



ONE COMMON BOND - THE HORSE

ONE COMMON VOICE - MARYLAND HORSE COUNCIL

# MHC UPDATE

MAY 2017

WWW.MDHORSECOUNCIL.ORG

## President's Letter Jane Seigler

This is my final letter as President of the Maryland Horse Council. On July 1, Neil Agate will assume the duties of President, joined by Stuart Pittman as Vice President, Ahesahmahk Dahn as Secretary, and Clarissa Coughlin as Treasurer. This is an incredibly strong and talented team, and I have no doubt that they will serve MHC ably and well.

I am so very grateful for the opportunity to have served this great organization, for the people I have met, the things I have learned, and the chance to see, experience, and learn about the in-credibly diverse aspects of the our horse industry and equestrian community.

This is surely a very exciting time. With the aid of our tireless and dedicated volunteers and our professional administrative staff, and with lobbying assistance from the inimitable Frank Boston, the Horse Council has grown to be strong, solid, powerful, effective and respected - truly worthy as the representative of our \$1.15 billion dollar a year industry.

Now we are engaged in the next big step in the trajectory of our mission. Elsewhere in this re-port, you will read about our historic push for growth - our Go Pro initiative. I hope I can count on your support to help us reach our goal and take our great organization to the next level of service and support.

On June 30, I'll be riding off into the sunset. Until then I look forward to seeing you at our Quar-terly meeting on May 9 at Prince Georges Equestrian Center, and at the MHC Day at the Races on June 10th - Belmont Day, the last Jewel in the Triple Crown - at the beautiful, newly reno-vated Laurel Park Racetrack. Join us for track tours, great speakers, great food, live racing, and finish the day with live feed from New York of the Belmont Stakes - watch for details!

### MHC QUARTERLY MEETING

Open to All Members & Guests

**May 9, 2017**

**Prince George's Equestrian Center**

6:00 pm - 7:00 pm: Social hour and free refreshments

7:00 pm - 9:00 pm: Meeting

#### Highlights

- Report on MHC's historic plan for growth - our "Go Pro" Initiative
  - Final vote on major by-laws revision
- Report on Membership Satisfaction Survey conducted by UMD
  - Report on 2017 Legislative Session in Annapolis

Visit [www.mdhorsecouncil.org](http://www.mdhorsecouncil.org) to RSVP

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### MHC DAY AT THE RACES

Come join the MHC for our annual Day at the Races event on Saturday, June 10th, the same day as the Belmont Stakes. This year's event will take place for the first time at Laurel Park. We will again be offering discounted group packages, so bring your friends and family. The ticket cost includes entrance tickets, a program, champagne brunch, tour of the training barn, tours of the paddock and winners circle, handicapping 101 lesson on betting, speakers including a jockey, trainer, and track veterinarian, and door prizes.

Additional information coming soon, and there will also be a link to register online at

[www.mdhorsecouncil.org](http://www.mdhorsecouncil.org).



Maryland Horse Council membership is open to all associations, farms, businesses and individuals. To join, please visit [mdhorsecouncil.org](http://mdhorsecouncil.org) or contact [admin@mdhorsecouncil.org](mailto:admin@mdhorsecouncil.org). The Maryland Horse Council is sponsored by B & D Builders, The Equiery, Farm Credit, Maryland Horse Industry Board, MARBIDCO, Days End Horse Rescue, Maryland Thoroughbred Horseman's Association and Agape Pet Services.

# Help Maryland Horse Council Go Pro!

By Incoming Vice President Steuart Pittman

When Neil Agate agreed to become the next President of MHC, I saw an opportunity, and agreed to back him up as Vice President. When Ross Peddicord proposed engaging Kevin Atticks and Grow & Fortify to manage a major expansion of MHC, I got inspired. When Jane Seigler asked me to lead a campaign to raise the funds needed to launch the effort I HAD to say yes.

We've just gotten the Go Pro campaign underway. We need all of your commitments in hand before the May 9 Quarterly meeting. Join us that evening at Prince George's Equestrian Center to plan the next steps.

Here is the pitch I've been emailing to my friends. What's yours?

*I am writing to enlist you in what I think is the most important mobilization of horse people the state of Maryland has ever seen.*

*It's not about one issue. It's about a lot of issues, and about having a voice.*

*Maryland Horse Council is raising \$150,000 to Go Pro. We are hiring an executive director, engaging the most effective association management operation in the state, and reaching into the local level where the decisions get made that make or break horse farms every day.*

*Here is why Erin and I chose to contribute \$1,000 on behalf of Dodon Farm Training Center, less than one month of training revenue from one horse.*

*In Anne Arundel County where we live they issue citations for turning horses out in paddocks that don't have sheds, tried requiring bum bags on all horses on county-owned trails, won't let us place two run-in sheds or any other structures within sixty feet of each other, want us to get grading permits to push back growth on the edges of our fields, and have threatened to shut down horse shows, meetings, and club gatherings on farms. We organized effectively for a brief period and won the exemption from building permits for ag structures, but we must mobilize again and need a strong Maryland Horse Council to win. Your county may have similar issues, and county level advocacy is what Grow & Fortify is known for.*

