



# News from Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association

April 2015

## Will Youth Be Served? Keith Gisser, HHYF Project Manager

While columnists, pundits and track managers continually bemoan the aging fan base that goes to the races (I am in my mid-fifties and still consider myself a young race fan), very few tracks are doing much about it. The general attitude seems to be that the target demographic, 25-35, is too busy raising their kids and investing in their futures to spend a lot of money at the races. This, despite the fact that many, many folks in that exact demographic are across the parking lot at the slots and entertainment center.

But let's say the tracks are right and the 25-35s are beyond our reach? To create the next generation of racing fans, we need to start young. If we instill a love of the sport and the horse in young people, they will remember it and come back to it when they are old enough to bet a few bucks, either as avid fans or casual race goers. There are numerous youth organizations with equine interest already in place, but rarely does racing go after them.

I attended my first night of harness racing at Northfield Park with my high school youth group. Granted, it was not an official activity and the seniors might not have been quite old enough to bet legally, but we did. We split \$2 wagers four ways with the goal of winning \$10, enough for a large pepperoni pizza to split four ways. I was fifteen and I was hooked. I have wagered over \$250,000 in the forty years since. And that's not really a lot. It's a bit more than \$5,000 a year, or \$150 or so a night.

So why not reach out to the Future Farmers of America or a 4-H group and invite them to a night at the races? Give them a tour of the backstretch and the paddock. When I worked at Northfield, the track regularly hosted pre-schoolers to a Friday morning backstretch tour, which culminated with pizza while watching qualifying races. Certainly a similar event, especially under the lights, for kids who are closer to legal gambling age

would be a great form of outreach. And guess who many of those kids will drag along with them? Their parents, now passed that 25-35 demographic, but with older kids having the free time to attend the races without worrying about a baby sitter.

Some tracks do this type of outreach, some don't. The United States Trotting Association has seen the light, offering free youth memberships for those under 18. They also added a youth corner to [ustrotting.com](http://ustrotting.com), and publish the quarterly YouthBeats magazine. Tracks must partner with the USTA to publicize and expand this outreach.

No organization has a bigger impact on getting our youth involved in harness racing than the Harness Horse Youth Foundation, which, according to its mission statement is "To provide young people and their families information and experiences with harness horses in order to foster the next generation of fans and participants." HHYF alumni and scholarship recipients include Tony Alagna, Chris Mcerlean, Jodi Schillaci, Heather Vitale and even new OHHA top dog Renee Mancino, to name a few. The organization runs hands-on camps across the country, featuring a stable of Trottingbred, smaller cousins to the Standardbred, that are the ideal size for teens and pre-teens to work on. Camp participants get to jog the horses, after learning how to groom and harness them. This year, HHYF, a 501(c)(3) public charity, will head to Scioto Downs for a one-day event on Tuesday, August 11. The one-day camp has sold out the last two years, and hopes are to expand to a five-day overnight event in 2016. You can get more information at [www.hhyf.org](http://www.hhyf.org).

So the pieces are out there. Now, we as a sport, must come together to put them in place, to solve the puzzle of from where our next generation of fans will come.



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# Executive Director's Report

Renée Mancino



## **OHHA Staff**

**Renée Mancino**  
Executive Director

**Jerry Knappenberger**  
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**Regina Mayhugh**  
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Director

**Open**  
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**Linda Nance**  
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Retirement Plan  
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Northfield Park  
(614) 778-5905

**Brett Merkle**  
Miami Valley  
Gaming & Racing,  
Hollywood at  
Dayton Raceway,  
Scioto Downs  
(614) 354-1601

## **2015 Racing Dates**

Northfield Park  
Jan. 1-Dec. 30  
(214 Live Days)

Miami Valley Gaming  
Jan. 2-May 3  
(89 live days)

Scioto Downs  
May 5-Sept. 12  
(95 live days)

Hollywood at  
Dayton Raceway  
Sept. 14-Dec. 30  
(75 live days)

## **Important Dates**

**OSRC Monthly Meeting**  
April 29- 10:00 AM  
Rife Center  
77 S. High St., 31<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215

**OHHA Quarterly  
Board Meeting**  
April 21 - 9:00 AM  
Hilton Garden Inn  
3232 Olentangy River Rd  
Columbus, OH 43202

*Photos on cover by  
JJ Zamaiko Photography  
(Northfield Park) &  
Conrad Photo (Miami  
Valley)*

At the Ohio State Racing Commission's February 25, 2015, meeting they announced that the subsequent four monthly meetings would in part be used to investigate and discuss the medication and testing rules in the state of Ohio. The investigation was initiated as part of the Racing Commission's normal due diligence process, however, it was also done to help the Commission make a determination on adoption (or not) of Racing Medication and Testing Consortium (RMTC) backed Association of Racing Commissioners International (ARCI) promulgated model rules for medication and testing.

