



# PTHA NEWS

Pennsylvania Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association Newsletter

*We ARE Pennsylvania Racing*

Volume 6 2010

## Members "Meet the Candidates" for PTHA Board

Horsemen were invited to meet the 2010 candidates for President and Board of Directors of the PTHA on Saturday, November 27 in the backstretch rec hall. Postcards had been sent to all the members, of which 60 were in attendance for a question and answer session with 11 of the 19 candidates.

Present were incumbent Owner Director Michael Ballezzi, and new nominees Lisa Allen, John Benson and Randy Swisher. Trainer Directors on hand were nominated incumbents Phil Aristone, Kate DeMasi, Ron Glorioso, and Frank Petrozzo, while Butch Reid and John Servis were the only two of six newly nominated Trainer Directors.

Candidates had approximately two minutes to introduce themselves and speak on why they wished to become board members.

### Experience Deemed Important by Candidates

Topics that were most important to the candidates were continuation of the PTHA's presence in Harrisburg, protection of our percentage of the slot machine revenue, and maintaining the cohesion of the board.

Michael Ballezzi, running for another term as owner/director, felt he possessed three characteristics that are most important to the success of the Board and the PTHA. "Integrity, experience and influence are necessary in not only earning the respect of the people who are instrumental in making the rules in this industry, but in maintaining what we have worked so hard to achieve," said Ballezzi. "I have worked long hours to be recognized and be involved in every decision that is important to the horsemen."

Sal DeBunda, the only candidate for President of the PTHA, cited his reasons for running for the position.

"It is very important that we be represented by those who are experienced with working with the legislators, and experienced as horsemen." DeBunda has been involved in the equine industry for

over 22 years, and has served five terms as a director on the PTHA board, and also the last three years as First Vice-President. He also drafted and lobbied for most of the horsemen's language in the PA slots bill.

### New Candidates Discuss Issues

Among the new candidates who attended the Meet the Candidates session were Lisa Allen, John Benson and Randy Swisher, as owner/director nominees; and Butch Reid and John Servis, trainer nominees.

Allen, who owns LA Thoroughbreds, offered her support of the \$10 PAC donations per start, which she felt was a well spent donation towards support of our legislators, stating that her partners would be happy to donate \$50/start with the increased pay back to last of \$200.

Her promise, if elected, was to speak for and represent all owners.

Moderator Barbara Luna collected written questions from member attendees, and posed a question regarding the turf season to John Benson, who felt improving the grass course would be an interest of his.

Current leading trainer Phil Aristone, running for another term as Director, fielded a question regarding medication rules, and firmly stated his position on the success of the current board in working with the Racing Commission.

Meet the Candidates ended after a nearly two hour session with every candidate expressing his or her credentials and issues they felt were most important.



Candidates Salvatore DeBunda, and Owner Director candidate Lisa Allen introduce themselves to the members.

## 2010 Candidates for the PTHA Board

### PRESIDENT

Salvatore DeBunda

### OWNER DIRECTOR

Lisa Allen  
Steve Appel  
Jack Armstrong  
Michael P. Ballezzi  
John Benson

Mary Kernan

Randy Swisher

### TRAINER DIRECTOR

Philip Aristone  
Ron Dandy  
Kathleen DeMasi  
Ron Glorioso  
Scott Lake  
Ed Lehman

Frank Petrozzo

Robert "Butch" Reid

Ralph Riviezzo  
John Servis

**BALLOTS WERE MAILED TO ALL PTHA MEMBERS ON DECEMBER 2, AND MUST BE RETURNED AND POSTMARKED NO LATER THAN DECEMBER 31.**

## President's Message

Although only 60 members showed up at the well-promoted Meet the Candidates gathering on November 27 at the race-track, I think everyone left 2 1/2 hours later realizing one thing: the current board has left some pretty big footsteps to fill, and we are all very, very lucky that seven of them are up for re-election!



