



The Horsemen's Newsletter

April 2014

Vol. 24 • Number 4

Year Round Training Resumes At Pimlico



For the first time in many years, horsemen who relocated to Pimlico for the Maryland Spring meet could pack all their belongings because, as per track management, they will be permitted to stay at Pimlico for year round training at the conclusion of the spring meet which ends June 7.

"We have begun the new barn construction project in earnest which calls for 300 additional stalls to be erected at Laurel Park," said MJC President and CEO Tom Chuckas. "Since we anticipate this project moving quickly, we are happy to accommodate our Pimlico horsemen at the end of the spring meet. Bowie will remain open as a training center until the construction project is completed, however we urge horsemen who want to move to Laurel to make the move sooner rather than later."

Terms of the 10-Year Agreement struck in December 2012 permitted MJC to close the Pimlico barn area after the competition of the spring meet until Bowie was eventually shuttered. However as a gesture of goodwill and a sign of good working relations between the track and MTHA, management has agreed to keep Bowie, Laurel and Pimlico's stable areas open until the new stalls at Laurel are able to be occupied and Bowie is eventually closed.

Beloved Board Member, Owner Heft Passes

Every morning between 8:00 and 8:30 Arnold Heft would pick up his telephone and call trainer Tim Keefe to find out how his horses were doing. But in late February the calls stopped coming, and on March 12, Heft, 94 and a Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association board member, passed away.

"He loved his horses," Keefe said. "But the last two weeks [of his life] he didn't call me. I was calling him and I began to prepare myself. I could see and hear the decline. I knew it was coming. Arnold was a wonderful man who loved his horses, loved sports and cared about people."

Heft died peacefully in his sleep at Sunrise at Fox Hill Senior Living Facility in Bethesda. On a seasonably mild afternoon, a graveside service to celebrate Heft's life was held March 14 at the Garden of Remembrance Memorial Park in Clarksburg, Md. The service was attended by many who knew him from his various careers and interests over his long life.

Long time Maryland horse racing fans know Heft and his wife Sylvia for the campaigns of multiple stakes winners, among them Pulverizing, Baldski's Choice, He Is Risen and Red's Round Table. Most recent-

ly, the Hefts experienced what Arnold called "their happiest moments" in sports through the efforts of Eighttofasttocatch, a horse he named for Washington Capitals' all-star Alex Ovechkin and a horse that delivered two Maryland Million Classic titles (2011 and 2013) and a Maryland-based Horse of the Year Award.

"Though I owned the Bullets and the Capitals with Mr. Abe Pollin, we never really had a champion (when Heft was involved in the partnership)," Heft said in the winner's circle after Eighttofasttocatch won the Classic for the first time. "This has to be the biggest thing for my wife and me. This is my first real champion—and I'm 92 years old."

Last year Heft was given the Maryland Racing Media Association's highest award—the Humphrey A. Finney Award for lifetime contributions to the Maryland horse racing industry.

He owned Thoroughbreds for decades, but his involvement in sports goes back much farther.

Born May 29, 1919, he grew up playing baseball. He began a minor league pitching career in that sport when he was 20, playing for the Baltimore Orioles' Double-A International League team. He went 2-0 that season before moving on to other teams. His best season came in the D League in 1941 when he won 22 games for Owensboro, Ky. Over his five year career, he went 30-25.

Baseball and horse racing might have been enough for most people. But after finishing his

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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.



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.

MTHA Golf Tournament: April 28

Spring is here and that means one thing, the MTHA Golf Tournament is upon us.

Grab your team and mark your calendar for Monday, April 28. The 18-hole scramble tournament will be held at Walden Country Club at 177 Riedel Road in Crofton.

Tee off time is at noon. Entry fee is \$60 per person which includes golf with cart, two drink coupons and numerous cash awards.

Signup by calling MTHA Recreation Director Dan Mangum at (410) 802-5798.



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have been urine and blood samples collected from the horses and screening and confirmation testing could and would have been conducted. In this case, the laboratory could not issue positive calls based solely on the screening of the blood samples and without the ability to do confirmation testing.

"For future reference, it is strongly suggested that anyone who has concerns regarding the Commission's drug testing laboratory or any aspect of Maryland's medication program should consult with the Stewards and the Commission's Executive Director."

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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.



Recreation Report *From Dan Mangum*

MTHA Softball League

MTHA is again trying to form a softball league or games for play in the spring and early summer. Please call Dan if you are interested in playing or having a team.

Orioles / Baysox Tickets

Tickets for the 2014 baseball season have arrived. There are more O's tickets available in 2014 so everyone should get a chance to experience some Oriole Magic. Sign-up in the track kitchens or call Dan Mangum at (410) 802-5798. Each set of tickets includes a premium parking pass.



Calendar

Live Racing:

Pimlico Apr. 3 - Jun. 7

Bowling Results

The winners of the Bowling Tournament held at the Columbia Bowling Lanes on Feb. 24 were as follows:

1st Place: EDMUND BENSON

Four game set with 928 total pins

2nd Place: LOU GARNER

Four game set with 909 total pins

3rd Place: DAN DIVVER

Four game set with 890 total pins

The next bowling tournament is scheduled for Monday, May 12 at Columbia Bowling Lanes.

Fasig-Tipton Midlantic Sales:

Two-Year-Olds in Training May 19-20

Continued from cover

baseball career, he became an NBA referee, running the floor from 1945 to 1961. A few years later, in 1964, he contacted Abe Pollin about buying the then-Baltimore Bullets. He, Pollin and Earl Foreman put a partnership together almost overnight and bought the team for \$1.1 million.

