

ST. CROIX TRAIL BLAZERS

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 9 | JANUARY 2018

New Horse Update

The goal of St. Croix Trail Blazers is to own all of our horses one day. Currently, we lease five horses, and own four. Donations are extremely helpful in helping us achieve that goal. Recently, we received a generous donation from one of our riders, Stacy Knapp. Stacy was hoping that we could put her donation to good use and find another big, patient horse like Rowdy.

We searched far and wide for the perfect horse, and wound up finding Zipper. Zip is a big guy, measuring in at 15.2 hands and



about 1,200 pounds. He is a Paint Quarter Horse and absolutely adores people. He loves attention from anyone and everyone. Zip is a great horse for any of our riders that need help with balance and he's got a big, smooth trot. Since he's still learning a few things, he's being slowly introduced into our lesson program.

While on the property looking at Zip, another horse was brought to our

attention. Her name is Vanna. Vanna is an Arabian mare and has had many, many years of professional training. She was a



world class show horse in her prime. We are very lucky to have been able to purchase her too! Since Vanna is smaller, she is ideal for riders that are small as well. She is a very good first-time-canter coach and has already taught her first student how to canter.

Thank you, Stacy, for this wonderful donation!



Diezel is another new horse. He is a palomino Quarter Horse who has had extensive barrel training. Although he was not a donation, we are happy to be able to lease him!

We hope that 2018 will bring even more wonderful horses to our program!

2018 Payments



The 2018 Payment Policy was emailed out in December. If you did not see that email, there are copies available in the lounge with the payment dates listed for you. Remember, if your payment is

not received in the payment box by the 15th of each month, you will be charged a \$15 late fee. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask Karen (karen@stcroixtrailblazers.org) or Keri (keri@stcroixtrailblazers.org).

MISSION

Trail Blazers mission is to provide horseback riding, training, and competitive sports opportunities to individuals with special needs in a safe learning environment through adaptive equine experience.

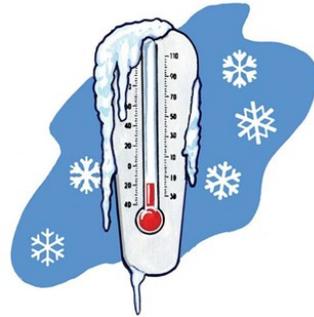
In This Issue

New Horse Update	page 1	Kowalski's Box to Return April 1	page 4
2018 Payments	page 1	Flu Season Has Arrived ...	page 4
Cold Weather Reminder ..	page 2	New Email Addresses	page 5
Who Am I Riding?	page 2	\$50 Off Riding Fee	page 5
Rider Spotlights	page 3	Reminder if not going to make scheduled lesson	page 5
Holiday Party Thank You	page 4		

Cold Weather Reminder

When the temperature is 0° or below, for the safety of our riders, staff, and horses, our normal policy is that sessions will be cancelled. Cancellations will be posted on our Facebook page and telephone calls will also be made to inform those scheduled for sessions. We will make every effort to make contact with you. Discretion will be used to cancel sessions if the temperature is above 0° but the wind chill is below 0°. Not only is the cold weather tough on humans, it can also be tough on our horse partners. At this point in time, we are on overload with make-up lessons from the holidays and the number of days we had to cancel due to the temperature already. We are trying to limit the number of cancellations if we don't have to.

To minimize dust in the indoor arena, the footing gets dampened. The unfortunate part of that in the winter is that the footing can freeze and can feel like concrete under a horse's hooves. Footing that gets clumped or solid can twist joints and bruise feet. It's best for the footing to have "give" to it.



Cold air can worsen respiratory issues. Some studies have shown that frigid air – in the single digits – can lead to minor inflammation of the lungs. A few of our horses have breathing issues and riding them in cold weather can exacerbate the situation.

Proper warm-up takes longer in cold weather to prepare tendons, ligaments, and cartilage for the work ahead. Warming up heats crucial structures by increasing the blood flow. A horse with arthritis will take longer to warm up also because they will feel stiffer in the cold air. Those of us who deal with arthritis know that feeling!

Remember to wear appropriate clothing. The barn is heated, however, it can still be cold. Gloves, not mittens or really bulky type ski gloves, are best for holding onto the reins. Beanie hats work well under helmets to cover ears.

As always, if you have any questions, please ask.

Who Am I Riding?

We are often asked, "Who am I riding?" We also have requests to ride (or not ride) a specific horse. We have been asked these questions enough that we felt it important to spread the word on the logic and reasoning that goes into assigning horses to riders here at SCTB. We also want everyone to understand why it is that we do not allow those requests to ride/not ride specific horses. Although every day is different, I've outlined some of the main considerations for how we determine which horse each rider is on for the day.

