

Spring 2017 Newsletter

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The purpose of any service organization is to help further a cause while bringing relevance and value to its membership. The Turf Publicists of America was formed in 1951 and its goal then, as it is today, is to promote the sport of Thoroughbred racing.

A look back at past presidents, officers and members of the TPA is a testament to some of the great publicists in horse racing.

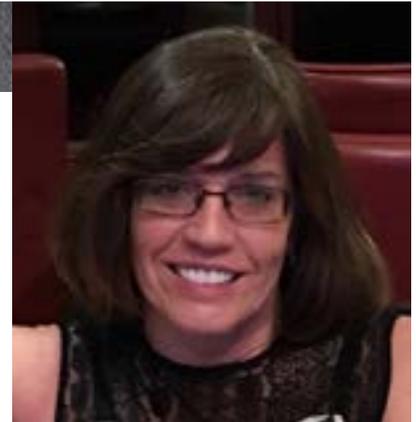
Our membership today is made up of publicists and marketing executives from racetracks, breeding farms and other industry organizations all across North America. And while specific job functions no doubt vary depending on where you work and who you represent, we all share a common goal of publicizing the people, the events and the horses that together make this such a unique and enjoyable sport.

Your newly elected officers bring together a vast array of experience and talent that will carry on the great tradition of TPA leadership and I'd like you to know a little bit about each of them:

- Vice President **Joe Bacigalupo** began his career in racing working for TVG before joining Churchill Downs as their simulcast marketing manager. Since 2007, Joe has been with the NTRA and currently serves as their Sr. Director of Government Relations and Membership Development.
- Vice President **Jeff Maday** has been a part of the Canterbury Park team since 1994, currently helping in the marketing department in addition to serving as the Senior Manager of Media Relations and Player Development. His introduction to racing was as a groom, at Ak-Sar-Ben racetrack in addition to Canterbury.
- Vice President **Jennie Rees** joined the publicity ranks as a racing communication and advocacy specialist after having covered horse racing for the Louisville Courier-Journal from 1983 until 2015. During that time, Jennie won an Eclipse Award five times for her writing work and was inducted into the National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame's Joe Hirsch Media Roll of Honor.
- Vice President **Lynne Snierson** began covering racing in the mid-1980's at the Boston Herald, later shifting to publicity where she served as the communications director at both Arlington Park and Rockingham Park. Lynne now contracts with tracks and many other industry organizations to support their publicity efforts.
- Secretary-Treasurer **Dave Zenner** has been in racing since the mid-80s, starting in guest relations at Arlington Park before

servicing in the publicity offices of every Chicago track over his career. He currently serves as a racing official at Gulfstream Park.

- Like Jennie, I began my career as a turf writer covering the sport for nearly a decade at the Blood-Horse before a brief stint (for all of us!) at the Racing Times. (For those of you too young to remember, the publication folded after two years of existence.) I then spent five years in the marketing department at Remington Park before being named the marketing and communications manager for Equibase Company in 1997.



With my enthusiastic fellow officers, I'm hoping we can lead this organization to new heights in the next few years and build upon these annual achievements:

- Publication of the annual joint membership directory for the TPA and NTWAB
- Hosting the Mark Kaufman workshop at the Symposium of Racing & Gaming
- Funding a scholarship to a college student pursuing a career in horse racing
- Funding of a trip to the Symposium for a TPA member
- Presentation of the Big Sport of Turfdom award

I've had the privilege to work with many of you over the years and I look forward to meeting those of you I have not met in the past.

One of those networking opportunities will happen on Wednesday, April 26 when Keeneland Race Course will host a TPA regional meeting and an afternoon of racing. Be sure and read the details on that event in the newsletter and join us if at all possible.

I am honored to have been elected president of the TPA. We welcome and encourage your input on any subject at any time.

Rhonda Norby
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TPA REGIONAL MEETING & DAY AT THE RACES

Hosted by Keeneland

Join us on Wednesday, April 26 for an opportunity to meet TPA members, enjoy a round table discussion and later experience lunch and an afternoon of racing at historic Keeneland Race Course!



We'll begin the day with a round table discussion on regional and national issues including how to encourage more coverage of the sport. Representatives from regional newspapers and industry trade publications will be on hand to share ideas and answer questions. We will then make the short drive to reserved grandstand parking and the Keeneland Clubhouse where we will enjoy an afternoon of food and terrific racing. Don't miss a great opportunity to network with other TPA members made possible by our friends at Keeneland!

