



ONE COMMON BOND—THE HORSE; ONE COMMON VOICE— MARYLAND HORSE COUNCIL

MHC UPDATE

mdhorsecouncil.org

MHC Hosts Maryland Racing Interests For Laurel/Pimlico—State Fair—Horsemen—Standardbreds—Allegany/Ocean Downs—Legislators



For the first time since slots became a real possibility in Maryland, all the various entities with an interest in slots came together to discuss the issues with Maryland horsemen and women. Over 100 people attended the May 6 open forum hosted by the Maryland Horse Council at the Prince George's Equestrian Center, Show Place Arena. Discussing the failure of slots in the recent legislative session, and the early plans for the 2004 session, were Dr. Tom Bowman, Maryland Horse Breeders Association; Tim Capps, Maryland Jockey Club, Laurel/Pimlico Race Courses; Richard Hoffberger, MD Thoroughbred Horsemen's Assn.; William Marlow, Maryland State Fair & Agricultural Society; William Rickman, Jr., Ocean Downs, Allegheny Racing Assn.; Sharon Roberts, Cloverleaf Standardbred Owners Assn.; Kelley Rogers, Standardbred Race Tracks.

Numerous legislators were present, including Senator Gloria Lawlah, Del. John Hurson, Del. Sheila Hixson, Del. Virginia Clagett, Del. J.B. Jennings and Del. Anne Healey.

Horsemen were eager to understand what happened this past session, and how can we learn from that for 2004. Each panelist gave his or her perspective on what did happen in the 2003 session, and their vision for what should happen to prepare for the 2004 session.

William Marlow gave a compelling presentation on why Timonium Race Track should not be left out of any slots bill. William Rickman, Jr. was able to provide insight into how slots currently work at his track, Dover Downs, and was also able to frame the slots issue within the larger economic framework of a state's base tax rate as well as corporate overhead for running slots business. Richard Hoffberger demonstrated how the numbers have to work in order to be viable for owners and trainers. Dr. Bowman gave a thoughtful analysis of what happened, and where MHBA hopes to go in the future. Tim Capps pledged the Maryland Jockey Club's continued forward action and intention to work with all interests. Sharon Roberts and Kelley Rogers discussed the Standardbreds perspective of trying to more raise support at the grass roots level.

Del. Sheila Hixson, Chairman of the House Ways & Means Committee, discussed the upcoming summer study sessions and hearings that her committee will be conducting on the slots issue.

Sen. Gloria Lawlah warned the horsemen that there are other entities interested in being involved with slots in Maryland, particularly Las Vegas casino interests, and they want slots in other destination locations.



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 Board Member _____
 Phone _____
 Alternate _____
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Mail w/ check payable to:
Maryland Horse Council
P.O. Box 233
Lisbon, MD 21765

Federal Bills To Protect Health Coverage of Riders

Two bills have been introduced in Congress to promote health care coverage parity for individuals participating in horse back riding and other legal recreational activities. In the Steele, Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME) introduced S. 423, and it has 2 co-sponsors. In the House, Rep Scott McInnis (R-CO) introduced the identical bill, H.R. 1749, which has 50 co-sponsors.

In 1996, the President signed into law the Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act, which prohibits insurance carriers from denying health care coverage based upon preexisting medical conditions or participation in legal activities. However, in 2001 regulations were adopted by the IRS, the Pension and Welfare Benefits Administration, and the Health Care Financing Administration (now Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services) that could affect people who enjoy riding (and other forms of recreation) by permitting health insurers to exclude coverage for injuries resulting from riding or other forms of "dangerous" recreation.

In other words, the first law recognizes that employers could not refuse health care coverage to someone who participates in a legal recreational activity, they do allow insurance companies to deny benefits for injuries sustained in connection with that activity.

S. 423 and H.R. 1749 reinstate the original intent of the '96 law, and both bills specifically state that benefits cannot be denied for the treatment of an

injury solely because the enrollee was involved in an activity such as riding, skiing or other similar legal activity.

The American Horse Council is urging horse people to contact their Senator or Representative and ask them to co-sponsor these bills. To find out who are your U.S. legislators, please visit www.house.gov, www.senate.gov, or visit www.horsecouncil.org.

Sunday Hunting Meeting

Concerned about the recently passed Sunday Hunting law? Worried about Sunday Hunting expanding into your area? This purpose of this meeting will be to lay the groundwork for a successful anti-Sunday Hunting campaign for 2004. Anyone concerned about Sunday Hunting is welcome to attend:

Thursday, July 17 at 7:30 p.m.
Club House: Howard County Hounds
Mt. Airy, Maryland
Please see www.mdhorsecouncil.org
for directions.

Trails & Greenways Committee Meeting

Wednesday, June 25—Annapolis area
For location and directions, please contact
Jacqui Cowan, 410-923-6157 • JCowan@gscm.org
or Peggy Bree, 410-224-8804 • bree@riva.net