

MARYLAND HORSE COUNCIL

NEWS

Message from the President



**Michael Erskine,
DVM, DABVP**

As the holiday season arrives, one cannot help but recognize the many challenges we currently face. Uncertainty in the economy, financial markets, automobile industry and much more leave us wondering how to plan for the coming year. But plan we must.

This is a time when we take stock of what really matters to us. We search for things in our lives that we can depend upon; things that are constants in changing times. Family, friends, and the things that we really enjoy and value become increasingly important.

So, with sensitivity to the pressures we may be feeling, I want to assure our membership that the Maryland Horse Council continues to move forward. Planning for our presence at the Maryland Horse World Expo, our business and health seminars, and our active advocacy for Maryland's horse industry are all in full swing. I invite everyone to participate in MHC activities. I know you will find them worthwhile, and your involvement strengthens our efforts.

Maryland's horse industry received welcomed news with the passage of the Slots Referendum this past November. This referendum is seen

(continued on page 2)

Slots Referendum Re-Cap

By Stuart Pittman

Dodon Farm

Thank you and congratulations from the Maryland Horse Council to everyone who put out yard signs, slipped brochures under windshield wipers at horse shows, forwarded e-mail blasts to their personal networks, and voted YES. We Won; by a landslide! Voters chose to save the Maryland horse racing industry, along with their own pocket books.

Now we must ask ourselves, what does the victory mean?

The Big Picture

A segment of our industry, the racing folks, is getting a financial boost. They will actually have some resources not only to enhance purses, but also to promote their sport. They are smart people and they are already strategizing about how to do this.

The rest of the horse world is the first group that racing can and should market to. By promoting all horse sports along with racing, everyone in the industry benefits. Anyone who has been to the

Kentucky Horse Park can clearly see how this works. It's a public showcase for the horse, and you can't leave the place without a sense of reverence for the great race horses that populate that state's bluegrass.

Political power is all about enthusiasm and alliances. The voters' support for slots has breathed some enthusiasm into the racing side of our industry. It was won through an alliance that included the Maryland Horse Council, the Maryland Farm Bureau, all sectors of the racing industry, the AFL-CIO, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce, and the office of Governor O'Malley. Now is the time to take that alliance and that enthusiasm and move it to new issues.

Let's strengthen the Maryland Horse Industry Board. Let's recognize that horse farms are good for the environment and help them to become even bet-

(continued on page 2)



President *(continued from page 1)*

as an essential element to the future of the racing industry in Maryland. Without it, a continuing and unsustainable decline was foreseen. With it, a brighter future is possible. The Maryland Horse Council was significantly involved in promoting the Slots Referendum. Our membership, through the Board of Directors, voted overwhelmingly to actively support the referendum. Congratulations to all of those who worked for its passage and special thanks to Steuart Pittman for coordinating our efforts.

In the mean time, the MHC must consider our financial status in light of the current economic conditions. Like any organization, the MHC depends on consistent revenue sources to continue operations. Membership dues and sponsorships are critical to support our efforts. Every member can assist us in meeting our obligations by paying dues in a timely fashion, attending our programs, and supporting our sponsors. You can also help by recruiting new members and sponsors who value Maryland's horse industry.

The MHC is a membership association. We are here to serve our membership, and we rely on our membership to support and drive our efforts. Our membership is the foundation on which we will grow. Growth in numbers means growth in influence to develop and promote the interests of the horse industry including land use, trail access and maintenance, health and welfare issues, economic viability, and much more. I encourage all members to be active in the MHC, participate in our activities, contribute to our discussions and positions regarding Maryland's horse industry, and promote membership in the MHC to others.

Slots Recap *(continued from page 1)*

ter environmental stewards. Let's enhance what the University of Maryland does for the horse industry in our state. Let's take another look at creating a Maryland Horse Park with a museum in it that celebrates the fact that American racing began here.

We all know how good horses are for us as individuals and for the communities where they exist. Now is the time to market that truth to the entire state, from the citizens all the way up to the General Assembly and the Governor.

