



The Horsemen's f Newsletter

October 2026

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Wendaur Joins TMJC as Veterinarian

Dr. Forrest Wendaur, who operates a private equine veterinary practice in Woodbine, Md., has been hired as a part-time association veterinarian for The Maryland Jockey Club.

Wendaur will join Dr. Gabrielle Rivest, TMJC's full-time association senior veterinarian, with his work focused primarily on morning training. TMJC said his addition will ensure that a veterinarian is present every morning while horses are training.

The position became available when Dr. John Connick departed at the end of August to manage a small animal clinic and spend more time with his family.

Wendaur opened Revival Equine Veterinary Services in July. His new role with TMJC will bring him back to racetracks where he has worked while allowing him to continue operating his practice.

Wendaur began his veterinary career in the Standardbred industry before shifting to Thoroughbreds in 2020. His experience includes work at Laurel Park, Pimlico Race Course, Delaware Park and Colonial Downs.

"I'll be doing mainly training part time a couple of days a week," Wendaur said. "I'm just looking forward to keeping the horses safe. When (TMJC) contacted me, I thought I'd jump in and help out."

Wendaur and Rivest serve as TMJC's association veterinarians.

The Maryland Racing Commission's veterinary team consists of Drs. Ilene Ellis, Sam Saksen and Kelly Walsh, who report to Dr. Libby Daniel, the commission's equine medical and welfare director.



A Statement From The Board of Directors:

The MTHA Board of Directors would like to respond to misleading and inaccurate accounts of the Association's actions. The dispute concerns the October 1, 2026 Special Membership Meeting, at which the candidate slate for the forthcoming Board election was finalized. Members deserve the facts, and the Board should not allow mischaracterizations of this process to go unanswered.

Beginning in early September, well before the meeting, the MTHA and its Nominating Committee widely publicized the opportunity to run for the Board and actively encouraged members to participate. Many members were contacted personally to help build a diverse slate of candidates. The full membership received notice of the meeting and the nomination requirements, with participation available both at Laurel Park in person and through Zoom.

Every eligible member had an opportunity to seek nomination. All were required to follow the same established rules.

The nomination process dates to the MTHA's founding and its predecessor organization. Members interested in serving on the Board have any one of three avenues to seek nomination:

1. Request consideration by the Nominating Committee.
2. Be nominated from the floor at a Special Membership Meeting, with endorsement by at least 10 members and the nominee's written consent.

3. Submit a written petition signed by at least 25 members, accompanied by the nominee's written consent.

Article 5 of the bylaws states, in relevant part:

"A special meeting of members shall be held at least forty-five (45) days prior to the voting date established by the Board of Directors for the purpose of announcing the report of the Nominating Committee and receiving additional nominations from the floor. A nomination from the floor will be accepted if it (i) receives the endorsement of not less than ten (10) Members and is accompanied by the written consent of the nominee to the nomination, or (ii) is accompanied by a petition signed by no fewer than twenty-five (25) Members and the nominee has consented to the nomination in writing."

At the October 1 meeting, the Nominating Committee presented 26 nominees—one of the largest slates in the Association's history. Every candidate on that slate had communicated an interest in serving to the MTHA or a member of the Nominating Committee before the meeting began. No eligible candidate who sought nomination through that process was excluded. Following the committee's report, counsel clearly explained the nomination procedures on numerous occasions, and the floor was opened for

Continued On Page 2 ➔

Maryland's FAMLI Program: What You Need To Know

Maryland's Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) program will bring new payroll and staffing responsibilities for trainers, breeding farms and other racing businesses. Payroll contributions begin January 1, 2027, and employee benefits become available January 1, 2028.

Eligible employees will generally qualify for up to 12 weeks of paid, job-protected leave for a serious health condition, family caregiving, welcoming a child or certain military-related needs. Benefits depend on wages, with a maximum payment of \$1,000 per week. Employees generally must have worked at least 680 hours in employment localized in Maryland during the four reported calendar quarters before applying or beginning leave. Hours may come from multiple employers.

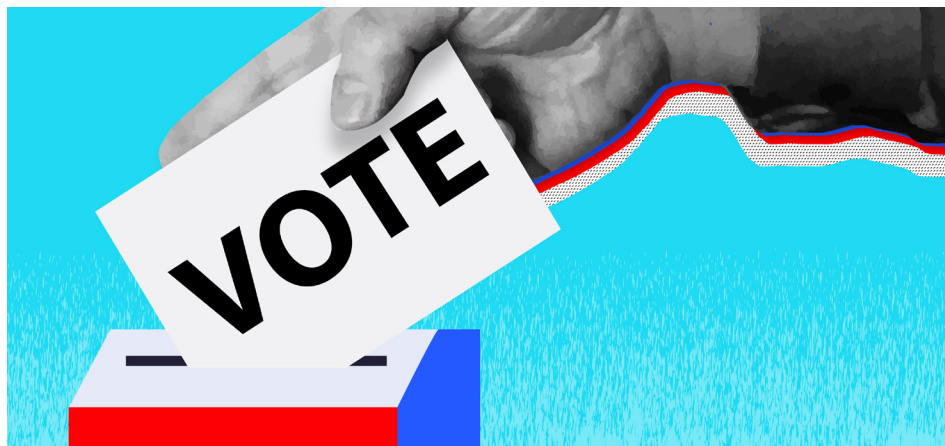
Even small stables are covered. Businesses with at least one Maryland employee must register. For 2027, the State Plan contribution rate is 0.9% of covered wages, up to the Social Security wage cap. Employers with 15 or more employees generally split that amount equally with workers. Smaller employers owe no employer contribution but must remit the employee's 0.45% share, which they may deduct from wages. Workers inside and outside Maryland under the same federal Employer Identification Number count toward employer size. Maryland's contribution guidance explains these requirements.