To that end the Racing Commission hearing in February included ARCI President Edward J. Martin and Dr. Dionne Benson, Executive Director with the RMTC. They provided testimony on their science, process, and the efficacy of adoption.

The Racing Commission Hearing March 30th was devoted to racing industry participants' testimony. Invited for presentations were the U. S. Trotting Assn., national and state branches of the Horsemen's Benevolent & Protective Assn., and the Ohio Harness Horsemen's Assn.

In preparation for hearing, the OHHA Medication and Testing Committee met multiple times, conferred, and developed the Ohio Standardbred Industry's position. The Committee includes, Dr. John Mossbarger (Chairman), Dan Ater, Scott Mogan, Virgil Morgan Jr., Steve Bateson, Kent Sherman, Mark Headworth, Emily Hay, and Rick Martindale.

Veterinarian support for the medication and testing Committee was graciously provided by Dr. Dan Wilson, racetrack veterinarian with Cleveland Equine Clinic, LLC, full-time consummate practitioner primarily servicing Northfield Park from 1975 to date, and Dr. John Reichert, with Woodland Run, one of the most prolific backstretch veterinarians on the southern

circuit, including Scioto Downs, Miami Valley, and Dayton Raceway. Not just Ohio licensed, Dr. Reichert also provided a multi-jurisdictional view because he is licensed in 10 other states, KY, PA, IN, NY, NJ, VA, GA, NC, IL, FL., where he also diagnoses and treats racehorse related ailments.

Virgil Morgan Jr., Miami Valley Raceway's current runaway leader in the trainer's standings, the winningest trainer in Ohio history, and currently the second-winningest trainer in North America by wins, and leading UTRS trainer for this year and last nationwide, provided the trainer's perspective for the Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association. Dan Ater and Scott Mogan appeared at the hearing in support of Virgil's position as testifying witness, veterinarian support at the hearing was graciously provided by Dr. Dan Wilson and Dr. John Reichert.

We thank everyone for their support and the enormous amount of time they devoted to this project. As a result of their hard work, the Ohio standardbred industry position as offered follows. For the official video and transcript contact the Racing Commission.

Everyone agrees that it would be nice to see uniform medication rules in effect. But the Racing Medication and Testing Consortium (RMTC) backed Association of Racing Commissioners International (ARCI) promulgated model rules aren't the rules.

Why aren't they the rules? First, no state has adopted the ARCI model rules verbatim in their entirety. Second, there isn't enough scientific research to establish the published thresholds as reliable or legal-challenge proof, and finally, no other state has control over any other individual state's adoption processes and procedures, so nationally there is no, "Model Rule".

In conjunction with no control over what other states implement and accept within their own

borders there is also no reliable information share system among the states when they periodically revise their own rules. As any one racing jurisdiction identifies shortcomings with one substance or another in their racing industry, they often do their own state-specific research outside of the RMTC and ARCI framework. Then based off of their own in-state research they will tweak their own in-state rules using their own procedures to complement that research, one state that does this often is Pennsylvania. So even-if one state adopts an ARCI rule as a standard they then tweak individual components of those model rules to fit into their own state racing practices. So although the ARCI Model Rules are a good starting point, verbatim acceptance in their entirety by any one state is impractical.

One glaring area this occurs in under the model rules are with the controlled therapeutic medications. The therapeutic medications are essential to the welfare of the standardbred racehorse, the safety of racing, and are an important component of the standardbred racing business model.

Drug manufacturer's recommended therapeutic dose and treatment recommendation times and durations are things that need to be considered in setting thresholds and establishing out-times. Veterinarians need to be able to have the leeway to therapeutically treat horses and keep them healthy. Veterinarians also need to be able to confidently administer controlled therapeutic substances with reliable out-times in order to reduce the probability of a trainer receiving a positive test off of that administration. That level of confidence is not presently in place in Ohio.

What the standardbred indus-

try would like to see in Ohio is for Ohio to reject adoption of the ARCI Model rules and instead set the standard for a model rule based off our existing regulatory thresholds for prohibited substances, (which are referenced in an OSRC Dispatch as being from the January 19, 2012 Commission Hearing).