The Maryland Horse Council needs you to take advantage of this moment. Go tour our web site at www.mdhorsecouncil.org. Come to the next meeting. Sign up as a member!

The Boring Details

Bids are due in February from businesses and partnerships who would like to install and operate slots in each of the five proposed areas, in Anne Arundel, Cecil, Worcester, and Allegany Counties and Baltimore City. The slots legislation requires that 2.5% of revenues go to a race track facility renewal fund, which will benefit racing and increase attendance. That is in addition to the 7% that goes to enhance purses. The law also requires that the racing industry develop and implement a marketing strategy. The first revenues will not be seen until 2010.

Some people have predicted that the 33% of revenue that goes to the slots operators to cover their investment and expenses is not enough for them to break even. Other states allow closer to 40% and more. Some legislators have said that if bids from operators do not come in then the General Assembly could amend the law to increase that percentage.

Oh, and if you like playing slots yourself, take note that in Maryland the machines are more generous than in neighboring states. State law requires them to pay out an average of between 87% and 90% of what goes in. Much better than the state lottery!

Anne Arundel Again!

If you happen to live in Anne Arundel County the fight isn't over. Laurel Race Track is potentially the biggest slots venue, and the one most important to the Thoroughbred industry. It is in Anne Arundel County, the place where County Executive John Leopold put an end to our plans for a Maryland Horse Park in Gambrills.

Leopold and the County Council could block slots at Laurel through zoning ordinance. Two council members have said that they intend to do so. Leopold was leaning in their direction until voters in his county spoke so clearly at the polls in support of slots. Now he says that he will not stand in the way, "so long as there is unanimous support" for slots at Laurel on the County Council. Clearly we have some work to do, and by the time you read this it will be well underway but not yet over. If you live in Anne Arundel County and can help lobby some council members, e-mail me at dodonfarm@verizon.net.

Update on Florida Equine Piroplasmosis Outbreak and Canadian Export Restrictions

After a horse tested positive for Equine Piroplasmosis (EP) in Florida in August 2008, the Florida State Veterinarian's Office began a full investigation and traceback. EP is a blood-borne parasitic disease that is primarily transmitted by ticks or contaminated needles. The disease was eradicated from Florida in the 1980's. Because the U.S. has been free of EP for two decades, it is required by law that suspected cases be reported.

This Equine Piroplasmosis outbreak investigation is near completion. There have been a total of seven counties and seven premises in Florida with horses that tested positive for EP. Throughout the investigation a total of 25 premises were placed under quarantine and approximately 200 horses were tested. Premises are being released from quarantine after obtaining negative test results and after an extended period of time since exposure. There is only one premises left that still has EP positive horses, five horses in total. All other horses that tested positive have been euthanized.

All of the horses that tested positive for EP have been directly linked to what is believed to be two horses that entered Florida from Mexico. The evidence indicates that the disease transmission was by management practices of shared needles and not by a tick vector. Thorough tick studies and surveillance have been conducted. No exotic ticks have been found and all testing on the collected ticks has been negative for EP.

Due to this EP outbreak, Canada placed movement restrictions on U.S. horses being exported to Canada and would not accept horses from Florida. Canada has since revised their requirements to allow horses from Florida with additional export requirements.

For horses that are being exported to Canada from Florida, an import permit is required as well as certification that the horse was inspected within 15 days prior to the date of importation into Canada. Additional certifications on the export health certificate are required including that the horse was not on a premises where EP occurred (or where EP occurred on an adjoining premises) during 60 days prior to exportation, and a negative cELISA test during the 15 days prior to the date of exportation.

Horses that are being exported to Canada from states other than Florida need additional certification that in the 21 days prior to exportation the horse was not in the state of Florida. These restrictions will be in effect until further notice.

Provided by the American Horse Council
www.horsecouncil.org

The MHC Business Committee is busy planning the 2009 Business Seminar, currently planned for February 25, 2009, at the Prince George's Equestrian Center. As in past Business Seminars, we will have guest experts offering a wealth of information on how to plan, market and grow your business. Watch the MHC website and your mailbox for more details!



