



The Horsemen's Newsletter

May 2015

Vol. 25 • Number 5



Excitement High at Pimlico

When horse racing fans at Pimlico Race Course turn their eyes to the new high-definition television screens to watch a race they no longer have to squint. And when they look at those screens to check the post positions or minutes to the next race they no longer have to search frantically to find the information, thanks to the new clearly designed graphics.

Those are two of the changes that have come to the track this spring and created a buzz and an air of excitement at Old Hilltop.

With changes at the track and some increased advertising, attendance is up and so is the handle, said Tim Ritvo, chief operating officer of the Stronach Group, which owns the Maryland racetracks.

"We've not gone all out yet with our advertising," he said. "We're just getting started. We don't want to over-market. Once we have some serious renovations done, we'll market more. We want people

who come to enjoy the experience and tell others about it. That's the best advertising we can get."

Ritvo said fans "aren't coming in droves" just yet, but those who are watching the races at Pimlico have indicated they like what they're seeing – the high-definition televisions and the new graphic designs, which are like the ones being used at Gulfstream Park and other Stronach Group tracks. The consistency among the tracks is creating a familiarity for customers, with clear, easily read information.

"We're moving in the right direction," Ritvo said. "We've seen a lot of customers praising us for the changes we've made. The changes we're making are long overdue. People are telling us they love the new screens, love the HD and like the graphics."

Continues at mdhorsemen.com ➔

Horsemen Bid Farewell To Bowie

As trainer Linda Gaudet went about the business of taking down walls of photographs that tell the history of her life and that of her husband, Eddie, and their children at the Bowie Training Center, the emotions were bittersweet.

"We're excited about the move," said Gaudet, who has stabled horses at the center for nearly 43 years, with her husband there

many years before that. "But in a way, it is agonizing. It's been two weeks of not sleeping and I'm not sure the car won't come here all on its own when I go to work [at Laurel Park]."

"Both my kids were raised here. They were home-schooled here. We've been in this barn close to 30 years. It was new when we first moved in and it was a nice barn at that time. There are a lot of memories here."

Lacey [her daughter who is also a trainer] said she was going to go to Wal-Mart and get a bunch of frames for all these pictures so we can put them up in our new place, but a lot of them will come home."

Gaudet and all the other horsemen, some of whom have stabled their horses at the Bowie Training Center for up to half a century,

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Howard Wolfendale Saddles 1,500th Career Winner

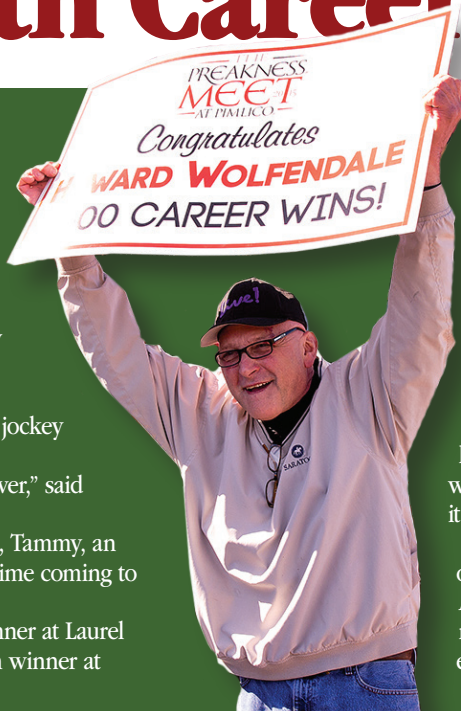
Trainer Howard Wolfendale won the 1,500th race of his career when he saddled Miners Quest to victory April 11th at Pimlico.

The popular Maryland-based trainer, who saddled Bold Affair to nine stakes victories from 2011 to 2013, was joined in the winner's circle by family and friends after G. Russell Gourley's Miners Quest rallied from last in the seven-horse field to win by a nose under jockey Sheldon Russell.

"Finally. That's it. Finally. It's finally over," said Wolfendale, laughing, after the race."

"It feels great," said Wolfendale's wife, Tammy, an exercise rider and owner. "It was a long time coming to get this particular win."