A model rule that makes sense to the different racing breeds in Ohio based off of their own individual breed differences, racing practices, racing surfaces, racing styles, and longevity. A model rule for Ohio racing Standardbreds bifurcated from the Thoroughbred and Quarter Horse Rules.

This isn't an attempt to give cheaters an edge or undermine the RMTC, ARCI, and the Ohio Racing Commissions' good work. What we are requesting will provide horsemen with accurate information to manage their horses properly and avoid unnecessary positives as much as possible.

If the number of violations for these therapeutics which can be attributed to bad management can be cut back by education, proper thresholds, and accurate out-times for practicing veterinarians, the Racing Commission can devote their limited resources to catching the serious and deliberate offenders, particularly the Class I and Class 2 positives, and attempt to stay ahead of the curve on new advances in testing.

One critical point from a horseman's perspective is that the current thresholds for most of the substances listed on the regulated therapeutic medication list are

based on the RMTC's set 95/95 tolerance interval. When extrapolated out as applied in the real world testing barn, that equates to 1 out of every 20 test samples as being a positive test as currently classified under the existing RMTC thresholds and ARCI model rule system. Therefore, in the real world for every 20 post-race samples tested one will result in a false positive test. From a due process perspective that is unacceptable.

Along these lines we would also like to see Ohio amend the definition of a "positive" test. For reporting purposes we would like to see controlled therapeutic drug "overages" separated from the presence of illegal stimulants and penalties commensurate with those differing offenses. We would like to see them categorized as overages and stop vilifying therapeutic treatments as "doping". Human athletes are accorded a higher level of respect than their equine counterparts as many human athletes perform with much higher permitted levels of therapeutics, and in some cases it is legal for a human athlete to perform on a medication that would be completely illegal in any amount in an equine athlete.

Corticosteroids, Bronchodilators, Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatories, Sedatives, Local Anesthetics, and Muscle Relaxers are all important tools used therapeutically by the practicing veterinarians for standardbred trainers every day. They are not "doping", they are therapeutic.

The rules need to be amended to enable veterinarians to treat horses therapeutically, not partially. Our breed is durable and sturdy. Our death rates as compared to the thoroughbreds are less than 1/1000th per race run, and our racing style dictates a change. It is time for medication and testing to recognize that and adjust thresholds and out-times accordingly.

In the next two months the Racing Commission has invited our local state Veterinarians and any other Veterinarian with an interest on the issue to testify. Dr. Dan Wilson and Dr. John Reichert have both signaled their intent to testify in April as-to the specific drawbacks they face in therapeutically treating racehorses with the currently set therapeutically limits in Standardbreds that race weekly an average of 30 times a year, and in some cases over a span of ten years.

In May the researchers and scientists will provide their data and information relative to currently set RMTC thresholds, the efficacy of the underlying research, those standards, and the reliability of the ARCI published model rules.

So thank those that participated on your behalf in this very important project and stay tuned for more information to come as this process continues. Hopefully, we can help Ohio become a leader in the medication and testing realm and level the playing field for all Ohio based participants.

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## Racing Commission Update

At the regularly scheduled Racing Commission Meeting on Monday, March 30, 2015 at the Columbus Riffe Center, most of the Hearing was devoted to racing industry participants' testimony on medication and testing in Ohio and opinion on the adoption (or not) of uniform RMTC and ARCI backed model rules.

Mike Tanner and Phil Langley provided the U.S. Trotting Associations position. Executive Director, Renée Mancino and trainer Virgil Morgan Jr. provided the OHHA's position and Executive Director Dave Basler with trainer William Cowans provided the National and Ohio Horsemen's Benevolent & Protective Association's position. All participants opined that model rule adoption was not recommended, that there needed to be uniform rules put into place, and that the rules should be adopted taking into account the different breeds business models, breed sturdiness, and racing styles.

During normal business the Commission passed resolution 2015-2, "Use of the Whip", which is intended to replace the current rule, § 3769-17-17, in its entirety. The resolution will be vetted through the legislative process through the Common Sense Initiative and Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review process. Implementation on any final rule after legislative vetting will take at least 60 days.

*Continued on page 4*



## Racing Commission Update

*continued from page 3*

An update on the Hollywood Gaming at Dayton Raceway Agreement negotiations was provided. Representation was made that progress is being made.

An update on the horse racing fatalities was provided, so far this year there have been 3 thoroughbred fatalities and 1 standardbred fatality.

