



# The Horsemen's Newsletter



December 2016

Vol. 26 • Number 12



## THA Launches New Website

The Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association (THA) a respected industry voice for horsemen for more than 20 years, launched its much anticipated website designed to provide members of its affiliates – and horsemen everywhere, industry stakeholders, regulators and those interested in racing – with a one-stop shop for important information, news, features, and commentary.

"In developing our website, we spent considerable time talking to individual horsemen, industry stakeholders, regulators and others to see what kind of information they would like to see on one convenient site," said Alan Foreman, Chairman of the THA. "We believe we've done that. Our website fills a niche for horsemen that was sorely needed. We are extremely proud of this site and believe it will become a daily resource for horsemen and the industry at-large."

The website (THAracing.com) focuses on key areas such as medication information and guidance, racing-related resources such as

*Continued on Page 2* ➔

## Charles, Magee Highlight 2016 MTHA Christmas Party Awards Ceremony

Five individuals will be recognized for their accomplishments the evening of Dec. 13 as part of the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association Awards Ceremony and Christmas Party.

The event, to be held in the new Second Floor Sports Bar at Laurel Park, this year will spotlight the MTHA Owner of the Year, Trainer of the Year, Backstretch Workers of the Year, and the recipient of a Special Award for Contributions to Maryland Racing.

Ellen Charles (pictured), who has had her own Thoroughbred operation since 2004, is the 2016 Owner of the Year. She operates Hillwood Stable and keeps her horses with trainer Rodney Jenkins.

"I'm honored and amazed," said Charles, a member of the MTHA board of directors. "To win Owner of the Year, it's a tribute to the horses, the trainer, and the whole team."

Kieron Magee, a former exercise rider who began training in his 40s and is now one of the top conditioners in Maryland, is the Trainer of the Year. Magee captured the training title at the Laurel winter/spring meet with 29 wins



and is on pace to win in excess of 100 races this year.

"I was very excited when they told me about it," Magee said. "I'm thrilled to get it. I live here in Baltimore County, and Pimlico is my home."

As is the custom, two backstretch workers will be honored—one for Laurel and one for Pimlico Race Course. Donna O'Connor, who works for Jenkins, is the Laurel Backstretch Worker of the Year, while Donna Arbitelle, who works for trainer

Mary Eppler, is the Pimlico Backstretch Worker of the Year.

"I've been working for Rodney for about 16 years," O'Connor said. "Rodney has a lot of integrity and really cares for these horses. I do work with some really good people."

Arbitelle, who retired from a government job at age 50 to work as a groom in Maryland, said: "This is something I knew I wanted to do all the time. I go in every day to do a job and care for the horses. And the wins are nice."

Last year Frank Stronach, chairman of The Stronach Group, which owns Laurel and Pimlico

*Continued on Page 3* ➔

**MTHA Christmas Party & Toy Drive**  
DECEMBER 13 • 6 P.M. – 10 P.M.

Tickets are \$35 each or Ten for \$300 – To Purchase visit [www.mdhorsemen.com](http://www.mdhorsemen.com), stop in the MTHA Office or call 410-902-6844

# Maryland Racing Calendar Expands to 169 Days in 2017

The Maryland racing calendar will expand to 169 days of racing at Laurel Park, Pimlico Race Course and Timonium in 2017, up from 154 days this year, the Maryland Jockey Club announced.

State racing officials called the calendar a promising marker for the health of Maryland racing, given that many tracks around the country are cutting dates.

"It is an improvement," Maryland Racing Commission chairman John McDaniel said. "This is what we want, to continue to increase racing days."

The racing commission unanimously approved the calendar, which will be highlighted by the 142nd Preakness on May 20 at Pimlico.

See complete calendar to the right:



## Rec Report

### Texas Hold'em

To not interfere with bowling, we will be moving poker to the second Tuesday of each month in the MTHA Rec Room at Laurel Park. Start time is 12 noon. Our next poker tournament will be Tuesday, December 12th.

Mike LaRochelle was the winner of our last event on November 8th. Mike defeated 16 other players with second place going to Marty Leonard and Jermaine McDonald finishing third.

### Winter Clothes Drive

We are still collecting warm clothing, blankets, gloves, hats, etc. for the cold winter months approaching. Please utilize the bins at the stable gate and horsemen's entrance at Laurel Park. Be sure to place items in a bag before depositing them in the bins. Please, no loose articles in the bins.

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## → **Awards, From Page 1**

co under the Maryland Jockey Club banner, was the MTHA Owner of the Year; he is the first racetrack owner to receive the award. This year Tim Ritvo, who serves as chief operating officer for The Stronach Group, will receive the Special Award for Contributions to Maryland Racing.

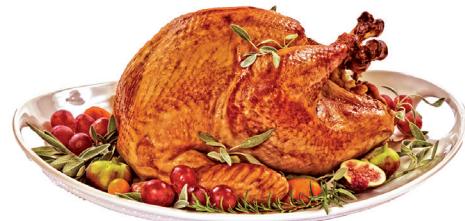
Ritvo, who oversaw many changes at Gulfstream Park for the company, has spent much of his time the last few years in Maryland directing renovations of the clubhouse and grandstand at

Laurel as well as construction of new barns.

