



The Horsemen's Newsletter

August 2009

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Horsemen retain right to appeal stewards' judgment calls

Horsemen have retained their right to appeal stewards' judgment calls involving the running of a race.

The Maryland Racing Commission (MRC) agreed, by majority vote at its August 18 meeting, not to proceed with a rules revision that would have eliminated the appeals process for judgment call disqualifications.

The Commission reversed its stand after MTHA representatives, including director Dale Capuano, spoke at the August meeting, explaining the importance of making it possible for a panel of Commission members to review the actions of the stewards, whose judgments are made quickly but have far-reaching consequences.

Proposed rule eases restrictions on toe grabs

Toe grabs up to four millimeters in height will be permitted under a proposed rule change approved by majority vote of the Maryland Racing Commission at its August 18 meeting.

The change is expected to take effect in September.

Currently, toe grabs are restricted to two millimeters in height.

Other sections of the current shoe rule will continue: A horse may not be permitted to start with shoes on the front hooves that contain bends, jar carks or any other traction device.

Gov. O'Malley pushes for action on Anne Arundel County slots

Governor Martin O'Malley has gone public with his dismay over the Anne Arundel County Council's failure to address slots.

The Council has repeatedly postponed voting on zoning changes for a proposed site at Arundel Mills Mall.

The Arundel Mills Mall plan is the only viable application in Anne Arundel County.

Laurel Park, the site presumed for slots when the enabling legislation passed in November 2007, is not currently in the running because its slots license application was not accompanied by the required fee.

However, Laurel could resume its bid if the Arundel Mills site is turned down.

The Governor has made it clear all along that he prefers slots at race tracks. But inaction is the worst possible scenario in his view.

"Anne Arundel County needs to make a decision so we can move forward," Gov. O'Malley told a gathering at the Maryland Horse Forum on August 6 in Upper Marlboro. ". . . That's their job, that's their responsibility."

The state's Video Lottery Facility Location Commission is expected to award licenses within the next several months.

Backstretch Appreciation Day: Sept. 20 at Laurel

The MTHA will sponsor a Backstretch Appreciation Day cookout at Laurel Park on Sunday, September 20, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., in the White House Area adjacent to the Racing Office/paddock area. Admission is free for all backstretch employees.

Pit beef and pulled pork, door prizes and d.j. music by Absolute Sound will highlight the festivities. Soda and water will be served. The event will be catered by Russell Clark.

For more information call Dan Mangum at (410) 802-5798.

Scholarship applications due Sept. 24

September 24 is the deadline to apply for aid from the Maryland Thoroughbred Scholarship Fund for 2009.

Individuals employed on the backstretch at Maryland tracks or at farms, training centers or veterinary clinics in Maryland, and enrolled this fall in college or graduate school, will be considered for these scholarships. More than \$20,000 is available this year through the fund, which is supported by various industry groups and individuals, including the MTHA and Maryland Horsemen's Assistance Fund.

The Maryland Racing Media Association sponsors the scholarship program and selects recipients, so as to avoid any potential conflict of interest.

Applications are available in the track kitchens at Bowie and Laurel and in the MTHA office at Laurel. They may also be downloaded from the MTHA Web site at www.mdhorsemen.com. For more information contact David Richardson at (410) 239-7022, drichardson@darkhollowfarm.com.



Retired Racehorse Training Symposium

A Retired Racehorse Training Symposium is set to take place on Sunday, October 4 at the Maryland Therapeutic Riding Center in Crownsville.

Nationally recognized trainer and rider Steuart Pittman will work with a carefully selected lineup of retired race horses, demonstrating various techniques. His presentation will include prospects who are still winding down their racing careers, horses in their first months of post-race training, and successful sport horses who began their lives racing.

There will be an intermission for networking and socializing.

Tickets may be purchased online for \$25 at www.dodonfarm.com; \$5 from each ticket goes directly to Maryland Therapeutic Riding Inc.

For more information contact Margaret Rizzo, Mythic Landing Events LLC, (301) 502-8929 (cell); margaret@mythiclandingevents.com.

Notice from MJC regarding stray and wild animals

Horsemen placing food for stray or wild animals (including but not limited to cats, dogs, squirrels, raccoons and pigeons) are subject to the following penalties:

First offense: \$100 fine and taken before the stewards.

Second offense: Expulsion from the grounds of all Maryland Jockey Club tracks.

Any food for pets must be placed off the ground and in a container.

Stray and wild animals are a serious problem that the MJC is attempting to control. It is important that horsemen fully cooperate with these efforts.

