



The Horsemen's Newsletter

September 2011

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Maryland's Largest OTB To Close

Maryland's oldest and largest off-track betting facility will shut down October 9 because it can no longer sustain losses.

The closure of the Cracked Claw restaurant and sports palace in Frederick County is the latest blow to the Maryland racing industry. The closure leaves only three OTB facilities in the state.

The Cracked Claw generated \$19.6 million in wagering in 2010, or 51 percent of all off-track bets placed in the state. Bettors at Maryland's four OTB facilities wagered \$38 million in 2010, according to the most recent figures from the Maryland Racing Commission. That's down from \$41.2 million in 2009 and more than \$80 million in 1995.

The Cracked Claw will close after 35 years as a business and 18 offering off-track betting.

Husband and wife Johnny "Pap-py" Poole and B.J. Poole bought the Urbana business in 1989 and renamed it Cracked Claw after a restaurant they had owned and operated in Germantown, which opened in 1976.

Laurel Park Celebrates It's 100 Anniversary

The fall meet is celebrating 100 years of live racing at Laurel Park, with an official centennial celebration taking place on Saturday, October 15, in conjunction with a community festival. The week will include birthday promotions on each of the five live racing days that week.

Twelve Laurel Legends video packages will be played on the simulcast signal throughout the meet and have been posted on Laurel Park's YouTube page. The topics are the Early Years, Laurel Futurity, D.C. International, De Francis Dash, Maryland Million, King Leatherbury, Dave Rodman, Kent

Desormeaux's record breaking 1989 year, Horacio Karamanos' seven-win day on 2002 Breeders' Cup day, Little Bold John, Xtra Heat and the Sports Palace.

The central Maryland track first appeared on the racing scene October 2, 1911. Its first meeting was held under the direction of the Laurel Four County Fair.

The track's history includes famous match races in the track's first decade of operation, races featuring many of the best horses in training in the nation, including dozens of Hall

of Fame runners, and participation from many of the greatest stables from across the country. Laurel is the home to two juvenile races, the Selima and Laurel Futurity, that had significant impact on championship titles over the years, and the track launched a ground-breaking movement of international competition when the Washington, D.C., International was run for the first time in 1952.

The Laurel Museum is celebrating the milestone with a current exhibition that continues until December.

The exhibition explores the Laurel track from its beginning years through its different owners. It takes viewers from 1911, when the track began as part of a four-county fair with high-wire acts, to the golden age of the Washington, D.C., International, through to the modern era. Memorabilia, photographs and storyboards provide the stories of the excitement of racing at Laurel, as well as how Laurel was used for other purposes besides racing over the decades.

The Laurel Museum is located at 817 Main Street in Laurel.



CELEBRATING HISTORY IN THE MAKING





In Memoriam

Kathleen 'Kathy' H. Riggs passed away on August 5 at the age of 60. Prior to her death she was employed by the Maryland Racing Commission in the Test Barn.

While working for Talbot 'Tolly' Albert, Kathy was winner of MTHA's Outstanding Backstretch Employee award for her work at Pimlico in 2003.

Hotwalker **Patricia 'Trish' Rugieri** died on August 10 at the age of 46. Trish was an employee of trainer Steve Hinds.

Trainer **Earl Begley, Jr.** passed away on August 11. He was 55. The son of the late longtime horsemen Earl Begley, Sr., Earl Jr. campaigned several stakes winners including Star de Naskra S. winner Love Sam.

Longtime Pimlico racetracker **Clarence 'Tiny' Whye** died on August 13 at the age of 81. Tiny rubbed, bandaged, saddled, blanketed and walked horses from the time Citation won the 1948 Preakness until 2007.

Owner/breeder **Albert H. 'Big Al' Cohen**, 89, died on August 26. A World War II veteran where his courage earned him a Purple Heart, Silver Star and Bronze Star, Big Al was a partner with his son, Randy, in Hickory Plains Farm, a multiple stakes-winning racing and Thoroughbred broodmare operation in Monrovia, Md.

Longtime backstretch employee of King T. Leatherbury **Harold Frank Jones** passed away on August 25 at the age of 81.

State Mediating Rosecroft Thoroughbred Simulcasts

The state of Maryland is currently in the process of mediating a simulcasting agreement between Rosecroft Raceway and representatives of Maryland's Thoroughbred racing industry.

