



The Horsemen's Newsletter



March 2026

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Enck, Lindsey Recognized For Aftercare Contributions

Two individuals who have played key behind-the-scenes roles in assisting the Beyond The Wire aftercare program in Maryland will be recognized when the program's namesake Beyond The Wire Stakes is held Saturday, March 21, at Laurel Park.



Jessica Hammond, who administers the program, said the awards will recognize "two people that go above and beyond out of their love of horses." They are Michele Enck, who served as The Maryland Jockey Club Horse Identifier before taking over as Stakes Coordinator earlier this year, and Jessica Lindsey, the longtime assistant trainer for the John Robb barn.

The Beyond The Wire Board of Directors endorsed the selected candidates for the awards.

Enck was instrumental in getting papers and microchip numbers for all of the horses that have through the Beyond The Wire program since it began in 2017. If the papers were at another racetrack, Enck would call that office and have them transferred for Hammond. She also regularly attends fundraisers for Beyond The Wire partner facilities and adopted a horse herself from Foxie G., which is one of the facilities.

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Renaissance Awards Set for March 22

The Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association (MTHA) and the Maryland Horse Breeders Association (MHBA), in cooperation with The Maryland Jockey Club, are proud to present the 2025 Maryland Thoroughbred Industry Renaissance Awards. The event will be held as a luncheon on Sunday, March 22, 2026, at 11:30 a.m. in the Terrace Dining Room at Laurel Park.

The Renaissance Awards celebrate the very best of Maryland breeding and racing from the 2025 season, recognizing outstanding equine athletes and the dedicated owners, breeders, trainers, jockeys, and backstretch workers who power the industry.

"This event represents the very heart of Maryland racing," said Katy Voss, President of the MTHA. "The Renaissance Awards give us the opportunity to honor not only exceptional equine performances, but also the horsemen and horsewomen whose hard work, horsemanship, and commitment elevate our sport every single day. It is a celebration of excellence and of the strength of our racing community."

"Maryland breeders continue to produce horses that compete and succeed at the highest levels," said Richie Blue, President of the MHBA. The Renaissance Awards shine a well-deserved spotlight on the farms, families, and partnerships behind these accomplishments. It is a proud moment each year for our breeding industry and a reminder of the quality and resilience of Maryland-bred Thoroughbreds."

Tickets are \$75 per person and may be purchased online at marylandthoroughbred.com. Nominees in all award categories will receive a forthcoming invitation and will be offered complimentary tickets.



RENAISSANCE CHAMPIONS AWARDS

Everyone is welcome to attend as we come together to celebrate the accomplishments of Maryland's Thoroughbred industry.

To purchase tickets, go to <https://marylandthoroughbred.com>

2025 MHBA Award Finalists:

MD-bred Champion 2YO Male:
Big Cuddle • Code of Silence • Romeo

MD-bred Champion 2YO Filly:
Dazzling Dame • Just Philtored • Slewperstus

MD-bred Champion 3YO Male:
Barbadian Runner • Passion Rules
Slam Notion

MD-bred Champion 3YO Filly:
Grayson's Girl • Onyx Ten
Worth a Dime

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Pension Signups Start April 1

Virtual sign-ups for the Maryland Backstretch Pension Plan have been a success the last few years and will again be available beginning in April with a deadline of June 1, 2026.

Those 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 2025 and provide documentation to that effect (with a W-2 or 1099 form, or tax return).

Benefits become available when the employee reaches the age of 65, or at age 55 with 25 years in the Plan. More about the program including qualifications is available at: <https://mdhorsemen.com>.

Please note that even if you have created an account through the John Hancock website or app, you still must complete your online sign-up form each year.

The MTHA Board of Directors last year reaffirmed its support for the Backstretch Pension Program when it approved \$1 million in pension funding for the program.

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.

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Reminder: HISA Shoe & Traction Device Rules Remain in Effect

The Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association would like to remind all horsemen that the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Authority (HISA) horseshoe and traction device rules remain in full effect and are being enforced.

These regulations apply during both training and racing and are an important component of HISA's national safety standards.

Understanding the Rule

Under HISA Rule 2010, a "traction device" is defined as any device that extends beyond the ground surface of the horseshoe. This includes, but is not limited to, inserts, wear plates, rims, toe grabs, bends, jar calks, stickers, ice nails, frost nails, and mud nails.

Rule 2276 outlines surface-specific restrictions:

Dirt Surfaces

Forelimbs: Traction devices are prohibited, except full rims 2 millimeters or less in height.

Hindlimbs: Traction devices are prohibited, except full rims measuring 4 millimeters or less, or toe grabs measuring 4 millimeters or less.

Synthetic Surfaces

Traction devices are prohibited on both forelimbs and hindlimbs, except full rims measuring 2 millimeters or less.

Turf Surfaces

Traction devices are prohibited on both forelimbs and hindlimbs.

These standards became effective July 8, 2024.

Why This Matters

The primary difference between a full rim 2 mm race plate and a toe grab (specifically 2-4 mm, as often compared) lies in how they provide traction and the resulting stress placed on the horse's limbs. A full rim offers traction while allowing a flatter foot landing, while a

toe grab acts like a cleat, raising the toe and increasing the risk of injury. A full rim 2mm is the entire circumference of the shoe.

Compliance is the responsibility of the trainer and connections. Horses that compete with prohibited shoes or traction devices run the risk of being declared ineligible by the Stewards.

Such a ruling can have significant consequences, including:

- Voiding of claims
- Loss of purse money
- Additional regulatory action

The MTHA strongly urges all trainers to review the HISA rules carefully and work closely with their farriers to ensure all horses are properly shod prior to entry.

