



The Horsemen's Newsletter



April 2024

Vol. 33 • Number 4

"Pimlico Plus" Bill Gets House Approval

Legislation that would authorize the rebuild of Pimlico Race Course, construction of a new training center and creation of a non-profit under the Maryland Thoroughbred Racetrack Operating Authority passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 104-34 on April 1.

House Bill 1524 easily passed the House Appropriations Committee and House Ways and Means Committee March 26 as did a list of primarily technical amendments. The bill was sent to the Senate Rules Committee and the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee.

The Senate was expected to take up the bill April 2. The regular General Assembly session ends April 8.

The bill as amended would facilitate the issuance of \$400 million in bonds for the reconstruction of Pimlico and construction of new training center at a yet-to-be-named location. It also would authorize creation of the not-for-profit model that would take effect Jan. 1, 2025, under what is being dubbed the "Pimlico Plus" plan.

The MTROA, created last year by the General Assembly, already had announced that 1/ST Racing (The Stronach Group) agreed to transfer ownership of the Pimlico property to the state for \$1. Attorney Greg Cross, who chairs the MTROA, told House Ways and Means Committee members all agreements with TSG are subject to due diligence.

Under the deal, TSG would license the Preakness Stakes and Black-Eyed Susan Stakes to the state. Cross at the hearing said TSG will receive \$3 million in perpetuity plus 2% of pari-mutuel handle from the two most lucrative days of racing at Pimlico each year. There would be a 10-year license that would renew

Continued on Page 3 ➔



Pension Signups Open Thru June 1

Virtual signups will again be the primary means to participate in the Maryland Backstretch Pension Plan, which this year will receive a \$1-million contribution as approved by the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association Board of Directors.

Signups will be available beginning April 1, with a deadline of June 1. The online registration form is available at: <http://backstretchpension.com>.

Backstretch workers and horsemen employed in the care of horses on the backstretch at Laurel Park, Pimlico Race Course or the Fair Hill Training Center, including trainers, are eligible to participate. However, the eligible employee must have worked a minimum of 1,000 hours during 2022 and provide documentation to that effect (with a W-2 or 1099 form, or a tax return).

Benefits become available when the employee reaches the age of 65, or at age 55 with 25 years of service. More about about the program including qualifications is available at: <https://mdhorsemen.com/index.php/services/pension-program>.

As part of the signup process you must submit a W2, 1099 or tax return documenting the earnings you reported on the registration form.

You will also need your Maryland Racing Commission badge. You may do this by emailing a PDF or a photo of the tax documents and badge to info@mdhorsemen.com; texting a photo of the tax documents and badge to (443) 805-1995; or dropping forms off at the MTHA Racetrack Office at Laurel.

If you need assistance filling out the online form in English or Español, call Diana Pinones at 410-902-6844, Tom LaMarra at (859) 492-8365 or Jessica Hammond at (301) 776-0404. The MTHA staff would prefer that if you visit the office for assistance, please do so in the morning in the Recreation Room office at Laurel rather than during live racing. You are welcome to schedule an appointment.

You are not enrolled in the program until you receive confirmation of your successful registration. At this time you will also receive a current statement if you have been enrolled in the plan for at least two consecutive years. The following categories of licensees are not eligible to participate: owners (as opposed to owner/trainers), security, maintenance, valets, parking, mutuels, vendors, jockeys, or miscellaneous.

To Register, Eligible Horsemen Should Visit:

backstretchpension.com

Summer/Early Fall Stakes Schedule Released

Laurel Park will offer \$2.425 million in stakes during its summer meet and the first portion of its fall meet.

The summer meet runs from May 31 to Aug. 18, and will be followed by the seven-day Maryland State Fair at Timonium meet. The Laurel fall meet begins Sept. 13 and runs through the end of the year.

The summer meet will feature 17 stakes valued at \$1.575 million. Eight stakes totaling \$850,000 are scheduled over three weekends in September. Purses for the

Oct. 12 Maryland Million have not yet been released, nor has the remainder of the stakes schedule for the Laurel fall meet.

Highlights of the summer meet include a four-stakes program July 28 including the \$150,000 Frank J. DeFrancis Dash for 3-year-olds and up at six furlongs; and on July 14 three grass stakes including the \$100,000 Prince George's County for 3-year-olds and up at 1 1/8 miles. There will be six stakes for Maryland-bred or -sired horses on four different days.