Trainers should review covered positions, coordinate payroll deductions and quarterly reporting, and plan for continued horse care during employee absences. Employees must receive notice one pay period before deductions begin. The first State Plan contribution payment is due April 30, 2027.

Employers pursuing a private plan should also review the November 15, 2026, Declaration of Intent deadline.

For more information, including registration, employee eligibility, private plans and practical considerations for racing operations, read the full FAMLI article on the MTHA website.

Slate Of 26 Candidates Approved For MTHA Election



The Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association Board of Directors on October 1 approved a slate of 26 candidates—12 owners and 14 trainers—that was presented by its Nominating Committee.

The action was taken during a general nominating meeting and was followed by the regular Board meeting. The candidates are as follows:

Owners: R. Thomas Bowman, Linda S. Gaudet, Michael D. Golden, David Hayden, JoAnn Hayden, David R. Hughes, Joseph P. Pons, Jr., Charles J. Reed, Gina F. Robb, Christy L. Payne, Michael B. Scheffres and Justin M. Wayson.

Trainers: Anthony Aguirre Jr., A. Ferris Allen, W. Robert Bailes, Philip L. Capuano, Kenneth M. Cox, Daniel G. Eubanks, Daniel J. McKenzie, Hugh I. McMahon, H. Graham Motion, Brittany T. Russell, Jason D. Smith, Suzanne Stettinius, Mi-

chael J. Trombetta and Katharine M. Voss.

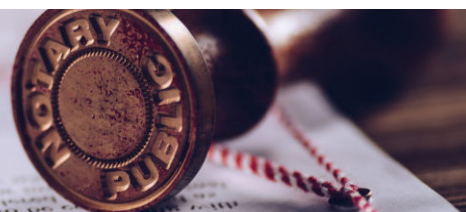
The 2026 election booklet, which will include biographies of all candidates, is scheduled to be finalized in November.

Ballots and printed election booklets will be mailed in early December. Each ballot will include a QR code providing electronic access to the booklet. The mailing also will include the ballot and return envelopes required by the bylaws.

Completed ballots must be received, not mailed, by the close of business on December 31, 2026. As in recent MTHA elections, members also will have the option to vote online rather than by mail.

The MTHA again has engaged an independent third-party election services company, to administer the election. The election company expects to announce the results in early January.

Free Notary Services Available In MTHA Office



➔ Setting The Record Straight

additional nominations. John J. Robb and Hugh I. McMahon then handed counsel nine written petitions, each bearing 10 member signatures.

Counsel reviewed the submissions and advised that the bylaws distinguish between a nomination from the floor, endorsed by at least 10 members, and a nomination submitted by written petition, which requires at least 25 member signatures.

Based on counsel's advice, the Board determined that the petitions received did not comply with the bylaws.

No nominations from the floor were received.

Accordingly, the Board then closed the

nominations and finalized the slate. The Special Membership Meeting was then adjourned, and the Board proceeded with its regular business meeting and full agenda.

The Board welcomes participation and is encouraged by the diverse slate of candidates and the fresh perspectives they bring. We are excited by the positive momentum in Maryland racing and look forward to engaging new voices as we build on that progress. We remain committed to serving Maryland horsemen and working together to strengthen the industry at this pivotal moment in its future. Any questions can be directed to info@mdhorsemen.com.

MTHA Board Extends \$1,000 Minimum Purse Payment to All Races

The Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association Board of Directors unanimously authorized a minimum purse payment of \$1,000 to every starter, through last place, in all races, including stakes.

The decision expands the minimum payment policy previously limited to overnight races. Owners whose horses start in stakes races will now receive the same \$1,000 minimum payment available to participants in overnight events.

The Board restored the minimum payment for overnight races earlier this year following discussion and a vote. The March announcement established payments of at least \$1,000 for fourth through last place, with fourth-, fifth- and sixth-place finishers receiving their designated percentage of the purse or \$1,000, whichever was greater.

The latest unanimous action extends the minimum to the entire racing program, ensuring that every starter receives at least \$1,000 regardless of finishing position or whether the race is an overnight event or a stakes.



Backstretch Cookout Rescheduled for Oct 12

Make plans now to attend the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association's Backstretch Appreciation Cookout, which has been rescheduled for Monday, October 12.

The event will begin at 11:30 a.m. under the tent on the apron at Laurel Park. It will feature chicken, beef, pork, salads, water, soda and special dishes from Hideaway Catering, which has provided the food for many years.