- We think the Maryland horse industry is on the verge of explosive growth, and that horses are good for people, for land, and for clean waterways. We don't want to ever again risk losing our racing industry because we were too weak to get slots passed when surrounding states were doing it (or have slots revenue taken away), or fail to win on a project like the Maryland Horse Park and Agricultural Education Center at the Navy Dairy Farm because we got out-organized by a small group of misinformed neighbors. We want the Breeders' Cup at Laurel, the Fair Hill CCI\*\*\*\*, the revitalized Prince George's Equestrian Center and the rest of the network of facility improvements proposed by the Maryland Horse Industry Board.*
- We know what Maryland Horse Council could be. We know Kevin Atticks and his company Grow & Fortify. We are convinced that the people, the players, and the resources are poised to do something incredible by partnering with the other growing sectors of agriculture that engage local communities.*

*Maryland Horse Industry Board, The Equiery, and the major horse industry associations in Maryland are lined up and ready to fire on this. We need full participation to raise the funds that allow us to take this step.*

*We understand that this is a leap of faith. You have to believe that our new President Neil Agate, our current President Jane Siegler, your incoming Vice President (me), and the rest of the MHC Board of Directors and Executive Committee will make the right investments with these funds, and that the strategic plan we develop with Grow & Fortify will succeed.*

*MHC has never asked much of us financially. We do not expect to ever ask again. But now we are asking.*

*The list of donors for this campaign is people like us. We don't have extra money. We are trying to make it in the horse business. But we have a lot at stake.*

*Are you in for \$1,000? Can you do more? Less? Would you like to raise the funds through your clients with mandatory or voluntary check-off? We're happy to include membership dues from new members in your total, and if you're not a member now, we'll include this year's membership dues with your pledge.*

*You can use this pledge form or you can pay online at the Go Pro link at MDHorseCouncil.org.*

## Maryland Horse Council "Go Pro" Pledge Form

*Yes! I/we want to be part of the Maryland Horse Council's push to "Go Pro."*

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Associations & Business members:** Can you support MHC with at least \$1,000? That is just \$83.33/month to allow all your members to have personal access to assistance with local and state level zoning and regulatory problems, as well as state legislation!

\$1,000    \$2,500    \$5,000    Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Farm members.** Think of having your own personal advocate with your local permitting/zoning authorities! Isn't that worth your investment?

\$1,000    Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Individuals and Charities/Rescues.** Please contribute what you can to help MHC continue to exert maximum effort to help you and the issues that matter to you.

\$100    Other \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to:  
"Maryland Horse Council"  
and mail to: PO Box 141,  
Damascus, MD 20872

Or visit [mdhorsecouncil.org](http://mdhorsecouncil.org)  
to donate online!



# Legislative Report

The 2017 Maryland Legislative session has ended. During the 3 month session, 1,200 bills were introduced in the Senate, and 1,661 in the House, for a total of almost 3,000 bills. Each week during session, MHC legislative committee member Kim Egan Rutter scanned all bills introduced that week, flagging those of interest to the horse industry and the broader equestrian community. During our weekly conference call, we evaluated these new bills, discussed and arrived at our position, and determined our lobbying strategy. During the course of the session, the MHC Legislative Committee closely monitored about 30 bills (plus their cross-filed counterparts) that could have an effect on horse people, their farms, businesses and even their pets. We testified at a number of hearings, wrote and submitted written testimony on a number of other bills, and took formal positions without extensive testimony on others. Although budget constraints caused us to cut back on the use of our professional lobbyist, Frank Boston, nevertheless, our all-volunteer army was a force to be reckoned with, and legislators and other interest groups gave us repeated recognition as a significant and respected group.

As has been the case in recent years, we worked on a number of bills related to deer hunting on Sundays. This issue has consumed the resources of MHC (as well as the Legislature) for many years. Prior to the 2016 legislative session, we worked on a compromise position that we hoped would put the issue to bed. The compromise bill, which would have permitted Sunday deer hunting in the firearms season, statewide, until 10:30 am, did not advance in 2016 for technical reasons, not for lack of support. In the summer of 2016, the Horse Council, the Montgomery County Farm Bureau, the Montgomery Agricultural Producers, and MHC members TROT and the Potomac Hunt, among other groups, worked with Del. David Fraser-Hidalgo of Montgomery County, to craft a similar bill that would apply in Montgomery County only.

After lengthy negotiations, the final bill (HB310) called for hunting until 10:30 am on Sundays throughout the deer seasons (bow and firearm) and preserved the existing three full day Sundays (one for bow, one for firearm and one for the Junior day). The bill will sunset in five years, during which data on its effect on the deer population can be collected. Because the County Council was threatening to put in its own, all day/all Sundays bill, and because the bill adopted the "Sunday mornings only" approach of our own proposal, MHC supported the bill. It is noteworthy that during the hearing before the powerful Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee, the Chair, Senator Joan Carter Conway, who has been a great supporter, asked "where are my horse people?" and called the MHC President up to the witness table to ensure that we were on board with the bill - significant evidence of our growing presence in Annapolis! The bill passed both houses, and as of this writing, awaits signature by the Governor. It is our hope that this bill can become a template of a statewide resolution of this thorny issue.

