

VLT'S NUDGED TOWARD NOVEMBER BALLOT

Assemblyman Ralph Caputo on Monday, March 1, 2010 announced he and several other Assembly Democrats have introduced legislation that would seek voter approval to place video lottery terminals at the Meadowlands horse racing track

"Let's face it - times have changed and so must we if Meadowlands racing and gaming are going to continue to be a strong part of New Jersey's economy," said Caputo (D-Essex). "We cannot stand idle and pretend expanded competition at nearby horse tracks in New York doesn't exist. It's there, and unless we move forward, we will forever lose those customers, the immense revenue potential and the horse racing industry itself."

The bill (A-2458) would ask voters to approve video lottery terminals at a referendum held during a November general election. A video lottery terminal is an electronic game of chance similar to a video slot machine. Under the bill, if voters approve, the State Lottery Commission would be authorized to install the machines at the Meadowlands race track, with the operation developed by the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority and overseen by the Division of Gaming Enforcement.

A portion of the revenue earned by the machines would be placed into a newly created Horse Racing Special Fund that would benefit the state's horse racing industry.

"This is a sensible way to keep gaming and horse racing more viable in New Jersey while helping cut the horse racing's reliance on state subsidies," Caputo said. "I know many have strong opinions on the idea of bringing gaming to the Meadowlands, but I hope this can at least be the start of a in-depth discussion on this matter."

The bill is also sponsored by Assembly members Fred Scalera and Gary Schaer (both D-Bergen/Essex/Passaic), Elease Evans (D-Passaic/Bergen) and Ruben J. Ramos Jr. (D-Hudson).



Muscle Hill added to his honors on February 28, 2010 when he was selected the 2009 Dan Patch Award as Horse of the Year, adding to his divisional title and Trotter of the Year crowns.

Well Said was named Pacer of the Year.

In 2009, Muscle Hill, the New Jersey-sired son of Muscles Yankee, won all 12 of his starts and retired with a 20-race winning streak from 21 starts. The Greg Peck trainee swept through the premier events for three-year-old trotters, including a six-length victory in the Hambletonian on August 8 at the Meadowlands. His time of 1:50.1 equaled the all-age mile track record.



Dr. Karyn Malinowski [right] accepts her award from Dr. Stephen Dey II [left] and Agriculture Secretary Douglas Fisher. [Photo by Donna Noonan]

MALINOWSKI: HORSEPERSON OF THE YEAR

Dr. Karyn Malinowski, director of the Equine Science Center at the Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, was been named the 2009 Horseperson of the Year by the New Jersey Department of Agriculture's Equine Advisory Board. Luncheon, an event which celebrates the state's best in the equine field.

Malinowski was presented with the 2009 Governor's Trophy on Sunday, January 31, 2010 at the New Jersey Breeders Luncheon.

"Karyn richly deserves this recognition by the New Jersey Equine Advisory Board," said Robert M. Goodman, executive dean of Agriculture and Natural Resources. "She has devoted her professional life to equine leadership and is recognized nationally as one of the most effective educators and advocates in the area of equine health."

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From the Desk of President Tom Luchento

If all the pieces fall into place, the Meadowlands Racetrack, long the home to the world's greatest harness racing, will become what we have always hoped, a standardbred-only facility.

Discussions are underway to shift all thoroughbred racing to Monmouth Park with a rich, boutique summer meet and a short fall meet.

This will put us in the position to race prime fall dates at the Meadowlands, picking the best days of the week and showcasing our sport to its best advantage.

The cost of converting the Meadowlands racing surface twice a year will be of considerable benefit to the New Jersey Sports & Exposition Authority.

And this could very well open the door to keeping the Meadowlands backstretch open for year-round training.

In the weeks ahead, as negotiations are completed, the details will unfold, and we will share them with you on our website, www.sboanj.com.

For now, we can only assure you that we are facing hard decisions and taking the bold steps that are necessary to satisfy those in Trenton who question whether we are serious about saving our own industry.

It is important that we not be seen as a financial

drain on the NJSEA and the state. With this one-year experiment, both the thoroughbred and standardbred horsemen of New Jersey will be taking actions that could very well determine our future and prove our viability as an industry.

In this issue of the *Pacesetter*, you will read about the agreement that has added \$4.8 million to Freehold's purse account, including an initial 30 percent increase. Purses will go up again this spring and will reach nearly double the distribution in 2009.

The benefits will be most pronounced for New Jersey-sired or owned horses [NJOS] who are eligible for a bonus of 25 percent added to the base purse in many of the races.

