



The Horsemen's Newsletter

November 2017

Vol. 27 • Number 11

Nominations Sought For Backstretch Employees Of The Year

Trainers at Laurel Park and Pimlico Race Course are encouraged to submit nominations for the MTHA Backstretch Employees of the Year for 2017.

The MTHA, as it has in previous years, will recognize one backstretch employee at each racetrack based on the nominations. The awards will be presented in early 2018 at a special event that is in the planning stages.

The deadline to submit nominations is Nov. 15.

"Our backstretch workers are very important to our industry," said Bobby Lillis, MTHA Benevolence Administrator.

"They arrive at the track in the darkest hours of the morning and are doing jobs that any nine-to-fiver just couldn't comprehend. They feed a barn full of horses, scoop manure from stalls, and lift hay, straw and water. The groom bathes them when they get back from the track – all before the rest of the world wakes up.

"They are very dedicated and spend most of the day making sure the horses are well taken care of. They always put the needs of the horse before their own. They know the personalities of their horses and every blemish on every inch of their bodies. The best feeling these workers experience is taking a horse in their care on race day and watching it come down the stretch to win or at least place well.

"They are indeed the force that makes it all happen, and we could not be here without them. We very much appreciate them."

To submit a worker to be considered email their name, position and a summary of why they deserve this award to info@mdhorsemen.com.



MTHA Christmas Party & Toy Drive

Tuesday, December 12, 2017 • 6 p.m. - 10 p.m.

\$35 in Advance • \$45 at Door • \$300 Table of 10

The Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association will host the popular Horsemen's Christmas Party celebration on Tuesday evening, Dec. 12, from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. in Laurel Park's new Sports Bar.

Maryland Racing's Party of the Year, the MTHA Christmas Party will feature a buffet dinner, open bar and a dance floor with tunes provided by one of the area's top party bands, The New Romanos.

Tickets are \$35 in advance, \$45 each at the door or \$300 for a table of 10 and can be purchased on race days in the MTHA racetrack office at

Laurel Park, online at mdhorsemen.com or by calling 410-902-6842. See Diana Pinones in the MTHA office for more details.

Horsemen are urged to purchase tickets in advance.

MTHA will also be hosting its annual toy drive for the third consecutive year and is asking attendees to the party to bring a new, unwrapped toy to be collected at the door.

Gifts will be distributed to children of backstretch workers during the holiday season.



2018 Maryland Racing Calendar Expands



The Maryland Jockey Club has scheduled 171 live racing programs for 2018, up nine days from 2017, under a calendar approved by the Maryland Racing Commission Oct. 26 and the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association Oct. 30.

The schedule calls for 159 days at Laurel Park and 12 days at Pimlico Race Course. With another seven days at the Maryland State Fair at Timonium, there will be 178 live racing programs from Jan. 1-Dec. 31 with racing at least three days every week of the year.

The additional days will be held at Laurel, and almost all of them will be Mondays in August and December in keeping with a schedule change this fall by which Mondays replaced the regularly scheduled Thursdays on the calendar.

At Laurel, there will be racing four days a week in August and October through November on a Friday-through-Monday schedule. At Pimlico, there will be a four-day week and a five-day week with the three-day Preakness week in between – the same schedule as this year – with racing on Thursdays instead of Mondays with the exception of Memorial Day.

"Having four days a week is the most important thing," MJC President Sal Sinatra said. "We skipped (four-day weeks) in September for next year because we missed August this year. Parx is usually dark for most of August and Saratoga is open on Mondays."

Sinatra has said it's worth seeing if wagering on Laurel races on Mondays in August is strong because there are more gambling dollars available at racetracks and off-track betting parlors and through advance deposit wagering services when Saratoga is open.

The 2018 schedule is subject to change because, as has been the case the last few years, additional dates were added to the calendar. It was noted at the MTHA board meeting that if handle and purse projections hold for next year, September could go to four days a week.

Change Recommended For Dual License Suspensions

A Maryland Racing Commission committee has recommended a change in a regulation dealing with dual licensees but said additional discussion is necessary regarding the suspension of horses that test positive for Class 1, 2 and 3 substances.

Under current policy in Maryland, a suspended trainer who also holds an owner's license can continue in good standing as an owner. MRC Executive Director Mike Hopkins, during the commission's regular meeting Oct. 26, said the committee recommended suspensions pertain to all licenses held by a suspended individual.

