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Turf Publicists of America

Official Newsletter

Spring 2015

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Welcome back!

Welcome to the Turf Publicists of America newsletter.



There are so many more enjoyable things one can do with \$50 than pay membership dues to the Turf Publicists of America. So why should you bother to renew year after year? Why should you encourage your colleagues to sign up? Why does this organization exist at all? These are all fair questions that, hopefully, this newsletter will help to answer.

Below you'll find updates on the most important TPA initiatives. In the past 12 months we've accomplished the following: published the annual membership directory of the TPA and the National Turf Writers and Broadcasters; supplied racetracks with talking points and background information during a public relations crisis; hosted a workshop at the Symposium on Racing & Gaming on handling crisis communications via social media; funded a scholarship for a college student pursuing a career in racing; and awarded the Big Sport of Turfdom to Tom Durkin in recognition of his cooperation with the media.

In short, though, I'd sum up what the TPA does like this - we've got each other's backs. And we have to, because it's never been more difficult to effectively publicize and market this sport. Nowadays there's a good chance nobody else in your office even understands your job. If you want to share ideas and experiences you probably need to connect with your peers from around the country. The TPA makes it easy to do just that.

Your elected officers are evaluating additional ways to make the TPA more relevant to today's publicists. This year we're planning more events available only to members, from regional meet-ups at racetracks to webinars that will keep you up to speed on the latest PR trends.

You've probably noticed that whatever negativity and conflicts exist in racing, they don't tend to come from publicists and marketers. Even if racing's leaders can't necessarily work together, there's no reason the rest of us can't! Consider getting more involved in the TPA by attending our next meeting - Thursday, April 30, at Churchill Downs - or, if you can't be there in person, give me a ring and we'll talk about other ways you can help.

See you at the races!

Jim Mulvihill
President
Turf Publicists of America

REMINDER



**TPA Annual Meeting
Thursday, April 30, 3-4 p.m.
Churchill Downs Media Briefing Room**

TPA Welcomes New Officers and Members --- by Dave Zenner, TPA Secretary/Treasurer



While certainly not as dramatic as the 2014 mid-term congressional elections turned out to be, the Turf Publicists of America held its annual election last November with two vice-presidential seats and the presidency up for grabs.

Having completed her two-year term as president, Daily Racing Form's Mandy Minger did not seek re-election to the Turf Publicists' top spot. Jim Mulvihill of the National Thoroughbred Racing Association (NTRA) won the election and will serve as our organization's leader until November 2016. Previously, Mulvihill had been a TPA vice-president.

As called for in the by-laws, two of the four vice-presidential seats needed to be filled. Winning re-election was Sophia McKee from Emerald Downs while Joe Bacigalupo of the NTRA was elected to TPA office for the first time. Like Mulvihill, their terms will run through 2016.

You may recall that in 2013, in what was likely a first in a Turf Publicists of America election, there was a tie for one of the available vice president seats. As a result the TPA is blessed with having one extra officer as Jennifer Hoyt of Oaklawn Park, Rhonda Norby of Equibase and Lynne Snierson, publicist par excellence of all things Northeast and beyond, all won election at that time and will serve until November 2015.

At the same time, Secretary/Treasurer Dave Zenner, then with Arlington Park and now a freelance publicist, was re-elected to the office which he has held since 2006 and will hold office until November.

In addition, the TPA is also pleased to welcome in to the fold the many new members who have joined the organization in 2014 and early 2015: Michael Adolphson Jr. and Brian W. Spencer, both of whom split their time between Arlington International Racecourse and Fair Grounds Race Course & Slots; Amy Owens from Keeneland Race Course; Keith McCalmont from the Woodbine Entertainment Group; Margo Flynn and Michael Henry from Tampa Bay Downs; Rich Paul from the Maryland Jockey Club; and Tammy Knox from Indiana Grand Racing & Casino.

Turf Publicists of America: Racing's Virtual Press Box --- by Sophia McKee, TPA Vice President

"You should be a member of the TPA," said Monmouth Park's Director of Marketing, Bill Knauf, my boss.

