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April 2015 – NEWSLETTER

Ride Schedules & Other Important Dates

May 9-10, 2015....	Work Bee (set picket poles, clean-up camp, etc.)	Hopkins Creek Trail Camp....	9:00 AM
May 8-17, 2015.....	Blossom Ride	Cadillac to Garey Lake	
May 28-June 7, 2015.....	1 st June Ride (Trophy).....	Oscoda to Empire	
June 11-26, 2015.....	2 nd June Ride (Trophy).....	Oscoda to Empire	
June 20, 2015.....	Board of Director Meeting.....	Goose Creek Trail Camp.....	Noon
August 8-9, 2015.....	Work Bee (replace Wilbur Creek Bridge, camp work).....	South Branch Trail Camp	
August 8-15, 2015.....	Family Ride.....	South Branch to 4-Mile	
September 5-28, 2015....	Criss-Cross Ride (Trophy+).....	Mackinaw to Cadillac, Empire to Oscoda	
October 3-11, 2015.....	Color Ride.....	Stoney Creek to Walsh Rd.	
October 10, 2015.....	Board of Director Meeting.....	Walsh Rd. Trail Camp.....	Noon
January 9, 2016.....	Board of Director Meeting.....	Jay's Sporting Goods, Clare.....	10:00 AM

BOARD BRIEFS:

1. Congratulations to the following board members on their re-elections: Jeff Balzer, Joe Burrill, Jimmy Corlew, Kathleen Moss and Jan Wolfen. Many thanks to Jan Osborne and Tom Smith for their efforts as write-ins. Thanks to everyone who voted at the General Membership meeting as well as all of the absentee ballots!!!
2. Workers are in great demand for this year due to the projects planned. We will be planting picket poles and spreading gravel at Hopkins Creek, replacing the Wilbur Creek Bridge and making plans to replace the Luzerne boardwalk. Check out the "Important Dates" schedule for specifics. **Remember** – you can earn a **free ride day** for each Work Bee day's participation.
3. Welcome back to our Trail Boss – Gale Gunders who will be leading our Trail Rides for another year and our Bus Driver – Barb Crampton who keeps us on time and hauls our "selves" back to our horses!!! Glad to see you guys back for another successful year of Trail Rides!!!
4. Welcome aboard Angie Marsh who has been hired as the new Secretary/Treasurer. There will be a transition period when both Chris and Angie will work together to keep things up and running smoothly. You will be notified when the MTRA Office address changes.
5. Special thanks goes out to all of the interested folks who applied for the Secretary/Treasurer and Assistant Secretary/Treasurer positions. It was a tough decision and all of your resumes will be kept on file.
6. The Youth Riders' Fund was extremely supported at the Annual Banquet and General Membership Meeting with the Silent Auction collecting \$1,039.50 with an additional \$383.67 from the sale of Terry Meier's fudge and cookies – yum! The Fund is alive and well – thanks to MTRA members such as Tammy Miller who donated \$200 and others who are also so generous!!!
7. There will be a sign-up sheet at the Trail Boss rig if you would like to be a mentor or would like to be assisted by a mentor. Newbies are encouraged to sign-up to be assisted.
8. The next Board of Director meeting is going to be held in Goose Creek Trail Camp on June 20, 2015 beginning at Noon. Please feel free to attend and see your Board of Directors in action!

LIFE Memberships on the Rise

Since October 2010, the Board of Directors has adopted the policy of offering LIFE memberships to MTRA members for a onetime cost of \$400.00. Some of those memberships have been “gifts” from family members and some are from members who know that they will be members for a long time and want to simplify the annual “membership renewal ritual”. LIFE memberships are indicated by an L in front of the MTRA number for those lucky members. At this time there are eighteen LIFE memberships with hopes that more people see the honor in this type of membership as well as the gift of support to the MTRA. Our two newest LIFE memberships are L4669 – Lon Platte in February 2015 and L6073 – Leah and Larry Reid in March 2015. Congratulations to all of our LIFE memberships and especially to our newest.