The Q & A session revealed just what our horsemen are up against in the near future: budgetary issues in the Commonwealth could affect our slice of the slot machine revenue pie--an issue that needs to be handled with an experienced board.

Sal DeBunda, who is running for my former position as President of the PTHA, was quick to note that his reasons for running had to do with how his experience as a horseman and lawyer have been very beneficial to our membership in the past. As President, he hopes to work with the PA Racing Commission, sharing his racing background to better allow them to understand the needs of our industry.


While I thoroughly enjoyed my work with the board as President in the last three years, I am confident in giving up the reins to a man of Sal DeBunda's character, work ethic, and experience. The presidency of the PTHA carries much responsibility--the position requires just as much looking toward the future as it does safeguarding all that the PTHA has accomplished in the past.

The same can be said for any director's seat on the board: take care in electing the owners and trainers who share the best interests of the majority. As a longtime horseman of over 50 years, -I know that at times it is difficult to step out of your own barn, for who really has the time? But time is what it takes to realize the bigger picture, continue to secure what we have worked so hard for, especially in the past three years with the new legislation. Communicate with each other, come to your Executive Director and board with questions and concerns, and we will all look forward to a continued, sound future.

Best Wishes for the Holiday Season!

Your Past President,

*Donald Reeder*



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**Work in Progress...** While wash stalls are currently being built into the four new barns, the demolishing of old Barns 2 and 3 began the first week of December. Plans are for five new barns to be finished in 2011.



# The PTHA's TURNING FOR HOME

***"We're proud to take care  
of our own"***

**Started by  
the PTHA in  
2008**

**Helped  
485  
Horses**

**Nationally  
recognized**

***Wishing You a Happy Holiday & Successful New Year!***  
***THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR SUPPORTERS***

TURNING FOR HOME, INC. IS A 501 c 3 NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION WHOSE MISSION IS TO PREVENT PHILADELPHIA PARK'S RETIRED THOROUGHBREDS FROM ENDING UP AT SLAUGHTER. Call 215-272-6716 FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO MAKE A DONATION. WWW.PATHA.ORG

**Thanks to Lisa Allen for hosting  
the 2nd Annual Turning For Home  
Benefit Dinner at La Stalla's in  
Newtown, PA.**

Over 150 owners, trainers, jockeys and their families attended to raise over \$3,000 for the many retired racehorses cared for by Turning For Home. Raffle prizes included a Secretariat movie poster signed by Ron Turcotte and Bill Nack, and Breeders Cup jackets, a leather racing bridle.

Allen is manager and of LA Thoroughbreds.



## Purse Protection and Promotion Fund

At a PTHA General membership meeting June 19, a \$10 contribution was approved to support the PPP Fund. The amount will be deducted from an owner's purse account similar to the deduction taken for Turning For Home.

Just prior to the approval of the PPP Fund, the payback to last place was increased from \$150 per horse to \$200. The net result is that after paying the \$10/horse contribution from the Purse Account, everyone running from sixth through last will still receive an additional \$40 per starter.

The contribution will be used to promote live racing at Parx Racing and to attract new owners to live racing. It will also be used to help protect the purses that are now generated through live racing and/or slot machine revenues.

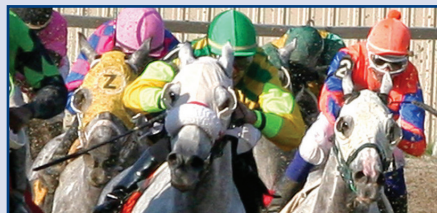
The Fund will also be used to offset some of the costs of placement and production on Comcast Sportsnet of Let's Go Racing, fund public relations notices to promote racing, and other informational items promoting horseracing, such as the PTHA News, the annual Owners Appreciation Day, and expansion of our website to include more information about racing activities at Parx Racing and the PTHA.