The committee was comprised of representatives of the MRC, Maryland Jockey Club and Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association.

Hopkins said a proposed revision to the regulation has been sent to the governor's office for review and will be brought before the MRC for consideration at a future meeting.

In a related matter, Hopkins said the MRC is developing guidelines for stewards and judges in relation to the transfer of responsibility when a trainer is suspended. The officials would be able

to view payroll information, purse payments and other documents to determine whether horses truly change hands during a suspension.

"We want to try to make it more uncomfortable for a trainer who is in these situations," Hopkins said.

SUSPENDED

As for the suspension of horses after a split sample confirms a positive

– Pennsylvania recently adopted such a regulation – the committee identified a number of logistical issues, Hopkins said, and decided to continue discussions rather than make a recommendation. He said "a number of ideas" came out of the committee meeting on ways to improve integrity.

"This is not the end of the discussion, this is the beginning of the discussion," MRC Chairman Mike Algeo said.

The MTHA board of directors at its Oct. 30 meeting approved a motion to support the change in the dual-license regulation in order to keep suspended trainers from claiming horses under their owners' licenses.



Rec Report

MTHA Bowling League

The bowling league has already started, but it isn't too late to sign up. Please contact Dan at 410-802-5798 to sign up.

MTHA Express Van Service

The MTHA Express Van runs on Tuesdays and Thursdays to service horsemen who reside at Laurel Park and Pimlico. Please contact Dan at 410-802-5798 to sign up.

Poker

Now that we run on Monday, the MTHA poker tournament has been moved to Wednesday. We will be having tournaments on the second and fourth Wednesday of every month.

We held two poker tournaments in October. In the first one, Tim Walsh and Tony Aguirre tied for first place with Steve Kell coming in third.

The second tournament was won by Hugo Garcia. Marty Leonard came in second and Tim Walsh came in third.

Flag Football

Flag Football has already started. If you want to play we will be having games on every Thursday up to the week before Thanksgiving. Games start at 1 p.m. The field is located off Brock Ridge Road next to the track.

If you have any questions, contact Marty Leonard 203-733-1367.

Email System For Horsemen's Concerns Speeds Up Response Time By MJC

The newly created email system for reporting backstretch and track surface concerns by Maryland horsemen has drastically improved response time by Maryland Jockey Club to address concerns at Laurel Park and Pimlico.

The MTHA created the system in early summer to improve communication among horsemen and track maintenance staff to expedite the process of issues being addressed.

Previously issues were communicated by horsemen by a paper-based ticket system which proved cumbersome.

Horsemen are now encouraged to send emails, with photos, of their concerns to backstretchissues@mdhorsemen.com for backstretch concerns or to track-issues@mdhorsemen.com for track surface issues.

Messages to each of these accounts are forwarded to a multitude of relevant parties as well as to the MTHA so progress and response time can be tracked.



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Published by the
MTHA

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Board Actions



Members present: Timothy L. Keefe (President), Linda S. Gaudet (Vice President), Dale Capuano (Vice President), Michael F. Horning (Treasurer), A. Ferris Allen, JoAnn Hayden, R. Larry Johnson, Mark B. Lapidus, Robert T. Manfuso, Charles J. Reed, Philip B. Schoenthal, Michael J. Trombetta and Katharine M. Voss.

Members absent: H. Graham Motion and Hugh I. McMahon.

Election

The Board unanimously voted to appoint Michael F. Horning to fill the vacant seat on the Board created by the resignation of Ellen M. Charles from the 2017 Board of Director's election.

2018 Live Racing Calendar

The Board unanimously voted to approve a 2018 Live Racing Calendar that calls for 171 racing days at Laurel Park and Pimlico and seven racing days at Timonium.

2018 Winter Stakes

The Board unanimously voted to approve a 2018 Winter Stakes schedule.

NTRA

The Board unanimously approved 2018 membership in NTRA.

Regional Compact

The Board unanimously expressed support for the concept of the creation of a medication compact to assist and expedite the adoption of new medication policies endorsed by RMTC and RCI.

Thanksgiving Dinners

The Board unanimously voted to approve all expenditures related to serving Thanksgiving Dinners to backstretch employees and their families on Thanksgiving Day at Laurel Park and Pimlico.

