

The New England HBPA

Encouraging Future with Gambling Bill

As the 2011 racing season comes to a close, the N.E. horsemen can look forward to an encouraging future. The latest expanded gaming bill passed both the House and the Senate during the summer and is currently under review by a six person legislative conference committee. Our expectation is for a finished bill to be on Governor Patrick's desk and subsequently signed into law by the Governor prior to Thanksgiving. At this time, it is not possible to accurately forecast our future purse structure or the amount dedicated to the Massachusetts Thoroughbred Breeders Association (MTBA) program. Our success in developing favorable legislation is a direct result of the close cooperation and hard work of the MTBA and the NEHBPA. Both organizations mobilized their members and conducted massive telephone lobbying efforts. It was a job well done and everyone who called or wrote can feel as though they own a share of the success.

2012 Contract Negotiations

Negotiations for a 2012 contract between Suffolk Downs and the NEHBPA have begun amid an air of optimism that the deal could be done by year end. What is emerging as a major concern is the fact that Suffolk has a construction issue while the HBPA has a racing issue. Simply put, Suffolk's efforts to address the EPA problem currently calls for a major construction project involving the barns, which may not be completed by the original target date of April 30, 2012. The HBPA's concern is the ability of Suffolk to provide needed stall space and training capability for our horsemen who have laid up in New England for the winter or shipping in from tracks such as Tampa. There is a great deal of speculation that 2012's starting date may be targeted for very late May.

The HBPA board will hold regular monthly meetings during the dark season. Members can get information on progress about the EPA track project by looking on our website: <http://www.newenlandhbpa.com>

2011 HBPA Elections

In late September, we counted the votes in our long delayed HBPA election. The results gave us veteran breeder/horseman Anthony Spadea as President, Bernie Bramante as First Vice President and Manfred Roos as Second Vice President. A new face on the owner side and a welcome addition, is Lee Loebelenz whose Dover, MA farm has been producing competitive runners for decades. The owner slate is rounded out by: James Greene, Susan Clark and Shirley Dullea with Donald Colapietio, Jr. as first alternative. The successful trainers include: Shirley Edwards, Archie Ricciardi, John Assimakopoulos and Kevin Clark. The trainer alternatives are Adel Salim and Joe Signore. John Assimakopoulos topped the voting numbers for trainers while owner Jim Greene drew the most votes of all board candidates.

Free Flu Shots

The free flu shot clinic on October 5th sponsored by the Eight Pole human services program at Suffolk Downs in conjunction with the Northeastern University School of Nursing was a rousing success with over 150 racetrack workers taking advantage of the

opportunity. This was the Eight Pole's ninth straight year providing a free flu shot clinic on the backstretch and the sixth year of partnering with Northeastern University.

MTBA Charity Golf Tournament

The MTBA held their third annual charity golf tournament on September 15th to benefit Second Chances which provides a home for retired racehorses. The event raised over \$7,000.00 for Second Chances. This shotgun tournament was held at the Glen Ellen Country Club in Millis, MA. In addition to golf, there was a buffet dinner, raffles and family/friends were welcomed to enjoy many amenities including swimming, tennis, softball and miniature golf. Participants were glad to have fun while contributing to a good cause – a home for retired racehorses.

Topsfield Fair Outing

Over 50 backstretch workers and their families enjoyed an outing to the Topsfield Fair. A large bus provided by the Eighth Pole left the track at 11:00am for the 12 miles trek to one of America's oldest agriculture fairs. Seven hours later, a tired but thoroughly entertained group returned to the track with stories galore about the Topsfield midway, free shows, animals, farm exhibits and refreshments.

Karaoke, Pizza and More

On October 8th the track kitchen and HBPA sponsored a karaoke and free pizza night for track workers. There was plenty of food and entertainment. Event stores contained many tales of surprising hidden talent – watch out American Idol here we come.

6th Annual Suffolk Showcase by Canter

Canter, an organization that helps retired racehorses find a place/owner to start their second career, held its 6th annual Suffolk showcase of available horses on October 23rd. This was an opportunity for interested buyers to view horses in one place at one time on Suffolk's backstretch. Many loved seeing these horses in person and getting an opportunity to speak directly with trainers/owners to help decide on choosing horses who are ready for their next career.

Annual Pizza Day for the Backstretch

Following up on last year's success, the MTBA again hosted a "thank you" pizza party on October 24th for the backstretch. MTBA chairman George Brown had 60 large cheese/pepperoni pizzas delivered into the barn areas as well as soft drinks. Distribution tables were set up at a central location and it was fun to watch production line pizza eating. Fortunately the demand dried up before the last piece of the 60th pizza was eaten.

Backstretch Appreciation Day

Sponsored by the HBPA, November 4th was declared backstretch appreciation day. All were provided with a full dinner at the track kitchen. In addition to the dinner, 25 grooms were awarded tee shirts and \$25.00 for recognition of their outstanding efforts this meet. Over 200 attended and enjoyed it very much.

2011 Meet Season

Suffolk Downs' meet ended November 5th. Although the season was off to somewhat of a slow start; last year's "contentious" negotiations of simulcast revenues allowed for three purse increases making it a more successful season. This meet's leading rider with 107 wins was Tammi Piermarin, capturing her second straight title and her third at Suffolk. Tammi is currently the fourth leading female rider in thoroughbred racing history. John Rigarrieri has earned his eighth consecutive title as leading trainer at Suffolk by winning 59 races during the 2011 meet.

We want to wish all of the horsemen much success and good health as this meet closes and we go into the winter season. Please continue to visit the NEHBPA website <http://www.newenglandhbpa.com> for current information and happenings. We look forward to seeing everyone in the Spring.