## PURSES

- The largest purses ever offered at Philadelphia Park reached \$300,000 a day in 2010.

## FESTIVAL OF RACING

- The PTHA introduced the inaugural Festival of Racing starting on Labor Day, 2010 with **Smarty Jones Day**.
- The Festival produced seven Breeders' Cup contenders during five weekends.



- **Owner's Appreciation Day** on September 18 rewarded Parx horsemen with Parx starters preferred on an afternoon which offered 100% increase in purses for overnight races, \$500 paid from sixth to last, and gifts for grooms, owners and trainers.

- The \$1 million **Gr.II PA Derby** highlighted the Saturday, September 25 card, which gave away 50% higher overnight purses, totalling \$450,000.



- The **Gr.II Cotillion S.** ended the

Festival on a day that offered \$1.5 million in total purses. The top two finishers, Havre De Grace and Blind Luck, went on to finish 3rd and 2nd, respectively, in the Breeders' Cup Ladies Classic.

## GRANDSTAND & FRONTSIDE IMPROVEMENTS



- Negotiations between the PTHA and Parx resulted in full grandstand renovation and its return to the horsemen in mid-August of 2010.
- The third floor offers a private dining room for horsemen, big

screen televisions and a poker area.

- The fifth floor will remain reserved for big race days.

## HEALTH CARE & PENSIONS

- Philadelphia Park is the first track in PA to establish a pension plan for its trainers--one in which the horsemen do NOT have to pay into to receive its benefits.

## 15 Years of Service Integrity, Experience, Leadership Your PTHA At Work for Parx Racing's Honor

*From the Desk of*

- Trainers based at Philadelphia Park/parx racing received the "first of its kind" pension plans in 2010. Included in the plan is a "catch-up" provision for trainers who have supported racing at Philadelphia Park and are over 55 years old.
- Philadelphia Park trainers with at least 20 starts per year receive free health insurance.

## BACKSTRETCH RENOVATION

- \$35 million has been committed to complete renovation of the Parx backstretch. In 2010, four new barns were completed, with attached feed and supply sheds, upgraded electric, water and ventilation systems, and indoor wash stalls.

- Manure and shavings removal has been upgraded to comply with DEP rules, preventing run-off into city water systems.

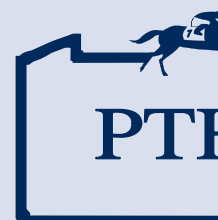
- Dormitories are being emptied, power-washed, painted, and installed with heating and air conditioning units and new windows and doors.

- New trainer viewing stands and track kitchen renovation have been additions in the past 10 years.



## TURNING FOR HOME: PTHA'S RACEHORSE RETIREMENT PROGRAM

The PTHA saw the need for a program to assure that our retired Thoroughbreds did not end up at slaughter. In May 2008, Turning for Home took in its first retired Thoroughbred, and since then, has added almost 500 more to its roster.





## Service e, Influence Horsemen & Their Families

of Executive Director Michael P. Ballezzi



- Turning For Home is funded by the PTHA, owners and jockeys racing at Parx, and Parx Racing.
- A non-profit organization, TFH has been commended by the Jockey Club, NTRA and other racetracks for its model program, and for the fact that "we take care of our own."

### LEGISLATION

- The PTHA was instrumental in formulating slots legislation in 2004 that has allowed the PA horsemen to benefit from larger purses, health and medical insurance, and backstretch renovation.
- When racing's share of slot revenue was in danger of being cut to save the

PA budget in 2010, Executive Director Ballezzi and PTHA VP Sal DeBunda negotiated on behalf of the horsemen to maintain our purses.

- Working closely with government in Harrisburg, the PTHA has made sure the PA horsemen have been well represented.



### LOBBYISTS AND PAC

- The voices of the horsemen are heard through lobbyists, who are on retainer to keep horsemen informed of important state legisla-

tive changes in Harrisburg that affect our horseracing industry.