Timing has a lot to do with the outcome of a Rain dance – Advice from an Old Farmer

Trail Warrior Award – Ron & Amelia Beyer

Please check out the December 2014 issue of TrailBLAZER Magazine in which these two MTRA members were honored as Trail Warriors. They were nominated by the Back County Horsemen Pigeon River & Beyond and the Waterloo Horsemen’s Association. What an honor for these two dedicated horse lovers. Congratulations go out to Ron and Amelia – we are proud to be part of your lives!!

Tidbits from Angie Marsh:

Effective Saturday, March 21, 2015, during the Board of Directors’ organizational meeting, I became the new Secretary/Treasurer, with Chris Rayner staying on as the Assistant Secretary/Treasurer. For those who do not know me, my MTRA number is 3479. I officially became an MTRA member in 1994 though I sort of grew up in the MTRA since Ernie Marsh was my dad. I live in my home town, West Branch. I have 3 grandsons and 4 kids, one still at home and she will be making her 1st Trophy Ride this June. I have years of 4H experience, did some Girl Scouts, have a Social Work background and currently substitute teach in our local schools. I enjoy riding, gardening, do a decent job of baking, we camp a lot, and are very involved in the Ogemaw County Fair. My home phone number is (989) 345-8608. Please call me if you have any questions or just simply want to chat!

Michigan Horse Council Horse Expo – March 13 – 15, 2015

The MHC Horse Expo was a resounding success for another year and the MTRA renewed lots of memberships, sold lots of maps and made lots of friends at that venue. This is always a special time to “gear up” and make plans for the Ride Season which is rapidly approaching. Special thanks goes out to the members who manned the booth and shared their stories with prospective “newbies”. With Steve Ross as the main man in booth management, we need to send super thanks to he and his wife, Kim, for hauling and setting up the booth and all of the organization that goes with it. Kim was also a presenter at the Expo with her “Camping With Your Horse” clinic which was avidly attended during both sessions. Congrats, Kim, and thanks for putting in a “plug” or two for the MTRA!!! Our much appreciated workers were: (in alphabetical order) Jeff Balzer, Joe Burrill, Al & Diana Davis, Jenny Duvall, Chuck Fanslow, David Hardaker, Gail Hilbrand, Cindy Lawrence, Robert Lee, Liz Lamb & Garnett Oetjens, Justin Lehnert, Saige & Sandy Morgan, Kim & Steve Ross and Deb Tune. It is a great weekend and you get to talk about the rides and your adventures and you get into the Expo free! See you next year – March 11-13, 2016. Happy Trails!!!

OFFICE NOTES...

1. Don't forget to get your Recreation Passports for your vehicle license plates in 2015 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. The Michigan Shore-to-Shore Riding and Hiking Trail has been "created" on the www.everytrail.com website. Come on down and check us out. You'll find the trail and the "rig routes" listed with key words MTRA and Shore-to-Shore Trail. The trail sections that are finished have pictures. You do not need to have an account to access these files.
3. The Shore-to-Shore Trail is also listed on www.opentrail.us which is a website designed specifically for horseback riders. You can find us in the Michigan section.
4. Plan to bring your horses to the Work Bees to enjoy the trails around the camps. We can't work ALL the time and the areas around Hopkins Creek and South Branch are spectacular!!
5. If you would like to receive the "approved" minutes from the Board of Director Meetings, please contact the MTRA Office and they will be sent "free" via email to any member's email address. If you would like them via US mail, please submit \$5.00 to cover printing and mailing costs for the year.
6. Don't forget – fellow members who assist you in "rescues" whether they be horse or vehicle related, would appreciate your consideration with a donation to their "fuel fund". We are all on vacation during the rides and would always be there to help out when needed. But, sometimes we appreciate the offer of monetary assistance when our rigs/trucks are being used.
7. 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!!
8. If you have any questions and/or concerns about your membership, the association, the workings of the MTRA Office or anything regarding the rides, etc., please do not hesitate to call or email the office. We'll do our best to help you.....
9. 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. At this time, the Office phone number will remain the same and will probably continue to do so perhaps "forever"!! During this transition, please be patient as Angie works hard to learn all there is to know about the MTRA Office, etc. If you have any questions or concerns, you can contact me on my cell phone (719-641-2969) or my email which is: raynechris@gmail.com. My title is now Assistant Secretary/Treasurer and I hope to spend more time on horseback!! See you on the rides - chris

