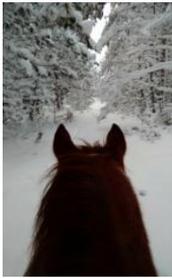




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February 2018 – NEWSLETTER

2018 Ride Schedules & Other Important Dates

March 24, 2018.....	Annual Banquet & General Membership Meeting.....	Evergreen Resort, Cadillac – 6:00 PM
March 25, 2018.....	Board of Director’s Meeting.....	Evergreen Resort, Cadillac – 9:30 AM
May 4-5-6, 2018.....	Work Bee.....	South Branch Trail Camp
May 17-21, 2018.....	Proposed Blossom Ride.....	Luzerne Trail Camp
May 31 – June 10, 2018.....	Proposed 1 st June Ride (Trophy).....	Oscoda to Empire
June 15 – 30, 2018.....	Proposed 2 nd June Ride (trophy).....	Empire to Oscoda
August, 2018.....	Work Bee.....	Location TBA
August 11 – 19, 2018.....	Proposed August Family Ride.....	Scheck’s Trail Camp to Goose Creek Trail Camp
September 7 – 30, 2018...	Proposed Kriss Cross (Trophy X 2).....	Mackinaw to Cadillac, Empire to Oscoda
October 6 – 14, 2018.....	Proposed Color Ride.....	Goose Creek Trail Camp to Hopkins Creek Trail Camp

Board Brief

1. As always, the MTRA Board of Directors are continuing to work hard in the winter. Directors are working with the MDNR and USFS to insure continued safe use of the trail and camps. Large projects that are being planned (getting permits and paperwork done so work can begin in the spring) are: the trail through the Mayhem Swamp, the route from Garey Lake to Empire, River Road Trail Camp clean up, South Branch Trail Camp clean up, trail improvements from South Branch Trail Camp to McKinley Trail Camp, removal of debris from McKinley Trail Camp, stump removal from 4-Mile Road Trail Camp, getting a new camp north of Cheboygan, trail improvements from Stoney Creek to Mackinaw.
2. The MTRA Board of Directors would like to thank everyone who supported the Youth Rider Fund in 2017 with their generous donations. A total of 27 children rode a total of 259 days for free. The MTRA Children's fund also supported several activities for children (adults participated at their expense) on the 2017 August Family ride.
3. In an effort to encourage people to bring children on the 2018 August Family Ride, the Board voted in January to enact a special program for the 2018 August Family Ride. Any adult who brings a child to the ride will not only receive free daily fees for the child, but the adult's daily fee will be paid in full from the Children's fund. Remember Grandparents, Youth riders are not covered under your membership. The parent of the youth rider must carry a current MTRA membership.
4. The BOD is currently reviewing all MTRA rides. Rider numbers for the 2015 Kriss Cross were low. If you are thinking you would love to do a Kriss Cross "someday", you may want to make arrangements to ride in September 2018. If numbers are down on the 2018 ride, this may be the last Kriss Cross for several years.
5. The BOD is working on getting MTRA t-shirts and hats to be sold at MTRA rides and events.
6. The next Board of Director meeting is going to be held at the Evergreen Resort on March 25, 2018 at 9:30 AM. Please feel free to attend and see your Board of Directors in action!

Annual Banquet & General Membership Meeting 2017 – March 25th - Evergreen Resort, Cadillac

Don't forget to make arrangements for your room at the Evergreen Resort and purchase your tickets for the Annual Banquet. The ticket order form is posted on the www.mtra.org website as well as attached to the 2018 Membership Renewal form. The deadline for Banquet reservations is March 10, 2018. MTRA is required to tell the Evergreen how many people will be having dinner so they know how much food to prepare, so this deadline is the DEADLINE. You do not have to attend the banquet to attend the General Membership Meeting directly following the banquet. **We will be having a special program during the meeting. Stuart Neils of the DNR has been working with MTRA to GPS the entire blue trail. His presentation will show MTRA members what has been done and what the final project will be.** Please vote at the meeting or return your absentee ballots for your choices of board members. You will receive a list of candidates as well as a ballot with your membership card for 2018. If you have any questions, please call the MTRA Office at 989-723-1425. FYI, those who pay for dinner or dance tickets, you will pick up your tickets at the resort on March 24, 2018. A banquet information sheet will be mailed to you next month with all the facts you will need to have a great weekend. See you there!!!