Yearling sale cut from three days to two

The Fasig-Tipton Midlantic Eastern Fall Yearling sale, originally scheduled for three days (October 5, 6 and 7), will be conducted over a two-day span, October 5 and 6.

It will be the first auction held in the newly remodeled sales pavilion at Timonium.

New Racing Commission appointees



Governor Martin O'Malley's two new appointees to the Maryland Racing Commission are labor leader Ernest R. Grecco and Standardbred horseman Thomas W. Winebrenner.

They fill the places on the Commission previously held by David Clegg and William Gerweck, whose terms expired.



An avid racing fan, Mr. Grecco is president of the Metropolitan Baltimore Council AFL-CIO Unions, a post he has held since 1987. He is active in numerous community organizations, and is well known in political circles throughout the state.

Mr. Winebrenner and his

Hoofprints

Supporting retirement efforts

The Jockey Club reminds owners that they can contribute to the post-racing care of Thoroughbreds through a voluntary checkoff program when completing the Application for Foal Registration. For more information visit www.jockeyclub.com.

NTRA studying aftercare issues

The NTRA's Safety and Integrity Alliance has formed a special subcommittee focusing on aftercare of retired Thoroughbreds.

For more information visit www.ntra.com.

Equibase on Facebook

Raising awareness of racing and developing new fans is the concept behind Equibase's new presence on the social networking site Facebook.

Equibase on Facebook features handicapping analysis, past performances and other free information; lists of leading horses, jockeys and trainers; milestone alerts for jockeys and trainers; weekly polls; and tutorials on handicapping products from TrackMaster.

Mary Thomas, former MHBA general manager, was devoted to the industry



Mary Warner Thomas, who worked tirelessly on behalf of the industry during her 24 years with the Maryland Horse Breeders Association (MHBA), died on August 20 at the age of 76.

Mrs. Thomas retired from the MHBA in 1989, and for the past two decades had made her home on Maryland's Eastern Shore. In retirement, she devoted her considerable energies to Christ Church in St. Michaels, serving as longtime church secretary and later as a volunteer.

During her years with the MHBA, she had an instrumental role in the growth of the organization and its monthly magazine, *The Maryland Horse* (now *Mid-Atlantic Thoroughbred*). Mrs. Thomas was involved in every aspect of the MHBA, her key duties including the administration of the Maryland-bred Fund.

She was named to the post of general manager when Snowden Carter gave up the position in 1985, and she remained in that capacity until her departure.

In 1989, the Maryland Racing Writers Association (now Maryland Racing Media Association) honored Mrs. Thomas with its Humphrey S. Finney Award for lifetime contributions to Maryland racing.

Thoughts, from page 4

seeking a new form of entertainment will revitalize the race track. And Maryland's proud tradition of Thoroughbred racing will have an opportunity to grow and prosper.

Laurel's failed slots license application last February caught everyone by surprise. It had been believed that Maryland's largest track, well-situated between Washington and Baltimore, would be a major center for slots.

Now it's difficult to predict what will happen. As long as the awarding of the Anne Arundel County slots license remains in question, however, hope remains that Laurel will ultimately become the site.

*/Arnold A. Heft, MTHA Director,
Legislative Committee Chairman*

IN MEMORIAM

Mary Louise Boniface, matriarch of one of Maryland racing's most prominent families, died on August 9 at the age of 91. Mrs. Boniface's husband, longtime Baltimore Sun racing writer Bill Boniface, died in 2005. Their son, J. William Boniface, operates Bonita Farm in Darlington with his wife, Joan, and their children and grandchildren.

Robert L. (Bobby) Leaf Sr., 77, a long-time owner/trainer and farrier, died on July 24. He was 77.

Jesse Willis (J.W.) Hammock, a former jockey who worked for many years at Maryland tracks as a cameraman and clocker, died on June 24. He was 68.

Ralph R. Christenson, Jr., 79, a former trainer who also worked as an outrider at Maryland tracks, died on July 26 at the age of 75.

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Your suggestions are welcome.



"Jockey Bounce" benefits Assistance Fund

Ten riders competed in the 100-foot "Rody Max Jockey Dash" on August 22 at Laurel Park, with donations from fans directed to the Maryland Horsemen's Assistance Fund. Geovany Garcia bounced to victory in a photo finish over apprentice Joshua Navarro.

Committee bulletins

Health and welfare

Chairman Rich Meyer reports that a high percentage of backstretch employees who participated in the recent Health Fairs were found to have sun-damaged skin.

Sunscreen is recommended, as well as hats and other coverings, for anyone working outdoors. Sun damage can lead to serious medical conditions, including

life-threatening forms of skin cancer.

