

DTHA

Delaware Thoroughbred Horsemen's Journal

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What a Year it's Been!

It's hard to believe that it's time to pack up and head off to our winter destinations. As my first year as Executive Director comes to an end, I am truly amazed that the time has flown by so quickly. The Board has been very busy this year working on several issues that are very important to all of us.

First and foremost, many miles and hours were spent in Dover this year to obtain matching funds from the State for the Delaware Certified Thoroughbred Program (DCTP). All the hard work paid off and we were awarded \$500,000 annually from the State for this excellent program.

We are also working on putting together a group plan for Workmen's Compensation insurance rates. There are censuses available in the Horsemen's Office that we would like filled out by trainers stabled at Delaware who would be interested in this program. These censuses will be handed in to the insurance underwriters to see if it is possible to obtain rate quotes for a group plan.

If you have not yet completed a census, please call our office, (302) 994-2521 ext. 7284 and ask for a form to fill out and fax back.

Year-round training is another issue about which we have had ongoing discussions with Mr. Rickman, Jr. We know many of you have expressed a strong interest in remaining in Delaware

year-round with your business and families and we will continue to pursue this issue.

At this time we are currently in the middle of contract negotiations. At the November 9, 2005 Delaware Racing Commission meeting, William Fasy, Chief Operating Officer of Delaware Park, presented a letter to the commissioners to race 136 days for the 2006 meet, from April 22 to November 19. It has been a fear of many horsemen that Delaware Park would cut the amount of race dates with the onslaught of Pennsylvania slots. Delaware Park is required by State legislation to only run 100 live dates, but through our contract they guarantee us 130 days. It is our intent to at least maintain that number.

In October, board member Madeline Locke and I traveled to Keeneland to attend the NTRA Annual Marketing Summit. During this time, we were able to meet with Robert Eliston, President and CEO of Turfway Park. As most of you know Turfway is the first North America racetrack to install an all-weather surface and race over it. The question has been asked "Is the Polytrack surface for us?" This surface offers many positive advantages as well as being very low maintenance.

At Turfway, there were no morning breaks for refurbishing, and the tractors only ran over it every third race. The track never had to be watered. At this point, the Polytrack surface has been well received by Turfway horsemen and jockeys. The surface seems to be more forgiving and reports are that the horses training over this surface are becoming sounder. The jockeys ride a full card in just one set of pants and use only two sets of goggles.

There are some questions that have not been answered so far, such as will there be any respiratory issues? How will the surface handle the winter weather? Other questions that I feel are a concern for the Mid-Atlantic area are: how do horses adjust to training over this surface and then ship to a dirt surface and fare or vice-versa? Reports at this point are very favorable, but only



Bessie Gruwell
Executive Director



Photo: Hoofprints, Inc.

Ramon Dominguez finished on top of the jockey standings with 188 wins during the 2005 Delaware Park meet.

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time will tell. Mr. Eliston invited us to visit Turfway Park any time. He will take us around to the barn area to visit with trainers and riders to get their views on the track surface. We will monitor Turfway's surface throughout the winter months.

As the meet closed, we watched trainer Scott Lake break his own record for most wins at the meet, with 126 wins. Mike Pino was second, with 67 wins, Tim Ritchey third, with 60 wins, Michael Gorham fourth, with 54 wins and Steve Klesaris in fifth, with 45 wins.

Michael Gill was this meet's leading owner with 44 wins. Home Team Stable was second, with 35 wins, Puglisi Stables third, with 25 wins, John D Murphy, Sr., fourth, with 24 wins and Bill Waldron fifth, with 21 wins.

Once again Ramon Dominguez finished on top of the jockey standings while being absent for six weeks while riding at Saratoga with 188 wins. Roberto Alvarado, Jr., regular rider for leading trainer Scott Lake, finished second, with 140 wins. Jeremy Rose third, with 120 wins, Mario Pino, fourth, with 101 wins and Jose Caraballo rounding out the top five, with 90 wins.

The Horsemen's Office will be open all winter. Beginning December 1, 2005 we will be open from 9 a.m.– 3 p.m. Monday through Friday. I wish you all a safe and winning winter and look forward to seeing you in 2006.

Happy Holidays!

Bessie

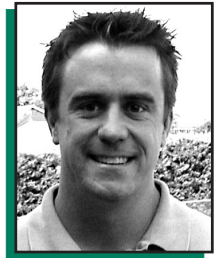
Counselor's Corner

With many leaving for warmer weather tracks, I want to make sure that everyone is aware of the counseling services that are available at many of the other race tracks north and south.

