



The Horsemen's Newsletter

February 2014

Vol. 24 • Number 2

Medication Reforms See Successful First Weeks

After some trepidation by many horsemen regarding the sweeping changes mandated by the Maryland Racing Commission as part of the Uniform Medication Program, all signs point to a successful launch of the initiative, which began January 1, 2014.

The new regulations, supported by a wide range of racing organizations, include reclassifying some therapeutic medications into different withdrawal-time windows. The Commission made available in December a brochure detailing these withdrawal times both online and in print.

Perhaps most notable among the affected medications is the bronchial dilator clenbuterol, which moved to a recommended withdrawal guideline of 14 days as part of the program.

There was some initial confusion regarding a rumored transition period for the clenbuterol regulations, which was incorrect. This misunderstanding was handled swiftly by an open letter circulated by MRC Chairman Bruce Quade on January 4 that stated the Commission "will enforce the new regulatory threshold for clenbuterol" as adopted in November.

A second phase of the Uniform Medication Program included the administration of Salix® by a third-party Commission-appointed veterinarian. Dr. Jay Baldwin's First Equine Horse Health Services LLC is conducting these services on behalf of the Commission.

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Winter Wreaks Havoc On Live Racing Schedule

With winter's wrath pounding the East Coast of the United States, racing jurisdictions have had to continue to struggle to deal with unsafe racing surfaces because of the extreme weather conditions. Laurel Park is no exception, losing two days during the first three weeks of January due to safety concerns for horsemen and animals alike.

The first race day lost on January 11 actually happened on a day when thermometers reached springtime highs, an unlikely occurrence.

"With the temperature going from the single digits early in the week to nearly 60, the track was freezing, thawing and freezing again which is a terrible combination for a racing surface," Maryland Jockey Club Director of Racing Georganne Hale said. "We couldn't even get a piece of equipment out on the track. They were just sinking."

Training was lost at the Bowie Train-

ing Center and Laurel Park the following day as well, however the venerable Hacienda at Bowie saw a revitalization of sorts for these days because its surface was unaffected due to its age old enclosure.

The second live race day lost occurred on January 22 due to a winter storm that blanketed the region with bitter cold and over six inches of snow.

Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen Association leaders have made every effort to replace the races lost because of these two lost days, working with Maryland Jockey Club officials to lessen the impact on horsemen.

After discussions, MTHA and MJC have agreed to add a day to the live racing calendar on February 14 which will resume 4-day a week racing one week earlier than initially planned during the MTHA subsidized winter meet.

In addition, races will be added to Saturday cards in March to restore as many racing opportunities as possible to Maryland owners and trainers.



MTHA Backstretch Pension Program, A Valuable Perk For Maryland's Horsemen

Retirement benefits for backstretch workers are a reality in Maryland, thanks to a program started by the MTHA in 1988. The Backstretch Pension Fund is derived from monies deducted annually from the Purse Account. Participants do not make individual contributions into the plan.

The Board of Directors of the MTHA annually allocates funds from the Thoroughbred Purse Account to support this program. The plan year 2013 contribution is \$400,000 which is allocated among all participant's accounts for that year.

Sign-ups for the Pension Program are conducted each spring at Laurel Park, Pimlico and Bowie Training Center. At that time, employees must register to receive benefits based on the previous year.

For individual questions regarding your

pension account, please contact Brenda Wright at CBIZ Benefits, at (800) 624-0954 extension 2352.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR PENSION PROGRAM

Anyone employed in the care of horses on the backstretch in Maryland, including trainers, are eligible to participate in the program.

Employees must have worked a minimum of 1,000 hours during the specified year in Maryland, and provide documentation to that effect (with a W-2 or 1099 form, or tax return) at time of sign-up.

Benefits become available when the employee reaches the age of 65, or at age 55 with 25 years of service.



2014 MTHA Backstretch Pension

Sign Up Schedule:

Pension Plan Registration for the year ended 2013 will take place at the following times and locations. Bring your MRC Badge and W-2, 1099, or tax return for 2013. For more information call the MTHA office at (410) 902-6842.

April 7 through April 11

Bowie Training Center, Conference Room across from Security Office, 10:30 a.m. to noon

April 14 through April 18

Laurel Track Kitchen, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

April 21 through April 25

Pimlico MTHA Office, 10:30 a.m. to noon

April 28 through May 2

Bowie Training Center, Conference Room across from Security Office, 10:30 a.m. to noon

May 5 through May 9

Laurel Track Kitchen, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

May 12 through May 16

Pimlico MTHA Office, 10:30 a.m. to noon

Failure to register will result in the loss of your 2013 benefit.

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To assist with the third party Salix® administration phase of the Program, the Commission has retained a clerk whose responsibilities are to facilitate obtaining dosage information for Salix®-designated horses.

Trainers or authorized agents are responsible for providing the Salix® Clerk with the proper dosage information for their horse. It is recommended that the Salix® Clerk be contacted immediately upon the horse's entry: MRC Salix® Clerk, Melanie Martin – (443) 631-4891 or (301) 725-0400 ex. 8329



Calendar

Live Racing:

Laurel Park Now - Mar. 29



Fasig-Tipton Auctions:

Kentucky Winter Mixed Feb. 9, 10

Florida Two-Year-Olds in Training Mar. 24

Midlantic Two-Year-Olds in Training May 19-20



Keeneland Auctions:

April Two-Year-Olds in Training Apr. 7



Ocala Breeders' Sales

Selected Two-Year-Olds in Training Mar. 10-11

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Published by the
MTHA

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



Baseball Tickets

Baltimore Orioles and Bowie BaySox tickets are on their way for 2014. There may be more tickets available in 2014 to root on the home teams.

