

# Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association News



Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association

850 Michigan Ave., Suite 100 Columbus, OH 43215-1920

614-221-3650 1-800-353-6442 (f) 614-221-8726 www.ohha.com

January 2016

## OHHA Annual Awards Banquet

Join us **Saturday, January 23, 2016**, at the **Columbus Marriott Northwest Hotel** for the Stallion Auction, Ladies' Luncheon, OHHA Membership Meeting, USTA District 1 Meeting and the OHHA Awards Banquet

### OHHA Banquet Agenda January 23, 2016

10 a.m.-5 p.m. Stallion Auction  
11:30 a.m. Ladies' Luncheon  
1:00 p.m. USTA District 1 Meeting  
2:30 p.m. OHHA Membership Meeting  
4:30 p.m. Cocktails and Cash Bar  
5:30 p.m. Dinner Seating  
6:00 p.m. OHHA Awards Banquet  
9:00 p.m. Awards Banquet After Party.  
*Includes Entertainment & Cash Bar.*

- Reservations and payment for tickets for the banquet must be at the OHHA office by Wednesday, January 20, 2016. Tickets are \$50 each and can be picked up at the Banquet Reservation Table. **No tickets will be sold at the door.**

- Table seating will not be assigned. There will be reserved tables available. If you would like to reserve a table please indicate that on your reservation form, below. Minimum reservation for a Reserved table is 8, Reserved tables seat up to 10.

#### Location:

Columbus Marriott Northwest  
5606 Blazer Parkway Dublin, OH 43017  
Phone (614) 336-4705  
www.columbusmarrittnorthwest.com

#### Room Reservations:

Columbus Marriott Northwest room reservations must be made by calling (888) 801-7133 or via the reservation link found on the OHHA website.

#### Directions:

From the North: Take I-71 South to I-270 West for 15 miles to Exit 15 (Tuttle Crossing Blvd.) and turn left. Travel two miles to Blazer Parkway and turn left.  
From the East: Take I-70 West to I-270 North to Exit 15 (Tuttle Crossing Blvd.) and turn right. Travel one mile to Blazer Parkway and turn left.

### Ladies Luncheon

January 23 at 11:30 a.m.

Reserve your spot by turning in the form below or call the OHHA office at 614-221-3650 to reserve your spot! If you would like to participate in the gift exchange, bring a wrapped gift (\$15-20 range).

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### Stallion Auction

Friday, January 22  
12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Saturday, January 23  
10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Auction details on page 5 in this Newsletter

From the South: Take I-71 North to I-270 West for 15 miles to Exit 15 (Tuttle Crossing Blvd.) and turn right. Travel one mile to Blazer Parkway and turn left.  
From the West: Take I-270 East to I-270 North for 5 miles to Exit 15 (Tuttle Crossing Blvd.) and turn right. Travel one mile to Blazer Parkway and turn left.

### OHHA Annual Awards Banquet Reservation Form

Columbus Marriott Northwest - Dublin, OH

Saturday, January 23, 2016

*Banquet Reserve tickets at \$50 each. Payment must be received by January 20, 2016, at the OHHA office.*

*The main entree being served is Beef. Please note below if you prefer an Alternate Menu Selection.*

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Tickets: \_\_\_\_\_ Alternate Menu Selection: Chicken\_\_ Fish\_\_ Vegan\_\_

**The following information is only needed if you would like to reserve a table please fill out and submit the following (Minimum 8, Max 10 per reserved table.)**

Name for Reservation \_\_\_\_\_ Number of People \_\_\_\_\_

**Ladies Luncheon Reservation (No charge, however no-shows will be charged the actual cost for lunch)**

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Amount Enclosed:** \_\_\_\_\_ If paying with credit card Name on Credit Card \_\_\_\_\_  
Credit Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Credit Card Code \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration \_\_\_\_\_

# From Your Executive Director



Renée Mancino

## OHHA Staff

**Renée Mancino**  
Executive Director

**Regina Mayhugh**  
Communications  
Director

**Cheri Johnson**  
Office Administrator

**Linda Nance**  
Harness Horsemen's  
Health & Retirement Plan  
Administrator

## OHHA Track Reps

**Amy Hollar**  
Northfield Park  
(614) 778-5905

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

## 2016 Racing Dates

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

Miami Valley Gaming  
Jan. 9 - May 8  
(86 live days)