The total distribution for the 2015 casino revenue share was also outlined as having been calculated pursuant to the

total number of live races at each pari-mutuel racetrack. Based on that calculation the breakdown was 29.04% to the Thoroughbred purse pools and 70.96% to the Standardbred purse pools calculated on 5,788 total races. For Standardbred racetracks that included: Miami Valley Raceway at 9.02% (increase from 8.23% in 2014), Northfield Park at 38.95% (decrease from 41.03% in 2014), Dayton Raceway 9.04% (increase from 8.23% in 2014), and Scioto Downs 13.95% (increase from 13.16% in 2014).

Approval for a racing day make-up day for Miami Valley Raceway's February 19, 2015 cancellation was given for Tuesday, April 14, 2015.

For a transcript of the meeting contact the State Racing Commission. The next scheduled Racing Commission Hearing date for testimony and input from Veterinarians on medication and testing in the state of Ohio, will be in conjunction with the next monthly meeting at 10:00 a.m. on April 28, 2015, at the Riffe Center, 77 S. High St., Columbus, Ohio on the 31st Floor.

## Updates From Your President

Kevin Greenfield

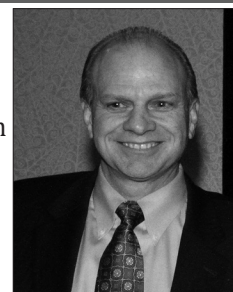
I am in the process of implementing a comprehensive marketing plan through a regional marketing company. John Mossbarger, Renee Mancino and I will be meeting as this newsletter is published with executives from the four harness tracks in order to work in collaboration with them to bring this marketing venture to fruition.

At the April Board of Directors meeting, I will be handpicking representatives from our sport to work in a massive fundraising effort to raise the \$100,000, as I promised for our PAC efforts in order to strengthen our influence in the legislature.

We are presently getting quotes from technology companies to integrate our computer systems in order to provide better service to our membership.

Finally, a meeting will be held with the legislative committee at the April Board meeting to elect members to serve on a task force to investigate and research alternative forms of income for our industry in order not to be solely dependent on VLT revenue in the future.

It is an exciting time of the year as everyone gets ready for another busy racing season. Best wishes and luck to all of you with them this summer!



## April Updates from Northfield Park

Ayers Ratliff

**RACING:** Northfield Park will continue to race four nights a week (Monday through Thursday), with a 6:00 p.m. post time. We currently offer a purse structure of \$3,000 to \$13,000 per race and average about \$90,000 in purses per program.

At time of writing, Aaron Merriman is our leading driver, posting 133 wins over the Flying Turns. Following Aaron is Ronnie Wrenn, Jr. (120), Jason Merriman (53), Ryan Stahl (45) and Kurt Sugg (42). Aaron Merriman and Ronnie Wrenn Jr. have each amassed over \$500,000 in purse earnings at Northfield Park so far in 2015.

Jessica Milner (23) tops Northfield's training ranks by wins. She leads Virgil Morgan, Jr. (18), Brian Loney (17), Sam Schillaci (17), Randy Cassavaugh (16), Michael Dowdall (16) and John Kina (16). The Milner, Schillaci and Dowdall stables have each garnered over \$100,000 in purse earnings so far this year at Northfield.

There have been an impressive roster of equine harness stars who have staked to the 2015 marquee events at Northfield. The \$200,000 Battle of Lake Erie is set for Friday, June 12, the \$200,000 Cleveland Trotting Classic will go to post on Friday, July 3, the \$500,000 Carl Milstein Memorial will be Friday, August 14 and the \$125,000 Courageous Lady is scheduled for Friday,

November 27.

**PROMOTIONS:** Northfield Park will offer a \$5 "Match Play" to Player's Club members on Wednesday, April 15 and well as Mondays, April 20 and 27. "Match Plays" are offered from 5:30 - 7:00 p.m. Northfield patrons will also continue to enjoy handicapping contests on Saturdays and Sundays throughout the month (except Easter Sunday). The contests offer \$900 in daily prizes. A \$5,000 handicapping contest final will be Saturday, April 25 and another \$5,000 will be on Sunday, April 26.

**NEW TRACK KITCHEN:** The Northfield Park track kitchen will be opening very soon, offering delicious food on a daily basis on the backstretch. The horsemen Easter Luncheon will take place in the new kitchen on Saturday, April 4.



