



# The Horsemen's Newsletter

February 2007

Volume 17 • Number 2

## Pimlico Special purse had special funding

The Maryland Jockey Club (MJC)'s decision to cancel the 2007 running of the Grade 1 Pimlico Special has been widely reported throughout the racing world.

But it should be further explained that the MJC—and not the horsemen's Purse Account—has been responsible for the purse for the Pimlico Special, worth \$500,000, in each of the past three years.

"In the fall of 2003, the MTHA impressed upon track management the fact that Maryland horsemen simply could not afford to go on paying for the Special," said MTHA President Richard Hoffberger. "It was agreed that the track would underwrite the cost, unless and until additional revenue became avail-

See *Special*, page 2

## Franzone reappointed to Commission



Jim McCue

In one of his early actions since taking office, Governor Martin O'Malley has reappointed John B. Franzone to the Maryland Racing Commission.

Mr. Franzone, a former Thoroughbred owner and ardent advocate for

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## MTHA launches new Web site *www.mdhorsemen.com*



**The MTHA is proud to announce the creation of a new Web site at *www.mdhorsemen.com*.**

**Updated features include photographs and profiles of directors, and information on the MTHA's numerous programs, plus an innovative design by David Richardson of David Hayden Advertising. Check it out and you'll agree: The MTHA now provides the most complete and up-to-date Web site of any horsemen's group in the nation.**



## Board actions

Meeting held February 1 in Laurel  
*Members present: Richard J. Hoffberger, President; Richard J. Meyer, Vice President; John V. Alecci, Howard M. Bender, Phillip L. Capuano, William T. Fitzgibbons, Sr., Linda S. Gaudet, H. Neil Glasser, Arnold A. Heft, Timothy L. Keefe, Lawrence E. Murray, John J. Robb, Valora A. Testerman, Katharine M. Voss*

*Member absent: Dale Capuano*

### Claiming rule

The board discussed, at length, possible changes in the claiming rule.

A motion to require a claimed horse to race for a claiming price at least 25 percent higher than the claim for 21 days following the claim failed to pass on a vote of 5 to 7, with one abstention.

Voting in favor were Gaudet, Keefe, Meyer, Testerman and Voss. Voting against were Alecci, Bender, Capuano, Fitzgibbons, Glasser, Murray and Robb. Heft abstained.

The board also considered the issue of multiple claims, and ultimately directed MTHA representatives to bring this

matter before the Maryland Racing Commission. The board favors a policy that would limit an owner to one claim by a single trainer in a race.

### Jockeys' insurance fee

While the MTHA is not involved in determining the annual fee that owners and trainers pay to provide workers' compensation coverage for jockeys, the MTHA board has received a few complaints from horsemen regarding the sharp increase in this fee (to \$375) for 2007.

The board considered inequities in the fee, particularly in regard to racing partnerships that require each participant to hold a separate license.

It was agreed that prior to the establishment of the 2008 fee, the MTHA will discuss possible modifications with the Maryland Racing Commission, which oversees the program and sets the fee.

### Financial report

The MTHA's financial report for the period January 1 through December 31, 2006 was reviewed and unanimously approved as presented.

## Committee bulletins

### Bowie

Backstretch chairman Phil Capuano reported:

- Immigration issues remain a serious problem; there is a shortage of employees.

- Now that Race Track Road has been completed, concerns about speeding vehicles have increased.

- Some horses have had electrical shocks caused by faulty wiring in the Hacienda.

Backstretch chairman Linda Gaudet reported that track maintenance has

completed many improvements. She added that the track kitchen needs cleaning.

### Laurel

Backstretch chairman Larry Murray said the new fence at the five-sixteenths pole already is serving its purpose by stopping loose horses.

### Pimlico

Backstretch chairman Lori Testerman described an urgent need for vending machines and a microwave. Ms. Testerman also commented on ongoing problems with rodents.

## Hoofprints

### McCue provides valuable service to horsemen

The MTHA expresses special appreciation to track photographer Jim McCue, who provided numerous photographs for the new Web site.

Mr. McCue's first-rate photography and outstanding service to horsemen are a major asset to Maryland racing.

### Scholarship winner earns honors

Stephanie Wolf, who last fall received

the Backstretch Scholarship Program's largest award ever to an incoming college freshman (\$2,000), was named to the dean's list in the honors program at the University of Maryland College Park.

### Laminitis seminar

The Maryland Horse Council will offer a seminar on laminitis on Saturday, March 17, at the Glenwood Community Center in Glenwood. For information contact Dr. Mike Erskine at (301) 829-4977 or mikedvm@aol.com.