House Bill 1039, passed by the Maryland State Legislature earlier this year, mandated state-led mediation when Rosecroft and Thoroughbred industry representatives failed to reach a deal to broadcast Thoroughbred races at the Prince George's County harness track.

In 2009 Rosecroft, which emerged from bankruptcy earlier this year, violated the 15-Year Cross-Breed revenue sharing agreement crafted in 2006 for the right to receive and accept wagers on Thoroughbred simulcast signals. The Cross-Breed agreement represented a \$2 million reduction in the annual premium Rosecroft had previously paid for the sig-

nals and was dubbed the "Peace in the Valley Accord" paving the way to move forward on issues that benefit the industry as a whole.

When simulcasting was last permitted at Rosecroft, Thoroughbred racing accounted for over 85% of the simulcast revenue generated at Rosecroft.

Penn National Gaming, Rosecroft's current parent company, has publicly stated its intentions during the 2012 legislative session to seek expanded gambling at Rosecroft.

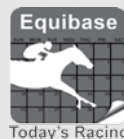
House Bill 1039 mandated the Maryland Thoroughbred industry to enter these proceedings in order to be eligible for slots revenues in 2012 and 2013. The legislation requires the parties to agree to binding arbitration if a deal is not reached by October 1.



Equibase Launches Smart Phone App

Equibase Co. launched its Today's Racing app for iPhone and Android phones.

The app, which can be downloaded for free at iTunes.com and the Android Marketplace, features current



and next day entries as well as current and previous day results.

Entries include links to handicapping products, scratches and program changes while results include links to result charts and race replays.

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6314 Windsor Mill Road,
Baltimore, Md. 21207;
(410) 265-6842; Fax: (410) 265-6841;
E-mail: mdhorsemen@erols.com
Website: www.mdhorsemen.com

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



Horsemen's Calendar

RACING

Laurel Park Sept. 9 through Dec. 17



FASIG-TIPTON MIDLANTIC AUCTIONS

AT TIMONIUM (410) 392-5555

Eastern Fall Yearling Oct. 4, 5

December Mixed Dec. 5

OUT-OF-STATE AUCTIONS

Barretts October Yearling Sale,
Pomona, Ca.
(909) 629-3099 Oct. 11-12

OBS Fall Mixed Sale, Ocala, Fla.
(352) 237-2154 Oct. 18, 19

Fasig-Tipton Kentucky Fall Yearling Sale,
Lexington, Ky.
(859) 255-1555 Oct. 24-26

Fasig-Tipton November Sale,
Lexington, Ky. (859) 255-1555 Nov. 6, 7

Keeneland November Breeding Stock,
Lexington, Ky.
(800) 456-3412 Nov. 6-19



MRMA Crab Feast Tickets On Sale

All horsemen are invited to attend the Maryland Racing Media Association's annual Crab Feast on Saturday, October 22 in the Carriage Room at Laurel. Festivities begin at 6:30 p.m.

As usual, the evening's highlights will include the presentation of backstretch scholarships, an auction of racing memorabilia and assorted racing-related items, and MRMA's annual award presentations.

Tickets are \$60 per person or \$550 for a table of 10.

Ticket price includes all-you-can-eat crabs and a full menu including chicken and side dishes, plus beer, wine and soft drinks. Those planning to attend are urged to purchase tickets in advance. For more information or to purchase tickets, call MRMA president Stan Salter at (443) 279-8982.

De Francis Dash Returns

After a one-year hiatus, the Frank J. De Francis Memorial Dash returns to the Laurel Fall meet on October 22.

The Dash is one of the elite sprints in the country and will run in 2011 for the purse of \$150,000.

Until 2009, it was one of the only two six-furlong contests with

Grade 1 status, was second only to the Breeders' Cup Sprint in purse money and prestige. Beginning in 2010, the American Graded Stakes Committee of the Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders Association downgraded the Dash to Grade 2 status. The race was not eligible for grading in 2011 and hopes to regain this status in future years.



BACKSTRETCH APPRECIATION DAY

Sun., Sept. 25th • 1pm-4pm • White House Lawn Area
All backstretch personnel and their families are invited to attend free of charge!