Photo by JJ Zamaiko Photography

### ATTENTION: Farm Workers, Trainers, Drivers & Grooms

Signups for the Harness Horsemen's Health and Retirement Plan are ongoing. You must opt-in, if you are not already an active participant, before June 1, 2015. \* You may sign up via your OHHA track representative at the racetrack and you must be a permanent Ohio resident to be eligible.\*

# Ohio County Fairs Updates

## Defiance County Area Horsemen's Held Its 5th Annual Reverse Raffle

The 5th Annual Defiance County Area Horsemen's Reverse Raffle was held Saturday, March 28th with over 200 attending. When it came down to the last two "live" tickets, Jeff Batt and Kim Berry, both from Defiance opted to end the anticipation by splitting the last two prize amounts of \$1500 and \$600. A silent auction of twenty-six donated stallion breedings will add to the money raised at the event. That money will be returned to the participating horsemen at the Defiance County Fair harness races August 22nd and 25th, 2015.

## Coggins Paperwork Memo

To: County Fairs, Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association, Fair Judges, Fair Inspectors

From: William Crawford, Executive Director  
Ohio State Racing Commission

Date: 2015

Re: Coggins paperwork

This memo is to remind you of the Racing Commission's rules on equine infectious anemia (EIA) and coggins tests. Rule 3769-15-32(C) states in part that "No horse shall be admitted to any race track facilities in Ohio without having had a negative official test for equine infectious anemia within twelve months. It shall be the responsibility of the trainer to see that each horse's test results are current, and the racing secretary's office will record such in the United States Trotting Association computer after the trainer's present the negative coggins test papers to the racing office upon arrival in the barn area." Rule 3769-14-41(A) (4) states in part that "...no horse infected with equine infectious anemia, or a carrier thereof, shall race." Rule 3769-14-48 (J) states in part "The Race Secretary shall check the electronic eligibility of each horse on the premises of the permit holder for current coggins test report."

These rules are partially in effect due to state and federal laws enforced by the Ohio Department of Agriculture and the United States Department of Agriculture. I would like to wish you a successful fair season and if you have any questions please contact me at 614-466-2757.

## Harness Horsemen International Annual Meeting

The Harness Horsemen International annual meeting was held March 1-5, 2015, at the Embassy Suites Deerfield Beach Resort and Spa in Deerfield Beach, Florida. On March 2, President Tom Luchento opened the meeting and after business reports were given, racing commission issues were discussed among members. Dr. Mary Robinson, from the University of Pennsylvania's New Bolton Center in Chester, Pennsylvania, was the keynote speaker and presented "Equine Drug Testing in the 21st Century". The re-election of HHI At-large Directors was held on March 4, followed by the awards luncheon.

The 2015 HHI Board of Directors are: President- Tom Luchento, First Vice President- Kim Hankins, Second Vice President- Tony Somone, Secretary- Sal DiMario, Treasurer- Mike Izzo, and At Large Directors- Ron Battoni, Jerry Knappenberger, Dr. Timothy Powers and Gabe Prewitt.

Awards were presented at the awards luncheon, concluding the HHI Annual Meeting. Gene Oldford, HHI past president was named the 2014 HHI for his continued dedication to the organization. Jerry Knappenberger, former GM of the Ohio HHA, was awarded the HHI Appreciation Award for 2014. Derick Giwner, Daily Racing Form harness racing editor and writer, accepted the 2014 HHI Clyde Hirt Media Award.



President Tom Luchento presents the HHI Appreciation Award to Jerry Knappenberger.



President Tom Luchento presents the Dominic Frinzi Person of the Year presented to Gene Oldford.



President Tom Luchento presents the HHI Clyde Hirt Media Award to Derick Giwner.



Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association  
850 Michigan Avenue, Suite 100  
Columbus, Ohio 43215-1920



## Thank You to our 2015 P.A.C.E.R. Contributors

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Stephen Bateson	Edward Miller	Robert Sidley
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**P.A.C.E.R.:** Ohio horse racing received great support from Governor Kasich and Ohio legislators with the enactment of House Bill #386 (HB386). We must support those legislators who support us.

Donate by sending a personal check or money order (*corporate checks are not acceptable for PAC donations*) to:  
**P.A.C.E.R 850 Michigan Ave, Suite 100 Columbus, OH 43215-1920**

Include employer information and type of business.

All P.A.C.E.R. donations go to a candidate's campaign funds.

The OHHA offices receive calls every week from state legislators asking for campaign donations as they attempt to raise campaign financing throughout the year.

**A special Thank You to those who donate!**

### Pacesetter Level (\$1000 & More)

Thomas Miller	Dr. John Mossbarger
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as of March 31, 2015