Scioto Downs  
May 10 - Sept. 10  
(90 live days)

Hollywood at  
Dayton Raceway  
Sept. 12 - Dec. 30  
(75 live days)

## Important Dates

**OHHA Quarterly  
Board Meeting**  
January 22- 9:00 AM  
Columbus Marriott NW  
5606 Blazer Parkway  
Dublin, OH 43017

**OHHA Annual  
Membership Meeting**  
January 23 - 2:30 PM  
Columbus Marriott NW  
5606 Blazer Parkway  
Dublin, OH 43017

**OSRC Monthly Meeting**  
January 26 - 10:00 AM  
Rife Center  
77 S. High St., 31<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215

## 2015. It's a Wrap.

With the final 2015 Holidays approaching as I write this column I want to wrap up the year with a brief summary of 2015 and look forward into 2016.

## Many Changes in 2015

Coming into 2015 and my new role with the Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association, my first column in February was about change. The enormous amount of change I personally faced having altered my career path and relocation back from the West Coast, change within the Association, and change throughout the Industry. *"Change is not only likely, it's inevitable,"* Barbara Sher, author.

People differ in what they do in the face of change. Some do nothing, some regress, some fight against change thinking that will stop it, and some people embrace change and move forward into the unknown. I embrace change. I am someone that would be truly bored in a widget factory on an assembly line. I am not wired to stay in the same place day in and day out, doing the same thing, over and over. For me change gives me the opportunity to innovate and move forward into a different way of doing things. Note I didn't say, "new" or "better" way of doing things, just "different". To move forward in my world that means innovating, making changes, doing things differently. During that process I will often and repeatedly make mistakes, that is inevitable, I just don't dwell, I acknowledge mistakes then move forward.

This year has been a year of immense change, which has given many Members and Board Members heartburn, but one I have enjoyed thoroughly. I have often been criticized at being focused too much on change because it wasn't broken and didn't need fixing, or it was moving too fast, or not moving fast enough. And no one said anything was broken nor needed fixing, it is all just change. So I do hear your constructive criticism, which comes to me frequently and rather often. Most recently received from the lovely and sweet owners of the nice little two year-old pacing filly Dominating Dora, Ronald and Becky Wulber who said they love the amount of information provided in my columns, all the details are there, but they took coffee breaks while reading them! This is the comment I hear most often, I am anything but brief! So in their honor I am in fact going to keep this one as brief as possible!

## Legislative Issues

2015 was a very busy and productive year. Legislatively after many years of doing without, the OHHA

brought a new lobbying firm on board in May, Byers, Minton & Associates. Primary partners Bill Byers, Andrew Minton, and support staff, Greg Bennett, Stephen Nielson, and Michele Staton. With them on board we saw an immense amount of legislative activity. And with their excellent canvassing team based approach to lobbying, coverage at the Statehouse, expertise, and resiliency they did an outstanding and amazing job for the Association in a challenging year.

Beginning with the Budget Bill, H.B. 64 we rolled through the Biennial Budget process as several legislative proposals impacting horsemen were inserted into and out of the Bill. All summer in conference committee, through to the line item veto process, and ultimately to the Governor's signature. Much of the activity was related to the efforts made towards getting the VLT Discretionary monies released to the Horsemen's custody and control from the escrow accounts it was being deposited into until final Agreement with each Permit Holder. Those efforts culminated August 25th with the Racing Commission adopting Resolution 2015-9 requesting a formal Attorney General's Opinion to answer the question of, "whether the OSRC has the statutory authority to address how the VLT funds designated for the benefit of breeding and racing in Ohio will be managed to include control and disbursal of VLT funds." In response to the opinion request, the Attorney General's office, Opinion Section lawyers, and Charitable Games section lawyer, sat down with the Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association, the OHHA, and our respective lobbyists October 22nd. The goal of the meeting was to review and understand the facts and documentation supporting the Associations' position for custody and control. The Attorney General's office opinion is still pending to date, but is expected early in the first quarter of 2016.