Great appreciation goes out to the following MTRA members who assisted during the counting of the ballots for Board members at the General Membership Meeting. With excellent supervision from Al Davis, Jenny Duvall and Carol Hyzer, the members who managed to count and tally the votes in the waning light of Saturday evening are the following: Mindy Ellis, Brian Hager, Kathy Kruch, Jane Miller, Tammy Miller, Taylor Orefice, Russ Pennington, Kim Ross, Jennifer Sedlacek, Mary Simon, Carla Walker and Don Willey. The location and lighting was a bit inconvenient but these folks did a wonderfully accurate job and were up to the task at hand. Thanks so much!!

Vet & Farrier List and other things that are Good to Know...

Thanks to all of the hard work from Diana Davis and Helen Meier, our **Vet & Farrier List** has been updated for this year. Copies will be available thru the Trail Boss. The "Good to Know" list will be updated soon and includes the veterinarians and farriers as well as places to shop, shower and have fun, etc. Talk to the Trail Boss for more information.

Maintenance is a MUST!!!

The MTRA is responsible for marking and maintaining over 500 miles of the Michigan Shore-to-Shore Riding and Hiking Trail. Each of the 15 Board of Directors is responsible for at least one section of trail and one trail camp to see that they are up to “snuff” for the trail rides for the year. Many hours of volunteer labor and money is spent in traveling costs as well as incidentals to keep the system working properly. And, of course, many hands make light work!!! In 2014 the MTRA volunteered over 700 hours toward this endeavor (including Work Bees) with over \$1600 spent and 124 volunteers helping out. This year Work Bees are scheduled for the 1st weekend of both of the Blossom Ride and Family Ride so that members on the rides can easily help out and earn free ride days. The May Work Bee will be held at Hopkins Creek Trail Camp May 9th-10th to install picket poles at Hopkins Creek and generally clean up the Hopkins Creek Trail Camp as well as the Cadillac Trail Camp. We will also be working on replacing gravel at the Hopkins Creek water crossing. The August Work Bee will be held at South Branch Trail Camp on August 8th-9th where we will need to work on the Wilbur Creek Bridge as well as haul gravel to re-enforce the trail at various locations. There’s a lot to do and the lunch on Saturdays will be provided by the MTRA. Don’t forget to sign in at the Work Bee so that your time will be counted toward “Free Ride Days”!!! If you have any questions about Free Ride Days that you may have earned on previous Work Bees, please call or email the MTRA Office and we’ll check it out for you!! If you cannot attend the Blossom Ride or Family Ride, bring your horses and ride after working at the Work Bee – camping is free during the Work Bee days.

From the President’s desk –

This last year was another great one for the MTRA. We started the year at Grayling for our annual meeting and then our spring work bee at our Mullett Lake camp, which is our only private camp. We replaced a few picket poles and added over 30 new ones. We also cut out overgrown brush and added gravel in low areas on the drive. We had 28 workers and cooks with lots of great food as usual.

Then the 50th Celebration of Shore-to-Shore rides and parade in Kalkaska was well attended to say the least. It was simply amazing with our very special DNR friend, Anna Sylvester, and me who gave speeches and recognition of our wonderful one-of-a-kind trail and some history of it. We also got to recognize one of very own founding members, Phyllis Garn. It was very special for her and all attending. Another accomplishment achieved was the 25th Anniversary for one of our past presidents group, the Shore to Shore club which also uses the blue trail system. TV station cameras and interviews and more filming from the Michigan Magazine rounded out the event. One episode of the Michigan Magazine so far has been shown on the RFD-TV channel. They have stated they intend to do more episodes about us. This should be some great national recognition which is always welcomed to continually support and promote our trail. Close to two hundred riders then hit the parade route through Kalkaska. A once in a lifetime for a lot of us!!!

The year brought us many bus problems and with the frame rusting badly on “Old Blue” we had to get a replacement which is now a diesel “Big Blue” with a couple more seats which Barb did great with. Barb will be back as well as our new trail boss, Gale Gunders, who have both done great jobs.