This hope may be starting to become reality, as the Kent County Sunday hunting bills (SB629 and HB312), which initially sought to allow Sunday hunting on private land all day on all Sundays, were amended to restrict that to mornings only in the firearms season until 10:30 am, except for the Junior Day, and one other

Sunday in the firearms season. The bill would still allow for all-day/all-Sundays in the bow season. The House version of the bill passed both houses. Similarly, the Wicomico bill (HB 894), which initially called for all day Sunday hunting on the first Sunday of the bow season and on all Sundays in the firearms season, was amended in the Senate committee to provide for Sunday hunting until 10:30 am only in the firearms season. As of this writing, it does not appear that the House had time to approve the Senate-amended bill before the Legislature adjourned at Midnight on April 10, so the Wicomico bill is probably dead for this year.

Other bills we were active on included SB178/HB606, which concerned the fate of the Bowie Race Course Training Center. As initially drafted, the bill would have allowed for the State to purchase or condemn the Center. We testified in favor of preserving equestrian use, and it appears that the Maryland Jockey Club has re-committed to preserving the site as an equestrian training center. The bill was substantially amended to include provisions for funding improvements to several tracks as well as the Bowie facility, and the Senate version passed.

We successfully testified against a proposal (SB172/HB152) to shift the cost of the Maryland Racing Commission and the International Thoroughbred Race from the State to the Purse Dedication Account.

SB99/HB171 creates a study to review methods of diverting and beneficially reusing organic waste. The law expressly states that the Maryland Horse Council must have a seat at the table. Both bills passed both houses.

There are dozens more bills that we weighed in on, concerning, e.g., land preservation easements (we supported HB155, which passed), standards for animal cruelty (we supported SB790/HB455, which passed), creation of a State bond to support capital improvements at Fair Hill (\$100,000 bond was approved). We also monitored bills on many, many more topics, e.g., immunity from civil liability for emergency veterinary care, regulation of kennel licensing, farm labor, tax issues, fox hunting regulation, and more. A complete summary of all the bills we followed and what action we took on them, and their ultimate outcome can be found here: <http://www.mdhorsecouncil.org/legislative-blog>. If you have any questions about any of these bills, please let us know.

Finally, MHC, in conjunction with the Maryland Horse Industry Board and other industry partners, hosted our 3rd MD Horse Industry Day in Annapolis on Jan. 31. Hundreds of diverse horse people from around the Maryland came to the State's Capitol to advocate for the industry and meet their legislators, and learn how to effectively lobby at the grass roots level. We had a great turnout of elected officials and cabinet secretaries and other Hogan administration officials. Next year we are looking forward to an even bigger and better event, and we hope you can join us in making our voice heard to our legislators!



One common bond ... the Horse. One common voice ... Maryland Horse Council.

# Maryland Horse Council Membership Form

**Membership Type:** (check your membership type/amount)

	Annual	3-Year	5-Year	Lifetime	Total
ASSOCIATION:	_____ \$100	_____ \$300	_____ \$500	_____ \$1,000	_____ \$
BUSINESS:	_____ \$100	_____ \$285	_____ \$475	_____ \$1,000	_____ \$
FARM:	_____ \$75	_____ \$215	_____ \$355	_____ \$750	_____ \$
CHARITY & FOUNDATION:	_____ \$75	_____ \$215	_____ \$355	_____ \$750	_____ \$
INDIVIDUAL:	_____ \$40	_____ \$105	_____ \$175	_____ \$400	_____ \$
YOUTH:	_____ \$5	Date of Birth: _____			_____ \$

**Donations:** (if you would like to make a donation to one of our funds, please write in amount(s) below)

Political Action Committee:	_____ \$	_____	_____	_____	_____ \$
Maryland Fund for Horses:	_____ \$	_____	_____	_____	_____ \$
MHC General Fund:	_____ \$	_____	_____	_____	_____ \$

**TOTAL Amount** (Dues plus Donations): \_\_\_\_\_ \$**MEMBER INFORMATION:** (please fill in completely)

Assn./Bus./Farm/Charity or Foundation: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact or Individual's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell: \_\_\_\_\_ Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Work: \_\_\_\_\_

Email(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Website: \_\_\_\_\_

 Check if you **DO NOT** want your membership to automatically renew each year. Renewals take place each July.
**PAYMENT:** Can be paid Online, by Mail, or by Phone**CREDIT CARD info:** (NOTE: If credit card billing address differs from the address above, please complete below)

_____	_____	_____
CC # (please print clearly)	Exp. Date	Security Code
_____	_____	_____
Name of card holder as it appears on card (please print)	Signature	
Billing Address: _____	Phone: _____	
City: _____	State: _____	Zip: _____

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[www.mdhorsecouncil.org/join.htm](http://www.mdhorsecouncil.org/join.htm)

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