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**Maryland Horse Council Meeting of the Board of Directors
August 19, 2008
Frederick, Maryland**

Officers Present:

Mike Erskine, President and Maryland Association of Equine Practitioners;
Jane Seigler, Vice-President & Director-at-Large for Farm Members;
Keith Wills, Treasurer & Director-at-Large for Businesses;
Crystal Kimball, Secretary, Director-at-Large for Business.

Directors Present:

Gretchen Mobberly	Director-at-Large for Farm Members
Steuart Pittman	Director-at-Large for Farm Members
Amy Burk	Director-at-Large for Individual Members
Beverly Raymond	Director-at-Large for Individual Members
Darryll-Ann Buschling	Director-at-Large for Youth Members
Carolyn Garber (for Joe Zentgraf)	Carroll County Equestrian Council
Mary Anne Steele	Howard County Horse Show Association
Crystal Kimball (temp sub.)	Howard County-Iron Bridge Hounds
Kathy Dobson	League of Maryland Horsemen
Patty Sasscer	Maryland Association for Wildlife Conservation
Cathy Tucker-Slaterbeck	Combined Training Association
Cricket Goodall	Maryland Horse Breeders Association
Terry Christensen	Maryland State Quarter Horse Association
Christine Bricker	Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association
Guillermo Warley	New Market-Middletown Valley Hounds
Monica Breland	Potomac Hunt Club
Liz Yewell	Prince George's Equestrian Center
Ron McNab (sub. for P. Huffman)	Trail Riders of Today
Royce Herman	Tuckahoe Equestrian Center

Directors Absent:

Vicki O'Hare	Director-at-Large for Individual Members	Tim Streaker	Maryland Farrier Association
Jacqui Cowan	Chesapeake Plantation Walking Horse Club	Alan Lohman	Maryland Horse Show Association
Kathy Schwartz-Howe	Days End Farm Horse Rescue, Inc.	Carrie Everly	Maryland Jockey Club
John Bolinski	Delmarva Driving Club	Felicia Hilleary	Maryland Standardbred Breeders Association
Vacant	Elkridge-Harford Hunt Club	Gail Varnedoe	Pasadena Horse & Pony Association
Debbie Rollins-Frank	Equine Rescue & Rehabilitation	Gayle Miller	Plantation Walking Horses of Maryland
Charlie Colgan	Fair Hill International	Deanna Beal	Potomac Valley Dressage Association
Jim McDonald	Graham Equestrian Center	Barbara Kraft	Ranger Foundation
Nicki Ratliff	Humane Society of Carroll County	Debbie Blair	Washington International Horse Show
Christy Claggett	Marlborough Hounds	Cindy Wood	Wicomico Hunt Club
Dorothy Troutman	Maryland Equestrian Foundation, Inc.		
Kristen Wilson	Maryland 4-H Foundation		

New Members

We welcome the following new members to the MHC:

Business Members:

Fair Hill Condominium Assoc.
Sally Goswell
719 Training Center Drive
Elkton, MD 21921
410-398-2992

Remuda Financial, Inc.
Jon Stone Goff
17740 Mill Branch Place
Mitchellsville, MD 20716
301-805-0827

Individual Members:

Mary Beth Friedel
Erin Giza
Mark Harrison
Judie L. Isham
Eileen Meier

New Officers Elected

At the last MHC board meeting, on November 18th, the following positions were elected for the fiscal years beginning July 2009 and ending June 2011.

President - Steuart Pittman
Vice President - Dr. Amy Burk
Treasurer - Royce Herman
Secretary - Christine Bricker


Elections are still to be held for Executive Committee positions. This committee serves as the steering committee for the board. If you are interested in serving on the Executive Committee, please contact MHC President, Dr. Mike Erskine at 301-829-4977 or mikedvm@aol.com

WANTED


A trail rider or interested party from Western Maryland (west of Frederick) to represent that area on the Trails and Greenways Committee of the Maryland Horse Council. Interested parties call or e-mail Royce Herman, 410-991-2203 or raherman1@verizon.net.

