



# The Horsemen's Newsletter

March 2007

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## Ban on shippers from Virginia may be ended

The ban on horses shipping to Maryland tracks from Virginia was expected to be lifted on Wednesday, March 21, pending the results of tests from two Virginia farms linked to a recent outbreak of equine herpesvirus (EHV-1) in Virginia and Florida.

"We're hoping to begin accepting horses from Virginia as usual," said the Maryland Jockey Club's racing secretary, Georganne Hale.

The Maryland Department of Agriculture posts routine updates and information on the EHV-1 situation at [www.mda.state.md.us/article.php?i=5110](http://www.mda.state.md.us/article.php?i=5110).

For the latest information on the MJC's policy regarding shippers, call the racing office at (800) 638-1859.

## MJC to hold Appreciation Party and Fundraiser on April 15

The Maryland Jockey Club invites everyone to its Horsemen's Appreciation Party and Fundraiser to take place on the closing day of the Laurel Park meet, April 15, in the Laurel lounge bar (dining terrace).

Festivities will begin after the last race, at approximately 5:30 p.m.

Admission is \$10 in advance or at the door. Complimentary beer, wine and appetizers will be served, and there will be a cash bar. A karaoke contest will be held. Proceeds benefit the racing community.

## MTHA fights for the industry in Annapolis

With the 2007 legislative session entering its final weeks (and due to adjourn on April 9), MTHA representatives are engaged in intense lobbying efforts in Annapolis.

"We are cautiously optimistic about the chances for successful slots legislation—if not this year, then in 2008, as part of a major tax package," said MTHA President Richard Hoffberger.

"Meanwhile, our focus is on securing a purse enhancement from the state that will allow us to keep our program intact until those issues can be worked out," stated Mr. Hoffberger. "We have done our very best to make it clear to state officials that the competition we face from surrounding states is very real, and will be devastating to us unless the state takes action to put us on a level playing field."

MTHA representatives testified before the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee on March 6 and the House Ways and Means Committee on March 8, as well as at an earlier Senate Finance Committee briefing on January 25.

Various racing-related bills are under consideration.

Among them is House Bill 1342, sponsored by Delegate Nancy J. King (D, Distr. 39, Montgomery County), et al., that would direct a portion of Lottery revenue toward purses and breeders funds.

That bill has drawn favorable comment from subcommittee chairman Frank S. Turner (D, Distr. 13, Howard County), who told the Baltimore *Sun* he believes the House is "committed to helping" the horse racing industry this year.

## MTHA's new Web site draws rave review

See it for yourself at [www.mdhorsemen.com](http://www.mdhorsemen.com)

The MTHA is justly proud of its new Web site.

And feedback from Laurel/Pimlico racing secretary Georganne Hale has made the organization still prouder.

"Nicer than any other horsemen's association Web site that I've seen" is just one of the phrases that Ms. Hale used to describe the site that the MTHA unveiled in January.

She also called it "very fancy—but easy to deal with. It's user-friendly, and gives you a whole lot of information."

Designed by David Richardson of David Hayden Advertising, the MTHA's

Web site provides information on the various programs sponsored by the MTHA and Maryland Horsemen's Assistance Fund, profiles and photographs of directors, a history of annual award winners, plus up-to-date claiming and medication rules, an archive of *The Horsemen's Newsletter*, calendar listings of racing dates and auction sales, and more.

The site remains a work in progress, and additional features are still to be added.

To see it for yourself, visit [www.mdhorsemen.com](http://www.mdhorsemen.com).



## Magna announces major business moves

Magna Entertainment Corp., principal owner of Laurel/Pimlico, has entered into a major cooperative agreement with one of its largest business rivals, Churchill Downs.

The two companies are forming a new entity, TrackNet Media Group LLC, that will buy content from and sell content to third parties.

"By creating a single cost-effective organization to more efficiently buy and sell racing content, TrackNet Media will have the resources to pursue wagering integrity and security objectives, with a view toward generating revenue for horsemen and race tracks that create content," stated a joint press release.