Time: **10:00 a.m.** | Location: **Keene Place**

- Enter through Gate 1 and take the first left to Keene Place
- Parking available



Lunch and Racing:

- Complimentary lunch in the Club House and box seating for the races
- Cash Bar

Clubhouse Dress Code:

- Suit/sports coat and tie required for men
- Attire of similar formality for women including dresses, pant suits or skirts
- No denim of any type or color or athletic clothing/shoes for men or women

RSVP by April 14:

TPA Secretary/Treasurer Dave Zenner | davezenner@gmail.com

BIG SPORT OF TURFDOM

by Joe Bacigalupo

California-based trainer Art Sherman has been all smiles over the past several years. His good mood may be attributed to the presence in his shedrow of a certain chestnut colt during this time. That chestnut, of course, was two-time Horse of the Year and North America's second all-time leading money earner California Chrome, winner of some of the world's most prestigious races including the Kentucky Derby and Dubai World Cup. Smiles often surround success like this.

But good moods and smiles do not guarantee cooperation with the media. In the case of Art Sherman, they do and they probably would even if his stable star was a low-level claiming horse.

The Turf Publicists of America (TPA) recognized the affable Sherman for his cooperation by presenting him with the Big Sport of Turfdom Award last December during the University of Arizona Racetrack Industry Program's Symposium on Racing and Gaming. Then TPA President Jim Mulvihill and current TPA President Rhonda Norby presented Sherman with the Big Sport of Turfdom at the annual TPA luncheon held last year on December 6.

"Art did every interview that was requested of him over the three years that California Chrome was one of the most popular horses in the world," said Mulvihill who serves as the National Thoroughbred Racing Association's director of media and industry relations. "That alone is worthy of recognition, but what was even more special is that Art somehow made every interview feel fresh and every member of the media feel like a friend. That's not easy to do when you're being asked the same questions over and over again. But Art is a generous and thoughtful man and to just regurgitate the same

stock answers to everyone would never even occur to him. Racing was very fortunate to have such a likable man representing our sport."



Former TPA President Jim Mulvihill and current President Rhonda Norby present the Big Sport of Turfdom award to trainer Art Sherman

Since 1966, the TPA has given the annual honor to a "person or group of people who enhance coverage of Thoroughbred racing through cooperation with media and racing publicists." Art Sherman joins recent winners Team American Pharoah (2015) and Tom Durkin (2014). Team Zenyatta (2009), veterinarian Dr. Dean Richardson (2006) and author Laura Hillenbrand (2001) are examples of other Big Sport of Turfdom winners that demonstrate the wide scope of recipients.

"The Big Sport of Turfdom is probably the TPA's single most visible and important endeavor," commented Mulvihill. "The list of recipients is a who's who of racing over the past 50 years and it is one of a handful of individual awards in the sport that seem to be deeply meaningful even to the biggest names. I remember calling Bob Baffert two years ago to tell him he'd won as part of Team American Pharoah and was worried he might just see it as another obligation, but he was genuinely moved and said he would do whatever it would take to be there to accept in person. It's an award that recognizes that you're not only great at your job, but that you've gone beyond that to help grow the game."

A RACING SYMPOSIUM EXPERIENCE

by Jeff Maday

In 2016, the TPA awarded a sponsored trip to the Race Track Industry Program's Global Symposium on Racing & Gaming held annually in Tucson, Ariz. Interested TPA members expressed in a short essay why they wished to attend this important industry event. The 2016 winner, as determined by the TPA Board, was Chris Sobocinski, Racing Information Coordinator at Delaware Park.

It had been 20 years since Sobocinski first traveled to the symposium.

"I attended the symposium in 1997 at the very beginning of my career as the publicist and marketer for Delaware Park," Sobocinski said. "That experience and exposure played an instrumental role in starting and establishing my career. Like many in this business, requests for travel for business purposes are rare because I try to focus nearly all available resources and time toward on-track activities. So I was anxious for an opportunity to again attend the symposium."