"I consider it an honor," Ritvo said. "We've made great progress in Maryland the last several years largely because all parties are on the same page. We appreciate that the horsemen, breeders, racing commission, and The Stronach Group are in agreement."

Tickets for the party can be purchased for \$35 or for \$300 for a table of 10. More information is available at [mdhorsemen.com](http://mdhorsemen.com).

# Nearly 500 Meals Served to Backstretch Community on Thanksgiving



## Board Actions

### Open MTHA Board Meeting – November 18, 2016

**Members present:** Timothy L. Keefe (President), Linda S. Gaudet (Vice President), R. Larry Johnson (Vice President), Katharine M. Voss (Secretary), Christine E. Bricker, Ellen M. Charles, JoAnn Hayden, Robert T. Manfuso, H. Graham Motion, Lawrence E. Murray, Charles J. Reed and Michael J. Trombetta.

**Member absent:** A. Ferris Allen, Dale Capuano and Michael F. Horning (Treasurer).

### 2017 Simulcasting Consent

The Board unanimously granted consent for the acceptance of interstate off-track wagers on the export of any live Maryland thoroughbred race to an out-of-state wagering facility and the import of any live race from an out-of-state track in 2017.

### Recreation Program

The Board unanimously appropriated up to \$45,000 to extend the Recreation Program through December 31, 2017.

### Condition Book

The Board unanimously endorsed a change in the A1X condition to read: "which have never won a race other than maiden, claiming, waiver claiming, starter, Maryland-bred or Maryland-sired races," instead of state sired races or state bred races.

### Backstretch Pension Plan

The Board unanimously appropriated \$400,000 from the Thoroughbred Purse Account for the 2016 contribution to the Backstretch Employees Pension Plan pending Maryland Racing Commission approval.

### Benefit Trust

Following established procedure, the Board unanimously approved up to \$65,000 in 2017 to fund the Benefit Trust.

### NTRA Membership

The Board unanimously voted to approve MTHA's 2017 membership in National Thoroughbred Racing Association-NTRA.

### Programs

The Board unanimously authorized all expenses related to distributing programs containing past performances to horsemen in the MTHA Racetrack Office.

### Jockey Insurance

The Board voted unanimously to approve a contribution to fund the balance of the Jockey Worker's Compensation Insurance premium in 2017 over the amount collected by the Maryland Racing Commission from a \$100 license fee.

### Thanksgiving Dinners

The Board unanimously approved all expenditures related to the serving of dinner to Backstretch Employees and their families on Thanksgiving day.

### 2016 Horsemen's Awards

The Board unanimously accepted the Awards Committee recommendations for 2016 Outstanding Owner (Hillwood Stable), 2016 Special Award for Contributions to Maryland Racing (Tim Ritvo), 2016 Laurel Park Backstretch Worker of the Year (Donna O'Connor) and 2016 Pimlico Backstretch Worker of the Year (Donna Arbitelle).

The Board, by a vote of 8-2, accepted the Awards Committee recommendation for 2016 Outstanding Trainer (Keiron Magee).

*Voting in favor of the recommendation:* Mrs. Gaudet, Ms. Voss, Ms. Bricker, Mrs. Hayden, Mr. Manfuso, Mr. Motion, Mr. Murray, Mr. Reed.

*Voting Against:* Mr. Johnson and Mr. Trombetta.

The Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association continued the 20+ year tradition of hosting an all-day Thanksgiving celebration on the backstretch of Pimlico and Laurel Park to feed hundreds of horsemen, many of which wouldn't have a warm meal otherwise. Nearly 100 meals were served at Pimlico while Laurel Park served 465.

The meals—turkey, mashed potatoes, and all the trimmings—were available all day in the track kitchen at Laurel Park and in the Snack Room above Barn 8 at Pimlico.

Prepared by track kitchen restaurateur Miguel Paz and family, the meals were served by the MTHA staff. Similar celebrations are held on Christmas and Easter mornings.

"The Thanksgiving dinner tradition is one of our favorite events throughout the year," commented MTHA Executive Director David Richardson. "Thanksgiving is about family and the backstretch community is our family."

Thanksgiving, as usual, featured live racing at Laurel Park which saw markedly improved revenue gains from the previous year.

Total all-source handle topped \$2.5-million for the 10 race card, up from \$1.2-million in 2014.

## The Horsemen's Newsletter

Published by the

**MTHA**

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Website: [www.mdhorsemen.com](http://www.mdhorsemen.com)



Our dedicated backstretch workers can enjoy a free

# HOLIDAY BREAKFAST

Christmas morning at Pimlico and Laurel Park track kitchens  
compliments of the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's  
Association and the Maryland Jockey Club.



## MTHA

500 Redland Court, #105  
Owings Mills, Maryland 21117

**December 2016**

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## Obamacare Registration Assistance Provided



**OBAMACARE**

The Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association 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 Jessica Hammond at 301-776-0404.

## Board of Directors

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, III  
Christine E. Bricker  
Dale Capuano  
Ellen M. Charles  
JoAnn Hayden  
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