

# REGIONAL NEWS

Readers' News submitted by groups, organizations and individuals. Send your club news to us by the 15th of each month to see it in the next month's print and online publication. Send to: thevenews@gmail.com or post on our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/VENews>



Left: Kenzie Richardson riding Pretty Reflection. Right: Jordan Henderson on Gunnar, both taken June 28 at the Alpha Equus (AEER) show in Fargo, N.D. Photos taken by Clay Lexen.



## Cowboy Up Ride Against Cancer Enjoys 11th Annual Event



Photos by Ley Bouchard. Find more photos at: [www.Facebook.com/VENews](http://www.Facebook.com/VENews)



Above: Horse pulling was July 10 in Rothsay as part of Prairie Days events. Brian Marquart, Rothsay, driving his draft team and stone boat.

Top right: Justin Demmer and his wife, Allison, on the plywood board being pulled, July 11 at the Ranch Rodeo at the Clay County Fair in Barnesville, Minn. Photos by Gail White.

Participants rode in different events of the Ranch Rodeo hosted by the 11th Annual Cowboy Up Ride Against Cancer Aug. 14-16 in McLeod, N.D. Two trail rides, a silent auction, an extreme race, meals, camping, dances Friday and Saturday night rounded out a weekend of fun and fund raising for the Roger Maris Cancer Center, Fargo, N.D.



# CJTR Honors Nez Perce Flight to Freedom

By Ley Bouchard

Imagine blocking out the same week of the month every year for 13 years to go on a trail ride. Not your average trail ride, this one. The Chief Joseph Trail Ride (CJTR) honors the Nez Perce whose flight for freedom took the life of a high percentage of their tribal family and signaled an end to a lifestyle of subsistence living off the land and territory they for centuries called home.

The annual trail ride follows the path that Chief Joseph, and his band of non-treaty Indians, took to lead his family and tribe in their flight to Canada to

seek freedom from battle, persecution, and removal, resulting from the refusal of the Nez Perce to give up their ancestral homelands to the United States Army. The Army pursued the Nez Perce for 1,170 miles, until their surrender just 40 miles south of safety with Sitting Bull in Canada. Those captured were taken to Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas.

Lannis Bergsgaard is among the folks who take seriously the fate of the Native Americans who were forced from their land by the American military after the Corp of Discovery, the Lewis and Clark Expedition, explored the land west of the Mississippi River between May 1804 and 1806. The COD first encountered the Nez Perce in 1805. At that time, the Nez Perce territory encompassed about 17 million acres and covered parts of Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana. These lands



surrounded the Snake, Salmon and Clearwater rivers. According to Wikipedia, they settled about 300 sites and migrated predictable seasonal routes from one area to another depending upon available food sources, their staples being buffalo, salmon and camas, a root used for bread-making.

Later in the century, specifically June 15, 1877, the American government and military forced the families from their land. They rode a well-documented trail in pursuit of their liberty. It was ultimately futile.

For many years, members of the Appaloosa Horse Club (ApHC) have been riding the same trail taken by Chief Joseph and

his tribal family. They ride to commemorate and try to keep fresh in the minds and hearts of the American people the life and traditions of the Nez Perce.

Their trail ride is nothing like what the Nez Perce encountered in 1877. This particular trail ride follows the same terrain and can be quite treacherous. The terrain is where the similarities end. Mark Bogar, Trail Ride Coordinator for the ApHC plans an extensive array of entertainment, food, and accommodations to make this trail ride quite contemporary.

Bergsgaard, 73, of Crookston, Minn., reports: "The 51st CJTR ride was very good. In the Judith and Snowy Mountains northwest of Billings from Ryegate to Roy, Mont., including a very challenging trail through Half Moon Pass, it rained and hailed as we were ascending and descending the mountain. For several of us 'old timers,' this seemed to be the most difficult of all the segments due to many miles in steep ravines to go down to the rocky streams and up the other side. It was quite slippery during rain and a couple of horses lost their footing and slid over the side of the trail. Horses and humans endured with no significant injuries."