We welcome AJ Sabath, our new legislative advocate. Well-respected on both sides of the political aisle, AJ will represent us in the State House as we continue to seek the support of the decision makers in Trenton.

He has more than 20 years of experience and is well aware of our issues, having spent four years as chief of staff for State Senator and former Governor Dick Codey.

STANDARD BRED BREEDERS & OWNERS ASSOCIATION OF NEW JERSEY

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Harness Horsemen International
609-747-1000

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Trenton—609-292-0613
Freehold — 732-462-3800
Meadowlands—201-460-4137

NJ Trailer Ban—NJTP
800-336-5875

FREEHOLD RECEIVES PURSE SUPPLEMENT FUNDS

Purse money at Freehold Raceway will increase by nearly \$4.8 million thanks to an agreement reached with the Standardbred Breeders & Owners Association of New Jersey.

The New Jersey Sports & Exposition Authority has agreed to release the Purse Enhancement Agreement funds which will be disbursed at Freehold, mostly in 2010

"The extra funding will benefit all classes racing at Freehold," said SBOANJ President Tom Luchento. "The increases will be especially apparent in the higher classes, with a preference for New Jersey-sired or owned horses."

"We are pleased to come to this agreement to provide for an increase to the purse program at Freehold Raceway," said Christopher McErlean, president of PennWood Racing Inc., Freehold's parent company. "I think everyone understands this is a temporary solution and a long term funding and business plan for all segments of racing - racetracks, horsemen, breeders and our customer base - to survive in New Jersey is necessary and urgently needed."

In the first round of increases, most claiming and condition classes experienced a 30 percent purse increase, effective with the condition sheet issued on February 11. A second jump in purses will be implemented in the spring.

All races for New Jersey-sired or owned horses will continue to have a bonus of 25 percent added to the base purse for such races.

The bulk of the funds - \$4.2 million - will be disbursed through February 2011, with a focus on maiden and non-winners of two classes. Future increases will be targeted toward increasing both the quality of races and field size at Freehold.

Both Freehold and the SBOANJ are committed to using these funds to benefit the Freehold horsemen.

Freehold will employ some of the available funds to introduce new late closing events which will be announced shortly.

PACE	OLD PURSE		NEW PURSE			
CLAIMING	4000	2000		2200	NJSO	2750
	6000	2700		3500	NJSO	4375
	8000	3100		4000	NJSO	5000
	10000	3800		4900	NJSO	6125
	15000	4500		5800	NJSO	7250
	20000	6400		8300	NJSO	10400
			REVISED CLASS			
MAIDEN		2700		4000	NJSO	5000
N/W 2PM		2700		5000	NJSO	6250
NW1500L6		2700	NW2000	3500	NJSO	4375
NW2500L6		3100	NW3000	4000	NJSO	5000
NW3500L6		3800	NW4000	4900	NJSO	6125
NW4500L6		4500	NW6000	5800	NJSO	7250
NW8000L6		6400	NW8000	8300	NJSO	10400
W/O		7500	W/O	9800		X
PREF		8600	PREF	11000		X
TROT	OLD PURSE		NEW PURSE			
NW2PM		2700		5000	NJSO	6250
NW1500L6		2700	NW2000	3500	NJSO	4375
NW2000L6		2800	NW2500	3600	NJSO	4500
NW4PM		3800	NW4PM	4900	NJSO	6125
NW4500L6		4500	NW5000	5800	NJSO	7250
NW8000L6		6400	NW8000	8300	NJSO	10400
PREF		8600	PREF	11000	NJSO	

TrotPAC Still Needs Your Help

The future of racing in New Jersey is going to depend on the future of gaming at our racetracks. Without the addition of income from slots, sports betting and other forms of gaming, New Jersey's preeminence in the world of harness racing is in jeopardy.

But it will take funding to tell our story and make our case both directly to legislators and through the mass media. Without your financial support, we cannot succeed. This is a critical time to INVEST in racing's future in New Jersey through your support of TrotPAC, the New Jersey standardbred horse industry's political action committee. For more information visit www.TrotPAC.com.

Send checks for TrotPAC to: 64 Business Route 33, Manalapan NJ 07726. LEVELS: Pegasus [\$2,500], Winner's Circle [\$1,000], Clubhouse [\$500], Grandstand [\$250] or Paddock [all others]. Election laws require occupation & employer info. Maximum per person donation to a PAC is \$7,200. Visit www.trotpac.com for more information.