"What's that?"

"Turf Publicists of America," he replied.

"Why?"

"Because it's good to have a network in racing and we should support our industry."

Enough said.

I was fresh out of college and making my way through the racing world like a filly on fresh legs. To think that there was a whole network of individuals available to me that I could call on was empowering.

I promptly filled out my membership application, expensed it to the Monmouth Park budget and waited for the magic to happen.

The magic came in the mail, in the form of a hard copy directory that under the M's listed my name. I kept the directory religiously in the top left hand drawer of my work desk. A quick flip of the pages revealed legendary race caller Dave Johnson, HRTV producer Amy Zimmerman and more. Names that I had read quoted in news stories or had seen at the top of press releases immediately jumped out at me.

There were names in there that I knew, but that didn't know me. But in time they would. A few years later my name appeared on the ballot for TPA Vice President.

I lost.

I was nominated again and was elected. I'm proudly serving my second term as a TPA Vice President.

As a TPA member, the network that Bill Knauf originally mentioned has continued to be the driving force behind my involvement in the TPA. The Turf Publicists of America promotes learning, education and media management and it rewards excellence.

The annual Mark Kaufman workshop at the University of Arizona Symposium on Racing is a must-attend event for media and marketing professionals. The panelists are consistently the leaders in our industry and cover fresh and thought-provoking topics.

The TPA Scholarship encourages and rewards the up-and-coming stars in our industry and enables recipients to pursue their course of study and prepare for a career in horse racing.

The media management was evident with the TPA's quick and constructed response to the PETA video that was easily accessible to TPA members to handle the brewing media crisis. The TPA also worked alongside the NTRA to manage the message in response to the potentially damaging New York Times series.

The Big Sport of Turfdom gives members a voting voice to recognize an individual in our industry that embodies the "sport" of turfdom.

The TPA best embodies what is good about horse racing - people working together for an industry that they are passionate about. I can easily pick up the phone, dial any member and after identifying as a fellow TPA member open a door to a wealth of information and wisdom.

"Hey Jacob, you should be a member of the TPA," I said to our media relations assistant and budding on-air talent, Jacob Pollowitz.

"What's that?"

And I smiled.

**Share the magic, nominate your up and coming Turf Publicists for membership in the TPA.
For more information on joining the TPA, contact secretary/treasurer Dave Zenner at
davezenner@gmail.com.**

Annual TPA/NTWAB Membership Directory Coming Soon --- by Lynne Snierson, TPA Vice President

Next to your over-sized 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 go-to 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 e-mail 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.

The 2015 directory will be available Kentucky Derby Week in the Churchill Downs Media Center and will hit members' mailboxes later in May. This year's edition has been reformatted by Breeders' Cup designer Gemma Parenti and is spiral-bound for the first time. We hope you like the changes!

Tom Durkin: 2014 Big Sport of Turfdom Recap --- by Joe Bacigalupo, TPA Vice President

Media coverage of Thoroughbred racing looks quite different today than it did in 1951, when the Turf Publicists of America (TPA) was formed. Technological advancements, consumer habits and modest budgets have led the change and the media has adjusted to continue to tell the wonderful stories of our industry and its endless list of colorful characters.

The stories in racing are everywhere but they do not tell themselves and they are not always obvious. That is why in 1966 the TPA began to recognize an individual or a group with the Big Sport of Turfdom Award. The winner of the Big Sport of Turfdom Award enhances the sport of Thoroughbred racing through cooperation with the media and Thoroughbred racing publicists - they help us write the stories by giving their time and unique perspective.

Cooperation is the cornerstone for the criteria that the TPA uses to select each Big Sport of Turfdom recipient. Winners show an uncommon willingness to carve out time from their demanding schedules to field the same questions from one interviewer to the next. Of more importance is how they answer these questions. Without fail, it is with great enthusiasm. This quality, paired with a willingness to reveal their unique personalities, helps the media and racing publicists tell the best stories and helps the TPA narrow the field on who will win the Big Sport of Turfdom.

