

A meeting of the Monadnock Happy Trails Association was held Monday, April 4, 2011 at 6:30 p.m. at the Congregational Church in Swanzey. President Sharon Thomsen called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Treasurer Anne McGrath reported the checking account balance at 3/31/11 was \$482.60. She will pay our donation of \$75.00 to the church for the use of the meeting space soon. The liability insurance bill will be due soon as well. Laura Susmann made the motion to accept the treasurer's report, Beth Phippard seconded and the motion passed.

Secretary Laura Susmann reviewed the minutes from the last meeting including the talk on fire safety. Our speaker had explained the most common causes of fire are:

1. Cooking
2. Smoking
3. Faulty heating equipment
4. Arson

Recommendations to reduce the fire risk include guards on lighting fixtures and sprinklers. We were reminded that hay can spontaneously combust if it has not been properly dried. Our speaker recommended no open flames, smoking or storing gas or paint in the barn. Lightning rods are useful as well. Extinguishers - 5 pound ABC should be posted at every exit; APW extinguishers are useful as well (pressurized water).

Sharon will have a draft of our club brochure ready for the next meeting, with Phil's help.

Maureen Blackledge reported \$4,100 was raised at the lasagna dinner/dance for Richmond logger Wayne Snow who was injured in January.

Mary Page e-mailed to let us know that the MRHS equestrian team has 8 riders this year with show dates being April 9, 16th, May 7th and the state show May 22nd at the Hopkinton Fair Grounds. Fund raising has gone well. A car wash will be held April 23 at the gas station on West Street next to Cheshire Village Pizza. There will be a spaghetti supper April 29th at Kimball Hall in Troy 5:30-7:30; tickets available from team members or at the door. The team thanks MHTA for our support.

Laura reported receiving an invitation for the club to join the NH Horse Council. The benefits of membership were discussed; Sandy Holbrook spoke in favor of joining. Maureen made the motion that MHTA join the NH Horse Council. Sharon seconded; the vote was unanimous.

Ted Gewanter spoke to the membership about safety at our trail rides. In Ted's opinion we are a wreck about to happen but we aren't really any different than other clubs. We need to face our problems and be more aware.

1. We kid ourselves that our horses and our skills are better than they are making us "honest liars".
2. Green horses and green riders in large groups makes the ride challenging for all.
3. Horses and riders lose condition over the winter months. Riders and their mounts need to get into shape before coming to organized rides.

A lively discussion ensued. Suggestions include talking to each other honestly before heading

out so that others have the opportunity to be supportive. It's okay to admit being nervous about a particular ride or section of ride. It was suggested we communicate before heading out on a ride so that we are more aware of each other.

Ted suggested the calmest horse should be in the lead. The most confident horse and rider combination should be in the back, able to ride forward to assist/support others having a problem. Ted also suggested riders use tapaderos, stirrup coverings that protect your feet from brush, thorns, stickers and prevent feet from going through the stirrup so that a rider is not dragged in the event of an emergency.

We also discussed that 100% bombproof is a phrase that cannot be taken literally as there is no such thing as a bombproof horse. A truly broke horse can travel at all gaits on a loose rein.

Traveling in small groups may be something to consider, too. Some like to move right out and others prefer a more leisurely pace.

Ted and Norma offered to host a fun day at their home in Westmoreland to include obstacle practice in the indoor and outdoor rings as well as a trail ride on the extensive network of trails available. Zola Luebkehan will be available for coaching regarding the obstacles. We will bring a dish to share and Ted will have the grill available for those who would like to cook something.

Sophie asked for advice on battling ticks. Suggestions included clipping the tail so it doesn't reach the ground as well as clipping the fetlock areas as these are easy hopping on spots. Chickens and guinea fowl were offered as prevention ideas as well.

Beth Phippard will firm up plans for the camping trip to the Wagonwheel Campground in June and she will be collecting deposits.

Club events:

Saturday May 21, Swanzey railroad bed ride with barbeque at the Sportsmen's Club

June 10, 11 & 12, camping at the Wagonwheel Camp Ground

June 26 Lake Dennison

July 10 Northfield State Park

July 16 Swanzey Old Homestead Days Parade

August 20 Springfield, Vermont

September 17 Swanzey

Other events:

April 17 NHAHA Hampton Beach Ride, www.nharab.org

May 14 NEECA Lake Dennison

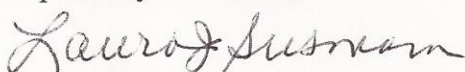
July 16 & 17 Mt. Washington

Oct 10 VT/NH Ride for the Cure

The next meeting will be held Monday, May 2 at 6:30 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Laura J. Susmann

Secretary