NJ LEGISLATORS ATTEND THE HAMBLETONIAN

The SBOANJ and TrotPAC, with assistance from the Advocacy & Management Group, hosted five members of the New Jersey Legislature at The Meadowlands Racetrack on Hambletonian Day, Aug. 6, and the visiting lawmakers found the experience to be a winner.

The legislators were given a tour of the facilities, spent time enjoying the races from the grandstand, and participated in the winner’s circle trophy presentation following the John Cashman Memorial, which was sponsored by the SBOANJ. Brian Cashman, general manager of the New York Yankees, also joined the ceremony following the race named in memory of his father.

Participating legislators were:

Assemblyman John DiMaio, with his wife Gina. Assemblyman DiMaio, a Republican whose district includes portions of Hunterdon, Somerset, and Warren counties, is the Assembly Republican Leader. He has served in the Assembly since 2009.

Assemblyman Kevin J. Rooney, with his wife Hayley and Chief of Staff Matt Conlon. Assemblyman Rooney, a Republican whose district includes portions of Bergen, Essex, Morris, and Passaic counties, is the Deputy Republican Conference Leader and a member of the Assembly Appropriations Committee. He has served in the Assembly since 2016.

Assemblyman Ralph R. Caputo, with his aide Joseph Cocuzza. Assemblyman Caputo, a Democrat whose district includes portions of Essex County, is the chair of the Assembly Tourism, Gaming and the Arts Committee. He has served in the Assembly since 2008. He also served from 1968-1972.

Assemblywoman Kim Eulner and Assemblywoman Marilyn Piperno. Assemblywoman Eulner and Assemblywoman Piperno, both Republicans, were elected this past November in the same district, which represents portions of Monmouth County including Freehold.

Two days after the Hambletonian, Assemblyman Rooney sent an email to the SBOANJ and others associated with the event to express his gratitude for the experience. Rooney also said he and Hayley were looking forward to the opportunity to sit behind a racehorse in a double-seated jog cart in the future.

“I wanted to reach out and thank you and the SBOANJ team for being such gracious hosts at the Hambletonian event this past weekend at the Meadowlands Racetrack,” Assemblyman Rooney said. “My wife Hayley and I had a wonderful time speaking with you and the SBOANJ’s Officers and Board of Directors. We thank you for the many introductions you made for us and for sharing extensive insight into current trends in the industry.

“The trackside presentation after the John Cashman Memorial Trot was an experience we will not soon forget. We hope to be able to join you all again next year. I am here to support your organization and the industry as a whole in any way I can, and my office is always available to assist you should you need it.”

In addition, Assemblywoman Eulner and Assemblywoman Piperno prepared an Assembly Resolution honoring the occasion. The legislators were planning to make an in-person presentation of the Resolution at the SBOANJ office.

“They are so appreciative of SBOANJ’s gracious hospitality,” said Anissa Esposito, deputy chief of staff for the assemblywomen. “It was a wonderful day.”
During a brief pause while meeting with the media in the Meadowlands Racetrack press box after Cool Papa Bell’s win at odds of 52-1 in the Hambletonian, the horse’s owner, Scott Farber, look around the room and spotted his brother standing nearby.

“Brian,” he said. “Do you believe this? Do you believe this?”

The trackside Hambletonian celebration had ended some time earlier, but there was no end to the joy felt by Farber and Cool Papa Bell’s trainer, Jim Campbell, as the whirlwind festivities continued in the press box, located on the Big M’s grandstand roof. It might as well have been the top of the world.

“I can’t believe it’s happening,” Farber said. “I’m in shock. I told people anything can happen in a horserace, and then we just watched this.”

Farber grew up in northeast New Jersey, three miles from the Meadowlands, and was introduced to harness racing by his dad, Sandy. Father and son would spend their weekends going to area tracks and Sandy eventually got involved as a horse owner when Farber was in his mid-teens. Sandy’s best horse was the pacer Run The Table, purchased in 1987 and trained by Campbell, and Farber races under the name Runthetable Stable as a tribute.

Sandy, who was an insurance broker and mayor of Palisades Park, passed away in 2004.

“When my father passed away – my father was my idol, my father was my everything – I felt it necessary to continue his work,” Farber said. “I’m glad I could really finish this off for him. It’s the most wonderful feeling in the world.”

A wonderful feeling made even more special because of his Jersey roots.

“It’s surreal,” Farber said. “I’m here with my family, and a huge group of friends. This is home. My home track. We brought it home.”