The TPA presents this prestigious annual national award each December at the Race Track Industry Program Awards Luncheon as part of the University of Arizona's Global Symposium on Racing & Gaming. The list of past winners includes jockeys, trainers, racing stables, owners, journalists, authors, broadcasters, entertainers, horses and their entourages and now, for the first time, a track announcer.



Tom Durkin receives the 2014 Big Sport of Turfdom Award.

Jim Mulvihill, Tom Durkin and Mandy Minger.

Photo Courtesy of Denise Pharris, RTIP.

Tom Durkin called races for 43 years and retired in 2014 after 24 years as the lead announcer at the New York Racing Association. The TPA recognized Durkin as the winner of the 2014 Big Sport of Turfdom for his tireless cooperation with an overwhelming number of interview requests as he neared his final race call at Saratoga Race Course on August 31.

The Big Sport of Turfdom does more than honor recipients like Durkin. It also puts the TPA in the spotlight at one of the industry's signature trade and networking events. Hundreds of industry leaders gather in Tucson for the Global Symposium on Racing & Gaming and the Awards Luncheon is a highly attended event during what can be described as a hyper-scheduled week in Tucson filled with meetings, presentations and, yes, golf. Thankfully, the industry recognizes the importance of the media telling racing's stories and rewards the TPA by supporting the Big Sport of Turfdom in a big way.

Crisis Management and Social Media: 2014 Mark Kaufman Workshop Recap --- by Rhoda Norby, TPA Vice President

Kentucky Derby week this year will mark the 20th anniversary of the death of one of racing's most talented and popular publicists, Mark Kaufman, who died of a heart attack at the young age of 47. Kaufman, the longtime publicity director of the former Longacres Race Course, assisted other publicists in the promotion of many of racing's biggest events, including the Kentucky Derby.

Kaufman was also one of the TPA's most ardent supporters and believed strongly in the organization's goal of promoting the sport of Thoroughbred racing and sharing ideas, best practices and more with fellow publicists. And so it was in 1995, following Kaufman's death, the TPA's workshop - held annually in December as part of the Symposium on Racing & Gaming in Tucson, Arizona - was renamed the "Mark Kaufman Workshop" in his honor.

Crisis Management in Racing: How Social Media has Changed the Game was the theme for the 2014 Mark Kaufman Workshop, held Dec. 9 at the Race Track Industry Program of the University of Arizona's Global Symposium on Racing and Gaming.

Newly elected TPA president Jim Mulvihill moderated a panel composed of Maggi Moss, who related her insights as an attorney, leading owner and president of HART, an Iowa-based racehorse protection and retirement facility; Dave Grening, who provided a journalist's perspective as an award-winning correspondent for Daily Racing Form since 1998; and Chip Tuttle, who shared his thoughts coming from his experience as a partner in CTP (the Boston-based advertising agency Conover, Tuttle and Pace) and as a track executive for Suffolk Downs.



2014 Mark Kaufman Workshop
Chip Tuttle, Dave Grening, Maggi Moss and Jim Mulvihill.
Photo Courtesy of Denise Pharris, RTIP.

Each panelist shared how publicists can manage their social media efforts, in particular Twitter, to more effectively communicate information whether the news is negative, positive or simply providing timely information such as daily track changes. Examples of breaking news - such as the deaths of jockey Juan Saez and two-time Horse of the Year Cigar - were discussed with recommendations on how those types of major news items could be better managed via social media moving forward. Recommendations by the panel included the establishment of proper protocols for social media and finding the right balance between immediacy versus accuracy when sharing information.

A full transcript of the workshop is available at the U of A's RTIP website in the section related to the symposium.

The TPA thanks our panelists for their enthusiastic participation, lively discussion and valuable insight. Thanks as well to Doug Reed and his staff at the Race Track Industry Program for all their help in making our annual Mark Kaufman Workshop a success.

Find the full transcript of the 2014 Mark Kaufman Workshop - Crisis Management in Racing: How Social Media has Changed the Game - here: <http://ua-rtip.org/symposium/sites/ua-rtip.org.symposium/files/Crisis%20Management%20in%20Racing.pdf>.