- In 2010, PTHA members were asked to help support the Purse Protection and Promotional Fund, by donating \$10 from each start. At the same time, pay back to last was increased by \$50 to \$200.

### EDUCATIONAL & SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

- Annual awards banquet open to all PTHA members honoring outstanding racing achievements



- PTHA-sponsored soccer league beginning in 2010
- Sponsor of Groom Elite Program which teaches horsemanship to those wishing to learn to groom, assistant-train, or work better around racehorses.
- Shared sponsorship of Easter, Christmas, Thanksgiving dinners for backstretch employees.
- Children's holiday parties three times a year.
- Annual Labor Day Pig Roast and Independence Day Picnic.
- Sponsor of Granny Youmans Scholarship Fund, which has helped over a dozen backstretch workers enrich their education.



### MEDIA

- The PTHA communicates to our 3,200 members through [www.PTHA.org](http://www.PTHA.org), the horsemen's website, which includes a biographies of all board members, calendar of events, news and current events, HPA Store specials, and Turning For Home news and notes



- The PTHA News, is the four-color, official newsletter of the Parx Racing horsemen's organization. It is mailed to our members 6 times a year.
- Let's Go Racing is sponsored by the PTHA and airs every Saturday on Comcast Sportsnet. Hosts Dick Gerardi and track announcer Keith Jones offer insight into local and national racing.

### DUE PROCESS PROTECTIONS

- No horseman or stable employee can be ejected from the backside without a three-tier hearing process involving PTHA Executive Director Michael Ballezzi and members of management.
- Horsemen have the right to bring legal action against management for management's negligence.

# Chaplain's Corner

**Chaplain Rick Bunker**

I am sure I do not have to remind anyone what time of year it is – Christmas decorations have been up since about Labor Day. This is the most wonderful time of the year and it seems this is a whirlwind time of the year. This can be overwhelming, especially, if you go into it already feeling like you are 'on the edge.'

Let me remind you of the old song that sings the truth that, "He's got the whole world in His hands." In times of uncertainty, the world begins to seem much more than a handful for me and perhaps even for God. An editorialist for The Atlantic Journal expresses similar sentiments: "The world is too big for us," he writes. "Too much is going on, too many crimes, too much violence and excitement. Try as you will, you get behind in the race in spite of yourself. It's an incessant strain to keep pace... and still, you lose ground. Science empties its discoveries on you so fast that you stagger beneath them in hopeless bewilderment. The political world is news seen so rapidly you are out of breath trying to keep pace... Everything is high pressure. Human nature cannot endure much more."

The author's words express the difficulty of living in a world marked by interminable momentum, where advances in media and the influence of globalization keep us hyper-informed but exhausted by the sheer number of "newsworthy" events. "The whole world" is arguably a different place today than it was when we were children in awe of God's ability to hold the whole world in His hands.

Or maybe it's not that different at all. Ironically, the editorialist's words above were originally published on June 16th, 1833.

Maybe it seems easier to sing of a world that is in God's hands when the world is calm and at rest. But has the world ever been calm and at rest? Nostalgia might tempt us to think otherwise, but the history since Cain and Abel tells a different story. A world without brokenness or brutality might be a world we imagine, but it is not the world we know. It is also not the world into which Christ came, nor the world that God carefully holds in his hands. "In this world you will have trouble," Jesus told his disciples. "But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

No matter what shape the world looms in our minds, no matter what difficulty we find ourselves carrying, God is not far off. May we realize that afresh and anew this Christmas when we remember His coming and the heavenly declaration, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord...Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." (Luke 2)



## Christmas Dinner at Ron's Cafe

### December 25

### 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the track kitchen

*Sponsored by the PTHA • All backstretch employees welcome!*



## Backstretch Views

### *Condolences to the Families of...*

#### **Joan Correnti**

Joan Correnti, wife of long time Philadelphia Park trainer Tony Correnti and mother to PTHA board member Armand, passed away at her home in Bensalem on November 29. She and her husband had been married for 58 years, and she is also survived by another son, Bruce and a daughter, Estelle; seven grandchildren, and five great grandchildren. Her niece, Marie, had cared for her throughout her illness.

