



# The Horsemen's Newsletter



February 2017

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## Legislation Introduced Authorizes Hiring of Equine Medical Director

Legislation authorizing the Maryland Racing Commission to create the position of Equine Medical Director was filed in the House of Delegates Jan. 27, with a companion bill in the Senate expected to be introduced soon.

The position is one of several recommendations that stemmed from a 2013 evaluation of the MRC by the state Department of Legislative Services.



DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, LICENSING AND REGULATION

"It has been a top priority of the racing industry since 2013, but there were problems creating and funding the position," said Alan Foreman, Chairman of the Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association and general counsel for MTHA. "The industry is taking the bull by the horns to create the position, which would be filled by the racing commission."

The legislation adds the words Equine Medical Director to a host of positions the MRC can fill statutorily. The position would be funded by the industry using the percentages in place for allocation of casino video lottery terminal revenue: 80% Thoroughbred and 20% Standardbred.

Racetrack licensees and groups that represent owners, trainers and breeders for each breed would share the cost.

"The industry has agreed to collectively fund the position," Foreman said. "It has industry-wide support and is revenue-neutral for the state. We see no reason why it wouldn't move quickly."

## Fantasy Owner's Day In The Works For March 18th At Laurel Park



Horsemen and breeders are being encouraged to bring friends to a special Fantasy Owners' Day at Laurel Park March 18 as part of a broader effort to introduce people to racing and Thoroughbred ownership.

The event will be sponsored by the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association, Maryland Jockey Club, Maryland Horse Breeders Association and Capital Bank.

The Saturday event will include a "Fantasy Owners' Experience" with a 10:30 a.m. seminar in the Ruffian Room featuring the region's top partnership managers; a buffet luncheon, paddock access, a winner's circle presentation, and gift bags; and access to an optional training session at 8:30 a.m. on the track apron with coffee and donuts available.



The day also will honor existing owners and breeders with a free buffet luncheon in the new second floor suites during the races.

Both events are free however, advance registration will be required by March 15. To register online visit <http://mtha.eventbrite.com>.

The March 18 racing program at Laurel will offer five stakes: the Private Terms for 3-year-olds and Caesar's Wish for 3-year-old fillies, each worth \$100,000; two \$75,000 events for Maryland-bred or -sired horses: the Not For Love for 4-year-olds and up and the Conniver for fillies and mares, 4-year-olds and up; and the \$75,000 Harrison E. Johnson Memorial for 3-year-olds and up.

# 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 from the Purse Account. Participants do not make individual contributions into the plan.

The Board of Directors of the MTHA annually allocates funds to support this program. The plan year 2016 contribution is \$400,000, which is distributed among all participant's accounts for that year.

Sign-ups for the Pension Program are conducted each spring at Laurel Park and Pimlico. At that time, employees must register to receive benefits based on the previous year.

For individual questions regarding your pension account contact Joyce Hoffman.

She can be reached by calling 904-853-5385 or by email at [jhoffman@pollardpensions.com](mailto:jhoffman@pollardpensions.com) for questions about accounts or for information about cashing out.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR PENSION PROGRAM

Anyone employed in the care of horses on the backstretch in Maryland in good standing, 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.

# MTHA Board Votes To Propose Change In Claiming Rule To Commission

The MTHA Board of Directors Jan. 27 voted to request that the Maryland Racing Commission make a change in a rule regarding claimed horses.

Under the current rule, the new owner of a claimed horse, should it be entered and run within 30 days, must race the horse at a claiming price 25% higher than the price for which it was claimed. Under the MTHA request, the 30-day window would be reduced to 20 days.

MTHA board members made it clear the change can only be made by the MRC. The board acted in response to concerns voiced by trainers who attended the Jan. 27 meeting.

Most of the trainers said the current rule, coupled with a three-day racing week at Laurel Park for most of the year, hinders their ability to provide earnings opportunities for owners who claim horses. They also said the tightening of therapeutic medication rules over the past three years has perhaps negated the need to mandate that a horse race at higher claiming price in the start after it's claimed.

MTHA board member Larry Johnson, a racehorse owner, supports the current rule but offered the compromise in light of the racing schedule in Maryland and the concerns from horsemen who fill races.

The rule was established in 2013 in the wake of a series of catastrophic breakdowns at a time when purses were increasing because of revenue from casino video lottery terminals. MTHA attorney Alan Foreman said the racing commission at that time recommended and adopted the change; the breakdown rate declined in conjunction with the changes in medication rules.

Perception by the public and heightened scrutiny by animal rights' groups were factors in the rule change several years ago.

In other business, the MTHA board said it has contracted with John Passero as a consultant to examine the depth and cushion of the Laurel dirt surface and also assess how the surface is being maintained. The MTHA will then share the information with the Maryland Jockey Club.



Pension Plan Registration for the plan year 2016 will take place at the following times and locations. Bring your MRC Badge and W-2, 1099, or tax return for 2016. For more information call the MTHA office at (410) 902-6842.

