Penn National pursues slots site in Cecil County

Penn National Gaming Inc. ’s move to secure a potential slots site in Cecil County is good news for Maryland horsemen. That’s because the Purse Account will receive a portion of the revenue from each site, under the terms of the program created by the state legislature and set for approval by voters in the statewide referendum in November. And Penn National Gaming has a proven track record with slots facilities, including those currently operating successfully from each site, under the terms of the

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horses and the most sophisticated testing is necessary to protect them from those who are always seeking an advantage. • The Racing Medication and Testing Consortium should continue to be the vehicle for establishing uniform drug rules and penalties. They represent a broad cross section of the industry and are gradually developing support and consensus within the industry. They have already made significant progress in this area.

Their expertise is vital and it would be a mistake for Congress to try to substitute something else. Congress can hold the big stick to encourage the different states to adopt the regulations.

The industry has long recognized the distinction between therapeutic medication and illegal drugs. In the process of your deliberations, the Committee must differentiate between the two. There is unanimity in the industry that users of illegal drugs should be banned, but a slight trace of a therapeutic medication should not cost a trainer his job.

• I strongly disagree with the people who testified against banning Lasix. Before the ban, every horse on Thunder mist was treated. If a horse bled, a horse was known to have bled if blood came out of his nose after a race. It was a fairly common occurrence and would usually be clearly seen by all, including the fans. With the endoscope, we discover that hundreds of horses do bleed. The majority of the time, you rarely ever see a horse bleeding from the nose on the track after a race.

This is both a humane issue and an economic issue. Each bleeding event causes cumulative damage to the lungs. The more you can eliminate or minimize bleeding, the safer for the horse, and the longer their career will be. —Lasix does not always prevent bleeding but [it] absolutely delays the onset and lessens the severity.

I do not believe that horses run faster because of Lasix. They run faster if they don’t bleed.

—The regulations governing the administration of Lasix are designed to minimize any masking effect it might have. The dilution effect is only in urine and blood tests are taken on all tested horses.

—Since disease and environmental issues probably have more to do with bleeding than genetics, banning it for the good of the breed would be a disservice to the horses.

• As far as breeding and genetics are concerned, graded black type is the engine that allows for value of stakes fees. A two-tiered system could be implemented for drug regulations that distinguish between graded stakes races and all others.

Setting a higher standard for all graded stakes would accomplish what the purists want and ensure that we are not breeding “chemically engineered” horses and allowing for the same use of therapeutic medications, according to the American Association of Equine Practitioners’ recommendations, for the rest of the population.

• The statistics relative to average number of starts per horse are being taken as proof positive that the breed is more fragile. That may or may not be true, but it has to be taken into account that training patterns, styles, techniques, etc. have changed significantly.

The business is so competitive that trainer percentages are a very significant factor in determining to whom owners send their horses.

Penn National Gaming has some very conscious trainers who will trade their horses much harder to peak when they run and are very selective about what races they run in. I think that is a motivating factor.

Training patterns, styles, techniques, etc. have changed significantly.

Several of the new Commission members will attest to this change.

Mr. Tildon said he has a vested interest in the success of horse racing, and in particular, Pimlico.

Rosecroft halts live racing

Rosecroft Raceway is no longer conducting live racing.

The Maryland Racing Commission has declared Rosecroft—located in the Washington, D.C., suburbs and the larger of Maryland’s two harness racing facilities—to be in an emergency situation. At its July 15 meeting, the Commission approved Rosecroft’s request to discontinue live racing (with the exception of several cards of sire stakes and fund races) for as long as two years, while continuing to offer simulcasting.

Rosecroft will continue to pay the Thoroughbred industry $59.9 million a year for the right to simulcast in-state and out-of-state Thoroughbred races, under the terms of the 15-year agreement signed in April 2006.

By eliminating the expenses involved in live racing, and saving an additional $1 million through salary cuts and lay-offs, Rosecroft expects to operate in the black by the end of this year.

Meanwhile, the state legislature has established a task force to study the feasibility of Thoroughbred racing at Rosecroft.

Committee bulletins

Bowie

Backstretch chairman Phil Capuano reported:

• The maintenance crew has been making good efforts to ensure that the track is in the best possible condition.

• Barns are in need of routine maintenance, in particular rain gutters and doorways.

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horses in the Maryland Racing Commission. Terms of two new members officially began—Mary Louise Press and Charles G. (Chuck) Tildon, III.

Gregory H. Barnhill and David Bramble left the Commission, as they were not reappointed upon the expiration of their terms.

Ms. Press is an executive with Citigroup, serving as vice-president for community relations in the Baltimore-Washington region.

An attorney, she was twice elected to the Maryland House of Delegates, representing Harford County from 1991 to 1998. During that time she chaired the Judiciary Committee’s subcommittee on gaming.