Delaware Park has always been home to Sobocinski, who began attending the races with his family as an infant. His career began on the end of a lead shank as a hot walker at the Wilmington track. He soon moved to the frontside as a mutuel teller and from there began learning all facets of the business. As a racetrack publicist he not only works closely with local media by providing story ideas and issuing press releases, but also assists the marketing team in development and promotion of events. "Many hats are worn," said Sobocinski, who also produces the morning line, assists in the production of the live broadcast on race days, and maintains the company's social media presence.

Sobocinski was grateful and eagerly traveled to Tucson last December. "This was an opportunity to strengthen my knowledge and network in the racing industry which will ultimately lead to finding new innovative ways to make a difference in the lives of our Delaware Park family and the racing industry," he said.

He was not disappointed in the symposium experience and encourages other TPA members to attend if possible and apply for the TPA sponsorship when it is offered later this year.

The symposium addresses topics regarding all aspects of racing and gaming as well as introducing cutting-edge ideas and technologies, and all were interesting to Sobocinski but not what he found most valuable. "The opportunity to form face-to-face relationships and have in-person conversations with others in the industry was invaluable," he said. "I realized that we all have the same challenges and the same goals and that we can share our experiences and creativity. This really re-invigorated my love for the industry. I came away more confident in my abilities."

More information regarding the 2017 symposium will be forthcoming.

"Try to get there if you can," Sobocinski said. "You will meet kindred spirits."



Delaware Park's Chris Sobocinski

MEMBERSHIP

by David Zenner

I hope everyone is enjoying spring and is ready for the upcoming Triple Crown season. If you haven't done so already, please submit any changes in your listing in our directory so it can be reflected in the 2017 edition which is currently in production. Please also submit your dues for 2017 as they are past due.

Please join me in congratulating Rhonda Norby of Equibase Company on being elected president of the Turf Publicists of America for 2017-18. I look forward to seeing the TPA grow and evolve under her leadership.

Congratulations also go out to Jeff Maday of Canterbury Park and Jennie Rees who freelances for Kentucky Downs, Ellis Park and the Kentucky HBPA on their election as first-time vice presidents of the TPA, and to the NTRA's Joe Bacigalupo on his re-election as a VP.

The TPA is also pleased to welcome a slew of new members to

our organization: Corey Johnsen, C. J. Johnsen, Rick Albright, Amber Norris and Preston Collins from Kentucky Downs; Darrell Haire, Jr. and Jen Perkins from JockeyTalk360.com; Brien Boyea from the National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame; Jennifer Ray from the Jockey's Guild; Denise Pharris from the University of Arizona Race Track Industry Program; Megan Devine from Santa Anita Park; Jonathan Stettin from Pastthewire.com; and freelancer Ryan Martin.

Also new to the fold are Merv Huber-Calvo from Bet America, and Fred Vickers and Gemma Parenti from Breeders' Cup Ltd., whose assistance in producing the TPA/NTWAB Directory the last three seasons has proven to be invaluable.

If you know of any prospective members, please encourage them to reach out to me at davezenner@gmail.com for a membership application.



THE MARK KAUFMAN WORKSHOP

by Rhonda Norby

Attendees of the Global Symposium on Racing and Gaming were treated with great racing stories past and present at the TPA sponsored Mark Kaufman Workshop, named in honor of one of the industry's hardest working publicists who died in 1995.

Outgoing president Jim Mulvihill moderated the workshop "Sports Illustrated and Thoroughbred Racing: Past and Present" with two of the best chroniclers of the turf – current senior writer Tim Layden and multiple Eclipse award winning former senior writer Bill Nack.

During the hour-long session, highlights from nearly six decades of exemplary Thoroughbred racing coverage at Sports Illustrated

were touched on, including what goes in to crafting a masterful feature story. Behind-the-scenes stories were also shared on the in depth reporting over the years on some of the sport's biggest stars, from Secretariat to American Pharoah.



NHC - AN EVENT TO GET BEHIND

by Jennie Rees

The National Handicapping Championship is one of American racing's best and most under-the-radar events. Betting horses obviously is the economic engine for the industry, and this annual event in Las Vegas is a great celebration of the horse player.

