

HOT OFF THE TRACK

News and information for the Standardbred Racing Industry

Provided by the Cloverleaf Standardbred Owners' Association

October 2008

Phone: (301) 567-9636 ♣ Fax: (301) 567-9638 ♣ E-mail: cloverleaf@erols.com ♣ Website: www.cloverleafsoa.org

Message from the C.S.O.A. President

Cloverleaf Membership:

I am writing to you this month to keep you up-to-date with two important matters.

Issue 1: The Maryland Slots Referendum



A FOR vote on the November 4 referendum (Question 2) offers the Standardbred horsemen hope for the future. One thing is certain – a FOR vote on Question 2 means that at some future time the Maryland Standardbred industry will benefit by a financial contribution to purses. Contributions to purses supports live racing. Keep in mind that even with a FOR vote – there remains a significant amount of implementation work to be completed in Annapolis. We will be active participants in the 2009 legislative session.

It is most unfortunate that Rosecroft Raceway and/or Prince George's County are not mentioned in the referendum. This was largely the work of the County's elected officials and they will have to live (at least for now) with their decision. A strong FOR vote in Price George's County will send a clear message to the elected officials.

After careful thought and reflection, I have concluded that it is in the best interest of the Maryland Standardbred industry and horsemen to offer strong and active support for the referendum. The November 4 referendum (Question 2) offers us a level of **certainty** at a time of much uncertainty. The measure helps to direct badly needed revenue back to the State of Maryland at a time when the State is facing a serious budget deficit. Most importantly, the referendum provides needed support for education and a way for Maryland residents to avoid higher taxes.

An AGAINST vote on the referendum (Question 2) would bring the issue back to the drawing board in Annapolis. What would happen in Annapolis is uncertain at best and do we really need more uncertainty?

Could the 2009 session of the Maryland legislature pass a slots bill without a public referendum? The answer is yes. But, would they? The honest truth is that no one knows what, if anything would get done in Annapolis.

If the referendum fails ... is there a chance that Rosecroft and/or Prince George's County could become part of new legislation? The answer is yes – but not likely unless the elected officials from Price George's County have a change of thinking. Any bets on that happening?

Please do everything you can to help insure a FOR vote on Question 2. Contact the CSOA office for yard signs. The final two weeks of the FOR on Question 2 campaign are the most critical.

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Issue 2: The Rosecroft Backstretch

On August 15, 2008, the CEI Board of Directors voted that CEI will accept a recommendation from the CSOA Board regarding the future operation of the Rosecroft backstretch. As everyone knows, Rosecroft (in better financial times) paid to keep the backstretch, dormitory and trailer park open. While rents from the trailer part offset expenses, stall rent was not charged until this past July. The current stall rent charge is \$100, per horse, per month. The total number of horses for the period of July, August and September was 86, 72, and 54.

The backstretch is currently being operated at a loss with CEI making up the difference. The loan covenants with the bank coupled with declining revenues from the simulcasting operations has forced CEI to make every effort to run the backstretch at as close to a break-even operation as possible. To its credit, Rosecroft management has made a number of business changes to the operation of the backstretch that will bring the expense side down. With a contribution of \$50,000 annually from CEI, the backstretch operation must generate income in the range of 100 horses at \$150 - \$180 a month, per horse. Obviously, any increase to the number of horses will reduce the cost per horse, per month.

Members of the backstretch community have held a number of meetings and some of those meetings have involved Rosecroft management along with CSOA and CEI participation. Every effort is being made by the respective parties to work to keep the backstretch open by finding a viable financial solution.

At its September 17 meeting, the CSOA Board of Directors, after hearing from the CEI Board as well as a number of CSOA members decided to place the backstretch issue on the November 18 agenda. The CSOA Board agreed to do this only after the backstretch community was put on notice that there is a proposal to close the backstretch effective December 31, 2008 if a viable financial solution isn't found.

So, between now and November 18, I would like to encourage everyone to solicit individuals and stables who might be interested in using Rosecroft as a training center.

Interested horsemen are being asked to sign a 6 month statement of interest (Application). If the right number of Applications are received by November 14, the solution may be within our reach.

Rosecroft management, CSOA and CEI are actively promoting the idea of Rosecroft as a training center. Advertisements have been placed on line, in the print media (Hoofbeats and Harness and Fair World), in letters to a number of racetracks and horsemen associations. Telephone call are being made to trainers up and down the East coast.

The goal is to have 100 stall applications in our hands by November 14, 2008.

Sharon Roberts has agreed to be the point person on sending out and receiving the stall applications. The Application can be downloaded on the C.S.O.A. website: www.cloverleafsoa.org

Thank you in advance for your efforts in working to keep the backstretch open and helping to ensure the passage of Question 2 – the Slots Referendum.