Bowie

Backstretch chairman Phil Capuano reports:

- Maintenance was expected to begin fixing potholes in the stable area on August 24.
- Manure containers have been emptied on a regular basis.

Recreation report

*From Dan Mangum,
MTHA Recreation Director.*

*For information on the MTHA's
year-round recreation program call
Mr. Mangum at (410) 802-5798.*

Golf

Winners of the August 10 golf outing at Ft. Meade were:

Low gross: 1. George Kazmerak; 2. Robbie Bailes; 3. Alfonso Griffith.

Low net: 1. Jack Adamecz; 2. Jack Reinhardt; 3. John Poe.

Closest to the pin: Robbie Bailes and Jack Nims.

Orioles tickets

The winners of the last two Orioles drawings for the year were Juan Ramirez and J.D. Brown.

Donations

The following generous people recently donated clothing, reading material and/or other items for distribution on the backstretch: Barbara Bryant, Gene Gilhooly, Sylvia and Arnold Heft, Laurel Facilities, Scott and Rosemary Lishia, Sally and Lisa Richardson, and Mrs. Gerald J. Stautberg.

Horsemen's calendar

RACING

Timonium Aug. 28-Sept. 7
Laurel Sept. 12-Dec. 19

**JIM MCKAY MARYLAND MILLION DAY
SEPT. 26 AT LAUREL**
PRE-ENTRY DEADLINE: SEPT. 17

**FASIG-TIPTON MIDLANTIC AUCTIONS
AT TIMONIUM**

Eastern Fall Yearlings Oct. 5, 6
December Mixed Dec. 6, 7
(Entries close Sept. 21)

OUT-OF-STATE AUCTIONS

Keeneland September Yearlings, Lexington, Ky. (800) 456-3412. . . Sept. 14-28

Ocala Breeders' Sales Company Fall Mixed, Ocala, Fla. (352) 237-2154. . . Oct. 12-16

New York Breeders' Sales Company Saratoga Fall Mixed, Saratoga Springs, N.Y. (518) 587-1555. . . Oct. 18, 19

Fasig-Tipton Kentucky Fall Yearlings, Lexington, Ky. (859) 255-1555. . . Oct. 26-28

Keeneland November Breeding Stock, Lexington, Ky. (800) 456-3412. . . Nov. 8-21

Fasig-Tipton Kentucky Selected Fall Mixed, Lexington, Ky. (859) 255-1555. . . Nov. 9



Maryland Million schedule of events

September 17—Pre-Entry Deadline

September 21—Maryland Million Golf Tournament,
Manor Country Club, Rockville

September 23—Entry Draw Brunch, Laurel Park

September 25—Maryland Million Gala Reception,
Maryland Club, Baltimore

September 26—Jim McKay Maryland Million Day,
Laurel Park

For more information call (410) 252-2100

MRMA Crab Feast set Oct. 23 at Laurel

The Maryland Racing Media Association's annual Crab Feast will take place on Friday, October 23 in the Carriage Room at Laurel from 6:30 p.m. to 10 p.m.

As usual, the menu includes all-you-can-eat crabs, plus a buffet featuring chicken and side dishes, as well as beer, wine and soft drinks.

Maryland Thoroughbred Scholarship Fund recipients will receive their checks at this event.

MRMA's annual awards will go to Robert T. Manfuso, Humphrey S. Finney Award for lifetime contributions to Maryland racing; and Vinnie Perrone, outstanding achievement.

Tickets are \$60 each, or \$550 for a table of 10. To order tickets call David Richardson at (410) 239-7022 or e-mail drichardson@darkhollowfarm.com.



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Thoughts and comment

The importance of the Anne Arundel County slots site can't be over-emphasized (see lead article on page 1).

A casino complex at Arundel Mills Mall would undoubtedly bring a much-needed boost to Thoroughbred purses and the Maryland-bred Fund, which will proportionately share 5.6 percent of the revenue from all slots locations. Even so, the long-term picture would not be rosy.

A glitzy new gaming emporium located less than 10 miles from Laurel Park would introduce an element of competition the likes of which Maryland racing has yet to experience.

While the Maryland Jockey Club could still use matching funds from the slots revenue to make physical improvements at Laurel, there would be little incentive to do so.

In a worst-case scenario, Laurel's future existence as a race track would be threatened. Maryland could potentially be left with one major Thoroughbred track—Pimlico—conducting an annual boutique meet centered around the Preakness.

Taking a far brighter view, if the slots license is awarded to Laurel, you can expect to see a dramatic turnaround. Fans See **Thoughts**, page 3