



# The Horsemen's Newsletter

February/March 2011

Volume 21 • Number 2

## Penn National buys Rosecroft

Rosecroft Raceway, the bankrupt harness track in Oxon Hill, Md., is poised to begin a new life under the ownership of Penn National Gaming, Inc.

Penn National completed the purchase for approximately \$11 million on February 28.

Rosecroft has not conducted live racing on a regular basis since the summer of 2008. However, Penn National reportedly plans to work with harness horsemen and the Maryland Racing Commission "to develop a plan to resume live racing at Rosecroft this year."

Penn National's long-range goal involves development of a racino at Rosecroft, although such a move would require a change in the state constitution, which currently limits slots to five specified locations, none of them in the area surrounding Rosecroft.

A group led by Nathan Landow, former state Democratic Party chairman, was the underbidder in the Rosecroft bankruptcy auction, which took place earlier in the month.

## Slots update

Thoroughbred purses received a total of \$435,907.87 in January from Maryland's two operating slots facilities, Casino at Ocean Downs and Hollywood Casino Perryville.

Ocean Downs, which opened to the general public on January 4, generated \$3,305,421.74 in gross revenue during January.

For a complete financial accounting, visit <http://slots.mdlottery.com/financial-reporting/>.

## Penn National may sell its interest in MJC

Maryland's track ownership took another turn in late February, when Penn National Gaming, Inc. (PNG) acknowledged that it is considering selling its interest in the Maryland Jockey Club.

PNG representatives met with state officials in Annapolis on February 23 to discuss a plan to divest its MJC holdings.

The prospective sale raises the possibility that Maryland's two major Thoroughbred tracks, Laurel and Pimlico, along with Bowie Training Center, could soon be under complete control of Frank Stronach.

Under a pending deal made on February 1, MI Developments Inc. (MID), which owns the MJC in a 51/49 percent partnership with Penn National, has agreed to transfer all of its racing assets to Mr. Stronach, who currently serves as MID's chairman and CEO. In return, Mr. Stronach will give up control of MI Developments. That deal is set to close on June 30.

A world-leading gaming company

that operates successful racinos in two neighboring states—at Charles Town in West Virginia and Penn National in Pennsylvania—PNG had been intent in securing slots at Laurel.

Penn National spent approximately \$7.4 million in an attempt to defeat last year's Anne Arundel County referendum that ultimately cleared the way for a casino at Arundel Mills Mall.

With the Anne Arundel County slots license now firmly bound to the Mall site, Laurel's chances for slots appear nonexistent.

Penn National, thus faced with the prospect of continuing to operate Laurel at a financial loss, became a major impediment late last year in negotiations for a viable live racing schedule for 2011.

The MJC has agreed to preserve the current 146-day calendar for this year, pending receipt of \$3.5 million to \$4 million from slots revenue originally earmarked for capital improvements at the tracks, and a \$1.7 million expense contribution from horsemen and breeders.

## Work resumes on Arundel Mills Mall casino

Although groundbreaking has taken place for the Arundel Mills Mall casino, the project has continued to spawn legal challenges.

Work on the site was halted for several weeks in February after two local groups submitted complaints regarding traffic management.

The issues were resolved when The Cordish Cos., which is developing the casino and entertainment complex on the Mall parking lot, presented plans for

improved roads and additional stoplights, among other upgrades.

Meanwhile, Cordish is seeking \$600 million in damages from the Maryland Jockey Club and a former Cordish business partner in Indiana.

The lawsuit claims the two companies conspired to falsely harm Cordish's reputation and prevent it from securing the slots license for the Arundel Mills Mall casino.



## Notes from the Racing Office

- Stall applications for spring/summer are due by Monday, March 14.
- Pimlico will open for training on March 21. You must turn in a stall application if you want to stable at Pimlico for the meet.
- Trainers, please fill out and turn in your 2011 badge list so your owners can receive their passes.
- The horsemen's bookkeeper must receive payment before a horse can be tattooed.
- Reminder: If you are stabled at a Maryland Jockey Club facility, you are expected to support the Maryland program and race in Maryland.

## Committee bulletins

### Bowie

Backstretch co-chairman Linda Gaudet reported:

- Plans are underway for a clothing distribution center at Bowie. Details to follow.
- The mobile food wagon remains popular.
- The racing surface has been well maintained.
- Potholes will soon be under repair.

### Laurel

Backstretch chairman Larry Murray reported that exercise rider Shelly Stone is making good progress in her recovery from injuries sustained in a training accident on February 18.

The MTHA, along with her many friends on the backstretch, sends its very best wishes to Ms. Stone.

## Hoofprints

### Transitioning retired race horses

The American Association of Equine Practitioners has developed guidelines for transitioning retired race horses.

In addition to criteria for physical assessments, the guidelines include estimated cost-of-care data from CANTER, a non-profit organization that provides retiring Thoroughbred race horses with opportunities for new careers.