Also planned for 2016 are Legislative initiatives amending the Ohio Revised Code to enable the Standardbred Development Committee to potentially add more Ohio Sired Stakes races or series in addition to the current Ohio Sires Stakes Series. On deck is a potential Revised Code amendment to add Ohio Breeder's Awards to the Ohio based Breeder's benefits to bolster the Ohio Breeding Program.

*Continued on page 3*



**PACER**

Within the Association a new Legislative Committee and PACER Board was formed tasked with investigating and implementing additional PAC funding programs, as well as strategically providing legislative funding to pivotal political candidates and caucuses. The goal of funding the PACER Account was zealously pursued by President Greenfield, his personal goal set at \$100,000. As of year-end the total in the account was \$94,000. Legislative spending by the PACER Board in the last half of 2015 reduced that total by \$6,200, so President Greenfield met his 2015 challenge! With next year being an election year we meet with Byers, Minton the first week in January to strategically plan our legislative efforts and PAC funding for 2016. Look for details on a standalone legislative event in the first quarter of 2016 and plan to attend. Looking forward to 2016 it will be interesting to see what President Greenfield sets as a new PAC Fund goal having met his 2015 mark!

**Personnel and Office Updates**

Association personnel changes include the addition of Cheri Johnson for our front-line Office Administrator's position, the addition of a second regional fair coordinator, Todd Brown, and a transition over to H.H.H.R.P. Administrator Linda Nance and H.H.H.R.P. Trust Attorney Christine Poth with Vorys, Sater, Seymour and Pease LLP. And with the deadline date looming for a newly approved OHHA Project Coordinator's position, which is being put into place to provide backup for the myriad of projects planned for the Association moving forward, 2016 will see another new face in the office.

Also on the operational side of things numerous IT improvements were made including completely transitioning all of the Association's financial accounts into an automated full double-ledger accounting system and consolidating those same accounts with one financial institution in order to solidify the Association's financial position in the marketplace.

The IT infrastructure improvement project was also started with the IT systems evaluated, updated and in the process of completing implementation. 2016 will see the proposal for a membership, nomination, healthcare, and retirement database expected to be developed to help finalize the IT modernization in the office.

**Benefits**

On the Benefits side of the Association, Ohio resident Horsemen saw \$1,000,000 million allocated from VLT Discretionary funds to their benefit directly. In June \$500,000 was allocated to the

Ohio Harness Horsemen's Health Plan by the OHHA Board to shore up the required minimum balance and solidify the fully Obama Care compliant medical benefits plan for all participants. In the first quarter of 2016 the O.H.H.H.I.T. Trustees will evaluate the needs for 2016 and plans will be made on what revenue will be necessary after that meeting occurs going forward.

In October the Board allocated \$500,000 to the Harness Horsemen's Health and Retirement Plan (H.H.H.R.P.) and the Trustees approved a 2014 Distribution to all eligible and active Horsemen's retirement accounts. The Trustees meet January 22, 2016 to determine their course of action for 2015 on Distributions. The OHHA Board also reallocated VLT Discretionary Funds to potentially earmark up to \$100,000 on a yearly basis for a Horsemen's Welfare and Benevolent Fund. The Fund is expected to be in place to help Ohio resident horsemen in imminent need with emergency expenses related to deaths, disability, and other hardships. With the O.H.H.H.I.T. Trustees overseeing distribution on that new Benefit for Horsemen, expect more details after the January 22, 2016 Board meeting on program criteria and guidelines.

**Driver Flat Fee Commission**

An additional benefit spearheaded by Board Vice President, Steve Bateson was added in 2015 at three of the four pari-mutuel racetracks. Steve's proposal passed by unanimous OHHA Board Resolution in January 2015 and he sought to fully implement the Resolution by the close of 2015. That Resolution was the \$15 flat fee commission paid out of the Horsemen's Purse Pool monies for OHHA Members driving in pari-mutuel races when they finish 6th through 10th.