There will be music and drawings for prizes. All members of the backstretch community and staff of The Maryland Jockey Club are invited to attend.

John Salzman Sr. Passes at Age 81

John Salzman Sr., a stalwart of Maryland Thoroughbred racing for decades, passed away September 28 at age 81.

Salzman began training in 1978 and stepped away in 2025 due to illness. His last winner came on April 13, 2025, at Laurel Park with Happy Hour Joker for longtime client Gracie Mae Stables.

Salzman began a family operation that continued in later years through his sons John Jr., who currently has a stable at Laurel, and Tim, a trainer who passed away earlier this year. Tim Salzman's wife, Megan, who took over training duties, won her first race in September at Laurel with a horse that had been trained by her husband.

"It is with a sad heart I have to say Maryland racing has lost one of the truest horsemen I ever knew," John Salzman Jr. said. "My father passed away today at noon—post time for the first race. You will be truly missed. Rest in peace, dad."

Horses trained by John Salzman Sr. won 828 races and earned more than \$16 million. The pe-

riod of the mid-1980s through the early 2000s produced many of his most productive years by number of starts and victories.

Salzman is best known nationally as the trainer of National Racing Hall of Fame sprinter Xtra Heat, who won 26 of 35 starts and set a modern record for a filly or mare with 25 stakes wins.

Xtra Heat fittingly won her first start (a \$25,000 maiden claimer at Laurel in June 2000) as well as her final start in the Grade II Barbara Fritchie Handicap at Laurel in February 2023. In the \$1 million

Breeders' Cup Sprint at Belmont Park in 2001 against colts and geldings, then 3-year-old Xtra Heat led from the start through quick fractions only to be caught late by Squirrel Squirt. The \$200,000 for finishing second was just part of her overall career earnings of \$2.3 million.

Salzman also won the Grade III Martha Washington Stakes at Laurel with Tee Kay in 1984 and the Grade III Laurel Futurity with Lord of the Bay in 1992.



Fasig-Tipton Offering Yearling Sale Preakness Bonus

Fasig-Tipton is offering a \$500,000 bonus if a horse offered at its 2026 Eastern Fall Yearlings Sale wins the 2028 Preakness Stakes, adding a significant incentive alongside Maryland's annual Preakness bonus program.

The sale will take place Tuesday, October 27, beginning at 11 a.m. at the Maryland State Fairgrounds in Timonium.

The Fasig-Tipton bonus will be divided equally: \$250,000 to the horse's owner at the time of the Preakness victory and \$250,000 to its owner when offered at the 2026 sale. All horses offered are eligible, including those that do not meet their reserve.

Fasig-Tipton President Boyd Browning emphasized the Preakness's importance to Mid-Atlantic racing and its connection to the region's yearling market. The 2028 running is scheduled for the rebuilt Pimlico Race Course, just nine miles from the sales grounds.

For qualifying Maryland horses, the new incentive adds to the annual Preakness bonus authorized by the Maryland Racing Commission and supported by Maryland Thoroughbred Horse-

men's Association, the Maryland Horse Breeders Association and The Maryland Jockey Club.

Maryland's program provides the following awards for a Preakness winner:

Maryland-bred and Maryland-sired: \$500,000 total, consisting of \$225,000 to the owner, \$225,000 to the breeder and a \$50,000 stallion award.

Maryland-bred but not Maryland-sired: \$450,000 total, divided equally between the owner and breeder.

Maryland-sired but not Maryland-bred: \$275,000 total, consisting of \$225,000 to the owner and a \$50,000 stallion award.

Second-place finishers receive 20% of the applicable awards, while third-place finishers receive 10%. If

Maryland-bred/sired horses sweep the top three positions, the agreement provides for an additional \$150,000 paid by MTHA and MHBA in the same percentages.

Together, the programs create the opportunity for \$1 million in combined bonuses if an eligible Maryland-bred and Maryland-sired horse offered at the 2026 Eastern Fall Yearlings sale wins the 2028 Preakness.



Maryland Racing Community WhatsApp Groups:

Maryland Jockeys



MJC Racing Office



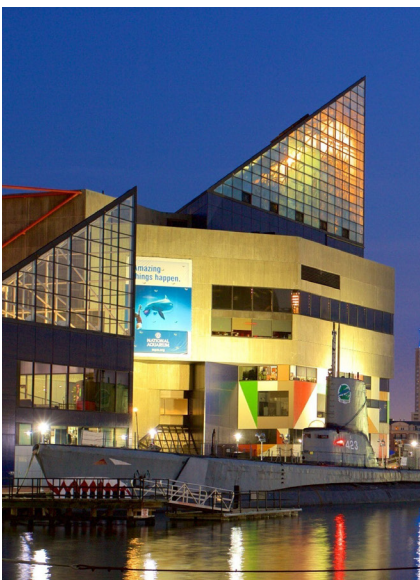
Laurel Park Trainers



HORSEMEN CAN NOW STREAM LIVE RACE VIDEO

<https://vimeo.com/event/4865441>
Password: mtha2025!

vimeo



A FREE TRIP TO NATIONAL AQUARIUM

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16
VAN LEAVES GATE AT 4PM

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