## Industry asks state for \$30 million

Maryland's racing industry has asked the state for a \$30 million enhancement in 2007 and another \$30 million in 2008 to help withstand increasing competitive pressure from neighboring states with expanded gaming.

John Franzone, chairman of the Maryland Racing Commission's Keep It In Maryland (KIM) task force, put forth the request at a January 25 briefing before the Senate Finance Committee chaired by Thomas M. (Mac) Middleton (D, Distr. 28, Charles County).

"These enhancements would not in any way curtail our pursuit of slots," emphasized MTHA President Richard Hoffberger. "Even if slots are approved this year, additional funds will be needed as a stopgap measure until the slots program is up and running."

The enhancement, to purses and breeders' funds, would come from lottery funds. It would be divided on an 80-20 percentage basis between the Thoroughbred and Standardbred industries.

A bill to authorize enhancements has been introduced in the House of Delegates. The House Ways and Means Committee chaired by Delegate Sheila E. Hixson (D, Distr. 20, Montgomery County) is scheduled to conduct a hearing on this bill (HB 348) on March 8 at 1 p.m.

The House bill is sponsored by Delegates Nancy J. King (D, Distr. 39, Montgomery County), Chairman Hixson, Jon S. Cardin (D, Distr. 11, Baltimore County), Ann Marie Doory (D, Distr. 43, Baltimore City), D. Page Elmore (R, Distr. 38A, Somerset and Wicomico Counties), Carolyn J.B. Howard (D, Distr. 24, Prince George's County), Anne R. Kaiser (D, Distr. 14, Montgomery County) and Frank S. Turner (D, Distr. 13, Howard County).

## *Special*, from page 1

able to the Purse Account."

In 2004, the purse for the Special came directly from the track. For 2005 and 2006, it came from a now defunct state bond fund originally intended to capitalize a race track improvement project.

"This is another example of how carefully the MTHA has managed the Purse Account," said Mr. Hoffberger.

Franzone, from page 1

the industry, has served on the Commission since February 1997, when he was appointed by former Gov. Parris N. Glendening. From 1998 to 2001, Mr. Franzone was the Commission chairman, also designated by Gov. Glendening.

Mr. Franzone leads the Commission task force known as Keep It In Maryland (KIM), created last October by Commission chairman John P. McDaniel.

“By reappointing Mr. Franzone, Gov. O’Malley clearly demonstrated his understanding and concern for the welfare of the racing industry,” said MTHA President Richard Hoffberger. “Mr. Franzone’s knowledge, and commitment, are an invaluable asset not only to the Commission and the industry, but to the entire state.”

### In memoriam: Barbaro

The MTHA offers deepest condolences to owners Roy and Gretchen Jackson, trainer Michael Matz, veterinarian Dr. Dean Richardson, and all of the horse’s numerous other connections, upon the recent death of Barbaro.

The 2006 Kentucky Derby winner’s heroic battle to recover from injuries sustained in the Preakness will forever hold an important place in the history of Maryland racing.

### The Horsemen’s Newsletter

Published monthly by the

**Maryland  
Thoroughbred  
Horsemen’s  
Association, Inc.**

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*The Horsemen’s Newsletter*  
reports on issues and events of interest  
to owners and trainers in Maryland.  
Your suggestions are welcome.

Thoughts and comment, from page 4

live racing product, has enabled us to maintain a reasonably competitive program.

In fact, purses for dirt races were raised in the spring of 2006, based upon a sufficient surplus that had built up in the Purse Account.

(Increasing purses for dirt races—and not for turf races—drew complaints from a small but vocal group of horsemen. However, it turned out to be a wise move, because increasing purses for turf races, which are costly to begin with and fill easily, would have quickly depleted the additional funds.)

The surplus allowed the Purse Account to pay out more in purses than it has taken in from wagering over the past two years. But that situation won’t

last beyond 2007.

Without additional revenue, at the beginning of 2008, the Purse Account will no longer sustain the program as is—even without factoring in competition from neighboring states.

And, as we all know, competition from Pennsylvania is growing at a rapid rate. Purses at Philadelphia Park are soaring and may reach approximately \$500,000 a day or more.

Unless the state takes serious action, it is anticipated that Laurel/Pimlico will propose a dramatic reduction in the number of live racing days in 2008. And that, unfortunately, would begin the final chapter of our downhill slide.