The Resolution was graciously implemented and administered by each Racino's management and staff kicked off by Scioto Downs Racino in May, implemented by Hollywood Gaming at Dayton Raceway in September, with Miami Valley Raceway following suit in their upcoming January meet. Much gratitude is due to those permit holders that went the extra mile for this benefit to Ohio Horsemen in 2015. Efforts will continue to work towards statewide implementation into 2016.

**Horsemen's Agreement**

OHHA Business saw the final Horsemen's Agreement completed in October with Penn Gaming. With Steve McCoy continuing to lead the negotiations throughout the year, final OHHA and Penn Gaming signature occurred October 26th and the Final Agreement was ratified at the October 27,

*Continued on page 4*

**OHHA Board of Directors**

**President**

Kevin Greenfield

**Vice President**

Steve Bateson

**Breeders**

Senena Etsy  
Scott Hagemeyer  
Randy Haines  
Dr. Randall Hutchison  
Joe McLead  
John Poppe  
Ayers Ratliff  
Betty Shaw  
Brad Wallace

**Owners by District**

- (1) Sue Stockwell
- (2) John Ryan Melsheimer
- (3) Mary Jo Bross
- (4) Suanne Kochilla
- (5) Dayle Roof
- (6) Randy Leopard
- (7) Steve Bateson
- (8) Emily Hay
- (9) Carl Wick

**Trainer / Driver**

Jim Arledge Jr.  
Dan Ater  
Brian Brown  
Roy Burns  
Rick Martindale  
Scott Mogan  
Virgil Morgan Jr.  
Kent Sherman  
Mark Winters

**Track Directors**

Miami Valley- Dan Noble  
Northfield Park- Scott Cox  
Hollywood at Dayton- Mike Polhamus  
Scioto Downs- Hugh Beatty Jr.

**Advisory Committee- Active Past Presidents**

Richard Brandt, Jr.  
Dr. Al Gabel  
Don "Skip" Hoover  
John Konesky, III  
Steve McCoy  
Dr. John Mossbarger  
Daryl Sherman  
Robert Sidley



SMSideas.com

2015 Racing Commission hearing. The Horsemen's net effective rate on the VLT revenue share is 10.5%, with a 70-30% purse pool to discretionary division, a variation in export simulcast expense and revenue distribution between the Horsemen and Penn Gaming diverging from the base statutory scheme. With a 1.5% boost in VLT revenue in effect from October forward, it is anticipated that we may be able to boost purses when the live racing meet returns in September 2016 at Dayton.

**Sires Stakes Program**

In the Sires Stakes Program Ohio Sired Horses will be racing for over \$14,000,000 in purses with approximately \$7,500,000 in purse monies up for grabs in the Ohio Sires Stakes program. Recent Standardbred Development Fund changes include a one second reduction in qualifying time across the board, and one second allowance for the first leg of the three year-old races at Miami Valley.

Also, the "Super Night" Ohio Sires Stakes Finals will be held at the Hard Rock Rocksino Northfield Park on Saturday, September 3, 2016 with the Super Night final purses raised to \$250,000 each division. Scheduled Monday, September 5, 2016 at Scioto Downs for the first time, are Ohio Sires Stakes Consolation Races for each division, offered for a \$50,000 purse. And by special request of the Host, Hollywood at Dayton, the four \$50,000 divisional 4 year-old and up Sires Stakes Championship races Saturday, October 15, 2016 will be nomination-free. Instead they will be open for entry to the top Ohio Sired aged horses restricted to the nine leading money winners in races conducted at Ohio commercial tracks and Ohio fairs between January 1, 2016 and October 1, 2016 that have raced a minimum of five times in Ohio in 2016 prior to October 2nd.

Even I will admit jury is out on the "brief" summary for 2015, I'll let Ronald and Becky be the judge on that when they get back from their coffee break! And honestly I could have gone on for what is normally at least an additional page trying to make sure I got every last detail in there. I will however, close out with a thank you to the efforts of many in 2015, the Horsemen, Staff, Board Members, Regulators, Permit Holders, Vendors, and everyone else that I crossed paths with in 2015! I am looking forward to the change we see in 2016, thanks for hanging in there through every minute detail!