HISTORY HAPPENINGS

Sadly, we do not have History Happenings because we do not have a historian. Due to personal obligations, Sally Sever resigned as MTRA historian. Thank you, Sally, for your years of service. We have enjoyed your articles in the newsletter and the exhibit you made for the museum in Empire. If you would like to volunteer to be the next MTRA historian please call President, Al Davis.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK:

Hello Trail Riders,

Winter is about half over, and soon we will start preparing for another riding season. It is about time to begin thinking of cleaning our trails and camps, in preparation of the coming year. Although this is the duty of our board members, it can not be accomplished without the help of the MTRA membership. We have scheduled a work bee for the weekend of May 4th, 5th, and 6th in which South Branch Camp will serve as our base camp. We need a lot of help! We plan on cleaning both South Branch and River Road Camps, and assist in the cleaning of the Shore to Shore Trail in both directions from those camps. If possible please try to assist us in this mammoth project.

As always work has continued throughout the fall and winter. Negotiations have taken place to help protect the Shore to Shore Trail, keeping its longevity. Some changes have occurred in several of our scheduled rides due to the input and desires of our members. Hopefully this will draw more people in attending this year's rides. It has been announced the Shore to Shore Trail Ride, LTD. is no longer in existence due to the retirement of Virginia Franklin. The new name for the group is the Shore to Shore Trail Riders LLC. I am looking forward to working along with the Shore to Shore Trail Riders maintaining the Shore to Shore Riding and Hiking Trail.

At this time I would like to say thank you to all the various trail groups for their input concerning the controversy and concerns with the Michigan Horse Council. After many in-depth discussions and evaluating the information received, the MTRA Board of Directors and several other trail groups have voted not to re-join the Michigan Horse Council or attend the Michigan Horse Expo. The MTRA is, however, again planning on attending the Equine Affair in Ohio, April 12th – 15th.

I would like to announce our employees for the 2018 season: Trail Boss will again be Gale Gunders, our Secretary is Jan Wolfin, Mindy Ellis will continue as our Treasurer, and Barb Crampton will again join us as the Bus Driver.

A reminder, the annual meeting is quickly approaching, so make your reservations and plan on attending. It will be great to again see many old friends and hopefully make many new friends. Hope to see you there!

Sincerely,
Al Davis – MTRA President

DEADLINES: Several deadlines have been set for 2018. It is important that our membership follow these deadlines.

Annual Banquet reservation deadline is **MARCH 10, 2018**. If you are planning to attend the banquet and want to eat dinner, you must have your reservation in by March 10, 2018. On the 10th of March, MTRA has to call the Evergreen Resort and report how many reservation we have. The resort needs to know how much food to buy and prepare. If you do not make the deadline for dinner, you may attend the General Membership meeting following the dinner. There is no charge for attending the meeting. If you wish to stay for the entertainment (listening to and dancing to music by McCarn entertainment) dance only tickets can be purchased in advance through the MTRA office or at the resort on the day of the banquet (March 24, 2018) for \$10.00 per person.

Ride reservation deadlines are important because our trail boss, Gale Gunders, needs to have the ride roster, copies of ride registrations, hold harmless forms and other paperwork when he arrives at the ride. These items are mailed to Gale. According to the USPS, it could take a week for a package to get from the post office in Ovid to Gale's home. Therefore, the deadline for having your ride reservation into the MTRA office is 10 days before the ride. If you register for only one day, you may extend your stay when you check in with Gale at the \$10.00 per day pre registration fee. REMEMBER, if you do not get your reservation in by 10 days prior to the ride, you still may drop in and attend the ride. Your 2018 membership must be current and you will need to register with the trail boss and pay \$12.50 per day. Ride deadlines are as follows:

May Blossom Ride-----May 7, 2018
1st June Trophy Ride-----May 21, 2018
2nd June Trophy Ride-----June 5, 2018
August Family Ride-----August 1, 2018
September Trophy Ride X 2-----August 27, 2018
October Color Ride-----September 26, 2018

If you have questions, please contact the MTRA office at (989) 723-1425 or mtra.office@gmail.com.

MTRA wishes to extend a warm welcome to Mr. Scott Flaven, Recreation Specialist with the MDNR. Scott works in the Forest, Mineral and Fire Management Division out of the Cadillac office. Scott is filling the position that was vacated when Todd Neiss moved on to the Michigan DOT. Thank you, Todd, for being a friend to MTRA for many years.