Editor's note: It is never too early to start thinking about topics for the 2015 Workshop. Members are encouraged to share ideas with any TPA officer. Typically, a topic is chosen by the end of the summer to allow sufficient time to secure guests.

Catching Up With TPA Scholarship Winners --- by Dave Zenner, TPA Secretary/Treasurer

Randy Olson and Taylor Kirby, the first two recipients of the \$2,000 TPA Scholarship awarded annually to a student the Race Track Industry Program at the University of Arizona, will graduate from that program in May but are already gaining valuable hands-on experience at Tucson's Rillito Park.



Inaugural TPA Scholarship winner Randy Olson (center) handicaps on-air at Rillito Park with RTIP student Aaron Brukman and guest TPA Secretary/Treasurer Dave Zenner.

Photo by Taylor Kirby.

"A lot of (RTIP) students are working out here at Rillito Park. It's kind of a 'working lab,'" Olson said. "I'm doing the (between race) TV handicapping, making the morning line, doing a tip sheet and hosting a handicapping seminar - all with (RTIP student) Aaron (Brukman). It's really cool getting this experience because at most race tracks you're not going to be able to jump in and go in front of the camera right away or make a tip sheet or lead a handicapping seminar. I've been able to get experience here at Rillito that I wouldn't be able to get anywhere else. It's been a great transition from the classroom to the racetrack and getting a quality hands-on experience as I make my way into the horse racing industry."

While Olson is quite visible to the public in his roles at Rillito, Kirby can be found behind the scenes but is still a vital part of the team in getting the word out about the track, which is enjoying an upsurge in attendance and handle this year and has been given a five-year reprieve by the Pima County board to continue to conduct a mixed meet with both Quarter Horses and Thoroughbreds competing each weekend.

"I'm doing the marketing and social media," Kirby said. "I do all the Twitter, Facebook and Instagram for the track and I do updates to the Website when I can. I am working on a YouTube channel so we can do all of our race replays there because we've had a lot of people ask for it. I also help with admissions and wherever they need me. I'll be doing the (on-site) print shop for the next couple of weekends."

Winning the TPA award came as a surprise to both Olson and Kirby, but more so to Olson since the inaugural winner in 2013 was chosen by RTIP staff without a formal application process.

"I was really caught off guard (when my name was announced)," Olson said. "Doug (Reed, RTIP director) kept asking me if I was going to be at the Awards Luncheon. I was wondering why he was asking me three or four times before the Symposium. When my name was announced, I remember going up to the podium to say a few words to thank the TPA but I couldn't tell you what I said."



Mandy Minger, Taylor Kirby and Jim Mulvihill.
Photo Courtesy of Denise Pharris, RTIP.

"The award means a lot to me because tuition can be quite expensive for an out-of-state student. It goes a long way to getting me an education that is going to help me succeed in getting a job in the industry."

Last year, applicants for the \$2,000 award were asked to write an essay explaining why they wished to pursue a career in horse racing. Kirby's essay was chosen by a panel that included TPA officers and RTIP staff.

"I was surprised, too," said Kirby. "There are a lot of great people in our program that have various reasons for pursuing a career in this industry. My computer broke at the start of the fall semester so the scholarship went toward getting me a new computer so I could do my homework (at home) and not have to spend all my time on campus 24/7."

Both Olson and Kirby hope to continue down a marketing and/or communications path when they get their degrees in May.

"I love doing big events and getting people involved," said Arizona native Kirby.

"I've been in contact with Los Alamitos about getting into marketing and publicity there," said Olson, who calls Northern California home. "If that doesn't work out, I'll head back up to Northern California for the Fair circuit which starts off at Pleasanton doing a variety of different things there and wearing a lot of hats."

From all appearances, it looks as though the first two TPA Scholarship winners are well on their way to making a mark in our sport.

The Turf Publicists of America is an organization that was created in 1951. It is comprised of approximately 135 Thoroughbred racing publicists and marketing executives at racetracks throughout North America with the shared goal of promoting the sport of Thoroughbred Racing.

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