Cool Papa Bell’s connection to the Garden State extends beyond Farber. The horse was bred by Vito Cucci, as Belmar Racing and Breeding, out of the New Jersey-bred mare BlkThai Optional, and he was raised in New Jersey. Cream Ridge’s Concord Stud Farm bred BlkThai Optional and now owns the mare again, having purchased her in November 2019.

And, of course, there is longtime Jersey-based trainer Campbell, who has trained for the Farber family for 35 years.

“Scott is very enthusiastic and loves the game,” Campbell said. “For him to win the Hambo made me feel good because he’s been so loyal to me. He stuck by me when things weren’t going go and never once questioned anything.”

Campbell’s thrills were not limited to the Hambletonian on Hambletonian Day at the Big M. He also won the Hambletonian Oaks with Fashion Schooner and Continentalvictory with Misswalner Fashion – both from post 10, no less.

He became only the third trainer in history to win the Hambletonian and Hambletonian Oaks in the same year. He also became only the fourth trainer to win both those races twice in a career, having captured the 1995 Hambletonian with Tagliabue and the 2009 Oaks with Broadway Schooner.

“To win those two in the same day, without a doubt it was the greatest day in racing that I’ve ever had,” Campbell said. “I thank my owners for giving me the horses to train and my crew for their support. They do all the hard work behind the scenes. It’s an unbelievable feeling. It’s a day I’ll cherish for the rest of my life, that is for sure.”

Fashion Schooner and Misswalner Fashion both are daughters of stallion Walner, who stands at Southwind Farms in Pennington. Earlier this year, Fashion Schooner won the New Jersey Sire Stakes championship for owner Fashion Farms.

Other Hambletonian Day winners calling New Jersey home included Bella Bellini in the Dr. John R. Steele Memorial for trainer Nifty Norman, Kilminster in the Peter Haughton Memorial for trainer Marcus Melander, Instagram Model in the Jim Doherty Memorial for trainer Annie Stoebe, Alrajah One in the John Cashman Memorial for trainer Ake Svanstedt, and Max Contract in the Shady Daisy for trainer Julie Miller.
Dr. Karyn Malinowski, founding director of the Equine Science Center at Rutgers, received the Harness Horse Youth Foundation’s 2021 Service To Youth Award on Aug. 5 at the Meadowlands Racetrack. Ellen Taylor, the executive director of the Harness Horse Youth Foundation, presented the award to Dr. Malinowski, who was surrounded by friends and colleagues. “Dr. Malinowski’s passion for harness racing and dedication to educating youth through her work at Rutgers is unmatched,” HHYF President Allison Conte said. “She and HHYF have collaborated for years so her selection as this year’s recipient was an obvious choice and perhaps a bit overdue.” Among her many works, Dr. Malinowski was a member of the team that conducted the prize-winning study, The New Jersey Equine Industry 2007: Economic Impact, which has been used by the state’s horse industry to show its value to the Garden State. Photos courtesy of Lisa Photo.

This year we had 20 attendees. We had our four Trottingbreds with us. We shared Barn 10 with Stafford Racing. All were together working in teams in the morning. We split the group in half on the “learning to drive on the track” afternoons. The following volunteered their time to assist the youngsters to drive: Symon Spicer, Jimmy Foley, Michael Fuimenero, and Jimmy Marshall. The other half went to the Spicer Racing barn to learn anatomy and equine massage, taught by me (Suzanne D’Ambrose). They learned hands-on using Standardbreds: Marvelous One, Big Nudge, and Winneress. As the youngsters called it…..”To work on the big race horses!”. They visited the Ron Burke stable and met Atlanta, This Is The Plan, and It’s Academic. They toured the pool and Equine spa building. The attendees learned various skills taught by Ellen Taylor, Bob Lasky, and Travis Ceppaluni; grooming, putting on and taking off racing equipment, wrapping legs, bathing a horse and a lot more.

Thank you SBOANJ for donating the lunches, Gaitway Farm, and everyone who helped with the HHYF camp. Photos courtesy of Suzanne D’Ambrose.
When the state’s 2022-23 fiscal-year budget was signed in June by Gov. Phil Murphy, it included $25 million in appropriations for New Jersey’s horse racing purses. The total, to be divided evenly between Standardbred and Thoroughbred horsemen, represented the final $20-million payment from the five-year $100-million outlay approved in 2019 plus funding to make up for previous $5-million shortfall related to the coronavirus pandemic.

The SBOANJ is in the process of finalizing a report for the New Jersey Legislature detailing the positive effects of past payments upon harness racing. The study is required to receive the money from the final installment of the appropriation.