DR. MEIRS JOINS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Richard S. Meirs, VMD, director of the Walnridge Equine Clinic and general manager of Walnridge Farm in Cream Ridge, NJ, has joined the Board of Directors of the Standardbred Breeders & Owners Association of New Jersey in 2010.

Meirs fills the vacancy on the Breeders Committee created by the resignation of Martin O'Hare.

A 1982 graduate of the Veterinary School at the University of Pennsylvania, Dr. Meirs grew up in the standardbred racing and breeding industry on his family's 300-acre family in Central New Jersey.

As director of Walnridge Equine Clinic PC and gen-

eral manager of Walnridge Farm, Dr. Meirs focuses on reproductive work with stallions and mares, as well as elective surgical procedures, such as arthroscopic surgery, foal orthopedic surgery and upper airway procedures.

The Upper Freehold Township farmland has been in the family since 1830 when it was purchased by Nicholas Waln. When Elizabeth Waln married John Meirs in 1861, it established the connection between Walnridge and the Meirs family. There is currently a seventh generation of the Meirs family at Walnridge.

HHI HONORS APP'S JORDAN WITH HIRT MEDIA AWARD

Asbury Park Press staff reporter Bob Jordan received the 2009 Clyde Hirt Media Award winner by Harness Horsemen International at HHI's annual banquet on Wednesday, March 3, 2010 at the Embassy Suites Resort in Deerfield Beach, FL.

"Mr. Jordan has written extensively on the plight of harness racing, and the horsemen of the Garden State, during the recent tough economic times in New Jersey," the association's board of directors said in their announcement.



Tom Luchento [left] presents HHI's Clyde Hirt Award to Bob Jordan. [Photo by Donna Noonan]

While Bob Jordan was attending Ocean Township High School near Monmouth Park Racetrack, he spent his mornings hot walking horses on the backstretch of the Oceanport thoroughbred track.

"My first job out of college [he graduated Rowan University in 1984] was in the publicity staff of the old Liberty Bell Park harness track in Philadelphia," Jordan said. "In the last 20 years, as a horse racing writer for newspapers and magazines, I've covered many editions of every major stakes race held at the Meadowlands, Freehold Raceway and Monmouth Park."

Since 1987, he has worked for the Asbury Park Press, which is based in Neptune, NJ.

"Horse racing is a specialty beat to go along with my other duties of covering the Monmouth County government as a political writer and investigative reporter," Jordan noted. "I have won multiple awards, including a 2009 U.S. Department of Justice/FBI proclamation for 'outstanding assistance to the FBI in connection with its investigative efforts.' The FBI award was for reporting related

to Operation Bid Rig, a long-term investigation into political corruption in New Jersey conducted by the FBI, IRS and the U.S. Attorney for the District of New Jersey. To date there have been indictments of more than 60 public officials and politically connected individuals."

Jordan and his wife, Annette, are the parents of Kassandara, 18, a freshman political science major at Rutgers University, and Tyler, 16, a sophomore at Howell High School. Tyler is a graduate of the Harness Horse Youth Foundation's Youth League Camp in 2007.

2010 NEW JERSEY STALLION REGISTER AVAILABLE ONLINE

The 2010 New Jersey Stallion Register, featuring profiles and pedigrees for each of the stallions standing in the state, is available online at www.sboanj.com.

The all-digital edition includes spotlights on the winners of the SBOANJ-sponsored stakes as well as the New Jersey Sire Stakes champions of 2009.

AJ SABATH NAMED SBOANJ LEGISLATIVE ADVOCATE

AJ Sabath, a veteran of Trenton's State House, will serve as the legislative consultant for the Standardbred Breeders & Owners Association of New Jersey.

Sabath is the owner of The Advocacy Group LLC [TAG] a full service government relations and communications consulting firm in Trenton.



AJ Sabath

"We are pleased to have someone with AJ's experience and connections in Trenton to represent the standardbred breeding and racing industry," said Luchento. "We will be able to tap into his wealth of knowledge and insights into the inner workings of the State Legislature."

"I am grateful for the confidence of the SBOANJ, and I am honored to work with such tireless and dedicated advocates of the New Jersey horse racing industry," said Sabath. "Horse racing has much to offer Garden State residents beyond the obvious entertainment value. It generates valuable revenue for the State and breeding is one of the driving forces behind efforts to preserve open space in New Jersey. Besides advocating for the industry, our job is to make sure government and the public recognize the value of keeping horse racing and breeding in New Jersey."