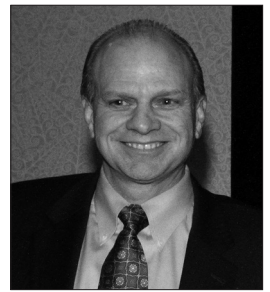
**Advertise your Stallion, Farm & Standardbred  
Related Services in the  
February 2016  
Buckeye Harness Horseman**

**Deadline for camera-ready ads January 15, 2016**

For more information and to reserve your space contact Regina Mayhugh at 1-800-353-6442, (614) 221-3650, Cell 614-569-6404 Email: rmayhugh@ohha.com

**From Your President**

Kevin Greenfield



2015 has come and gone and it's time to reflect on the past year. It was a year of transition at the OHHA. I just completed my first year as your President and Renée Mancino replaced Jerry Knappenberger as our Executive Director.

2015 was indeed a busy year. Let us first reflect on our accomplishments. During 2015, we negotiated and reached the final horsemen's agreement with Hollywood Dayton. We raised nearly \$100,000 for our PACER account and strengthened our relationships with Ohio Legislators by hiring a top-flight lobby firm, Byers, Minton, and Associates who have performed valuable work for us by getting our message out to the legislators. We have hired an Office Administrator and Renée has streamlined operations within the office to make OHHA more efficient and more technologically up-to-date. Importantly, membership enrollment has increased over 22% this last year and 65% over the last two years. Our financial position has increased and is strong as well.

On the racing front, the OHHA directed \$3,581,000 million dollars toward county fair racing in 2015 and has spearheaded a successful campaign to add \$50,000 consolation races as the fourth race of the Ohio Sires Stakes program as well as successfully obtaining an increase in the Sire Stakes final races to \$250,000 per championship race.

On the marketing end, the OHHA Board approved \$50,000, which was allocated by the Ohio Racing Commission to begin a comprehensive marketing campaign to commence in early 2016.

As we begin 2016, however, there is still a lot of work to do. A top priority for me this year is to assure the OHHA takes control of its VLT discretionary money, totaling in the millions of dollars so that we may operate the association in a more efficient and effective manner.

More efforts need to be taken to assure Ohioans Preference in overnight races, late closing events for claiming and young horses need to be more prevalent. Changes need to be introduced in the Ohio Legislature to allow for Ohio sired horses to race in more stake events than just Ohio Sires Stakes and Ohio Fairs. Finally, the voice of Ohio breeders needs to be heard as some form of Breeder's awards needs to be established to assist this important group in the Ohio racing scene.

In all, a lot was accomplished in 2015 and I look forward to the challenges ahead in 2016 in an effort to make Ohio the premier state for harness racing. Please feel free to contact me anytime you would like to discuss any issue you feel is important for us to know. Until my next update, best wishes.

**Note Update From Last Newsletter:**

*The phone numbers in the December issue advertising of PACER auction were incorrect. Please use the full page on PACER Auction in this issue for phone numbers.*

# Political Action Committee for Equine Racing (P.A.C.E.R.) 2016 Ohio Stallion Service Auction

## Bidding by Phone

Friday, Jan. 22  
Noon to 4 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 23  
10 am to 5 pm

## Call

1-800-353-6442  
or 614-221-3650

## Pacers

Stallion	Fee	Donated By	Standing At
Art Official	\$3,000	Robert Muscara	Midland Acres
Beachtrea	\$3,000	Paul P Miller Jr./ Urie U Byler Jr.	Dublin Valley Farms
Bigrisk	\$2,000	Andy & Natalie Burkholder	Andy Burkholder Farm
Charlie Barley	\$1,000	Amy Peebles	Ohio State ATI
Cheyenne Rei	\$2,000	Barry Rubenstein	To Be Announced
Dragon Again	\$5,000	Dragon Again Syndicate	Sugar Valley Farm
Feelin Friskie	\$2,000	Wayne Whebby	Midland Acres
Ghee's House	\$2,000	Barry Rubenstein	To Be Announced
I'm Gorgeous	\$3,000	Elmer G Fannin / George Teague Jr.	Sugar Valley Farm
McArdle	\$5,000	Kevin Greenfield	Hickory Lane Farm
Memphis Flash	\$ 750	Sally Shaffer Parkinson	Autumn Lane Farm
Mr. Wiggles	\$4,000	George Teague Jr.	Sugar Valley Farm
Mr. Apples	\$1,500	Matt Rowe	Hawks Cry Farm
Nob Hill High	\$2,000	Robert Mondillo / Donal Robinson	Hagemeyer Farms
Pet Rock	\$6,000	Joe Bellino	Midland Acres
Rockin Amadeus	\$3,500	Susan Grange	Cool Winds Farm
Western Hero	\$1,500	John C Green	Cool Winds Farm
Woodstock	\$2,000	Bill Walters/ Billy Walters	Sugar Valley Farm
Yankee Cruiser	\$4,500	Tim Pinske	Sugar Valley Farm