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**Maryland Horse Council
Executive Committee
2007 – 2008
www.mdhorsecouncil.org**

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Unwanted Horse Coalition Press Release

Finding the right Facility: What you should ask before Adopting or Donating a Horse

Making the decision to part with your horse is difficult decision. While there are many reasons one can no longer keep their horse, most struggle to find the right home for them. As a responsible and concerned horse owner, you want to make sure they will be well cared for and happy in their future endeavors. If you happen to be in the lucky position to adopt a horse, you also have concerns regarding the facility you are adopting from, as well as the horse's history.

There are many options out there if you are adopting or donating a horse, but before you settle on one you must know the right questions to ask any organization. It is YOUR responsibility to ask these questions.

First, make it a point to visit the facility and have a look around. What are the physical characteristics of the facility? Does the facility provide horses with ample room to move about and graze? Do the horses have easy access to suitable drinking water? What type of shelter is provided for the horses? Every facility will not be picture perfect, but having your horse's basic needs provided for in a safe environment is what matters. As you're looking around, write down any questions you might be concerned with.

You should know an organization's mission statement. See if they have a website and check it out. If so, how does the website compare with your first hand visit to the facility? How long has the facility been in operation? Do they have a board of directors? If so, who are they? Have any welfare charges been brought against the facility? You must know an organizations specific means and goals. Also, does the facility provide routine and emergency veterinary and dental care and farrier needs?

Not all facilities of a general type are the same. For example if you choose to go to a horse rescue facility, some may only take Thoroughbred horses off the track, some may not accept horses that are "owner initiated surrenders" and some may be a horse sanctuary only. Make sure you understand what type of organization the facility is. If you know of a facility near you and can not donate, or adopt a horse from them, it is still a good idea to ask them for helpful suggestions subject to your area if you need it and some facilities have been known to make exceptions.

If the organization is an adoption facility, ask if they will try to place your horse into foster care. If the facility uses foster care, ask how the homes are screened. If the facility only adopts horses out, what the requirements are for adoption? Does the facility follow up with the new owners to

ensure the horse is being properly cared for? What becomes of the horse when the adopter or the foster care giver no longer wants the horse? You may want to visit your horse from time to time. Ask if this is allowed and if they will let you know when your horse is transferred to a new owner. Also, there may come a time when you are able to have a horse again. Find out what their policy is on an original owner taking their horse back. If the facility can not place your horse in a new home, will they euthanize the horse? If so, will you be notified before hand?

Does the organization train/re-train their acquired horses and then sell for profit? While there is nothing wrong with this, it is something you should definitely know. Many organizations must sell a horse for profit after they put the time, money and energy into rehabilitating your horse. If they don't necessarily re-sell the horses, most organizations must charge a low adoption fee which covers the horse's basic care cost. It is also very important for you to ask if the facility has a policy against breeding, or do they restrict the horse's use in any way. What is the facility's post adoption policy on breeding and use? If it is an adoption facility, are stallions gelded upon entry and before adoption? Over-breeding horses for profit is not responsible ownership.

While it doesn't always matter if a facility is tax exempt, you should ask them for your own benefit. Is the organization an entity exempt for federal tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code? Does it file IRS Form 990 and forms required by the state? As for your horse's benefit, there are many great facilities that are not tax exempt, so you shouldn't overlook sending your horse there for that reason.

Finally, there are basic principles of horse care and management that apply to equine needs, regardless of the organization. Care can vary to some extent depending on specific factors such as region and climate. The American Association of Equine practitioners have laid out general guidelines for operating facilities called "Care Guidelines for Rescue and Retirement Facilities" prepared by the American Association of Equine Practitioners. These guidelines cover everything from Nutrition and basic hoof care to horse welfare and euthanasia. You can access this resource, as well as the Unwanted Horse Coalitions "Own responsibly" handbook by going to www.unwantedhorsecoalition.org

Remember, knowing the facts is your full responsibility before you donate or adopt a horse.