HISA previously amended portions of the hind shoe regulations following discussions with horsemen. Those interested in further background on the amendments can review the BloodHorse article summarizing the changes:

<https://www.bloodhorse.com/horse-racing/articles/261737/hisa-amends-hind-shoe-rules-after-meeting-with-horsemen>

Maryland horsemen are encouraged to take these requirements seriously. Avoidable compliance issues can have meaningful financial and regulatory consequences. If there are questions regarding shoe specifications, trainers should consult the Racing Office or appropriate regulatory officials before entering to race.

The MTHA remains committed to ensuring that our membership is fully informed and positioned for success under the national HISA framework.



MTHA has secured D.C. United season tickets for distribution to backstretch workers.

Sign-up for ticket raffles in Laurel Park's track kitchen or by calling: (410) 802-5798



➔ Awards, continued

MD-bred Champion Older Male

Mindframe • Post Time • Quint's Brew

MD-bred Champion Older Female

Future Is Now • Seismic Beauty • Splendor

MD-bred Champion Sprinter

Future Is Now • Mindframe • Splendor

MD-bred Champion Turf Runner

Future Is Now • Had to Have Him
Lifelovelaughter

MD-bred Champion Steeplechaser

Keys Discount • Mission North • Road to Oz

Breeder of the Year

Jagger Inc. • R. Larry Johnson

Broodmare of the Year

Candy Striper • Gansett • Slow and Steady

Stallion of the Year

Blofeld • Great Notion • Mosler • Uncle Lino

2025 MTHA Award Finalists

Owner of the Year

Madison Avenue Racing Stable, Morris Kernan Jr. and Jagger Inc. • Larry Rabold • The Elkstone Group LLC

Trainer of the Year

Brittany T. Russell • Gary Capuano • Michael Trombetta

Jockey of the Year

Mychel J. Sanchez • Sheldon Russell • Yedsit Hazlewood

Backstretch Worker of the Year

Charles Sniffen

Male Dirt Horse of the Year

Barbadian Runner • Post Time • Slam Notion

Male Turf Horse of the Year

Coringa • Had To Have Him • Witty

Female Dirt Horse of the Year

Complexity Jane • Onyx Ten
Taketheoneyhoney

Female Turf Horse of the Year

Lifelovelaughter • Ultimate Love
Worth A Dime

Claimer of the Year

Bold Diversion • Cluck Cluck • Zero Blitz

Award winners in all categories will be revealed during the March 22 luncheon.

For more information, please contact the MTHA (mdhorsemen.com) and MHBA (marylandthoroughbred.com).



Reminder To Register All Trailers

The Maryland Jockey Club and Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association remind trainers that trailers housed in the Laurel Park stable area must be formally registered. This requirement applies to every horseman keeping a trailer on the grounds, and unregistered trailers will be subject to towing.

The initiative is part of a broader effort to better organize and manage the Laurel Park backstretch—particularly important as preparations ramp up for the Preakness and related events.

Several years ago, the MTHA issued numbered trailer-identification stickers for use in the stable area. If you no longer have a sticker, or if your original has faded or been removed, replacements are available from Diana Pinones in the MTHA office located in the Laurel grandstand.

To streamline the process, online registration forms will be available at <http://mdhorsemen.com/trailer>, and all submitted information will be added to the MTHA's existing trailer database to match trailers with the correct sticker numbers.

➔ Aftercare, continued



Enck also would alert Hammond and TMJC about welfare concerns when she had them.

Lindsey has rescued numerous horses after they have left Maryland if they were ever stabled in Robb's barn and has paid to ship them back to Maryland so that she can find them a home. There was a welfare issue with a horse at Laurel that used to be in her barn; the horse had a significant injury and was not getting good care at the farm where it was located.

Lindsey took the horse to her barn and kept him at her own expense for almost six months until he could be re-homed as a pasture pet.

"We really want to recognize the selfless efforts of Michele and Jessica because both go above and beyond in regard to caring for Maryland's retiring horses and they have done so for years," Hammond said. "We need more people like them in the horse racing and breeding industry."

Celebration Of Life Set For King Leatherbury

A Celebration of Life for trainer King T. Leatherbury, who passed away February 10 at age 92, is planned for Saturday, April 18, at Laurel Park. His family is participating in the arrangements.

The date coincides with the running of the King T. Leatherbury Stakes at 5 1/2 furlongs on the turf. The event will be held from 10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. in the Sports Book on the second floor of the clubhouse.

Leatherbury, a winner of 6,508 races, was inducted into the National Museum of Racing Hall of Fame in 2015. Born in Shady Side, Md.,



in 1933, Leatherbury got his trainer's license in 1958 and won his first race the following year with Mister L at Sunshine Park in Florida. By the time he retired in 2023, his runners had earned almost \$64.7 million.

Leatherbury, known throughout most of his career as a sharp claiming trainer, captured 52 training titles in Maryland, 26 each at Laurel Park and Pimlico Race Course, and four meet championships at Delaware Park. He led all North American trainers in wins in 1977 and 1978, and won 300 or more races each year from 1975 to 1978.



IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN

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.

Nationals Game Van Trip

MARCH 23 LEAVING TRACK KITCHEN AT 1PM

ALL HORSEMEN ARE INVITED

CONTACT BRYANT PAZ AT (240) 319-1892 TO SIGN UP

SPACE IS LIMITED



Get Your Tickets Now



Order online at MarylandThoroughbred.com/store/tickets

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