Date	Race	Purse	Age	Sex	Distance	Surface
6/16/24	Stormy Blues	\$100,000	3YO	Fillies	5 1/2 Fur	Turf
6/29/24	Star De Naskra	\$75,000	3YO		7 Fur	Dirt
7/14/24	Jameela	\$75,000	3YO & Up		6 Fur	Turf
7/14/24	Ben's Cat	\$75,000	3YO & Up		6 Fur	Turf
7/14/24	Prince George's County	\$100,000	3YO & Up		1 1/8 Mi	Turf
7/21/24	Big Dreyfus	\$100,000	3YO & Up	Fillies and Mares	1 1/8 Mi	Turf
7/21/24	Miss Disco	\$75,000	3YO	Fillies	7 Fur	Dirt
7/28/24	Concern	\$100,000	3YO		7 Fur	Dirt
7/28/24	DeFrancis Dash	\$150,000	3YO & Up		6 Fur	Dirt
7/28/24	Alma North	\$100,000	3YO & Up	Fillies and Mares	6 1/2 Fur	Dirt
7/28/24	Deputed Testamony	\$100,000	3YO & Up		1 1/8 Mi	Dirt
8/4/24	Bald Eagle	\$100,000	3YO		1 1/8 Mi	Turf
8/4/24	Searching	\$100,000	3YO	Fillies	1 1/16 Mi	Turf
8/4/24	Caesar's Wish	\$100,000	3YO & Up	Fillies and Mares	1 1/16 Mi	Dirt
8/18/24	Find	\$75,000	3YO & Up		1 1/16 Mi	Turf
8/18/24	All Brandy	\$75,000	3YO & Up	Fillies and Mares	1 1/16 Mi	Turf
8/24/24	Shine Again (R)	\$75,000	3YO & Up	Fillies and Mares	6 1/2 Fur	Dirt
9/14/24	Twixt	\$100,000	3YO & Up	Fillies and Mares	1 Mi	Dirt
9/14/24	Polynesian	\$100,000	3YO & Up		1 Mi	Dirt
9/14/24	Sensible Lady Turf Dash	\$100,000	3YO & Up	Fillies and Mares	6 Fur	Turf
9/14/24	All Along	\$100,000	3YO & Up	Fillies and Mares	1 1/8 Mi	Turf
9/22/24	Weathervane	\$100,000	3YO	Fillies	6 Fur	Dirt
9/28/24	Selima	\$125,000	2YO	Fillies	1 1/16 Mi	Turf
9/28/24	Japan Turf Cup	\$100,000	3YO & Up		1 1/2 Mi	Turf
9/28/24	Laurel Futurity	\$125,000	2YO		1 1/16 Mi	Turf



Tina Bond Elected THA President

The Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association (THA) held its annual meeting and election of officers in Florida March 19-20. Tina Marie Bond, President of the New York Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association (NYTHA), was elected President of the national organization. She is the first woman to head the THA since its inception in 1994.

"It's an honor to be elected President of such an esteemed collective," Bond said. "THA is at the forefront of collaborative decision-making and policy implementation on issues such as racehorse aftercare, equine safety and welfare, and protecting the integrity of our sport. I look forward to leading the organization as it addresses the challenges that horsemen and women face on local, regional, and national levels."

Bond, who with her husband Jim own Song Hill Thoroughbreds LLC in Saratoga Springs, New York, follows previous THA Presidents Michael Martin, Rick Violette Jr., and Joe Appelbaum.

"We are proud of the leadership role that women play in the THA and our member organizations. Tina has worked with the THA for years and she will be a great resource for the industry," said THA Chairman Alan Foreman.

Established in 1994, the THA is a highly regarded and influential voice for its member organizations in Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania, representing more than 20,000 owners and trainers.

The Horsemen's Newsletter

Published by the
MTHA

500 Redland Court – Suite 105,
Owings Mills, Maryland 21117;
(410) 902-6842; Fax: (410) 902-6841;
E-mail: info@mdhorsemen.com
Website: www.mdhorsemen.com



MRC Approves Laurel Summer Meet Dates



The Maryland Jockey Club April 2 received approval from the Maryland Racing Commission for a 33-day summer meet at Laurel Park. Live racing will begin Friday, May 31 following the 11-day Preakness meet and conclude Sunday, Aug. 18.