## April 24 through April 28

Laurel Track Kitchen,  
9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

## May 1 through May 5

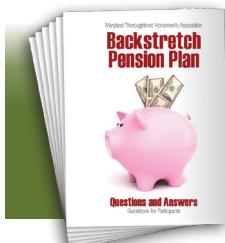
Laurel Park MTHA Office,  
9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

## May 8 through May 12

Pimlico MTHA Office,  
9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

**Failure to register will result in the loss of your 2016 benefit.**

Stop in the MTHA Racetrack Office or visit [mdhorsemen.com](http://mdhorsemen.com) for a copy of the MTHA Backstretch Pension Plan Guidebook to answer all your questions about the Plan.



# Board Actions

Open MTHA Board Meeting – January 27, 2017

**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, Dale Capuano, Ellen M. Charles, JoAnn Hayden, Robert T. Manfuso, Lawrence E. Murray, and Michael J. Trombetta.

**Member absent:** H. Graham Motion, and Charles J. Reed.

## 2017 Budget

The Board unanimously approved a comprehensive budget for MTHA for FY 2017.

## Test Barn Analysis

The Board unanimously endorsed the creation of, and expenditures related to, the creation of a Task Force to investigate Maryland's Test Barn procedures and protocols.

## Claiming Rule

The Board, by a vote of 8-5, voted to endorse a proposal which reduces the time period from 30 to 20 days, the current regulation that requires claimed horses to be raised 25% from the time of claim.

*In favor:* Mr. Allen, Ms. Bricker, Mr. Capuano, Mrs. Gaudet, Mr. Horning, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Murray and Mr. Trombetta.

*Voting against:* Mrs. Charles, Mr. Keefe, Mrs. Hayden, Mr. Manfuso and Ms. Voss.

## Daniel takes over from Zipf as Maryland state veterinarian

Dr. Elizabeth "Libby" Daniel began her new duties Jan. 1 as state veterinarian for the Maryland Racing Commission. She replaces Dr. David Zipf, who retired from the post at the end of 2016.

Daniel has served as state vet for the West Virginia Racing Commission at Hollywood Casino at Charles Town Races, and said she will continue in that role. Charles Town, located not far from Laurel Park, Pimlico Race Course, and the Maryland State Fair at Timonium, races in the evening except for a handful of days each year.

A resident of Charles Town, Daniel was state vet at the West Virginia track from 1997-2001 and then moved into small animal veterinary medicine. She returned to the Charles Town post about six years ago.

"I'm looking forward to it," Daniel said of her new position in Maryland. "The horsemen welcomed me with open arms. I had been substituting in Maryland for the last two years and was lucky enough to get on board here full time."

As for pulling double duty in Maryland and at Charles Town, Daniel said: "I'm a workaholic. I got that from my dad. I learned a lot from him before I went to vet school, so when I learned the medicine behind it that made it much easier to understand."

MRC Executive Director Mike Hopkins noted that the hiring of a new state vet

is unrelated the proposed position of Equine Medical Director, which has been in the works for a while.

A 2013 review of the MRC by the Maryland Department of Legislative Services recommended the hiring of an EMD. "While the MRC has been fulfilling its mandate, the commission could benefit from additional resources to effectively implement recently approved health and safety regulations and enhance its regulatory oversight, including an Equine Medical Director, a second investigator, and a deputy director."

The report also notes an EMD could "ensure compliance with the recently adopted stringent equine testing and drug policies." Maryland was at the forefront of adoption of what became the National Uniform Medication Program.

Zipf, who spent more than 50 years a vet in the Maryland racing industry, received the 2016 Joe Kelly Maryland Million Unsung Hero Award for his many years of service.

"Dr. Zipf has provided more than 50 years of veterinary service to the Maryland horse racing industry," Hopkins said. "Throughout that time he has provided, and continues to offer, the industry with a wealth of knowledge and personal commitment to the health, safety and welfare of the horses that compete in Maryland."



## Rec Report

### Texas Hold'em

Howard Wolfendale defended his title and won the MTHA poker tournament for the second consecutive month. Eddie Pryzbyla finished in second place and Tim Walsh finished in third.

The next poker game will be held at 12:30 on Tuesday, February 7th at Laurel Park. If you have any questions, please contact Marty Leonard at 203-733-1367.

### Bowling

The MTHA Bowling League is winding down for this season. The League has been very successful so far and we are all looking forward to a bigger and better league for next season which will start up in October.

Our League will end with a party/ceremony on Feb. 24 for outstanding bowlers, most improved female and male bowlers, and team and League awards.

### Winter Clothing Drive

Again, thanks to all the generous people who continue to support and contribute to the MTHA clothing drive, especially for the warm clothes such as coats, gloves, hats, etc. All is very appreciated.



The MTHA Express Shuttle Van runs every Tuesday and Thursday. Signup in the track kitchen or call Dan Mangum at 410-802-5798 to reserve your spot.

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# Don't Forget About Uncle Sam



Tax time is here. The MTHA will assist backstretch workers and trainers to prepare and file their state and federal tax returns.

An appointment is required. Stop in the MTHA racetrack office during live racing from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. or call 410-902-6843 to schedule.



**MTHA**

500 Redland Court, #105  
Owings Mills, Maryland 21117

**February 2017**

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The MTHA will be providing Coffee and Donuts to backstretch workers, owners and trainers on Saturday mornings on the backstretch at Laurel Park.

## Board of Directors

Timothy L. Keefe, President  
Linda S. Gaudet, Vice President  
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Michael F. Horning, Treasurer  
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