## Trotters

Stallion	Fee	Donated By	Standing At
Break the Bank K	\$3,500	Robert J Key	Midland Acres
Broadway Hall	\$5,000	Dr. John Mossbarger	Midland Acres
Cash Hall	\$3,000	Alan Levitt	Cool Winds Farm
Coraggioso	\$2,500 <i>Min. Bid \$1,250</i>	Joe Spadaro / Tom Durkin	Autumn Lane Farm
Dejarmbro	\$5,000	Leonard Buckner	Hickory Lane Farm
Lionhunter	\$2,500	John Magnusson	Midland Acres
Manofmanymissions	\$5,000	Bob Brady	Midland Acres
Muscle Network	\$3,500	Frank Bellino	Cool Winds Farm
My MVP	\$4,000	Joe Sbrocco	Sugar Valley Farm
Neely Dunn	\$1,500 <i>Min. Bid \$1,000</i>	Samuel Raneri	Abby Stables
Sheffield	\$1,000	Ngaire Umholtz	Marvin Raber Farm
Stormin Normand	\$3,000	Christina Takter	Abby Stables
Triumphant Caviar	\$4,000	James Gallagher	Abby Stables
Uncle Peter	\$6,000	Kevin Greenfield	Hickory Lane Farm
Winbak Yankee	Private Treaty	Benlee Troyer	Royal View Farm
Winning Fireworks	\$2,000	Daniel & Wayne Schlabach	Andy Burkholder Farm
Wishing Stone	\$3,000	Mike J Gulotta	Sugar Valley Farm

MMD= Multiple Mare Discount

## Bidding Rules

Horsemen may bid on an unlimited number of stallions, with a \$50 minimum raise. All bids are confidential and bidders are responsible to call in to raise their bids.

All contracts are subject to P.A.C.E.R. and farm approval and are not transferable to another mare or individual. The winning bidder must make a deposit for 10% of the bid, with \$100 minimum. The balance (90%) is due upon the birth of a live foal. Make all checks payable to P.A.C.E.R.

If there is no live foal, the deposit, less \$25, will be refunded upon receipt of a veterinarian certificate, or the deposit may be donated to P.A.C.E.R. There is no return privilege.

Failure to present your mare to the stallion without justifiable cause will result in forfeit of entire deposit.

No ownership change on a mare is permitted until service is paid unless a statement from a licensed veterinarian declaring the mare not in foal is provided to P.A.C.E.R.

## P.A.C.E.R.

850 Michigan Ave.,  
Suite 100  
Columbus, OH  
43215-1920

614-221-3650  
800-353-6442  
Fax 614-221-8726

## Northfield Park Increases Race

### Dates to 222 in 2016

Ayers Ratliff

Northfield Park, Ohio's leading racetrack in pari-mutuel handle, both on-track and export, is offering live harness racing four nights a week to start the 2016 racing year. January through September racing is Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday. The exceptions to this schedule are the addition of Friday, January 1, and three Sundays (May 29, July 3 and September 4). There is no live racing on Memorial Day, Fourth of July and Labor Day Mondays.

Beginning October 7, Northfield adds Friday evenings and will race five nights a week until the end of the year. Thursday (December 22) will replace Christmas Eve Saturday, while Thursday (December 29) will replace racing on New Year's Eve Saturday.