"While riding the 1,300-plus mile 1877 'flight to freedom' trail in 100-mile segments, (on as much as possible the same trail taken by the 750 Nez Perce of which 250 were able to provide protection for the 500 or so women, children and elderly, with 2,000 head of horses), I am constantly in awe of how they could make all those miles, eat, sleep, tend to the wounded and elderly and take care of the horses. And, of course, under the constant threat of being attacked by the U.S. Military. We can almost see, in a ghostly fashion, the steps being taken, the laughter of the Nez Perce young (kids) people playing tricks on each other while

riding their horses, just as they do on the trail today, as well as the deployment of scouts, horse herders and organizing for another day of quick step travel. No meals prepared by a master chef, no port-a-potties, no modern-day comforts.

"I am blessed to have been able to ride the 1,350-mile trail on an outstanding horse [Woody], from my own breeding program. He is 19 and I'm 73 so we don't know if we will be able to ride many more segments of the Chief Joseph. Next year the ride terminates at the Bearpaw Battle field near Chinook, Mont., where Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce surrendered just 40 miles of their goal of the Canadian border. There will be a ceremony honoring the dead of both sides and unity between the people. Many of the Nez Perce will be present with their native attire and decorated horses. U.S. Military will be present, also, dressed in period attire.

"I have also been blessed by meeting and riding with so many great people from all parts of the world riding our favorite horse, the Appaloosa. Lots of aches and pains, but, also, very enjoyable.

"Woody is 19 years old, bred and raised by me. I have several full siblings to Woody. One of his full sisters will earn her 13-year honor next year at Bears's Paw Battle Field. She is owned by Christy Wood of California. Woody (reg. name Zip Te Scenario) was shown by Nicky Overgaard (UMC [University of Minnesota, Crookston] Equine Dept.) in the Red River Valley Select Sire Futurity from weanling thru 3-year-old and earned the coveted Super Horse Award in 1999.

"To prepare for the Chief Joseph we ride three-10 mile rides per week for a month prior to the ride. Good for him and especially good for his old rider. He's never had any soundness issues. Two sets of shoes are needed before



the ride. Since the trails are rocky and require good footing for climbing and descending, shoes are a necessity. Even at 19 he was full of himself and never ran out of gas on our July 2015 ride.

"I try to leave home (Crookston, Minn.) early the Friday before the ride. I usually stop at Sully Creek State Park, south of Medora, N.D., the first night. I usually travel alone, but this year had the honor of three ladies accompanying me. All Minnesota girls and we had a terrific trip and all went smooth and cool, leaving Saturday morning and off to Ryegate. We picked up a passenger at the Billings airport. Mandi Dufort is from California and was our driver to move the trailer from campsite to campsite each day. We arrived in Ryegate at about 4 p.m. The CJTR participants bring dishes from their home state for a potluck supper Saturday evening. Mary Phillipe (one of our Minn. group) from Warroad, brought walleye filets, the "girls" prepared them after we arrived. They were, of course, a big hit and very delicious. Among the other entrees was alligator from Florida, Dutch-oven specialties from Texas, Missouri, Washington and other states. The Dutch-oven caramel roles were very good. "The ladies pitched their tents for the first night on

the 2015 CJTR. Due to my seniority, I slept in the gooseneck of my trailer.

"The daily schedule is as follows: Up at 5 a.m. to feed and water the horses, coffee and breakfast at 6, take down tents, pack, and saddle up. Be ready to ride out at 8 a.m.

"We enjoy a sack lunch on the trail at noon, arrive at a new camp by 5 p.m. (hopefully), eat supper at 6 p.m., enjoy the new program, awards, historical presentations and dancing (live music and portable dance floor), with lights out at 10 p.m. and repeat same next day. Friday night dancing until midnight. Saturday morning breakfast and sad farewells until next year. Fueled up in Roy, Mont., and arrived back at Crookston at 10 p.m. Saturday.

For more information on the Chief Joseph Trail Ride, go to the Appaloosa Horse Club at [www.appaloosa.com](http://www.appaloosa.com).