



The Horsemen's Newsletter

August 2016

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Horsemen Bill Vermillion Passes At Age of 96

Bill Vermillion, a longtime horse owner in Maryland after World War II, died Friday, July 8. He had been in good health until breaking his hip two weeks earlier in a fall. He was 96.

Born Nov. 15, 1919, Vermillion was an aide to Gen. George S. Patton and in France when World War II ended in 1945. By happenstance Vermillion got his start in racing when he decided to take a four-month trip to the French Riviera before returning home after the war.

"While he was there, he bought a racehorse," says Vermillion's son Richard. "He came home and surprised his mother by telling her what he'd done. Then he went to New York to pick up the horse. His name was Wilfred. I don't think he won a race with him, but that's how he got into racing and he was in it until the mid-1990s."

Bill Vermillion never had more than two racehorses at a time, but that was enough to interest Richard, one of his two sons, who has been in the business for 48 years and celebrated his 500th victory as an owner with Fleets Afire July 12, just four days after his father's death.

"My dad had a full life," Richard Vermillion says. "He is the oldest person to live on the Vermillion side of our family. He loved horse racing. The favorite colt he owned was Mohican and his favorite filly was Somebody's Pride. He enjoyed a good party and his friends."

Outside of racing, Bill Vermillion made a career with the Eastman Kodak Co., running its processing lab in Washington, D.C., until he retired in 1975.

At the racetrack he knew everyone, says his longtime friend, trainer Billy Christmas.

"I've known Bill since the 1950s," says Christmas, 91. "He always had a horse and he always had a story to tell. He was well-liked and well-respected for his horse knowledge. He was a low-key guy who knew a lot about racing. Any

Continued on Page 2 ➔

Backstretch Appreciation Day

Monday, September 19th, 1-4pm • Tent Beside Laurel Park Grandstand • All Are Welcome

All You Can Eat and a Wheelbarrow Full of Cash Prizes

The unsung heroes of our industry are undoubtedly the men and women who work tirelessly to provide the hands-on care and attention our equine athletes demand. In our continuing efforts to recognize and reward these individuals, the MTHA will hold its annual Backstretch Appreciation Day on September 19th from 1 p.m. until 4 p.m. at Laurel Park. This year's celebration will be one that you won't want to miss because, for the first time ever, we will be giving away \$5,000 in cash and other door prizes. There will be (8) \$500 cash winners and (1) grand prize of \$1,000.

This year's Appreciation Day will be held place in a new location, as the Maryland Jockey Club has offered us the use of its newly erected tent on the apron of the grandstand. This should provide attendees with a cool, shady environment to enjoy the

food, games, and other activities on tap for the celebration.

In addition to all that cash, our backstretch workers will be provided with All-You-Can-Eat BBQ Chicken, Pit Beef, Ham, a bountiful array of salads and sides, as well as non-alcoholic beverages to keep everyone cool and hydrated. The event will be catered by Russell Clark Catering and there will be a DJ provided by Carlyle Entertainment so attendees can dance off any desserts in which they decide to indulge.

The MTHA understands that early mornings and demanding schedules can be a strain not only on employees, but their families as well. So it goes without saying that the families of backstretch workers are wholeheartedly invited to take part in the food and festivities provided at Appreciation Day. There will be horseshoes, corhole,



MGM National Harbor Getting Close To Opening

Three years after receiving its license, The MGM National Harbor Casino is finally expected to open in December.

The opening is highly anticipated by Maryland's horsemen as another source of income for the industry. And that remains true, said Mike Hopkins, the executive director of the Maryland Racing Commission, despite the fact the Purse Dedication Account's percentage from the gaming industry will decrease 30 days after this newest casino opens.

Currently, the purse percentage is 7 percent from the four of the five currently operating casinos. Only Rocky Gap Casino in Western Maryland gives 2.5 percent.

Once MGM opens and after the 30 day period, the purse percentage will drop to 6 percent at all but Rocky Gap, which will

remain at 2.5 percent.

"Even though the percentage is smaller, the new casino opening will still give a bump to the revenue," Hopkins said. "Absolutely."

The MGM was awarded its license to operate in December 2013 and its original opening date was anticipated to be this August. However, at its May meeting, the Maryland Lottery Gaming Control Commission granted MGM a six-month extension to Feb. 14, 2017, though the facility is not expected to open later than December.

When the casino does open it is anticipated to have approximately 3,300 slot machines and approximately 160 table games. Carole Gentry, director of communication for Maryland Lottery and Gaming, said employees could total 3,600.

The casino is currently in the process of hiring and training its new workers.

The MGM will join Maryland Live! Casino at Arundel Mills Mall, The Horseshoe Casino in Baltimore City, the Hollywood Casino in Perryville and Rocky Gap in Maryland's expanding gaming industry.

The Maryland Jockey Club also has four Off Track Betting sites at the Horseshoe Casino, The Riverboat on the Potomac in Colonial Beach, Va., Timonium OTB at the Fairgrounds and G Boone's Restaurant and Bar near Boonsboro.