*/Dale Capuano, MTHA Director,  
Negotiating Committee Chairman*

### Recreation report

*From Dan Mangum,  
MTHA Recreation Director  
(410) 802-5798*

#### Basketball

Basketball continues on Sunday evenings at Meade High School. Games are scheduled at 6 p.m., 7 p.m. and 8 p.m., weather permitting.

#### Bowling

The MTHA will sponsor a bowling tournament on April 17 at AMF Fairlanes

in Laurel. Sign up in the track kitchens or call Dan at (410) 802-5798.

#### Donations

The following generous people recently donated clothing, reading material and/or other items for distribution on the backstretch: Christine Bricker, Cheryl Carton, Chuck Fawley, Chuck Foley, Gene Gilhooly, Sylvia and Arnold Heft, Binnie and Eddie Houghton, Rob Leibner, Klaus Panholzer, Fran Raffetto and Polly Rodriguez.

### Horsemen’s calendar

**RACING**

**Laurel.** . . . . . Now through April 15;  
Aug. 10 through Aug. 23;  
Sept. 5 through Dec. 31

**Pimlico.** . . . . . April 19 through June 9

**Timonium.** . . . . . Aug. 24 through Sept. 3

**FASIG-TIPTON MIDLANTIC  
AUCTIONS AT TIMONIUM**  
(410) 392-5555

**Two-Year-Olds in Training.** . . . May 21, 22

**Two-Year-Olds in Training  
and Horse of Racing Age.** . . . . . June 26

Entries close May 18

**OUT-OF-STATE AUCTIONS**

**Fasig-Tipton Florida Selected  
Two-Year-Olds in Training**  
Calder Race Course, Miami, Fla.  
(859) 255-1555. . . . . March 6

**Ocala Breeders’ Sales Company Adena  
Springs Two-Year-Olds in Training**  
Ocala, Fla. (352) 237-2154. . . . . March 26

**Ocala Breeders’ Sales Company  
Selected Two-Year-Olds in Training**  
Ocala, Fla. (352) 237-2154. . . . . March 27, 28

**Keeneland Two-Year-Olds in Training**  
Lexington, Ky. (800) 456-3412. . . . . April 17

**Ocala Breeders’ Sales Company  
Spring Two-Year-Olds in Training**  
Ocala, Fla. (352) 237-2154. . . . . April 24-27

**Ocala Breeders’ Sales Company  
Two-Year-Olds and Horses of Racing Age**  
Ocala, Fla. (352) 237-2154. . . . . June 19, 20

### Check the MTHA Web site for notice of the next Board Meeting.

Go to  
**www.mdhorsemen.com**  
and click on Calendar.



MTHA’s Backstretch Pension Plan Registration

#### Attention All Backstretch Employees (Assistant Trainers, Exercise Persons, Grooms, Hotwalkers, Stable Foremen, Trainers, etc.)

Pension Plan Registration for the year ended 2006 will take place at the following times and locations.

Bring your Maryland Racing Commission Badge and W-2, 1099, or tax return for 2006.

For more information call the MTHA office at (410) 265-6842.

**Failure to register  
will result in the loss  
of your 2006 benefit**

**March 26 through March 30**  
Bowie Track Kitchen,  
Office Next Door,  
9:30 a.m. to noon

**April 2 through April 6**  
Laurel Track Kitchen,  
9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**April 9 through April 13**  
Pimlico MTHA Office,  
10 a.m. to noon

**April 16 through April 20**  
Bowie Track Kitchen,  
Office Next Door,  
9:30 a.m. to noon

**April 23 through April 27**  
Laurel Track Kitchen,  
9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**April 30 through May 4**  
Pimlico MTHA Office,  
10 a.m. to noon



**MTHA**  
6314 Windsor Mill Road  
Baltimore, Maryland 21207

**February 2007**

### Thoughts and comment

Is Maryland racing, as we know it, approaching the end of the line? I sincerely hope not. But we’ve reached the point where our future can honestly be described as precarious.

Our destiny will be determined in the current session of the Maryland General Assembly.

It’s not complicated: Either the legislature acts to provide us with a substantial amount of additional revenue for purses (from slots or some form of enhancement), or Maryland’s racing industry will fall to levels that have never been seen in this state.

Our government leaders are well aware of the situation, and have given us reason to believe that help is on the way.

House leaders have introduced a bill that provides for purse enhancements in 2007 and ’08 (*see article on page 2*). And a slots initiative is on the horizon

But time, along with purse money, is quickly running out.

Our current racing program will remain intact through the end of 2007. Careful management of the Purse Account, along with strong support for our

See *Thoughts*, page 3

### MTHA Board of Directors

Richard J. Hoffberger  
*President*

Richard J. Meyer  
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