



The Horsemen's Newsletter

January 2016

Vol. 26 • Number 1

2015 Handle Numbers Significantly Higher

The new year brought good news for the Stronach Group and Maryland Racing when the Export Signal's handle figures from the Maryland Jockey Club's two racetracks, Laurel Park and Pimlico Race Course, were added up and found to have produced a nearly 20 percent increase over 2014.

"That percentage translates to almost \$66 million over 2014," MJC vice president and general manager Sal Sinatra says. That number, Sinatra adds, is even better than it appears, "considering how many days we lost to weather last year."

In 2014, the MJC's Export Signal handle was \$338 million. In 2015, the amount wagered rose to \$404 million. The live handle was also up, growing approximately eight percent from \$25.4 million in 2014 to \$27 million in 2015.

Sinatra says there are a variety of reasons contributing to the improved figures, but main among them, he believes, is the change in the racing schedule.

"We changed the schedule and ran an additional 103 turf races," Sinatra says. "That caused the field sizes to go up – almost a full horse – from 7.79 horses per race to 8.69."

Larger field sizes coupled with the improved caliber of horses made Maryland racing much more appealing to bettors.

The opening of the Off Track Betting

site at Baltimore's Horseshoe Casino leading up to Preakness week also contributed almost \$7 million in handle, a resource the MJC did not have before. And Sinatra points out the merger of HRTV and TVG last spring also meant more television exposure for the Maryland tracks.

"I think it's a trend we hope to continue into 2016," Sinatra says. "I think there is room for plenty of growth in Maryland."

This year we plan to stay at Laurel Park through the Kentucky Derby to utilize the Laurel turf course as much as possible.

We are also going to experiment with racing Friday through Monday in January and February, when PARX is dark, instead of Thursday through Sunday. We hope racing on Monday will draw more attention to our signal."

Racing will move to Pimlico the Thursday after the Derby, where it will then be able to utilize a fresh turf course for Preakness week. The racing program will remain at Pimlico through June and then return to Laurel Park for Fourth of July weekend.

"Our plan is to utilize the turf more," Sinatra says. "The field size will stay strong and we're also going to build out the OTBs."

Sinatra said a new OTB will be opening at the Timonium Fairgrounds by the end

Continued on Page 3 ↗



Join MTHA President Tim Keefe to raise money for Thoroughbred Aftercare and the Special Olympics at the Polar Bear Plunge on January 30 at Sandy Point State Park. To join Team Keefe or to make a donation please visit plungemd.com or call 410-902-6842.

Continued on Page 2 ↗

2016 Maryland Racing Calendar

January 2016						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

February 2016						
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28	29					

March 2016						
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27	28	29	30	31		

April 2016						
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May 2016						
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29	30	31				

June 2016						
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July 2016						
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31						

August 2016						
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28	29	30				

September 2016						
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October 2016						
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30	31					

November 2016						
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December 2016						
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25	26	27	28	29	30	31

 Laurel Park (129)

 Timonium (7)

 Pimlico (28)

Backstretch Pension, Continued from Page 1

order to be able to provide timely reports and feedback to plan participants."

Major elements of the plan remain unchanged. The plan begins covering individuals 21 and older who have been licensed for one year. Each year a person's earnings up to \$22,000 will be used to calculate his/her benefit. Those earnings must be confirmed by a W-2 form, a 1099 form or an actual tax return filed with the Internal Revenue Service.

A plan participant becomes eligible for benefits at the normal retirement age of 65 or on the fifth anniversary of joining the plan, if later. Early retirement age is 55 and 25 years of service.

If under normal retirement age and still working at the tracks an employee can't cash out of the plan. But if an employee has worked at the covered tracks for three years – the amount of time necessary to become fully vested

in the plan – decides to leave and does not intend to return, he/she will be entitled to his/her account balance.

Also, when an employee has reached full retirement age, he/she can continue to work and draw on the vested interest in their plan's account.

Each year, participants will receive an individual benefit certificate to inform them of their account balances. In order to do that, a Plan representative will collect earnings and service data from all eligible participants during a signup process to be conducted in late April and early May.

The new contact for plan holders at Pollard & Associates is Joyce Hoffman. She can be reached by calling 904-853-5385 or by email at jhoffman@pollardpensions.com for questions about accounts or for information about cashing out.



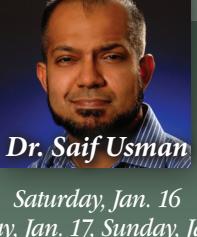
HORSEMEN'S HEALTH SYSTEM

2016 Doctor's Schedule:



Dr. Frank Dawson

Monday, Jan. 4, Monday, Jan. 11
Friday, Jan. 15, Monday, Jan. 18
Monday, Jan. 25, Monday, Feb. 1
Monday, Feb. 8, Monday, Feb. 15
Friday, Mar. 11, Friday, Apr. 8
Saturday, Apr. 9, Sunday, Apr. 10
Saturday, Apr. 16, Sunday, Apr. 17



Dr. Kelly Ryan

Friday, Jan. 8
Sunday, Jan. 10, Saturday, Jan. 23
Sunday, Jan. 24, Friday, Jan. 29
Friday, Feb. 5, Saturday, Feb. 6
Sunday, Feb. 7, Friday, Feb. 12
Friday, Mar. 18, Saturday, Mar. 19
Friday, Mar. 25, Friday, Apr. 1
Sunday, April 3, Friday, April 15
Friday, Apr. 22, Friday, Apr. 29
Saturday, Apr. 30



Dr. Jeffrey Mayer

Saturday, Jan. 9
Friday, Jan. 22, Saturday, Jan. 30
Saturday, Feb. 13, Saturday, Mar. 12
Saturday, Mar. 26



Rec Report

Poker Tournament

Our next MTHA Poker Tournament will be held on Wednesday, Feb. 10 starting at noon in the Laurel Rec Room.