Ability: First and foremost, we want to make sure that every rider is on a horse that is not too far above or below their ability level. While all of our horses are very well broke and well mannered, they all have their own unique quirks that may

or may not suit a rider. For example, Billy can be very sensitive to leg pressure or a rider's nerves, so we don't put riders on him that tend to squeeze or are very nervous. On the contrary, Shooter and Rowdy can both be a bit lazy and do well with riders that will push them to keep moving.

Daily Schedule: Our horses are often used more than one time throughout the day. We do not like to schedule the horses for more than two lessons per day. Any more than that, and we put the horses' health and soundness at risk. Saturdays we especially have to be mindful of this as the days can be very long.

Continued on page 3

Continued from *Who Am I Riding?* on page 2

Advancement: Special Olympics is something we participate in every August. The goal of Special Olympics is to provide healthy *competition* to riders who participate. With this in mind, SCTB aims to push our riders to continually improve their skill set. We push riders a little more each lesson.

Another good way to help improve a rider's skill set is to put them on a horse that will offer more of a challenge. Often times, if a rider is saying they don't like riding a particular horse, it's because that horse is not as easy for them to ride as another horse may be. If they continue riding the horse that's a challenge, eventually that horse will be easy for them as well, and they'll be quite proud of their accomplishment!

Health: Just like people, horses can get sick with all kind of things, and they also can sprain, strain, break, etc. Sometimes they just plain get burned out and need a break. Regardless of the reason, if we feel that their health is at risk, they will not be used. Without these horses, we wouldn't have a program so we make sure to treat them very well.

For the above listed reasons, we are not able to allow riders to request a specific horse or request to *not* ride a specific horse.

We hope that this article helps make more sense of how we pair horses and riders together!

Kellie

Rider in the Spotlight: Duncan

SCTB: How long have you been riding with St. Croix Trail Blazers?
Duncan: 1½ years.

SCTB: What horse(s) do you ride?
Duncan: Jag, Rowdy, Shooter

SCTB: Do you have a favorite horse?
Duncan: Shooter.

SCTB: What is your favorite thing about riding?
Duncan: Trotting.



SCTB: Do you have any hobbies?
Duncan: Watching sports.

SCTB: Do you play other sports?
Duncan: Yes, floor hockey, downhill skiing, basketball, swim, track and field, softball, golf, bowling, flag football, soccer, and my most favorite water skiing!

Rider in the Spotlight: Rowan

SCTB: How long have you been riding with St. Croix Trail Blazers?
Rowan: 1 year.

SCTB: What horse(s) do you ride?
Rowan: Jag, Rowdy, Shooter

SCTB: Do you have a favorite horse?
Rowan: Jag.

SCTB: What is your favorite thing about riding?
Rowan: Trotting.



SCTB: Do you have any hobbies?
Rowan: I love to do art. I painted pictures of Jag, Rowdy, and Billy. My picture of Jag was selected to be a t-shirt at www.jakemax.com.

SCTB: Do you play other sports?
Rowan: Gymnastics, swimming, skiing, and bowling.

SCTB: Anything you want to add?
Rowan: I love horseback riding and want to keep doing it.

Holiday Party Thank You



Thank you to:

- The Lake Elmo Inn Event Center staff for the wonderful service and very tasty dinner.
- Our generous donor who made this evening special for so many by funding dinners.
- Everyone who was able to attend. We were thrilled so many of you joined us.
- Anyone who graciously donated to the Trail Blazers' present.
- Santa and Mrs. Claus and DJ Missy for adding to the enjoyment of the evening.

Save the Date:

Holiday Party

Thursday, December 13, 2018

Lake Elmo Inn Event Center

Kowalski's Box to Return April 1

Starting again on April 1, when you shop at Kowalski's you can contribute to the Trail Blazers. At the Stillwater store (in the mall across from the high school) you will find acrylic boxes the shape of safety deposit boxes immediately to your right as you use the exit door. By placing your receipt in the box marked Trail Blazers,

your receipt amount will be included in the percentage of total sales the store remits to Trail Blazers.

If you forget, no problem, bring receipts back the next time you shop. Suggestion, share this information with your family and friends.



Flu season has arrived!!!



Please stay home if you are sick. Thanks!



New Email Addresses

We've updated our email!

You can reach these people now at separate emails:

Karen: karen@stcroixtrailblazers.org

Kellie: kellie@stcroixtrailblazers.org

Keri (treasurer):

keri@stcroixtrailblazers.org



Please remember to check your spam or junk folder for any updates from St. Croix Trail Blazers.



If you bring a new rider who joins the team, we'll give you \$50 off your next month's fee!

Rider must pass evaluation with instructor.



Special People Needing Special Horses

Contact Us



Email:

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Facebook:

[St. Croix Trail Blazers Equestrian Team](https://www.facebook.com/St.CroixTrailBlazersEquestrianTeam)

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St. Croix Trail Blazers is tax-exempt under Section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Service.

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