. Thank you to all the MTRA members who gave their time, equipment and labor to keep the Michigan Riding and Hiking Trail and its campgrounds clear and useable. In 2017, 742 volunteer man-hours were reported to the United States Forest Service. Along with these hours of labor, MTRA donated the use of our members' equipment; tractors, york rakes, post hole diggers, pole driver, stump grinder, chain saws, loppers, nippers, shovel, rakes, 4-wheelers, trucks and trailers. Volunteer hours to the MDNR for 2017 are still being compiled. **BOARD MEMBERS, who have trail sections on state land**, please report the hours for your section of trail to the MTRA office as soon as possible. We need to close the books for 2017 and start looking forward to 2018.

MTRA is going to equine affaire in Columbus Ohio April 12 -15, 2018.

The MTRA booth is also going to Equine Affaire. It will be set up from Thursday through Sunday. Kim Ross, Mindy Ellis, Samantha Lilly and John Pavelock will be manning the booth. If you are planning a trip to Equine Affaire be sure to stop by the booth and say "HI" and/or volunteer to man the booth for an hour to give these volunteers a bathroom or shopping break. We hope to see lots of MTRA members at this event along with making lots and lots of new friends for MTRA.

Free Ride Days earned from Work Bee credits can be used on any MTRA Ride. When you fill out your Ride Registration, either in paper or online, just pay for the days that you will need to pay for deducting your "free ride days" from the total number of days on the ride. For instance, if you will attend the Color Ride which is 9 days total and you have earned 4 free ride days from Work Bees in May and August, just pay for 5 days of the Color Ride and be sure to let us know that you are using your "work bee free ride days" to cover the cost of the rest. Be sure to sign-in at the Work Bees so that you get the credit for the days that you worked. The MTRA Office maintains a database of who attends the Work Bees and when those days are credited to rides.

FAQ's...

1. Don't forget to get your Recreation Passports for your vehicle license plates in 2017 so that you can be "legal" on our rides. This issue is even more important since we have been given permission to use the DNR boat launch next to the Lake Huron access point and they will be checking those passports. Out-of-state members can purchase the Recreation Passport at the following web address or at any state campground – even at the boat launch:
<http://media.state.mi.us/michiganestore/public/categorydisplay.aspx?categoryId=5>
2. Please update your membership information with your **preferred** phone number – no matter if cell or land line. Also, please make sure that the email address that you send us is updated as well.
3. Just a reminder – the MTRA does **NOT** share, sell or in any way distribute email addresses or phone numbers with anyone!! If someone contacts the MTRA office for information about a member, we contact that particular member and have them make contact with the inquirer. Our goal is to protect the privacy of our members!!
4. The MTRA Office now uses the email address: mtra.office@gmail.com. You should use that address for all official communications and that address will be used to distribute the Newsletters, send Ride Confirmations, etc.

FROM THE TREASURER AND SECRETARY:

Spring is coming. It really is! And the busy season for MTRA has begun. Lots of membership renewals, new memberships and annual banquet reservations are coming in. We have even had a few ride registrations come in already.

If you need a form for membership, annual banquet or ride registrations, you can print one off at our website at www.mtra.org. If you do not have a form and do not have access to the website or a printer, you can always just send a check in with a hand written note. Include your name, address, MTRA number (if you know it), a phone number and what the check is for. Without written instructions, we do not know how to apply your money.

Please note, our ride calendar is just a "proposed calendar". These are the dates that have been applied for to the MDNR and USFS. We will not get approval until early March. These dates are subject to change from the MDNR. We publish the dates as "proposed" because our members need to get vacation scheduled at work and start making arrangements to come on the ride of their choice.

As your secretary, I understand that some of you have had difficulty getting ahold of me. I am always available (except for Thursdays) in the early morning. You can call me as early as 7:00 a.m. until 10:00 a.m. If I do not answer, I may have stepped outside for half an hour to feed the horses or take the dogs out for a quick potty break. Or I might be on the phone with another member. If you call and I am not available for any reason, you will get voice mail. Please leave a message. If you leave your name and number, I will return the call. If you leave a question and I return your call and get your voice mail, I can leave the answer and we will not have to play telephone tag several times. If you have several questions or if you are a new member and just want to talk with someone who has crossed the state several times or if you just want to talk about the new horse you just bought, leave that message and tell me what time is good for me to return the call.

Our treasurer has been busy closing out the 2017 books and preparing a ride summary report for 2017, year-end financial reports for 2017 and working with our CPA to get income tax form 990 ready for the IRS. Mindy will have copies of the 2017 financial report at the Annual Banquet. If you are not attending the Banquet or if you have any questions about any MTRA financial matters you may call her at (810) 252-6761. She also has voice mail on her phone. Mindy does have another job with many obligations, so if you need to talk with her, please leave a message. She will return the call.

The MTRA office can be reached at (989) 723-1425 or mtra.office@gmail.com.