## Maryland Equine Census shows economic value of industry

Results of Maryland's 2010 Equine Census affirm the economic impact of horses in the state.

In total, the horse industry has assets valued at \$5.6 billion and expenditures just under \$513 million. Approximately 81,000 equines are located in more than 16,040 locations around the state. The counties with the largest equine populations are Prince George's (9,000) and Baltimore (8,950).

Race horse breeds (Thoroughbreds and Standardbreds combined) account for 39 percent of all breeds.

Equine operations cover a total of 587,000 acres, of which 188,000 acres

are devoted to equines and 88,000 acres are enrolled in land preservation programs.

The 2010 equine census is the second official count of all breeds (horses, ponies, donkeys, mules and burros) in Maryland. The first census results were announced in 2002.

The Maryland Horse Industry Board commissioned the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service field office in Annapolis to conduct both efforts.

For a copy of the census data, visit [www.mda.state.md.us/pdf/equinecensus10.pdf](http://www.mda.state.md.us/pdf/equinecensus10.pdf).

## Laurel Museum commemorates track's 100th anniversary

"And They're Off! 100 Years at Laurel Park," an exhibit commemorating the track's 100th anniversary, is on display at the Laurel Museum, 817 Main Street in Laurel.

The timeline begins with the track's origins in 1911 as part of a Four County Fair with high-wire acts, and continues to the present day.

The exhibit will remain in place

through December 2011.

Hours are Sunday, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., and Wednesday and Friday 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Group visits are available throughout the week by appointment, and the John Brennan Research Library is open Monday from 10 a.m. to noon and by appointment. For more information call (301) 725-7975 or visit [www.laurelhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.laurelhistoricalsociety.org).

## Tune in to Maryland Horse Radio— Tuesdays at 6 p.m.

Maryland Horse Radio is back on the air. Hourlong shows featuring up-to-the-minute racing news and commentary begin at 6 p.m. every Tuesday night on Baltimore's ESPN RADIO 1300.

Host Stan Salter is joined this season by the Maryland Jockey Club's Jacqui

Nigh and Megan Forshey. Laurel Park is the title sponsor.

Listeners may call the show live at (410) 481-1300, or listen at [www.MarylandHorseRadio.com](http://www.MarylandHorseRadio.com).

The schedule will continue through May 24.

The guidelines are available on the AAEP Web site at <http://www.aaep.org/images/files/TransitioningGuidelines2011.pdf>.

### Jockey Club Fact Books

The Jockey Club has posted the 2011 editions of the Online Fact Book and state fact books in the Publications & Resources section of [www.jockeyclub.com](http://www.jockeyclub.com).

The Online Fact Book is a statistical and informational guide to Thoroughbred breeding, racing and auction sales and includes some state and provincial analysis.

State fact books provide detailed breeding, racing and auction sales information specific to each of 34 states and Canadian provinces.

The Online Fact Book and state fact books are updated monthly.



# Laurel Commons has rooms available

Laurel Commons, the housing complex in the Laurel Park stable area adjacent to Whiskey Bottom Road, is accepting applications from backstretch employees.

Rooms have been updated with new carpeting and paint.

Monthly rent is \$200 for single occupancy and \$75 per person for double occupancy.

For more information see Lt. Francisco Saez or call (301) 725-0400, ext. 5682.

## IN MEMORIAM

**Cary W. Jackson**, a long-prominent owner/breeder, died on February 7 at the age of 88.

**Albert F. (Bert) Allen, Jr.**, a long-time owner/breeder at his home near Richmond, Va., died on January 9 at the age of 87. Mr. Allen was the father of Maryland trainer A. Ferris Allen, III.

**Jamie (Stickman) Cornwell**, a former Maryland jockey, died on February 19 following an extended illness. He was 35.

**Charles W. (Teddy) Ambrose**, 81, who operated the barber shop at Maryland tracks for more than 35 years, died on January 19.

**Gary R. (Babe) Dunlevy**, 65, a West Virginia-based owner/trainer who campaigned throughout this region, died on February 1.

## Thoughts, from page 4

"I am glad that you 'still wish to believe in Maryland Horse Racing.' As in the past, I am more than willing to meet with you and/or any members of your team to discuss the various issues facing us. I do not think that it is appropriate that we set restraints on our future discussions, and therefore I would not exclude Alan Foreman from any such meetings. With over 30 years in the racing business, Alan serves as a great resource to the industry both locally and nationally, and has been productive in moving projects forward.

"There is good business that we can do together and we should pursue those opportunities. I believe it would be positive for both of us, our organizations and the racing community.

"As always, I look forward to meeting with you in the future. All of our previous discussions have been cordial, sometimes entertaining and often productive."