"To better serve our customers and grow the financial return for our horsemen, Magna Entertainment and Churchill Downs believe the time has come to make our simulcast content available through as many trusted and eligible distribution platforms as possible," said Magna Entertainment's chief executive

officer, Michael Neuman. "In doing so, we can maximize the content available to customers and the revenue available to the horsemen and race tracks who create the industry's content."

At the same time, it was announced that Churchill Downs has purchased a 50 percent interest in Magna Entertainment's horse racing TV channel, HRTV.

### New Magna CEO

Michael Neuman has been named chief executive officer of Magna Entertainment Corp (MEC). He succeeds Frank Stronach, who had served as interim chief executive officer since March 2006.

Before joining MEC several months ago, Mr. Neuman was most recently president and chief operating officer of EchoStar, which operates DISH Network in the United States.

## Hoofprints

### Emergency Response tactics

Barn fire prevention. . . emergency transport. . . equine disaster management. These are just a few of the topics to be covered during the Equine Emergency Response Symposium on May 5 and 6 at Maryland State Fairgrounds.

There is no charge to attend. For information call (410) 887-7523 or visit [www.equineemergencyresponse.com](http://www.equineemergencyresponse.com).

### Equine Science Symposium

Equine researchers, educators and industry representatives from around the globe will assemble in Hunt Valley from June 5 to 9 for the Twentieth Equine Science Society Symposium, hosted by the University of Maryland.

The symposium, which is held every two years, showcases the latest research findings, technology and advances in the field of equine science. For information visit [www.enps.org/2007](http://www.enps.org/2007) or contact [ess@assochq.org](mailto:ess@assochq.org).

### Facts on National Animal Identification System

The Equine Species Working Group (ESWG), an organization formed to review and evaluate the possible role of

the National Animal Identification System (NAIS) in the equine industry, has released the second edition of its informational booklet, *NAIS and Horses: The Facts Surrounding the National Animal Identification System and the Horse Industry in the U.S.*

The booklet may be downloaded from the ESWG Web site at [www.equinespeciesworkinggroup.com](http://www.equinespeciesworkinggroup.com). Information is also available from the American Horse Council (202) 296-4031; e-mail: [AHC@horsecouncil.org](mailto:AHC@horsecouncil.org); Web site: [www.horsecouncil.org](http://www.horsecouncil.org).

### Jockey Club Fact Book available online

Record national purses and auction sale prices, as well as a reversal of a two-year decline in national handle, are among the statistical highlights contained in The Jockey Club's 2007 Online Fact Book, which is posted at [www.jockeyclub.com](http://www.jockeyclub.com).

The Jockey Club Fact Book is published annually as a statistical and informational guide to the North American Thoroughbred industry; the 17th edition of the printed version will be published and distributed in early May.

## Dale Austin, longtime turf writer, retires

Dale Austin, who covered racing for the Baltimore Sunpapers for 29 years and most recently wrote a weekly racing column for *The Capital* in Annapolis, says he's now "completely retired."

Mr. Austin, 74, grew up in Oklahoma, (near Blue Ribbon Downs, as he explains it) and became a part-time sports reporter for *The Washington Post* while serving in the Army at Ft. Myer in northern Virginia in the 1950s.

When the *Post's* racing reporter quit, he moved into covering racing and horse shows, he recalls, and that experience led to employment in the publicity department at Laurel, as well as at two Maryland harness tracks.

In January 1962, Mr. Austin was hired at the *Sun* to fill a vacancy created when its longtime racing writer Snowden Carter left to become general manager of the Maryland Horse Breeders Association as well as editor of *The Maryland Horse* magazine.

Mr. Austin's career at the *Sun* lasted until December 1991, when he accepted a buyout and moved over to become a staff writer for the *Racing Times*, a publication that soon went out of existence. He then worked in the publicity department at Laurel/Pimlico for five years, serving as publicity chief at Colonial Downs for that track's inaugural meet in 1997.