Tom Cooke
President, CSOA

The Nominating Committee has nominated the following people to run for Directors in the upcoming election on January 10, 2009.

| <u>Category</u> | <u>Candidates</u> (* signifies an incumbent) |
|-----------------|---|
| Owner | E. Daniel Bittle, Jr.* Thomas Cooke* Eli Solomon* |
| Trainer | Marty Burton* Jerry Nock* |
| At-Large | Vacant |

In the Owner category the three (3) people receiving the most votes will serve three (3) years. In the Trainer category, the two (2) people receiving the most votes will serve three (3) years. In the At-Large category, the one (1) person receiving the most votes will serve three (3) years.

In accordance with the by-laws Article IV, Section 1, effective March 31, 1997, the Board of Directors of this Association shall consist of eight (8) owners, eight (8) trainers/drivers and two (2) members at large of which one will be President, one will be First Vice President, one will be Second Vice President, one will be Secretary and one will be Treasurer per Subsection (A) of this Article.

For the purposes of definition of this Section, 1. An owner can hold only an owner's license, or train and/or drive only horses owned by oneself or his/her spouse or child for the past two (2) years, or is a retired owner/trainer/driver; 2. A trainer/driver must be actively training and/or driving within the past two (2) years and 3. At large is open to any qualified member under Article IV, Section 1(B).

Per Article, IV, Section 1 (B) second paragraph, beginning with the 1998 election of directors, no member may be nominated for Director unless he or she has been an active member of the Association and a resident of Maryland for the two (2) years immediately preceding his or her nomination. For the purpose of defining the two (2) years preceding nomination, the individual shall have been deemed an active member for two (2) consecutive years if his or her membership is paid up within (60) days after the expiration of his or her prior year's membership. Beginning with the 2001 election, nominees for the at-large seats are not required to be residents of the state of Maryland.

As per Article IV, Section 1 (C) second paragraph, Incumbent Directors may be candidates to succeed themselves. **Any qualified member of the Corporation who desires to become a candidate for membership on the Board of Directors may do so by notifying the Executive Vice President of the Corporation of such candidacy by registered or certified letter, return receipt requested, which is postmarked at least sixty (60) days before the date of the Annual meeting.** [Nov. 11, 2008] The notification must state the category that the member has selected. In the event there is a dispute as to the category a member is nominated to, the decision of the nominating Committee is final as to which category a member can select.

Per Article IV, Section 1 (D), **Every candidate for Director may send a photograph, position paper, and resume, not to exceed 500 words to be published in the Association's newsletter. The information must be sent by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, and received by the Executive Vice President at least fifty (50) days [Nov. 21, 2008] before the date of the annual meeting.**

A ballot will be sent to the membership containing the names of those nominated by the Committee and those who have notified the Executive Vice President that he or she is a candidate, per the by-laws.

Very truly yours,
William 'Bib' Roberts
Nominating Committee Chairman

FLU VACCINATIONS
Please Call & Sign-Up (301) 567-9636
Rosecroft - Tuesday, November 5, 2008 - 12:00p.m. - 2:00p.m.
Ocean Downs - Thursday November 6, 2008 - 12:00a.m. - 2:00p.m.

Fall Stake Dates at Rosecroft

- **Saturday, November 15, 2008 - 12:00p.m. Post time**
MD SIRE STAKES preliminaries 2yr. olds All Divisions
 - **Saturday, November 22, 2008 - 12:00p.m. Post time**
MD SIRE STAKE FINALS 2yr. olds All Divisions
 - **Saturday, November 29, 2008 - 12:00p.m. Post time**
MD SIRE STAKES preliminaries 2yr. olds All Divisions
 - **Saturday, December 6, 2008 - 12:00p.m. Post time**
MD SIRE STAKE FINALS 2yr. olds All Divisions
Earl Wagner Memorial
 - **Saturday, December 13, 2008 - 12:00p.m. Post time**
MD STANDARD BRED FUND 2yr. olds All Divisions
MD SIRE STAKES preliminaries 3yr. olds All Divisions
 - **Saturday, December 20, 2008 - 12:00p.m. Post time**
MD STANDARD BRED FUND 2yr. olds All Divisions
MD SIRE STAKES FINALS 3yr. olds All Divisions
W.W. "Pete" Shaw Memorial
Ronald "Doc" Banning Memorial
Hubert Jackson Memorial
Charles Keller Memorial
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Save the Date

- Thursday October 30, 2008
7:00-9:00 p.m. Horse Industry Slots Rally
Show Place Arena, Upper Marlboro MD
- Tuesday, November 4, 2008
Election Day
- Wednesday, November 5, 2008
12:00-2:00 p.m.
Flu Shots - Rosecroft
- Thursday, November 6, 2008
12:00-2:00 p.m.
Flu Shots - Ocean Downs
- Saturday, January 10, 2008
C.S.O.A. Annual Banquet
Hyatt Regency Chesapeake Bay - Cambridge, Maryland