The MJC also operates OTBs at Laurel Park and Pimlico and is looking into the possibility of extending the OTBs to MGM in the future.



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MTHA

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➔ Backstretch Party Continued

and other games available for children and adults alike. In addition, we would like to offer an invitation to MJC employees who work hard to maintain the facilities and keep operations running smoothly at Laurel and Pimlico.

This year a big thanks goes out to the Maryland Jockey Club who provided not only the new venue for our celebration, but also the \$5,000 cash door prizes. As the

MTHA and the MJC look to continue our partnership in making Maryland racing the best it can be, Backstretch Appreciation Day is a fun and rewarding reminder of those who keep our horses healthy and running day in and day out. They are the heart of our industry and as such, we hope to see everyone out at Laurel Park on September 19th from 1PM-4PM to join us in celebration of our backstretch workers.

Attention Trainers

Please DO NOT put dirty shavings and sawdust in your shed rows or manure bins. You must get a dirty manure bin just for shavings or saw dust.



Rec Report

Softball Games

The MTHA is holding softball games on Tuesdays at the field located across from the track on RT 198 at the Driving Range. Games start at noon.

Basketball

We will be holding a 3-on-3 basketball tournament and cookout on Tuesday, August 16th at the Laurel Park Kitchen. Please contact Marty Leonard at 203-733-1367 to reserve your team.

MTHA Express Van Service

The MTHA is sponsoring a Van service for employees on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The service includes transportation for shopping, pharmacy, lunch, movies, doctor and dentist appointments etc. you must sign up in the truck kitchen each week for the service. For information please call Dan at 410-802-5798.

Poker Tournament Results

The winners of the Texas Hold'em Poker tournament on July 11th were: 1st place Tracy Campola 2nd place Dan Magnum 3rd place TJ Aguirre The next tournament is scheduled for Monday, August 8th at the Laurel Park Rec Room starting at 12:00 p.m. For more information, please contact Marty Leonard.

Baseball Ticket Distribution

The winners of the most recent Orioles ticket package drawing were: Gretchen Werner-8/3 vs. Rangers (works for Mike Trombeta), Dora Ruiz-8/19 vs. Astros (Richard Siliman), and Alberto Torres-8/31 vs. Blue Jays (Ollie Figgins).

The next and final drawing will be held on Friday 8/26 at the Laurel Recreation Room.

In addition, the Baysox Tickets are going fast. There are some left for late August and September. See Dan to sign up.



News Clips

Assistance Foundation Receives Grant

Thoroughbred Charities of America has awarded a grant to the Maryland Horsemen's Assistance Fund Inc., the organization that provides extraordinary benefits to backstretch employees in need.

TCA distributes grants to several categories of Thoroughbred industry related non-profits including rescue, rehabilitation and adoption organizations, as well as education and backstretch programs.



➔ Vermillion Continued

big outfit, he knew them and he was a wealth of information. He was always talking about other people's horses, never his own, even though he always had good trainers."

Among those in the 1950s was Clay Sutphin, who also worked for Sam Riddle, who owned Man o'War. Though only an infant when Man o'War won the 1920 Preakness and Belmont Stakes, Vermillion did see Pimlico Futurity winner and 1943 Triple Crown winner Count Fleet, Tom Fool, the 1953 Horse of the Year, and countless others.

"It's sad to see someone like him go," Christmas says. "He knew so many things in racing. He could tell stories about the 1940s, '50s and '60s. He saw so much."

Vermillion was a resident at an independent senior living facility in Laurel at the time of his death. A widower, he is survived by two sons, Richard of Rehoboth Beach, Del., and Ronald of Gaithersburg; two grandchildren, Amy and Brian; and one great-granddaughter.

Richard Vermillion said plans for a memorial service and a military burial are pending.

New Online Rulings Database Available

Horsemen looking for fair play at Maryland's racetracks should be delighted with the July launch of the Maryland Thoroughbred Rulings website by the MTHA.

The new site contains all rulings by Maryland stewards that have been handed out since Jan. 1, 2016, and will be updated regularly when MTHA receives this information from the Maryland Racing Commission.

"We created this as a service to our horsemen," MTHA executive director David Richardson said. "It is a fully dynamic database that allows horsemen to view rulings as well as sort by person and/or infraction."

The site can be accessed from mdhorsemen.com or directly at: <http://mdhorsemen.com/data/public/rulings/index.php>

Richardson said the MTHA created the website after receiving numerous inquiries from horsemen about where to easily find information on the Maryland stewards rulings.

"We found that these local rulings are commingled on other websites only for a short period of time. That's not very helpful to horsemen when they wanted to know what's going on in Maryland," Richardson said. "We decided to create in-house an easy to use, modern online database in an effort to have complete transparency and eliminate information traveling from word-of-mouth. These days, the more transparent and accessible you can make things, the better."





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- Two Drink Coupons with Prizes
- \$500 Team Awards
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