Wolfendale, who saddled his first winner at Laurel in 1977 at age 21 and saddled his 1,000th winner at



Laurel in 2005, was named outstanding trainer by the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association in 1999 and ranked 37th in wins in 2006. He saddled Michael's Pride to victory in the 2003 Maryland Million Sprint and won the 2007 Maryland Million Turf Sprint with Happy Surprise. His daughter Maggie is the paddock reporter for the New York Racing Association.

Wolfendale said his success is due to a "total team effort."

"I have Tammy and this man right here (Gourley) to thank," he said. "Sometimes it can take a while to get a win like this. I just really wanted to do it in Maryland, so I'm happy it happened here."

When asked recently about his favorite memory of training the past 38 years, Wolfendale said, "Bold Affair. I'd like to have another of her. But, for the most part, we've done it with hard-knocking claimers."

Continued from cover

have been slowly moving out of the 101-year-old facility during the last few months. The last horses shipped out Tuesday, April 28.

"I've been here a long time," said Magill, 49. "Ten years; And I used to come here for the races with my dad when I was 9 or 10 years old. There's sadness to be going, but when you're over there [at Laurel Park], it is exciting. Bowie, well, it is time to go. It was getting a little run-down."

The trainers at Bowie have known for several months the training center would close in April, once the first of two new barns was completed at Laurel Park. And there is stoicism about them, as they reflect on the state of horse racing and the reality present in the industry.

During the last several years Hollywood Park, Garden State and other racetracks have disappeared. It's the state of the industry, as track owners consolidate, with the new ideal being two strong tracks are better than three and one better than two.

But that wasn't always the case. And in Bowie's heyday, people literally climbed over dead bodies to get the racetrack.



In those days, trains would stop at its doorstep to drop off thousands of race fans. King Leatherbury, who earlier this month was elected to the Hall of Fame, has said on a number of occasions that when he was a student at the University of Maryland he would go to the track after his last class of the day; arriving in time to bet the last race.

He told Baltimore Sun reporter Mike Klingaman he remembers seeing people covered in blood standing in line to make their bets after being involved in a train crash that killed six in February 1961.

Gaudet remembers fans on another occasion during a snowstorm refusing to leave until they could get their tickets cashed.

Hall of Fame jockey Chris McCarron, who in 1974 got his start at Bowie, told the Baltimore Sun five years ago,

the last time it was feared Bowie would be shut down, that while the track rates low in his estimation on being 'picturesque', he'd rate the course "one of the safest of all tracks for horses to run on - and I've ridden on about 70 tracks."

Continues at mdhorsemen.com

Sylvia Heft Passes

Sylvia Heft, prominent Maryland owner passed away April 23 at the age of 93.

Known belovedly as "Bubby" to her large family, Heft and her husband of 73 years Arnold were known for the campaigns of multiple stakes winners, among them Pulverizing, Baldski's Choice, He Is Risen and Red's Round Table. Most recently, the Hefts experienced what Arnold called "their happiest moments" in sports through the efforts of Eighttofastcatch, a horse he named for Washington Capitals' all-star Alex Ovechkin and a horse that delivered three Maryland Million Classic titles (2011, 2013 and 2014) and a Maryland-based Horse of the Year Award.





Rec Report

Donations

The following generous people made contributions to the backstretch this past month: Gene Gilhooly, Darryl Friday, Ginny Wright, Scott and Rosemary Lisha, Maryland Jockey Club, and Carrie Everly. Thanks for your thoughtfulness.

Orioles Tickets

The winners of the first Orioles Ticket Package Drawing this season were: Marriane Poe (Yankees-4/14), Victor Rosaw (Red Sox-4/25), M. Haibier (White Sox-4/27), and J.P. Patterson for game Rays-5/2). Congratulations to all the winners.

The next drawing will be held at the MTHA's Pimlico racetrack office on Friday, May 8th at 11:00 a.m.

Each ticket package is worth \$150 and includes two tickets and a premium parking pass. Sign-up at the Track Kitchens or call Dan at 410-802-5798.

Soccer League

The MTHA Soccer League will begin on Monday or Tuesday May 27th or 28th at Laurel Park.

Please see Francisco Siez or Juan Rameriz at Laurel or call Dan at 410-802-5798.

Bowie Baysox Tickets

The Bowie Baysox Tickets are going fast. Tickets are still available by signing up at the Track Kitchens.