Look for sign-ups in the track kitchens soon or call Dan for more information at (410) 802-5798.

Donations

The following generous people made donations this month: Juanita and Wayne Morris, J.D. Brown, Charles 'Snake' Frock, Gene Gillhooly, Jack Adamez, Russell Clark, Brad Clemons and Phoebe & Primrose Hayes.

Winter Clothing Drive

MTHA is always accepting donations of clothing to benefit backstretch workers in need during the cold winter months.

If you have anything to donate please call Dan at (410) 802-5798 or drop the articles off at the MTHA racetrack office at Laurel Park.

Bowling

The MTHA Bowling Tournament is scheduled for February 24 at 11:00 a.m. at Columbia Lanes.

As usual, we will have awards for the highest sets by a male and female bowler.



In Memoriam

Beloved horseman **Emilio Alecci** passed away January 7 at age 81.

Mr. Alecci formed a formidable tandem with his son John in both their family construction business (E&A Contractors) and on the racetrack, becoming one of the state's most active claiming stables before stepping away from the business in 2010.

The tandem's best runners included ex-claimers Spectacular Moon, who was sent out to win the Grade 2 Asartita Stakes in 2003, and 1994 Laurel Turf Cup-G3 winner Asserche.

Longtime parking lot attendant **Irving Pindell** passed away in late November.

Butch, as he was affectionately called, worked in many capacities at Maryland racetracks but was best known as the attendant of the horsemen's parking lot.

Former trainer / van driver **Marvin H. Kuhn** passed away December 11 at the age of 82.

Marvin was an active trainer in Maryland from 1976. His claim to fame was the astute claim of the "Iron Horse" Port Conway Lane, who rose to national prominence in the early 1980s.

Port Conway Lane's story made the national news—in *Sports Illustrated*, the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*. He even appeared on *CBS Sunday Morning* with Charles Kuralt and *Good Morning America*.

Retired horsemen **Ralph Gales Sr.** passed away December 27 at the age of 88.

Gales owned Pine Valley Farm in Laurel, where he bred, owned and trained numerous runners.

Veteran trainer **Thomas H. Voss**, known for both his success in the steeplechase world and with runners on the flat, died January 21 of an apparent heart attack at his home in Monkton. He was 63.

Valentine's Day Added To Racing Schedule

As a makeup for the live racing day that was canceled on Saturday, January 11 as a result of an unsafe racing surface, live racing will be conducted on Friday, February 14.

Come out to Laurel Park and treat your valentine to a sweet day of racing with free parking, free admission and a free program!



Free Admission, Parking and Programs a Hit With Patrons

The Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association and Maryland Jockey Club have partnered to offer free admissions, parking and programs to patrons throughout the Laurel Park winter meet which ends March 29.

"Horsemen have clamored to try something new for a while," commented MTHA Purse Committee Chairman Dale Capuano. "The 10-Year Deal offered the MTHA a perfect opportunity to try a few experiments to increase interest in our sport and generate some excitement."

The initial reaction from patrons and horsemen alike has been extremely positive.

"Anything you can do to give back to our sport's loyal fans is definitely a plus," said MTHA President Rich Meyer. "Casinos give free drinks, admission and parking



and racing fans deserve the same treatment when economically possible."

The widely-acclaimed 10-Year Deal guarantees 100 days of racing and year-round stabling for Maryland horsemen and affords the MTHA the opportunity to purchase additional racing days in month blocks using discretionary Purse Account funds.

The MTHA Board unanimously decided to purchase an additional 46 live racing days during the months of January, February and March in 2014 to preserve a 146-day live racing schedule.

In addition, the 10-Year Deal called for the shuttering of the Bowie Training Center when 300-net new stalls are constructed at Laurel Park, a project that is currently ongoing in the early stages.

Thoroughbred Aftercare Alliance Honored With Special Eclipse Award

The Thoroughbred Aftercare Alliance, a non-profit organization founded by a coalition of racing groups to support the industry's efforts to care for retired horses, received a special Eclipse Award on January 18 at Gulfstream Park.

The Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association announced in December a partnership with T.A.A. to disburse funds within Maryland to accredited aftercare facilities.

At the end of 2013, T.A.A. distributed approximately \$1 million in grants to 23 organizations it



has accredited. The organization was founded in 2012 to help the racing industry address persistent concerns about the fate of retired horses.

The special Eclipse Award is presented to honor "extraordinary service, individual achievements in, or contributions to the sport of Thoroughbred racing," according to the organizers of the awards. Although it has not been awarded every year, the organizers have identified a winner of the award nine out of the last 10 years and 23 times since 1971.



MTHA
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February 2014

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Obamacare Registration Assistance Provided



The Maryland Horsemen's Assistance Fund will assist backstretch workers to learn more about and sign up for health care under the new Affordable Care Act.

For help in English or Spanish, stop in the MTHA racetrack office during live racing from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. or call Bobby Lillis at 410-902-6843 or Bill Borchardt at 301-776-0404.