Northfield Park's marquee racing events are as follows: \$200,000 Battle of Lake Erie Saturday, May 21; \$175,000 Cleveland Trotting Classic Saturday, July 2; \$400,000 Carl Milstein Memorial and \$50,000 Myron Charna President's Pace Saturday, August 13; and \$125,000 Courageous Lady Saturday, November 26.

Ohio Super Night, with eight \$250,000 Ohio Sires Stakes Championships on tap, will be contested over the Flying Turns on Saturday, September 3. With total purses approaching \$2.1 million on the evening, it will be the richest card of horse racing ever conducted in Northeastern Ohio.

The always popular \$125,000 (est.) Summit County Fair Stakes, featuring many of Ohio's best freshman and sophomore trotters and pacers, will be held on Saturday, July 30.

Each of the 222 live racing nights, up from 215 this year, carries a first race post time of 6:00 p.m. Northfield Park is open daily from mid-morning until after midnight for simulcasting action from tracks across the United States, Canada and Australia.

## Hollywood Dayton Completes Second Season

Gregg Keidel

Hollywood Gaming at Dayton Raceway completed its second successful season on December 30 with numerous highlights during the 75-night meet. In addition to lowering the overall track records for both pacers and trotters, a new handle record was established when \$357,603 was pushed through the windows on Wednesday, December 23 as the season was winding down.

The new pacing record was established October 2nd when State Treasurer scorched the lightning-quick five-eighths mile oval in 1:48.4 to capture the \$138,500 Dayton Pacing Derby, a Grand Circuit event. In the companion \$136,750 Dayton Trotting Derby the winner was Il Signo Dream in 1:53.2. Both horses were driven by Ohio native and Hall Of Famer David Miller.

A night earlier (October 1st), Hollywood Dayton hosted the inaugural Ohio Fairs Finals in eight divisions, each for a purse of at least \$15,000. Ohio-sired juveniles accumulated points at all the Ohio county fairs throughout the summer to earn berths in the lucrative finals.

In late October, four \$50,000 Ohio Sires Stakes championships were held to crown the best older state-breds. The mares pace was won by Igotafeelinfran (Ronnie Wrenn Jr.) in 1:54.1; while the mares trot went to Victory Is Coming (Ronnie Wrenn Jr.) in 1:54.3. Ladys Dude (Chris Page) captured the male trot in 1:55.1; and Dancin Yankee (Dan Noble) defending his 2014 male pace championship with a 1:51.3 mile.

On December 12, the all-time trot track record held by the great Hambletonian-winning Market Share was lowered by a tick to 1:52.3 by Penn, driven by Josh Sutton.

Josh Sutton defended his 2014 driving title by finishing with a strong December to outdistance runnerup Kayne Kauffman, who surpassed the \$10 million career earnings plateau during the season. Dan Noble, Chris Page (who won his 3,000th race in November) and Jeremy Smith rounded out the top five at the end of the season. Both Sutton and Kauffman won over 100 races during the meet and earned over \$500,000 for owners of the horses they drove.

On the training side, Jeff Brewer won his first title by harnessing almost 50 winners and amassing almost \$200,000 in stable earnings. Perennial leader Virgil Morgan Jr. had his impressive streak of consecutive training titles in central and southern Ohio snapped, but still finished second with about half the starts as the winner. Kayne Kauffman, Chris Short and Sam Coven also had very strong meets to complete the top five in the standings. A total of 15 trainers won an average of at least one race a week during the session.

With an average of 8.8 starters per race, the five-hole again proved to be the most advantageous starting position by winning 18% of the races. Next best post position was the four, followed by the one, then a photo finish between the two and three spots behind the gate. Overall, the percentage of winning favorites for the 75-night meet was just over 38%.

Hollywood Dayton Raceway thanks all those horsemen and women who participated during their successful second season, and looks forward to welcoming everyone back in September, 2016, for the third season at harness racing's newest venue.