Basketball League

The MTHA Basketball League is scheduled to begin Jan. 10 on Sunday evenings at Meade High School. Anyone interested in having a team or playing as an individual please contact Dan Mangum at 410-802-5798.



Reminders

Winter Clothing Needed

Now is an ideal time to clean out your closet and donate unused items for distribution on the backstretch.

Winter clothing, such as coats, hats and gloves, are especially appreciated.

Items may be dropped off in the two collection bins at Laurel Park, or call Bobby Lillis at (410) 265-6843.



Pony Those Youngsters

Trainers are urged to school young horses with a lead pony.

A young horse who is unfamiliar with ponies can be difficult for the outrider – and his pony – to handle when there is a need to do so. This creates a hazardous situation on the track.

Due to parking and admission now being free at Laurel Park and Pimlico there is no need for Horsemen to obtain a parking pass. Admission to the Stable Gate will be obtained from a valid MRC license. Please make certain your badge is up to date!



Bowling League

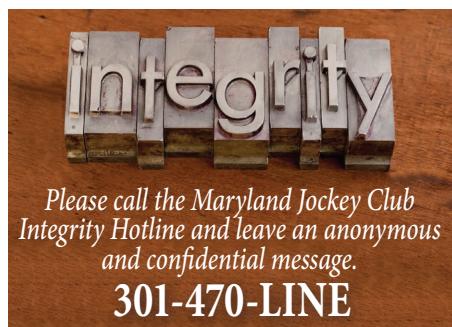
The MTHA bowling league began on Monday, Oct. 19 at Laurel AMF Fairlanes. Some of the outstanding male bowlers have been Wayne Potts, Edmund Benson, Lou Garner, Harley Foote, Avon Thorpe, Tink Throckmartin and Damon Gladden. The ladies include Terry Overmire, Karen Brocco, Kristina Schmidt, Jessica Lindsay and Kaymarie Kriedel.

A special thank you goes out to our league Secretary Sarah Carter.

Soccer Awards

The following players were honored for their achievements during the MTHA Fall Soccer League:

Claudio Gonzales, most goals scored with six, as well as the following outstanding players from the winning team – Luis Carlos Garcia, Francisco Avila, Hector Guerrero, and Victor Garcia. The captain of the Lucy FC was Salvador Bravo.



Handle, Continued from Page 1 —

of January and another new facility will open in Boonsboro on Route 40, between Frederick and Hagerstown, sometime in February.

"We think it will work in Boonsboro," Sinatra says, when asked why an OTB will be placed at a site not aligned with a casino or near a racetrack, when so many in remote locations haven't prospered in the past. "It is incorporated with a restaurant and that area is starving for recreational activity."

Counseling Corner

by Jasmine Arian

At some point in our lives we all experience grief, the natural response to loss. This emotion can be associated with the death of a loved one, the end to a relationship, loss of health, losing a job, or other life-changing occurrences. It is an emotion we often wish we could run from, but must learn to cope with.

The healing process comes differently to every individual. We may experience symptoms such as shock and disbelief, sadness, guilt, anger, and/or fear. Our bodies can also experience fatigue, nausea, weight loss, or weight gain. No one can put a timetable on how long one may grieve but there are ways to help cope.

Reaching out for support helps tremendously. There is always a reassuring feeling one gets when they come to find out they are not alone. Support can come from friends and family, support groups, therapists or religious groups.

Eventually it is important to learn how to face your feelings. Being able to acknowledge the sadness and pain will help you heal. However, one should never tell you to "move on." Heal on your own time and the sun will shine again.



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Beginning immediately, ALL jockeys and exercise riders MUST have an emergency medical card pinned to their vest whenever they are riding in Maryland at all times.

Trainers may obtain the cards for their exercise riders from the MTHA office. Jockeys may get the cards from the clerk of scales.



MTHA
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Owings Mills, Maryland 21117

January 2016

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Gelo Hall Passes at Age 88

When Howard Gordon "Gelo" Hall was 11, he had one of the greatest experiences of his life. His dad, Howard, a jockey's valet who worked at Pimlico Race Course, took him to see the match race between Seabiscuit and War Admiral. It was 1938 and that race was a spectacle he would always remember.

It also was the beginning of his lifelong love affair with Thoroughbred racing, a fascination that lasted until his death. Hall, 88, passed away on Dec. 10 due to a hemorrhage following a recent fall at his Windsor Mill home.

"My dad had two things he believed in deeply," Gelo's daughter Janis says. "The track



and God, the family came after them. He loved the racetrack."

At age 14, Gelo went to work for H.L. Straus in Reisterstown breaking horses. From there it was on to Pimlico where he went to work for Frank "Downey" Bonsal. It was just the beginning. He would get his nickname there, while working with his older brother Angelo. Angelo was known as "Big Gelo" and he was known as "Little Gelo."

"When my uncle left the track, Dad became Gelo and it just stuck forever," Janis Hall says. "Dad must have been about 14 or so then.

— *Continued at mdborsemen.com* ↗

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