Training Observation Shed

The Board unanimously appropriated necessary funds to construct two training observation sheds.

Christmas Party

The Board unanimously voted to approve all expenditures related to the 2017 Horsemen's Christmas Party to be held in December at Laurel Park.

Counseling Program

The Board unanimously appropriated necessary funds to continue the Counseling Program through 2018, in partnership with Maryland Jockey Club.

Appropriations

The Board unanimously voted to appropriate funds necessary for the continuation of the Recreation Program, Benefit Trust and Backstretch Pension program through the end of 2018.

Award Procedures

The Board unanimously voted to approve revised procedures for the selection of various year-end awards to be presented at a new ceremony to be held in February in conjunction with MJC and MHBA.

Committees

The Board unanimously established the following committees:

Executive Committee:

Tim Keefe (President), Dale Capuano (VP), Linda S. Gaudet (VP), Michael Horning (Treasurer) and Katy Voss (Secretary).

Purse Committee:

A. Ferris Allen, Dale Capuano, Linda Gaudet, Chip Reed, Katy Voss, Michael Trombetta, Hugh McMahon.

Aftercare Committee:

Ellen M. Charles*, Linda Gaudet and JoAnn Hayden.

Finance Committee:

Michael Horning (chair), Mark Lapidus and Katy Voss.

Recreation Committee:

A. Ferris Allen (chair) and Phil Schoenthal.

Benevolence Committee:

Linda Gaudet (Chair), A. Ferris Allen, Robert Manfuso, Jonathan Maldonado* and Bob Vallance*.

Track Surface Committee:

Katy Voss, Dale Capuano, Mike Trombetta and Linda Gaudet.

Scholarship Committee:

Mark Lapidus, Graham Motion and Chip Reed.

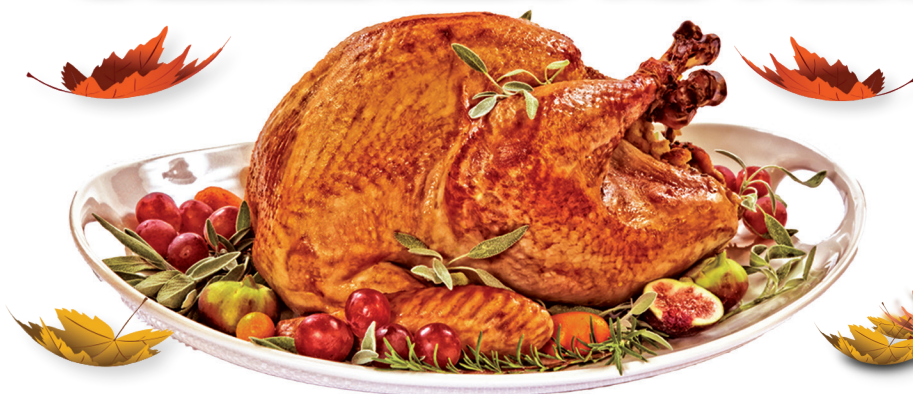
Communications Committee:

Phil Schoenthal, Mark Lapidus and JoAnn Hayden.

Awards Committee:

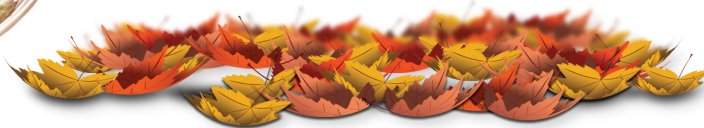
Joann Hayden, Larry Johnson and Hugh McMahon.

THANKSGIVING DINNER



The MTHA will continue the tradition of serving Thanksgiving dinner free of charge on Thursday, Nov. 23 to all backstretch workers and their families at Laurel Park and Pimlico.

Turkey, mashed potatoes and gravy and all the trimmings will be served from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Laurel Park in the track kitchen and from 8 a.m. to noon at Pimlico in the Snack Room above Barn 8.



MTHA
500 Redland Court, #105
Owings Mills, Maryland 21117

November 2017

STANDARD
PRE-SORT
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT #15
WESTMINSTER, MD

Obamacare Registration Assistance Provided



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

A. Ferris Allen, III
Dale Capuano
Linda S. Gaudet
JoAnn Hayden
Michael F. Horning
R. Larry Johnson
Timothy L. Keefe
Mark B. Lapidus
Robert T. Manfuso
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