Our added ride in August, the Family Ride, was warm and nice its second year. Make sure you sign up and give it chance if you have not tried it yet. We also added back the May ride coming up in a little over a month. Make sure you sign up to keep this ride and have enough support for it to continue.

Our other work bee was at Garey Lake camp and we removed a lot of over grown brush and trimmed many trees and replaced 20+ picket poles. We had 18 attendees and really appreciate your help at these work bees. Saying that we always need help from manual labor to equipment operators and if you can’t do those we can always use food helpers. We have some really big projects coming up soon including the bridge by Curtisville store in August and biggest of all a new boardwalk for Luzerne. We gained grants through the state and USFS for the Curtisville project and USFS for the Luzerne project estimated at least costing \$250,000. Also grants from Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund – Statewide Equestrian Initiative - given out by the ETS or Equine Trails Subcommittee are getting much done in the trail camps. Five thousand dollars for Hopkins Creek will be used for getting at least 56 new picket poles and some bathrooms redone and hitching rails to tie at the bathrooms. Another \$5000 will be used for picnic tables, fire rings and picket posts at Four Mile camp with \$10,000 at Stoney Creek for improvements. An additional \$15,000 has been earmarked for Elk Hill watering at the river with new bathrooms and fire rings and picnic tables at the campgrounds. We really appreciate all of the money coming in repairing the trail and trail camps to keep up for future

generations. Right now is a good time for our cause. The Governor has declared Michigan to be a “trails state” and we need to take this opportunity to do all we can to garner more support and more funding while the iron is hot. If we can stay involved and looking forward, we can keep an ever needed solid foothold and create enough of a statewide awareness to ensure our continued survival of this shore-to-shore trail.

We have many members from multiple equine organizations. We continue to foster relationships with many of those groups to strengthen our MTRA base and fruition has been seen from MHC to BCH and the so many riding associations supporting us and our endeavors. The September ride went well and then October ride which keeps growing as the secret is out on the fun, sun, fires, music, and much more which have made it a great ride enjoying the fall colors and weather. The MHC Expo went over well and one of our favorite DNR officials received the catalyst award along with two of our members, Anna Sylvester and Dick and Connie Kleinhardt? Congratulations to honors well served!!! Overall, again a pretty good year. Keep riding the trail and promoting it to ensure its future and we all thank each of you for doing just that.

Chuck Fanslow

Annual Reminders – things to do prior to the Ride Season which begins soon!!

1. Ride, ride, ride – using the saddle and other equipment that you intend to use on the rides. Get your horse and yourself used to all of that stuff!!!
2. Organize your saddle bags – check out the many resources online on what to take. Don’t forget – less is more!!! Talk to Kim Ross for pointers or suggestions.
3. Don’t forget – **shoes or boots** for your horse, especially on the longer/shore-to-shore rides. Please condition your horse with those prior to the ride to ensure fit and/or replacement if needed.
4. Don’t forget to get those **Coggins tests** and **annual vaccinations** in plenty of time!! Those riders from out-of-state will need Interstate Health Certificates for your horses.
5. Don’t forget those **Electrolytes** for your horses when the weather becomes warmer and the horses sweat more. Extra salt in their feed works wonders!!!
6. Don’t forget your **rain slicker** attached to your saddle – it’s the easiest way to insure nice weather!
7. Don’t forget the **bug spray** for both you and your horse – after all, it is Michigan!!!!
8. Don’t forget your **trail etiquette** – let’s be safe out there and all have fun!!
9. Don’t forget the **Potluck dinners** on all trophy rides after the pre-ride meeting on arrival nights! YUM! Great time to meet and greet!! We need a “name” for the dinners....help!
10. Don’t forget **extra equipment** like saddle pads, bridles, bits, reins, horseshoes, girths/cinches, etc. so that you always have an extra if something breaks, gets lost, or your neighbor needs one.
11. Don’t forget to post your **MTRA number** on the front and back of your rig! It’s a safety measure so that the Trail Boss can find you in an emergency!!!
12. Questions???? – call the MTRA Office – we love to talk about the rides!!!!

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