Mr. Tildon is vice-president of marketing and communications for United Way of Central Maryland. A former executive with the advertising firm of Richardson, Myers and Donofrio and MGH Advertising, he also served as proof positive that the breed is more fragile. That may or may not be true, but it has to be taken into account that training patterns, styles, techniques, etc. have changed significantly.

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Bowie horsemen bid farewell to Poppa Green

Nathaniel L. "Poppa" Green, who devoted much of his life to the care and maintenance of Bowie’s backstretch, died on June 29 following a brief illness. He was 69.

Mr. Green, also known as Nate, grew up in a house next to the track kitchen at Bowie, where his father was a longtime maintenance worker. He joined the track’s maintenance crew at a young age and rose to become the backstretch superintendent.

"Nate was an exceptionally hard worker who put in 12 and 14-hour days," said the MTHA’s Bowie backstretch co-chairman Linda Gaudet. "He loved Bowie and always wanted to do everything he could to keep things running smoothly. He never turned anybody down for anything. He will be sorely missed."

Final tour of the grounds: Lacey Gaudet led Nathaniel "Poppa" Green’s funeral procession past the Bowie track.

Recreation report

From Dan Mangum
MTHA Recreation Director
(410) 437-4405

Backstretch Appreciation Day

The MTHA will sponsor a Backstretch Appreciation Day cookout at Laurel Park on Sunday, September 28 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. in the area next to the walk-up house near the racing office and paddock.

The menu will include pit beef and ham, barbecued chicken, salads and more. There will be door prizes and DJ music by Absolute Sound. Soda will be served.

All backstretch employees are invited to participate, compliments of the MTHA.

Softball

Softball continues on Tuesday nights at Laurel beginning at 6 p.m.

Bowling

The MTHA will sponsor a bowling tournament on Monday, September 15 at Lexington, Ky., 11 a.m. at the Laurel Fairlains. Call Dan at (410) 802-5798 or sign up in the track kitchens.

Donations

The following generous people recently donated clothing, reading materials and/or other items for distribution on the backstretch: J.D. Brown, Russell Clark, Clement Conner, Gene Gilhooley, Sylvia and Arnold Heft, Karen Przbyla and Jerry Trone.

The Horsemen’s Newsletter

Published monthly by the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen’s Association, Inc. 634 Windsor Mill Road, Baltimore, Md. 21207; (410) 265-6842; fax (410) 265-6841; e-mail mdhorsemen@rcn.com Web site: www.mdhorsemen.com

The Horsemen’s Newsletter reports on issues and events of interest to owners and trainers in Maryland. Your suggestions are welcome.

Maryland Thoroughbred Scholarship Fund

In awarding scholarships, special consideration is given to:
• Grade point average
• Number of college/university credits earned
• Pursuit of undergraduate or graduate degree in animal sciences or other racing-related program
• Continuity of service in employment
• Employer’s letter of recommendation

The MTHA does not pre-determine the number of scholarships to be awarded.

Scholarships available for backstretch workers enrolled in college

Are you enrolled in college or graduate school this fall—and also employed in the care of Thoroughbreds in Maryland, either on the backstretch, at a training center or on the racetrack? If so, you may be eligible for financial aid through the Maryland Thoroughbred Scholarship Fund.

More than $25,000 will be available this year through the program, which is supported by various industry groups and individuals, including the MTHA and Maryland Horsemen’s Assistance Fund.

The program is sponsored by the Maryland Racing Media Association (MRMA). MRMA selects the recipients, so as to avoid any potential conflict of interest.

For more information visit the MTHA Web site at www.mdhorsemen.com or call Vinnie Perrone at (301) 890-4876.

Anyone wishing to donate to this worthwhile cause is urged to call David Richardson at (410) 984-2770.

Applications must be received by September 5.

Thoughts and comment

After the U.S. House of Representa-
tives Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade and Consumer Protection con-
ducted its June 19 hearing on racing-related issues, Maryland-based owner/trainer/breeder Katharine M. Voss, a director of the MTHA, wrote a letter to the subcommittee leadership, responding to specific points that were raised in the hearing.

Following is an excerpt from Ms. Voss’s letter. The full text appears on the MTHA Web site at www.mdhorsemen.com (in the news section).

• [Trainer] Jack Van Berg was abso-
lutely right when he said that [drug-
related] testing facilities must be the first order of business. Most states do not have the resources to properly equip state of the art testing facilities, an absolute necessity if illegal drugs are to be eliminated. They should pool their resources to develop three or four regional, state of the art labs with uniform testing protocols that the tracks in each region use.

The horse business is like any other industry where a lot of money is in-
volved (investment banking, mortgage lending, etc.) that attracts an element of greed. The majority of participants are honest people who care about their

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