



THROUGH OUR KIDS EYES – WHAT THEY SEE AND THINK!

Marsha Copeland – Education Chair

The young lady interviewed for this issue can hardly pass for a “kid” anymore. While a sixteen year old is still a “kid” in the eyes of most of us who have some years behind us, I’m speaking more of maturity than years. Meet Kersten. Kersten is a junior at Buffalo High School and involved in so many activities it would make your head spin. But everything she undertakes, she takes seriously and does well. Kersten is the daughter of Tracy and Jeff Strickland and they are members of the Tri-Lakes Chapter.

Kersten was six years old when Dolly came into her life. Dolly was one of those grandma mares that are worth their weight in gold. We all know the kind – the ones who watch after our kids while they learn about “giddy-up and whoa.” Dolly is gone now but did her job by jumpstarting Kersten’s journey and love of horses.

I asked Kersten if her perspective of what SMMBCH is all about has changed in the past several years. She remarked about the fun she had at the youth rides she attended and really just wanted to ride and have fun but today understands the importance of preserving access to trails so they will be available for years to come. She remarked the thing she remembers most from her first youth ride was to keep a distance between horses while riding in single file. She said it really “bugs” her even today to see riders crowding the rider in front of them. Another thing she remembered from the youth ride was to be aware of what your horse was doing at all times – that you could read horse body language if you paid attention.

Kersten said she felt her experience with taking the Leave No Trace Trainer Course was the experience that made very clear the importance of trail ethics and everyone’s responsibility to the environment. She said the things she learned about doing things “the right way” concerning horses, safety, and land ethics would follow her though her adult life. *(Kersten is a certified LNT Trainer)*

When asked if she wanted to say anything about SMMBCH, her comment was: “Well, this is more about trail riding, but Back County too. Riding horses is something our family does together and gives us time to bond and just be together. We learn about each other and about nature. It’s a special time and a lot of fun.”

Hearing Kersten talk about how she has grown from a just wanting to ride and have fun to realizing the importance of trail access speaks to the importance of getting our youth involved in our organization. Our youth programs need membership support. Please think about the youth in your life and how you can introduce them to trail riding and the importance in promoting the mission, values, and ethics of your organization.

(Please send names and info on the kids in your life that you would like to see featured in future issues. Names are needed. Send info to marshacopeland155@yahoo.com)