#### **Charles Burrows**

Condolences to the friends and family of Charlie Burrows, who passed away suddenly on December 1 at the age of 69. He is survived by his wife, Eileen, and two children, Bonnie and John, as well as two grandchildren. He was passionate about horse racing, and according to his wife, learned to read at the age of 4 by studying the Daily Racing Form.

Burrows retired from working for the State of NJ at the age of 48, and went right into the world of horses. Trainer Freddie Velazquez was a good friend of Burrows, and said they had been working together for 10 years, Burrows holding jobs as hotwalker, groom, assistant, and even owner. He was helping Velazquez while the trainer was on vacation up until the Monday before he died.

His wife asked that, in lieu of flowers, donations in his name be made to Turning For Home.

### *Congratulations*

#### **Chris and Melissa Forbes Proud Parents of Twins**

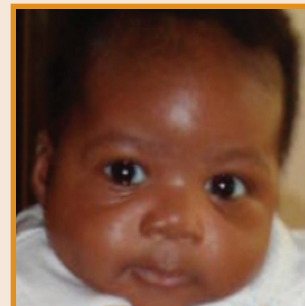
Chris Forbes, stable ID officer for Parx Racing and a familiar face in the Administration Building backside, and his wife, Melissa, welcomed twin girls on October 12. Rebecca, 6 pounds, 7 oz, and Cassidy, 6 lbs., 11 oz., are the first two children for the Maple Shade, NJ residents.



#### **Trainer Carl Jones Father Again**

Trainer Carl Jones and Tammara Brown became the proud parents of baby boy Cai Cavhari Jones on July 7 this year. Cai was born in Kingston, Jamaica, and proud dad Carl has

been wracking up airline miles flying back and forth to visit the new arrival. The baby boy is Jones' third child.



#### **Veterinary Assistant Larry Shaffer Proud Father of Son Lawrence**

Larry Shaffer, Dr. Al Reed's popular assistant, and his wife Kelli, became the parents for the first time on November 14 with the birth of their son, Lawrence James. Weighing in at 7 pounds and 9 ounces, the baby is "just awesome," said his proud father.

"I am loving it," said Shafer. "It has changed my life big time. I just want to stay home and be with my son all the time now." The Shafers make their home in Bristol, right down the road from Parx Racing.

### *Get Well Wishes*

#### **PTHA Office Manager Connie Youmans**

Connie would like to extend her appreciation and thanks to all of you who have sent their thoughts and prayers to her last month while she is recovering from an illness at Arias Hospital in Torresdale. All of us who work closely with Connie in the PTHA Office miss her dearly and are hoping for a quick recovery so she can get back on her feet, as there is just something missing when she's not here on the backstretch with us! Get well soon, Connie!! Anyone who would like to send a card can mail it to her c/o the PTHA Office, P.O. Box 300, Bensalem, PA 19020, or Aria Hospital, Knights and Red Lion Rds., Philadelphia, PA 19114.



**Pennsylvania Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association**  
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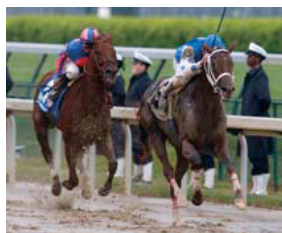
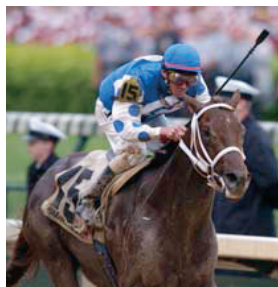
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Photos by Skip Dickstein.

# LET'S GO RACING TV SHOW

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