Last month, I had the opportunity to meet with the Winners Federation to discuss the quality of life for backstretch workers. The Winners Federation was created in 1989 with assistance from the Ryan Family Foundation and the University of Louisville School of Medicine. During the past 16 years the Winners Federation has been working with many of North America's racetracks to promote increased productivity, reduced absenteeism, and increased profitability for trainers and owners.

Please visit www.winnersfederation.org, for more information on services at other racetracks and information on how to get connected. If you have any questions, call me (302) 383-7233.

Hope you all have a safe and happy holiday and I look forward to seeing you in the spring!



G. Wesley Jones, MSW

G. Wesley Jones, MSW
Backstretch Employee Assistance Program

In Memoriam

WILLIAM M. RICKMAN, SR.

Mr. William M. Rickman, Sr. passed away on September 30th at the age of 84. Mr. Rickman purchased Delaware Park in 1983 with partner William Christmas and then bought him out in 1984. The early years here at Delaware Park were lean, to say the very least. We were racing for an average daily purse structure of \$35,000. \$5,000 claimers were racing for a \$3,000 purse.

Everyone (horsemen and the Rickman's alike) was struggling to stay afloat and trying to keep Delaware Park open. Horsemen paid stall rent throughout the off season and Mr. Rickman rewarded them with stall credits if they raced their horses here during the following live meet rather than ship to race at neighboring tracks. Then in 1994 the Horse Racing Redevelopment Act was passed. With the arrival of slots, horseracing in the State of Delaware was resurrected and, as they say, the rest is history.

Mr. Rickman was the savior for Delaware Park. The gamble on Delaware Park paid off, not only for him and his family, but for many families here in Delaware. It also became a new home to many horsemen that shifted their operation to Delaware in the mid 1990's. The resurrection of Delaware Park has afforded many horsemen a richer life in the thoroughbred industry.

Mr. Rickman loved his horses, horseracing and first and foremost always considered himself a horseman and he was very proud of that fact. One of his last visits to the track was July 9th on his 84th birthday. One of his many homebreds, EBONY STAR, won that day. She also won the inaugural running of the

Delaware Certified Distaff two days after his death on October 2nd, notching her first stakes victory. EBONY STAR was out of one of Mr. Rickman's favorite mares, MAKE ME CONQUER.

You could see Mr. Rickman and his longtime companion Dean Jones, any given morning driving around in the barn area visiting with his horses and trainers. He would stop in the track kitchen for breakfast or a cup of coffee. He would hang out in the racing office, and then move out to the paddock and sit with jockeys while the horses were being saddled, telling stories. He loved telling stories and wheeling and dealing. His wheeling and dealing has left a legacy on Delaware Park that will never be forgotten.

Photo: Hoofprints, Inc.



Backstretch Retirement Plan Update!

In 2002 we began our Defined Contribution Plan (backstretch retirement) with 52 participants and a contribution of \$34,195.75. We currently have over \$500,000 that has been contributed to this account via the 1/2 of 1% of the revenue from the slots dedicated to this program. The plan investment is diversified in over eight different funds. The average balance in the individual accounts is approximately \$3,700. The average balance of individuals who have signed up for all three years is approximately \$6,700. At this time we have had 111 different participants sign up for the program, but we have had participants that did not re-enroll. We strongly encourage all those that are eligible to sign up every year and take advantage of this program to help prepare for your retirement. The sign-up for next year will be held in the Horsemen's Office in June!

Fair Hill Fund Established

Some of our fellow horsemen were devastated by the barn fire at Fair Hill, Maryland. We send our heartfelt sympathy to those who were affected by this tragedy and the great losses they suffered.

The Delaware Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association (DTHA) and Delaware Horsemen's Assistance Fund (DHAF) each donated \$5,000 to the Maryland Horsemen's Assistance Fund. If you would like to make a contribution, please send it to Maryland Horsemen's Assistance Fund, 6314 Windsor Mill Road, Baltimore, Maryland 21207. Please write "Fair Hill Fund" on the check. Should you have any questions, please call Sherene Bracho at (954) 658-4748.

Delaware Certified Thoroughbred Program Gains Momentum!

On October 2, the inaugural running of the Delaware Certified stake and Delaware Certified Distaff races were run. EBONY STAR won the \$50,000 Delaware Distaff Stakes. The late William Rickman, Sr. owned and certified EBONY STAR, trained by John Zimmerman. MAGICAL GEM won the \$50,000 Delaware Certified Stakes. Mary Eppler Racing Stable and Triple Tree Stable are the owners, with Mary Eppler being the trainer as well as the certifier.