Since 1998, his work has appeared in the *Capital*.

Mr. Austin is a former president of both the Maryland Racing Writers Association (now Maryland Racing Media Association) and National Turf Writers Association.

## Thoughts, from page 4

Pension Plan (with annual registration beginning March 26).

The MTHA has managed to preserve—and even improve—its service to horsemen in a time when finances are shrinking. That alone is quite a feat.

Our business is threatened by competition from surrounding states. The livelihood of many is truly in peril. This is not the time for negative attacks on an organization that is focused on moving forward.

/Richard J. Meyer,  
MTHA Vice President

## Committee bulletins

### Bowie

Backstretch chairman Phil Capuano reports:

- The track is in good condition.
- Conditions have improved in the

### Bowie crew undergoes changes

The Maryland Jockey Club has made some personnel reassignments and changes at Bowie, reports general superintendent Glen Kozak.

• Jerry Burdick is the stall manager, replacing Bert Yourman, who retired several months ago.

• Mark Thomas has been given the official title of track superintendent, after serving in that capacity for some time.

• Nate Green has been assigned added responsibilities, along with the title of stable area superintendent.

track kitchen, along with a new food service.

• Track maintenance has done a good job with snow removal.

### Health and welfare

Rich Meyer, chairman of the MTHA's Health and Welfare Committee, reports that Health Fairs will be announced soon at all three tracks.

Look for details in next month's newsletter.

## Recreation report

From Dan Mangum,  
MTHA Recreation Director  
(410) 802-5798

### Orioles tickets

Backstretch workers are invited to participate in a series of eight drawings for free Orioles tickets, provided by the MTHA.

The first drawing will take place on April 7, for tickets to the April 11 game between the Orioles and the Detroit Tigers. Sign up in the track kitchens or call Dan at (410) 802-5798.

### Basketball

J.C. Harrington and Brian Parker's

## Assistance Fund to host holiday brunch

The Maryland Horsemen's Assistance Fund will sponsor a holiday brunch on April 8 at all three tracks.

Backstretch workers are invited to enjoy a complimentary meal in the track kitchens at Bowie, Laurel and Pimlico.

Please note: Brunch at Pimlico will be served in the track kitchen on the Hayward Avenue side only.

team won the MTHA's Sunday basketball league championship with seven wins and one loss.

### Golf

The MTHA will sponsor a golf outing at Ft. Meade on April 16, beginning at 11 a.m. Sign up in the track kitchens or call Dan at (410) 802-5798.

### Donations

The following generous people recently donated clothing, reading material and/or other items for distribution on the backstretch: Ben Dulany, Chuck Foley, Gene Gilhooly, Sylvia and Arnold Heft, and Binnie and Eddie Houghton.

## Horsemen's calendar

### RACING

**Laurel** . . . . . Now through April 15;  
Aug. 10 through Aug. 23;  
Sept. 5 through Dec. 31

**Pimlico** . . . . . April 19 through June 9

**Timonium** . . . . . Aug. 24 through Sept. 3

**FASIG-TIPTON MIDLANTIC AUCTIONS AT TIMONIUM**  
(410) 392-5555

**Two-Year-Olds in Training** . . . May 21, 22

**Two-Year-Olds in Training and Horses of Racing Age** . . . . . June 26  
Entries close May 18

**Eastern Fall Yearlings** . . . . . Oct. 1-3  
Entries close July 9

### OUT-OF-STATE AUCTIONS

**Ocala Breeders' Sales Company Adena Springs Two-Year-Olds in Training**  
Ocala, Fla. (352) 237-2154. . . . . March 26

**Ocala Breeders' Sales Company Selected Two-Year-Olds in Training**  
Ocala, Fla. (352) 237-2154. . . . . March 27, 28

**Keeneland Two-Year-Olds in Training**  
Lexington, Ky. (800) 456-3412. . . . . April 17

**Ocala Breeders' Sales Company Spring Two-Year-Olds in Training**  
Ocala, Fla. (352) 237-2154. . . . . April 24-27

**Ocala Breeders' Sales Company Two-Year-Olds and Horses of Racing Age**  
Ocala, Fla. (352) 237-2154. . . . . June 19, 20