Match Championship Series Revival Possible For 2012

Efforts are under way to relaunch the Mid-Atlantic Championships Series (MATCH), possibly in 2012, according to program founder Alan Foreman.

When last held in 2001, MATCH was a seven-month-long racing series of existing stakes at several race tracks in the Mid-Atlantic region, including Laurel and Pimlico. The races were tied together through promotions and bonuses for owners and trainers.

"There was a commitment by tracks and horsemen's groups to revisit it in 2011 so we can plan for 2012," said Foreman, chief executive officer of the Thoroughbred



Horsemen's Association. "We'll be starting those discussions soon. Does it mean we'll have the series (next year)? No, but that's the goal."

The series was suspended in 2002 because of uncertainty over stakes schedules in Maryland and racing dates in New Jersey.

Foreman said the series would fit well with plans by The Jockey Club, as part of its recently unveiled report on Thoroughbred racing, to better coordinate stakes and racing schedules.

"The MATCH series is tailor-made for those recommendations," said Foreman. "We'd like to bring it back."

Recreation Report

*From Dan Mangum,
MTHA Recreation Director.*

Grudge Match

On September 22 the agents/trainers will take on the jockeys in a "grudge match" softball game at Laurel's Griffith Park (the softball field) at approx. 5:00 P.M.

The agents/trainers won the first game 9-6 back in May. Come out and support the teams.

Texas Hold 'em Tournament

A mock Texas Hold 'em tournament will be held at Bowie on October 17 at 12 noon. Sign up at the track kitchens or call Dan at (410) 802-5798.

Donations

The following generous people made donations: Sylvia and Arnold Heft, Gene Gilhooley, Shawn Bakis, J.D. Brown, and Katherine Acton.

H-2B Program Facing Changes

On August 1, the Department of Labor (DOL) issued a final rule moving the effective date of the new prevailing wage final rule for the H-2B program to September 30, 2011. Originally the new rule was to go into effect on January 1, 2012.

The wage rule, in most instances, will increase the hourly wage that must be paid to all currently employed H-2B workers and American workers recruited in connection with an H-2B job application, as well as future workers.

Additionally, in December the DOL is planning to finalize a second rule that will af-

fect the program further. The rule will likely require employers to hire any qualified U.S. worker up to three days before the H-2B worker is scheduled to begin and require employers to pay transportation and subsistence costs for potential U.S. workers.

The horse industry relies heavily on the H-2B program and both new rules could significantly impact employers who utilize it. More information can be found on the American Horse Council's website at horsecouncil.org or call 202-296-4031.



Timonium Fair Meet A Success



After surviving the wrath of Hurricane Irene and losing one day of racing on Sunday, August 28 because of a washed out surface, the annual Timonium State Fair meet concluded on Labor Day after giving fairgoers much to cheer for during its six days of live racing.

The brief meet started by seeing the distinctive, deep blue silks of Shadwell Stable in the winner's circle following Baatesh's five-length win for trainer Michael Pino.

And Robert Cole Jr.'s Rapid Redux joined all-time greats

Citation and Cigar by winning his 16th race in a row on September 4.

Congratulations to trainers Dane Kobiskie and Dale Capuano for sharing the trainer's title for wins. Kobiskie took the top share of Timonium's \$10,000 trainers' bonus, outpointing all others by number of starters and in-the-money finishes.

Timonium



MTHA

6314 Windsor Mill Road
Baltimore, Maryland 21207

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Thoughts and Comments

Despite the current state of the economy, individuals and groups within Maryland's racing community have continued to support the MRMA's Maryland Thoroughbred Scholarship Fund with the same enthusiasm and vigor.

It's too soon to calculate a final figure, but I personally am amazed at the strong support that this program has received in what could have been a down year in fund raising.

In addition to the MTHA and Maryland Horsemen's Assistance Fund—which have been our partners since the early 1990s—many others, including individual horsemen, have become

significant contributors and have shared our group's vision.

Nearly every year has brought a new record. In 2010, the program awarded the most money to date, with a total of \$40,000 divided among 34 backstretch and farm workers.

The 2011 scholarship recipients will be announced at the MRMA Crab Feast on October 22 (and profiled in next month's MTHA newsletter).

/Stan Salter, MRMA President

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