There are a total of 607 horses enrolled in the Delaware Certified program, of which 380 are of racing age. In 2005 there were 99 horses that made 366 starts. The total award money for the owners and certifiers since the inception of the program (2002) is \$489,934.00. Currently there are 46 Delaware farms participating in the program that can board horses for the 90 days required to become Delaware Certified.



Photo: Hoofprints, Inc.

EBONY STAR



MAGICAL GEM



Photo: Hoofprints, Inc.

After Hours

Play...Pray...Travel Away

Here we are again, the end of another racing season and a time to start planning and looking forward to next year. It's my hope that the programs and services that the Delaware Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association (DTHA) provides for backstretch employees make Delaware Park a welcoming place to work and live. Here's a summary of some of the programs sponsored by the DTHA: trips to Dorney Park, English as a Second Language classes, shopping shuttle, trip to Blue Rocks game, Paddock Party, horsemen's picnics, movie nights, pool tournaments, volleyball, basketball, soccer, religious services, and the H-2B Visa Program.

November 4th was a beautiful sunny day for our last horsemen's picnic for this season. This particular picnic featured roast pig provided by Cannuli Brothers meats of Philadelphia. The meals were served by volunteers from St. Marks United Methodist Church, whom, I may add, have been very generous with their time over the years. This event was

well attended and is a great way to show our backstretch employees that the DTHA appreciates their contributions to racing.

As a final farewell gesture to our horsemen, the DTHA will sponsor a Thanksgiving Dinner to be served in the Backstretch Café on November 24th. Many thanks to John Malatesta for making Thanksgiving a memorable occasion for our backstretch residents and for all his help throughout the year.

I would like to thank all those that volunteered to help with many of the events, and I am looking forward to next season. I wish you all God's best, and may all of you have a safe and joyful Christmas and New Year.



Pete Lizarzaburu

Pete





Delaware
Thoroughbred
Horsemen's Association, Inc.

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AFLEET ALEX Auction a Huge Success!

A total of \$7,872.95 was donated to the American Red Cross from the proceeds of the AFLEET ALEX items that were sold on eBay. There were seven items up for bid and the auction lasted for ten days.

The top selling item was the autographed saddle cloth that AFLEET ALEX wore here at Delaware Park on AFLEET ALEX DAY, September 10, 2005, bringing in a hefty \$3,250.00. AFLEET ALEX'S halter and shank with brass name plate brought \$1,884.99. Four of his shoes that were removed here at trainer Tim Ritchey's barn by blacksmith Gene Reed sold for \$2,432.96. Each shoe was sold separately with a picture of the blacksmith removing the shoes. Also sold was a Fred Stone lithograph autographed by Fred Stone, Tim Ritchey and Jeremy Rose for \$305.00.

Our thanks to trainer Tim Ritchey for coming up with the idea and signing countless autographs along with jockey Jeremy Rose and Cash is King LLC's managing partner Chuck Zacney, along with all the AFLEET ALEX connections for all their help and generosity.

WINTER HOURS

The Horsemen's Office will be open all winter
Monday – Friday, 9 a.m.- 3 p.m.
Tel: (302) 994-2521 ext. 7284 Fax: (302) 994-3392
Email info@dtha.com

Wellness Works

My thanks go to all those who made the 2005 season the most successful ever at Delaware Park. We had over 1,000 patient visits this year, and were able to offer medications as well as care for acute illnesses and injuries as well as ongoing conditions like diabetes and high blood pressure. We provided HIV counseling and testing, breast cancer checkups and cholesterol checks at our annual Health Fair and added some diabetic labs to our on-site capabilities.

Cathy Felt, RN was back for a sixth year. Other returning staff included Nancy Bearss, PA, who has been with the clinic since it opened, and Otto Medinilla, PA for his second year. We had excellent support with medical assistant duties and translation from Norma Sierra and Evie Green.

I want to especially recognize the board and staff of the Delaware Horsemen's Assistance Fund and Delaware Park for their cooperation in making another year at the clinic a real success. With everyone's help, we expect to be back for another great year in April 2006.

Have a safe and healthy winter, and see you in 2006!

Glenn Hamilton, MD

Editor's Note

The Delaware Thoroughbred Horsemen's Journal is published bi-monthly. Members are invited to submit suggestions for future articles and letters to the editor. Contact Kim Sprenger, at (302)994-2521 ext. 7284; Fax (302) 994-3392.

your newsletter is online at www.dtha.com