**Fasig-Tipton Kentucky July Selected Yearlings**  
Lexington, Ky. (859) 255-1555 . . . July 16, 17

**Saratoga Selected Yearlings**  
Fasig-Tipton New York, Saratoga Springs, N.Y.  
(516) 328-1800. . . . . Aug. 6, 7

**Fasig-Tipton New York Preferred Yearlings**, Saratoga Springs, N.Y.  
(516) 328-1800. . . . . Aug. 10, 11

**Fasig-Tipton New York Open Yearlings**, Saratoga Springs, N.Y.  
(516) 328-1800. . . . . Aug. 14

**Ocala Breeders' Sales Company Selected Yearlings**  
Ocala, Fla. (352) 237-2154. . . . . Aug. 20-24

**Check the  
MTHA Web site  
for notice  
of the next  
Board Meeting.**  
Go to [www.mdhorsemen.com](http://www.mdhorsemen.com)  
and click on Calendar.



# MTHA's Backstretch Pension Plan Registration

## Attention All Backstretch Employees (Assistant Trainers, Exercise Persons, Grooms, Hotwalkers, Stable Foremen, Trainers, etc.)

Pension Plan Registration for the year ended 2006 will take place at the following times and locations.

Bring your Maryland Racing Commission Badge and W-2, 1099, or tax return for 2006.

For more information call the MTHA office at (410) 265-6842.

**Failure to register will result in the loss of your 2006 benefit**

### March 26 through March 30

Bowie Track Kitchen,  
Office Next Door,  
9:30 a.m. to noon

### April 2 through April 6

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

### April 9 through April 13

Pimlico MTHA Office,  
10 a.m. to noon

### April 16 through April 20

Bowie Track Kitchen,  
Office Next Door,  
9:30 a.m. to noon

### April 23 through April 27

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

### April 30 through May 4

Pimlico MTHA Office,  
10 a.m. to noon



**MTHA**  
6314 Windsor Mill Road  
Baltimore, Maryland 21207

**March 2007**

## Thoughts and comment

Complaining is easy.

Dealing with the many complicated issues that face this industry, and advocating successfully for horsemen, can be extremely difficult—and MTHA representatives do exactly that, every day.

In spite of the economic forces that are weighing on us, Maryland continues to have one of the best horsemen's groups in the country.

Yet a small number of individuals—often uninformed on the issues or deliberately twisting the facts—seems to take pleasure in complaining about this organization.

These people are not helping their fellow horsemen; in fact, they are doing harm by distracting MTHA leaders, however briefly, from the important matters that need attention.

Anyone who doubts that the MTHA is doing a fine job should visit the new Web site, at [www.mdhorsemen.com](http://www.mdhorsemen.com).

There you will find information on the MTHA's numerous, well-coordinated programs—from the Backstretch Health Center (staffed by a doctor, and free of charge to everyone on the race track) to a year-round recreation program to the

See *Thoughts*, page 2

## MTHA Board of Directors

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## IN MEMORIAM

**Philip Benson**, a longtime owner, died March 5 at the age of 94. Mr. Benson, better known in the steeplechase world, also owned a number of horses who competed on the flat.

**Walter M. Kelly, Jr.**, 66, who owned and trained horses for more than 40 years before retiring due to health problems a few years ago, died February 20.

**Linda Wilhelm**, a lifelong race track employee, died February 15. She was 65.

## The Horsemen's Newsletter

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*The Horsemen's Newsletter*

reports on issues and events of interest to owners and trainers in Maryland.

Your suggestions are welcome.