## Congratulations to 2015 North American Dash Champion, Aaron Merman

Aaron not only rang in 2015 on a high note by ringing up six wins on January 1, 2015, he also ended it with a bang by winning his last four drives of 2015 with trips to the circle on December 30th, including the finale 15th race on Duke Uh Brava! Aaron tallied stellar numbers for 2015 with 4,204 starts, 873 trips to the winner's circle, 665 place finishes, and 585 show tallies, for \$ 7,407,786 in purse earnings and a nice .342 UDRS. These totals also ranked him fifth highest total among North American Dash leaders of all time and seventh overall among drivers' victories in a single season. Nicely done Aaron, best of luck and continued success as you race into 2016!

## Sutton, Brewer Win Dayton Dash Titles

Gregg Keidel

DAYTON, OH. - Hollywood Dayton Raceway closed the curtain on a successful second season on Wednesday night (December 30) with an overall average nightly handle increase of 20% over the inaugural 2014 session. Over \$5.2 million in purses were paid out over the 75-night meet.

Josh Sutton successfully defended his 2014 driver's dash title by winning 116 races (through the 8th race on closing night) and earning nearly \$600,000 in purse money. At age 33, Sutton has won 3,288 races in his career and is nearing \$20 million in purse earnings. He currently ranks seventh in the national dash standings, one of four Ohio-based drivers in the top ten.

Kayne Kauffman also cracked the 100 wins barrier to finish second with Dan Noble, Chris Page and Jeremy Smith rounding out the top five.

Trainer Jeff Brewer garnered his first Hollywood Dayton trainer's title, harnessing 46 winners with stable earnings of almost \$200,000 for the meet. The 56-year-old Brewer has sent a total of 1,675 horses to the winner's circle in a productive career that also includes training titles at Hoosier Park, Indiana Downs, Lebanon Raceway and Thunder Ridge. Horses in his care have earned just under \$8 million over the years.

The remainder of the top five were Virgil Morgan Jr., Kayne Kauffman, Chris Short and Sam Coven. An astounding total of 440 trainers made at least one start during the 3-1/2 month Hollywood Dayton season.

New track records were established on both the pace and trot. State Treasurer (David Miller) copped the \$138,500 Dayton Pacing Derby in 1:48.4, the fastest mile ever at Dayton; while Penn (Josh Sutton) lowered the square-gait standard to 1:52.3 in a December open event.



Top driver and trainer awards were presented on closing night at Hollywood Dayton Raceway to Josh Sutton (4th from left) and Jeff Brewer (second from right). Congratulating the winners were: (l to r) Brett Merkle and Renée Mancino, Penn National Ohio Vice President of Racing Mark Loewe and Hollywood Dayton Race Secretary Gregg Keidel. (Conrad photo)

## Horsemen Spread Holiday Cheer

Regina Mayhugh

This holiday season Ohio horsemen worked together with the Dayton Firefighters Local 136 to spread holiday cheer to families in the community. The Dayton Firefighters Local 136 have sponsored their "Christmas from the Firehouse" program for twenty-eight years, collecting items to give to families who cannot provide gifts for their families. In the past, besides local contributions they have also had many corporate sponsors, however these corporate sponsorships have become less over the past two years and last year the fire department had to cut back on the amount of giving they could provide.

This year, horsemen saved the day. Hollywood Dayton Raceway sponsored a Buckeyes vs. Hoosiers race where the top Ohio drivers competed on a team against the top Indiana drivers. The winning team would receive \$2,000 and the other team \$500. Kayne Kauffman, the captain of the Buckeye team, told Gregg Keidel, Dayton race secretary, that he wanted to donate whatever he won to needy children at Christmas. Other drivers joined in the giving and every driver who competed in the Buckeye vs. Hoosier donated their share of the winnings to the "Christmas from the Firehouse program".

Trainers, owners, grooms and others associated with harness racing also helped to raise funds and donate gifts. They bought over \$3,000 toys and gift certificates that were dispersed among the community. Special thank you for your dedication to all of those who donated, to the staff at Hollywood Dayton Raceway, Brad Conrad, Terri Mt. Pleasant, Deb Cox and to all of the drivers, trainers, owners, grooms and others who helped make the holidays special for so many families by displaying the true meaning of Christmas! The Dayton Daily News featured this story in the December 24, issue where you can read more about the program and some of the families that were served.



Photos by Conrad photo



**Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association**  
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*as of Dec. 31, 2015*

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