Sabath has almost two decades of governmental and political experience. Sabath was chief of staff for New Jersey State Senator Richard J. Codey, the former Governor, from 2006 to 2009.

Sabath, 40, previously worked for the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development from 2004 to 2006, including a stint as commissioner in 2005.

The Moorestown, NJ resident served two tours of duty in state government. He was director of constituent relations for the New Jersey General Assembly and then a senior research policy advisor for the New Jersey Senate during the early 2000s. A decade earlier [1993 to 1996], he worked in the General Assembly as a press secretary for the Democratic Caucus and as a research associate for the Labor and Housing Committees.

During 1998 to 1999, he was public affairs director at the MWW Group, a national public relations and lobbying firm based in East Rutherford, NJ

The Ramapo College graduate left state government from 1996 to 1998 to work for the National Democratic Institute in Baku, Azerbaijan, providing democracy, governance and civic organizational training to officials in the newly developed former Soviet Republic.

EMAIL YOUR NEWS & COMMENTS

If you have news or comments for our newsletter, *The Pacesetter*, or our website, www.sboanj.com, you can now email editor Carol Hodes at carolsboanj@gmail.com.

The Pacesetter is published every other month. The next issue will cover May and June and will go to press the last week of April.

News is posted to the SBOANJ website nearly every day of the year.

We appreciate your feedback.

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2010 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

March 9	Board of Directors Meeting	April 13	Board of Directors Meeting
March 30	Insurance Meeting	April 27	Insurance Meeting

SBOANJ DIRECTORS SPOTLIGHT: MARK FORD

Somehow Mark Ford has balanced one of the busiest and most successful stables in the country, overseen construction of a training center, and joined the Board of Directors of both the United States Trotting Association and the Standardbred Breeders & Owners Association of New Jersey.

"I don't think you have a right to complain unless you step up and get involved," said Ford, who is currently the SBOANJ's third vice president. "I might have been critical but now that I've seen what goes on, I take my hat off to Tommy and Leo [SBOANJ President Tom Luchento and Executive Administrator Leo McNamara] for the great job they do."



Kelly and Mark Ford enjoying a night at the Meadowlands.

Ford, 40, is coming off his first \$4 million season in 2009, the tenth straight year his stable has surpassed \$3 million in earnings, to lift his career total to more than \$37.5 million. He was the youngest conditioner to reach the milestones of \$20 million and \$30 million.

He is also closing in on 2,300 victories, posting 200-win seasons every year since 2003.

It was a horse named Gallo Blue Chip who hurtled Ford into national prominence. The pacer was honored as Horse of the Year in 2000 and helped to put the West Virginian on the map.

"He was a horse you dream about," Ford noted. "He was a horse of a lifetime – but I hope there are quite a few more that will come my way.

"That was 10 years ago but I've had a lot of other very nice horses, blue collar horses, like On The Attack, Stonebridge Kisses, Whosurboy, Chewy Gross and Self Professed."

This year Ford has 70 horses in training, with the youngsters prepping in Florida and North Carolina

and others at his Mark Ford Training Center which was carved out of 80 acres near Middletown, NY.

"There are 270 horses here now and we're not fully complete," he explained. "We've got 295 stalls in six barns and a five-eighths track. We built this place from scratch."

Three years ago on Valentine's Day, Ford married Kelly Rucker who shares his passion for horse racing and has learned to appreciate his hobby, raising chickens. The Fords have 40 egg-laying chickens of various breeds.

"I grew up working hard in the poultry houses and hay fields in West Virginia and stumbled on horses at the fairs and nearby tracks like The Meadows and Scioto Downs," he noted.



Mark Ford [center] with owner Martin Scharf and driver Daniel Dube, celebrating the 2000 Meadowlands Pace victory by Gallo Blue Chip. [Photo by Lisa Photo Inc.]

Racing as afforded him a better life than he could have imagined.

A couple of decades later, he finds himself among the training elite. In 2009, his stable achieved Top 10 status by both wins [259] and by earnings [\$4,119,423].

He is also easily one of the most active trainers at the entry box, averaging more than 1,600 starters a year since 2007.



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MARCH/APRIL 2010 PACESETTER



The team behind Pacer of the Year Well Said were honored at the New Jersey Sports Writers Association Banquet on January 31, 2010 at Pines Manor in Edison, NJ. Left to right are Breeders of the Year Steve Jones and Mark Mullen, co-owners of Well Said's dam, Must See, and Horseman of the Year Steve Elliott, who trained Well Said.



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