*The full text of Mr. Stronach's letter is posted at [www.mdhorsemen.com](http://www.mdhorsemen.com), along with responses from Mr. Hoffberger and Mr. Foreman.*

## Recreation report

*From Dan Mangum, MTHA Recreation Director. For information or to sign up for programs, call Mr. Mangum at (410) 802-5798.*

### Basketball

William Wilkens's Bowie Allstars defeated J. C. Harrington's Laurel Team 72 to 65 to win the MTHA's Basketball Tournament.

Darnell Snead from the Bowie team took the Most Valuable Player award, scoring 23 points in the final game.

The Coach of the Year award went to Brian Parker of the Allstars.

### Mock poker

The MTHA will sponsor a mock Texas hold'em tournament on Monday, March 28 at noon in the track kitchen at Bowie.

Sign up in the track kitchens.

### Donations

The following generous people recently donated clothing, reading material and/or other items for distribution on the backstretch: Jack Adamecz, Mike Dalton, Mike Donlan, Gene Gilhooly, Sylvia and Arnold Heft, Jack Nims and Kathryn Size.

## Lady Legends to return

The highly popular Lady Legends For the Cure Race™ is set for its second running at Pimlico on Black-Eyed Susan Day, Friday, May 20.

Last year's Lady Legends event was the first-ever pari-mutuel race showcasing retired female riders. Seven of those participants will be back for another try, along with new contender Abby Fuller.

The returning lineup consists of Andrea Seefeldt-Knight, Mary Russ-Tortora, Mary Wiley-Wagner, Patti "PJ" Cooksey, Barbara Jo Rubin, Jennifer Rowland-Small and Cheryl White.

The event raises funds for the Maryland affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure® community outreach programs and breast cancer research.

## Horsemen's calendar

### RACING

**Laurel Park** ..... Now through March 26 ..... Sept. 10 through Dec. 17  
**Pimlico** ..... April 1 through May 21  
**Timonium** ..... Aug. 26 through Sept. 5

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

**Two-Year-Olds in Training** ..... May 23, 24

### OUT-OF-STATE AUCTIONS

**Ocala Breeders' Sales Company  
Selected Two-Year-Olds in Training**,  
Ocala, Fla. (352) 237-2154. . . . . March 15, 16  
**Keeneland Two-Year-Olds in Training**,  
Lexington, Ky. (800) 456-3412. . . . . April 11

**Ocala Breeders' Sales Company  
Spring Two-Year-Olds in Training**,  
Ocala, Fla. (352) 237-2154. . . . . April 18-21

**Ocala Breeders' Sales Company Two-Year-Olds and Horses of Racing Age**,  
Ocala, Fla. (352) 237-2154. . . . . June 21, 22

**Fasig-Tipton Kentucky July  
Selected Yearlings** Lexington, Ky.  
(859) 255-1555. . . . . July 12, 13

**Fasig-Tipton Saratoga Selected  
Yearlings** Saratoga Springs, N.Y.  
(516) 328-1800. . . . . Aug. 8, 9

**Ocala Breeders' Sales Company  
Selected/Open Yearlings**,  
Ocala, Fla. (352) 237-2154. . . . . Aug. 23-25

## The Horsemen's Newsletter

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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.



# 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 2010 will take place at the following times and locations.

Bring your Maryland Racing Commission Badge and W-2, 1099, or tax return for 2010.

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

***Failure to register will result in the loss of your 2010 benefit***

**March 28 through April 1**

Bowie Track Kitchen,  
Office Next Door,  
9:30 a.m. to noon

**April 4 through April 8**

Laurel Track Kitchen,  
9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**April 11 through April 15**

Pimlico MTHA Office,  
10 a.m. to noon

**April 18 through April 22**

Bowie Track Kitchen,  
Office Next Door,  
9:30 a.m. to noon

**April 25 through April 29**

Laurel Track Kitchen,  
9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**May 2 through May 6**

Pimlico MTHA Office,  
10 a.m. to noon



**MTHA**

6314 Windsor Mill Road  
Baltimore, Maryland 21207

**February/March 2011**

## Thoughts and comment

*by Richard Hoffberger,  
MTHA President*

On February 15, Frank Stronach, chairman of MI Developments Inc., which co-owns the Maryland Jockey Club (MJC), issued an "open letter to the Thoroughbred horse racing community of Maryland."

In his letter, Mr. Stronach laments what he called MTHA counsel Alan Foreman's "confrontational approach" during the December 21 Maryland Racing Commission meeting (at which the Commission rejected the MJC's proposal for 77 live racing days in 2011 and denied the MJC its license).

Mr. Stronach ignores the fact that the MTHA, along with other industry groups, had met with MJC representatives on numerous occasions and had virtually daily conversations with Mr. Stronach's office prior to December 21. Those meetings included representatives of Mr. Stronach as well as direct conversations with Mr. Stronach.

He proposes a meeting "without lawyers, to have a candid and constructive exchange of views."

Following are excerpts from my letter of response to Mr. Stronach:

See **Thoughts**, page 3

## MTHA Board of Directors

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