Bowling Tournament

A Bowling Tournament is scheduled for Columbia Lanes on Monday, June 15th. Please sign-up at the kitchens or call Dan.

Softball

The MTHA is still offering a league or pick-up forum for Softball at Laurel this summer. Please call Dan for info.

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MTHA

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Board Actions



MTHA Board Meeting – April 9, 2015 – Laurel Park

Members present: Timothy L. Keefe (President), Linda S. Gaudet (Vice President), R. Larry Johnson (Vice President), Michael F. Horning (Treasurer), Katharine M. Voss (Secretary), A. Ferris Allen, Christine E. Bricker, Ellen M. Charles, JoAnn Hayden, Robert T. Manfuso, Lawrence E. Murray and Charles J. Reed.

Members absent: Dale Capuano, H. Graham Motion and Michael J. Trombetta

Purse Account Financial Statements

The Board unanimously accepted the 2014 audited Financial Statements for the Maryland Thoroughbred Purse Account as presented.

Timonium Trainer Bonus

The Board unanimously approved a \$5,000 contribution from the Thoroughbred Purse Account to fund 50% of the Timonium Trainer Bonus program during the 2015 Timonium State Fair meet.

Pimlico Takeout

The Board unanimously approved the altering of takeout on two exotic bets during the Pimlico 2015 meet. The two modifications are:

The 20 cent Jackpot 5 (18% takeout) will be replaced with a 10 cent Rainbow 6 (20% takeout). The new Rainbow 6 bet will feature a consolation split of 70/30 instead of the previous 60/40 split.

A Normal Pick 5 (12% takeout) will be introduced that will be paid out on all tickets with all five correct. This wager will carry forward if no one selects five correct.

Health Center / Counseling Program

The Board unanimously appropriated up to \$40,000 if needed as the MTHA's 2015 contribution to the Drug and Alcohol Program and up to \$60,000 if needed for the 2015 operation of the Backstretch Health Center from the Thoroughbred Purse Account.

Clothing Distribution

The Board unanimously approved the funds related to the construction of an area at Laurel Park to collect, store and distribute clothing donated to backstretch workers.

Don't
forget!

**MTHA Annual
Meeting**

Thursday, June 18, 2015
Laurel Park Ruffian Room
5PM - All Members Invited

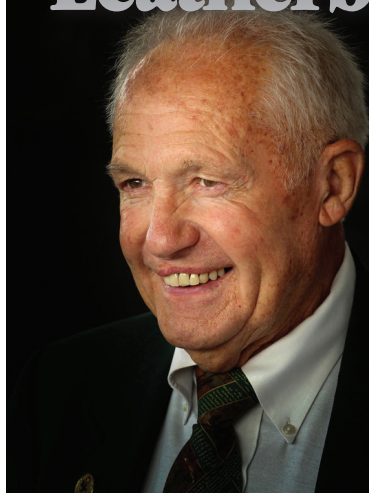
Racing Community Picks Up Shovels, Raise Money for Habitat for Humanity

Organized by MJC Racing Analyst Gabby Gaudet (pictured), a team of Maryland horsemen, breeders and track officials picked up shovels, hammers and rakes in April to help restore and rebuild Baltimore row houses while also raising more than \$5,000 for Habitat for Humanity of the Chesapeake.

The houses, located on McCabe Avenue, will be sold to those meeting eligibility requirements. The properties were made available through the Vacants to Value program, which identifies distressed areas with a high concentration of abandoned properties.



Leatherbury, Xtra Heat Immortalized In Hall of Fame



Legendary Mid-Atlantic horseman King T. Leatherbury and Maryland-based champion filly Xtra Heat were elected in April to the National Museum of Racing Hall of Fame in Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

The two, both based in and primarily associated with Maryland during their careers, will be joined at the August 7 ceremony by two other new inductees, the late jockey Chris Antley and claiming horse-turned-Grade 1 winner Lava Man.



MTHA

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May 2015

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MTHA Expands Clothing Drive Efforts

Led by MTHA Recreation Committee Chairmen A. Ferris Allen, the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association is doubling down on efforts to expand the Horsemen's Clothing Drive program at Laurel Park.

Changes being made to the program include a new distribution room in the Laurel Track Kitchen as well as two new collection bins (pictured) which will soon appear near the stable gate and horsemen's entrance at the racetrack.