*Contact: Julia Andersen, Director
Jandersen@horsecouncil.org*

Prevention of Equine Cruelty Act of 2008 Reported

In late September, the House Judiciary Committee approved the Prevention of Equine Cruelty Act of 2008 (H.R.6598). The bill was introduced in July by Representative John Conyers (D-MI). Mr. Conyers is chairman of the Judiciary Committee.

There were a number of amendments offered during the Committee's consideration of the bill, but only one was adopted. Under the legislation, the Attorney General would take custody of any horses seized and provide for their placement or disposition. The amendment adopted was offered by Congressman Bob Goodlatte (R-VA) and would require that the Attorney General consult with the Secretary of Agriculture regarding the disposition of any such horses.

Mr. Goodlatte also indicated during the markup that the House Agriculture Committee had requested sequential referral of the bill since it dealt with the slaughter of livestock, an activity generally under the jurisdiction of the Agriculture Committee. It will be up to the House Parliamentarian to decide if the legislation is also within the jurisdiction of the Agriculture Committee. If it is, the bill will go to that committee for consideration. If not, it will be available to be placed on the House calendar for a vote by the full House.

The bill would criminalize the possession, transport, sale, delivery, or receiving in interstate or foreign commerce of a horse or horse meat with the intent that it be used for human consumption. It would apply to the transport and sale of horses for slaughter in the U.S. or into a foreign country.

Penalties would include fines and/or one year imprisonment for a first offense or one involving five or fewer horses. Offenses involving more than five horses or repeat offenders would face increased fines and/or up to three years imprisonment.

If you have any questions, please contact the AHC at 202-296-4031.

Provided by the American Horse Council

Additional Internet Legislation

Provided by the American Horse Council

On September 16, the House Financial Services Committee approved the Payments System Protection Act of 2008 (H.R. 6870). The bill, introduced by Congressman Barney Frank (D-MA) on September 11, would suspend the rule-making process undertaken last fall by the Treasury Department and the Federal Reserve Board (the "agencies") under the Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act (UIGEA), except with respect to wagering on professional and amateur sports games and events.

The agencies proposed regulations last fall to require the financial services industry to identify and block unlawful Internet gambling transactions. Those regulations have been opposed by many banks and credit card companies as onerous and unenforceable. Mr. Frank and others believe that adoption of these regulations would harm the banking and credit card system.

This bill would allow the agencies to adopt the regulations already proposed under UIGEA as they apply to sports betting, which is prohibited under the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act. But application of any UIGEA regulations to other forms of wagering, including pari-mutuel racing, would be held in abeyance until Treasury and the Federal Reserve Board conduct an administrative hearing and develop new regulations that include a definition of "unlawful Internet gambling" and a list of unlawful Internet gambling businesses. The agencies would also have to conduct an economic impact study of the to-be-proposed regulations. In effect, this legislation would allow the agencies to move forward with the regulations regarding sports betting, while starting anew on regulations applicable to other forms of wagering, including horseracing.

Chairman Frank is likely to try to get a vote on the bill by the full House before it recesses for the elections or adjourns for the year.



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2009 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 15

MHC Quarterly Board of Directors Meeting

(in conjunction with Horse World Expo)

All Members Welcome

Meet and Greet Reception 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Board Meeting 7:00 p.m.

Vista Room

Maryland State Fairgrounds, Timonium

January 15 – 18

Maryland Horse World Expo

Maryland State Fairgrounds

Timonium, MD

www.horseworldexpo.com

Future Quarterly Board of Directors Meetings

All Members Welcome

May 19

Prince George's Equestrian Center

August 18

Venue to be determined

November 17

Venue to be determined

September 19

Third Annual MHC BBQ Picnic

Venue to be determined

Presentation of the

2009 Maryland Horseman of the Year Award

For more information about any MHC event, please call 410-489-7826 or e-mail secretary@mdhorsecouncil.org.

For event day updates or weather cancellations, check the MHC information line at 410-230-1819.

Questions? Contact MHC at 410-489-7826