Heft sold his stake in the Bullets in 1968, but as NBA Hall of Fame center Wes Unseld remembered recently, that wasn't the end of his interest.

"I was coming to the Bullets as he was selling his ownership interest," Unseld said. "But everyone knew Mr. Heft. Even though he wasn't part of the ownership, he kept coming to our practices. He was always coming around on his way to or from visiting his horses, I think. He was just a real sportsman."

And an understanding horse owner.

Keefe, his trainer for the last nine years, said Heft never put any pressure on him to win.

"When he was at the races, he'd see I'd get nervous," Keefe said. "He'd pat my back and say, 'This isn't the only race. . . As long as the horse comes out of the race OK, that's all that matters.' He was always happy and always seemed to care more about the horses and the people around him than about winning, though he loved to win.

"When he'd call me all those mornings, he'd never start out asking about his horses. He'd say, 'How's your wife?' 'How are your kids?' My oldest boy is 12 and he was concerned my son was playing football. He'd been reading about contact

sports and concussions and thought we might want to rethink football. And then, after all that, he'd say, 'By the way, how are the horses?'

"He was a great guy. He loved his horses. He always wanted what was best for them."

An example: Eighttofastocatch was what trainers like to call "a handful" when Keefe first purchased the Not For Love gelding for Heft. But Keefe came up with the idea that a goat might calm him down. So Keefe brought Gigi, a pigmy goat, to live with the horse and the results, good ones, started piling up. Heft would laugh and shake his head at the very idea of Gigi, but he wasn't about to tell Keefe the horse could do just as well without his companion.

"I have nothing to do with the goat," Heft said, with a soft laugh. "That's all Tim. But if it's good for the horse, I'm all for it."

Keefe said he has been in touch with Heft's representative and given him a run-down of Heft's stable of eight horses. He believes the operation will continue as usual for now.

"It sounds like we will continue to do what we've been doing," he said. "We'll run them until they're done and then we'll find good homes for them."

As if scripted for an almost perfect send off, Heft had a filly running the day of his memorial service at Laurel. The horse's name: Don't Stop the Party.

RMTC Amends Therapeutic Medications List

The Racing Medication and Testing Consortium (RMTC) board of directors took several actions March 17 intended to further the process toward the nationwide adoption of uniform medication rules, penalties and testing.

The actions came during the RMTC's regular board meeting in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

The board, with respect to the "schedule" of controlled therapeutic substances—the list of 24 medications at the center of the uniform medication rules—took the following actions:

- Adopted a detailed set of protocols for adding to or amending the original list of 24 medications;
- Recommended to the Association of Racing Commissioners International (RCI) that the bronchodilator albuterol and the corticosteroid isoflupredone be added to the schedule;
- Recommended to RCI a reduction in the threshold for the non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug ketoprofen (or Ketofen);
- Recommended to RCI an increase in the withdrawal time guidance for the non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug flunixin meglumine (or Banamine);
- Approved funding for the scientific analysis of five therapeutic medications at the request of the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP); and
- Voted to join the AAEP in petitioning RCI to remove the restricted administration times and replace them with withdrawal guidance as originally proposed by the RMTC.

"These actions of the RMTC board, including recommendations to amend the schedule by adding two new medications to provide veterinary practitioners treatment alternatives and modifying the recommendations for two others, demonstrate what we have been telling the industry from the beginning: The uniform rules are not static but will be amended as new scientific research and development becomes available," said RMTC chairman Alex Waldrop.

In response to recent media coverage that erroneously suggested the RMTC has changed course or retreated from an earlier position regarding substances not listed on the schedule, the RMTC board affirmed its position that the schedule does not preclude the use of medications other than those on the schedule. However, in using non-schedule medications, participants proceed at their own risk without the guidance provided with respect to medications found on the schedule or the protections found in other parts of the uniform rules.

An Open Letter to Horsemen Regarding Maryland's New Lab

Word has been circulating on the backstretch that a horseman recently arranged to have spiked blood samples sent to the Maryland Racing Commission's drug testing laboratory, along with samples collected at the test barn, in an effort to test the laboratory's capabilities. The horses from which the samples were collected are alleged to have been administered two particular drugs. It is being communicated that neither of the samples were reported as positive for either of the two drugs. As a result, it is being stated that the new laboratory is not up to par and is failing to detect prohibited substances. The Maryland Racing Commission is aware of

and has been fully investigating this matter.

In an effort to quell the rumors that are circulating, it's best to communicate the following accurate information to those who may be interested:

Under the Commission's Rules, the two drugs that are represented to have been administered and thus present in the samples have published testing thresholds in urine and not blood. The horseman who sought to test the laboratory's capabilities did not furnish corresponding urine samples from the horses that were treated. Drug testing is a two-fold process that requires screening and confirmation before a positive test

can be reported. If the screening identifies the possibility of a prohibited substance, the laboratory must then conduct a confirmatory test on the appropriate biological fluid to determine if it is positive.

For the screening of each of the blood samples at issue, the drugs were found to be present, but since there was no corresponding urine sample to perform the required confirmatory test (the testing threshold is urine based), the laboratory could not issue a positive report. If this had been a sample collection done in the test barn under the supervision of the Commission, there would

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MTHA

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April 2014



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Free Easter Breakfast

For Maryland's Dedicated
Backstretch Employees

**Easter Sunday -
April 20, 2014**

Laurel, Pimlico & Bowie

Compliments of Maryland Horsemen's Assistance Fund

