



MHHC UPDATE

mdhorsecouncil.org

QUARTERLY MEETING

May 4

Show Place Arena—Prince George's Equestrian Center

Maryland Politicians Reach Out To All Horse People

When it comes to the horse industry, most of the focus in the legislative session as been on slots—and rightly so, as a healthy race industry affects all aspects of the Maryland horse industry.

But slots are not the only legislative subject on the minds of horse people, and thankfully, there are a few politicians who do recognize this.

On Tuesday, May 4, three politicians, who just happen to be horse folk as well, visited with the Maryland Horse Council. The Maryland Horse Council is an umbrella association for all horse organizations in the State. From dressage riders to race track breeders, from Western to English, from trail and pleasure riders to professional organizations for vets and farriers, 33 organizations are members of the Maryland Horse Council. Total membership in all these organizations exceeds 40,000.



Sen. David Brinkley

Grew up in Frederick Pony Club, representing the U.S. in international Pony Club Games; drove horse vans as a teenager, thought he would have a transport business; wanted to be a vet; while at University of Maryland, his professor, Parris Glendening, helped him get an intern position in the State Senate; decided he wanted to go into politics; sister went into show hunters and jumpers (Liz Sponseller); whipped-in for New Market Middletown Valley Hounds; now has a family, 30 acres, two Thoroughbreds with foals by their sides, and one horse with an eye missing; served two terms as a Delegate in the Maryland House of Representatives; now in first term in Maryland Senate total of 10 legislative sessions; currently serving on the Senate Budget, Taxation & Finance Committee, which, he notes, "is pretty unusual for a freshman Republican."

On Slots

"I opposed slots for eight years, but recognize that things have changed; I can see how slots have changed Charles Town. But if we do it, we have to do it right... Governor's office has taken a lot of heat for being insular, but they were simply trying not to have undue influence. This year's version simply tried to accommodate the Speaker. [I'm concerned because the Governor's] heart does not seem to be there for another fight... Thoroughbreds & Standardbreds are IN the Alamo; we are all in this together, but Standardbreds should watch their backsides; Rosecroft, Pimlico should all have slots, all are in the same boat."

On Ag Preservation & Horse Businesses

"It's almost impossible to make money in agriculture or in horses; [we] need preservation if [we are] going to keep any agriculture... received lots of e-mails regarding Del. Ross bill [HB 84 that would collect sales tax from boarding and training stables]—forwarded all the e-mails on to him."



Del. Virginia Clagett

Spend part of her childhood on 200 year old family farm in Washington County; when little they had 10 working horses, mostly draft, but started to shift to tractors; rode the plow horses, now hunts a Belgian Draft with Marlborough Hounds; spent 20 years on Anne Arundel County Council; played a critical role in changing county zoning from 1 house per 2 acres to 1 house per 20, but notes "we still need to do so much more;" serves on House Committee for Environmental Matters.

On Slots

"Don't think that is the best way to do, policy wise—but if it is the way we are going to go, will work with it... would like to see a more solid way to support purses and [MD] bred fund—not just supporting track owners, but supporting horse people through purses and [MD] bred fund."



Del. J.B. Jennings

Grew up in the Bel Air area, involved with cattle as a child; got interested in politics in 1995 when working as a driver for freshman Congressman Bob Ehrlich; had intended to be a fighter pilot; got out of college, no job, became a partner in the Mill of Hereford; discovered he knew nothing about horses when a client asked for some frog protector and he told her the Mill didn't sell supplies for amphibians; 6 years later has learned it and loves it; delivers feed himself on Mondays to the track; has one horse and a wife who knows enough about horses to compensate."

On Slots

"Came out of session pretty disgusted... like watching a patient die, and knowing that we are holding the magic cure; [this year's bill] wasn't a great bill, but we could have amended it... last year's Preakness, male side

of every horse went back to Native Dancer; the last 6 winners went back to Native Dancer [who stood in Maryland]... slots are going to come back.”

Ag Preservation

“Hot issue where I live... getting ready to buy 30 acre farm... best preservation is a successful farm.”

Q&A

Q: How do you address the complaint from people that they don't think the horse industry should be subsidized?

Jennings: State is biggest competitor to the track, through the lottery.

Brinkley: The Senate bill had \$300 million in capital improvements to the track required; which will generate a lot of business for others.

Q: All horse sports are growing; trail riding is number one choice—which increases park usage; trails are closing in surrounding states, and trail riders from neighboring states are coming to Maryland to ride. Additionally, all park recreational activities are increasing, all of which is going to impact our natural resources. What are your thoughts on public resources and on the future of Maryland parkland/natural resources?

Clagett: Supportive of the .5% transfer tax, which used to go

to the Rural Legacy fund, but no longer does; there are also concerns about taking Program Open Space funds and moving to General Funds, which would take away from the state and counties' abilities to purchase land.

Brinkley: A percentage of open space funding did get moved into the general fund with the understanding that bonds would be sold to replace it; funding for DNR comes from general fund, but there is a movement to institute more user fees. Currently, only the hunters are required to pay user fees. Also there are challenges when moving land out of production and into protection/parkland. Yes, there are lower costs for some aspects of management, but there are costs associated with timber management, clean up after hurricanes, maintenance and infrastructure. So, if revenue can be generated through users fees, it will go back to DNR for that.

Jennings: There are 6 programs, including Rural Legacy and Green Print, that had their funding cut. Rural Legacy dropped from a funding high of \$20 million to \$5 million, then down to zero, and now they are back to \$2 million. User fees are an option. Del. Weis' bill had a license and tagging fee for ATV users, with that revenue earmarked for ATV trail development.

MEETINGS

MHC meetings are open to all horse people. The next meetings are Sunday, Aug. 8, 4 p.m. at Laurel Park and Tuesday, Nov. 16 in Annapolis. Please check the website for more details www.mdhorsecouncil.org.

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Maryland Horse Council

2004

*Serving the Industry
Serving You*

- Association—\$100/year
- Farm—\$60/year
- Business—\$60/year
- Individual—\$35/year
- Youth Club—\$10/year

INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERSHIP—\$1,000 one-time fee

Institutional Membership: open to any private entity, corporation, or for a state, county or other municipal agency, department, service or office that wishes to support the Maryland equestrian industry. Membership shall be a one time fee of \$1,000. Payment shall entitle the institution to designate one or more individuals to serve in an advisory (non-voting) capacity to the Council.

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