MJC Acting President Mike Rogers told the MRC that pari-mutuel handle for the three-month Laurel winter meet was down about 11% due to the loss of six racing programs due to weather issues. Though the number of days dropped 15%, average handle during the meet was actually up from the same meet in 2023, he said.

Rogers also noted that representatives of the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Authority were on

hand at Laurel in March 28-29 to conduct its annual accreditation examination. Early indications were encouraging, he said.

"The initial feedback (on our operation) was very positive," Rogers said. "The feedback was that Laurel punched above its weight. I'm told our policy format is one of the best."

The HISA Racetrack Safety and Anti-Doping and Medication Control programs are enforced in Maryland. MRC employees handle the collection of blood and urine samples for testing under the ADMC program.

Rogers said a full report from HISA is forthcoming and will be shared with the MRC.



Renaissance Awards Tickets Available For Purchase

Join us at the Renaissance Champions Awards dinner to celebrate the best of Maryland racing and breeding in 2023. The celebration is hosted by the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association and Maryland Horse Breeders Association.

The dinner will be held Wednesday, April 17, at the Marriott Owings Mills Metro Centre located at 10101 Grand Central Avenue in Ow-



RENAISSANCE AWARDS

ings Mills, Md., just off Interstate 795. The event, planned for 6-10 p.m., will begin with a cocktail hour.

Tickets are \$100 each and can be purchased online via Eventbrite at the following link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/renaissance-champions-awards-dinner-tickets-852386469877>. Please make your reservations before April 6.

Pimlico Plus, Continued

every five years.

TSG would operate the Preakness at Pimlico this year and in 2025, and at Laurel Park in 2026 to accommodate construction at Pimlico. The MTROA and its not-for-profit would assume control in 2027 at the new facility. Outside of those two days, the not-for-profit would be in charge of all racing operations at Laurel and Pimlico beginning in 2025.

Cross said TSG agreed to allow use of Laurel for racing and training "rent-free" for three years (2025-27). He told lawmakers a financial analysis that included information from the TSG indicates Laurel under the MTROA can operate in the black.

In recent years, under a 10-year live racing agreement that has been repeatedly extended, the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association and to a lesser extent the Maryland Horse Breeders Association have subsidized operations at Laurel and Pimlico. The 2024 figure is roughly \$11 million.

A substantial part of the House hearing was devoted to questions from lawmakers about the benefits the plan would bring to the Park Heights neighborhood in Baltimore. It was noted the package includes \$10 million for "workforce" housing in the Pimlico neighborhood as part of a joint community development project.



We've Got Your Ticket

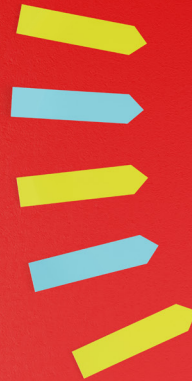
Sign up for O's, BaySox or DC United ticket raffles by calling Dan Mangu at (410) 802-5798.



UNCLE SAM IS CALLING

MTHA office will assist Maryland horsemen with preparing and filing their state and federal tax returns.

An appointment is required. Contact the MTHA office at 410-902-6844 to schedule.



MTHA
500 Redland Court, #105
Owings Mills, Maryland 21117

April 2024

STANDARD
PRE-SORT
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT #15
WESTMINSTER, MD

MTHA Golf Tournament Monday, April 29

Spring is right around the corner and that means one thing, the MTHA Spring Golf Tournament is upon us.



Walden Country Club
Crofton, Maryland
Registration: 11 a.m.
Tee Off: Noon

\$65 per golfer. Contact Dan Mangum at 410-802-5798

Board of Directors

- A. Ferris Allen, III
- R. Thomas Bowman
- Lacey A. Gaudet
- Linda S. Gaudet
- David Hayden
- JoAnn Hayden
- Michael F. Horning
- Timothy L. Keefe
- H. Graham Motion
- Joseph P. Pons, Jr.
- Charles J. Reed
- Brittany T. Russell
- Michael J. Trombetta
- Katharine M. Voss
- David H. Wade