For the second year, I was part of the NTRA's NHC media team and have become a big fan. Many of the participants have interesting backstories, such as the ballerina turned bettor (here's link to story in San Diego Union-Tribune) <http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/sports/sd-sp-rac-20170125-story.html> and from college football coach Joe Appelbaum, who as the Breeders' Cup Betting Challenge winner was in line for a \$3 million bonus if he won the NHC (here's link to Newsday story <http://www.newsday.com/sports/horseracing/bettor-shooting-for-3-8-million-in-handicapping-contest-1.12985890>). Former TPA president Jim Mulvihill does excellent Q&As with some of the NHC qualifiers throughout the year that would be terrific posts to share in the qualifiers' local markets and as background when pitching to the media. You can find them at <https://www.ntra.com/nhc/nhc-news/>.

This is something the entire industry should get behind and promote. Paul Matties Jr., who won last year's NHC, said it really impacted him in ways he wouldn't have imagined. Much as some people do (and we wish they all would!) when they win the Kentucky Derby, Paul feels he was blessed to be so fortunate that he feels it's his responsibility to give back to the sport and to be an ambassador for handicappers.

"The one thing I couldn't envision was all the other things that come with winning it," Matties said before this year's tournament. "That's pretty amazing. Everything that's happened in the last year, related to winning, has been something I never would have predicted or thought about. It's such a big thing, an honor to represent other horseplayers all year long. It's really cool."

It's a big deal just to get to the NHC championship. You cannot simply buy your way in (as with the Breeders' Cup Betting Challenge for \$10,000) but you must qualify.

I did a series of blog posts in the form of Q&As with first-time qualifier Barry Northern of Louisville about his experience for NTRA.com. (We called it "Cashing in a on Dream.")

It was picked up by the Kentucky Derby Museum (where he's a tour guide) and WAVE-3 TV, Louisville's NBC affiliate, along with Horse Racing Nation and Paulick Report. WAVE-3 did a several minute feature on Barry in advance of the tournament. <http://www.wave3.com/story/34337045/ky-derby-museum-tour-guide-in-handicapping-championship>

Indiana Grand's Tammy Knox sent out an excellent press release on "Team Indiana Grand" in advance of the tournament including a group photo. <https://indianagrand.com/racing/team-indianagrand-ready-nhc-18-las-vegas/>. I posted on Facebook that it would be great if all the racetracks publicized their qualifiers - and then I realized I hadn't for Kentucky Downs! One of my 2017 goals is to change that this year. I want to do more in advance of NHC qualifiers at Kentucky Downs and Ellis Park, and then more in advance of the tournament.

There are wonderful stories out there involving individual qualifiers and just the nature of the event. RollingStone sent a reporter, who had this terrific color piece <http://www.rollingstone.com/sports/inside-horse-racings-hunger-games-in-las-vegas-w466940>

People might think that only the professionals can do well, but that's not the case. As past NHC champion Stanley Bavlsh said: "I never knew about handicapping in a contest until I came to Bally's one year and said, 'What's this?' 'It's a contest.' 'OK, I'll enter.' And I then qualified at Delaware and then I won the whole thing the first year (of participating). This is like everyman's dream, not like the muckety-mucks or that they control the universe here. Anybody



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who can handicap on a daily basis certainly can win at this.”

People like reading about money, and the NHC has a couple of big-money bonuses going in addition to approximately \$800,000 for winning: \$3 million bonus is the Breeders’ Cup Betting Challenge winners takes the next NHC, and vice versa, and \$2 million if the

season-long NHC Tour winner winning the NHC championship competition in Vegas.

The NHC is a great event and deserves the support of the entire industry. As Barry Northern said, online qualifying tournaments might be the way for racing to reach a younger generation, and some of them are \$8 or even free to enter. And it’s very much fertile territory for promoting and publicizing the sport.

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

by Lynne Snierison

Next to your oversized coffee mug, there is nothing on your desk you’ll likely reach for more often each day than the newest edition of the TPA/NTWAB Membership Directory.

The directory is the goto resource for current contact information, both alphabetically and by association, for the members of the Turf Publicists of America, and it’s also the quickest and easiest way to find the same for the roster of the National Turf Writers and Broadcasters.

It also includes the run down, with names, numbers and email addresses, for media outlets covering our sport, other industry contacts, and a multitude of invaluable information that will make the execution of your job easier.

With so many other industry organizations no longer publishing a hard copy versions of their guide, or even a on-line version, your comprehensive TPA/NTWAB Membership Directory now is more valuable than ever.

The 2017 directory will hit members’ mailboxes around the first of May and will also be available Kentucky Derby Week in the Churchill Downs Media Center.