State Assemblyman Ralph Caputo, who was among five legislators to attend Hambletonian Day at the Meadowlands this year (see front page), was among the sponsors of the bill to add the $5-million payment to cover the pandemic shortfall.

“We owed them the money, and we have made the commitment,” Assemblyman Caputo said earlier this year. “We’re not going to abandon them. They are a worthy investment.” He added the funding would “empower our horse racing industry so it can flourish.”

AJ Sabath, president/CEO of the Advocacy & Management Group and the SBOANJ’s legislative lobbyist, credited SBOANJ members for helping make the harness racing’s resurgence possible.

“I am pleasantly surprised at how much our handle was up,” said Settlemoir. “What really shocked me is when I saw the Oaks handle pop up with a total pool of over $855,000. That about knocked me out of my seat. It just goes to show what [President and Chief Executive Officer] Jeff [Gural] and I have said all along that we need to get in front of a national television audience.”

“With the help of you and the money you’ve contributed to TrotPAC, we’ve been able to get our directors in front of lawmakers and develop deep relationships with leadership,” Sabath said at the SBOANJ Golf Outing Fundraiser, which sees a portion of the money raised allocated to the Standardbred industry’s political action committee, TrotPAC.

“All the hard work and dedication you show at functions like this to raise money really helps in the work that I do. My job is to take what we do here, what we do at the tracks, what we do at the training centers, and bring it to Trenton and show legislators what an amazing ecosystem the equine industry is in New Jersey.

“However, we do have our work to do. Come next year, nothing is in place for us in the form of that purse appropriation. We are going to look for ways that can continue to sustain us and look for alternative revenue sources to help keep purses up and keep everybody coming to New Jersey and making sure New Jersey continues to be the leader in harness racing in the world.”

In looking to the future, the SBOANJ is working with partners on an economic impact study to present the Legislature for consideration ahead of discussions regarding the 2023-24 budget. The report, which should be completed in the fall, will focus solely on racing its related components and highlight the importance of the industry to the state.

“This will help legislators understand our business even more,” SBOANJ Executive Administrator Al Ochsner said.

HAMBLETONIAN DAY HANDLE SKYROCKETS AT BIG M

The players were out in force on Hambletonian Day at The Meadowlands, as the total handle was $7,656,054 on the 16-race program, eclipsing last year’s action by more than $1 million. The total handle and the average per race of $478,503 were both far 2022 bests.

The betting from foreign organizations – such as the PMU (Pari Mutuel Urbain of France) and ATG (the Swedish entity) – are unavailable for several days, but these figures are likely to push the grand total handle near or past the $9-million mark, a barrier broken only once in Hambo history, when wagering in 2005 (North American and foreign) totaled $9,015,019.

On Saturday, betting on 11 races bettered the $400,000 mark, while five races saw at least $500,000 pushed through the windows. Wagering on The Hambletonian fell just short of $1 million, as a total of $979,627 was put in play, by far the biggest total for any single race during 2022 at The Big M.

“Our handle being way up today is a combination of hard work and dedication,” said Big M Chief Operating Officer and General Manager Jason Settlemoir. “And, obviously, us hooking up with the New York Racing Association team by going on national television through Fox Sports 2 and Fox Sports 1 we think is starting to finally pay off because you are getting a totally different audience with the thoroughbred players switching over to harness.”

Seemingly to prove that was a good decision, Gingras and Burke capped a big Meadowlands Championship Meeting Saturday by finishing well in front of the field in their respective dash-win categories.

Gingras’ 108 victories were 28 more than his closest pursuer, Dexter Dunn. Dunn finished on top in the driver’s money-earnings race with $3,026,547. He was followed by Tim Tetrick ($2,519,432) and Gingras’ ($2,519,432).

Burke students won 68 times, well in front of Jeff Cullipher, whose pupils made 40 winner’s circle visits. Burke also won the money title as his horses earned $1,676,709. Tony Alagna was next with $1,476,901.
Freehold Borough is celebrating its equine heritage, which includes being home to Freehold Raceway, with the “Half Mile of Horses Art Walk” along the downtown’s Main Street. The exhibit, which features 12 custom-painted horse sculptures designed by area artists, will run through mid-October. The winning designs were selected from 31 entries. The borough plans to make the display an annual event.

This year the SBOANJ and TrotPAC hosted their 26th annual golf outing at Knob Hill Golf Course with the best weather a golfer could ask for. The 18-hole scramble included a number of prize-winning competitions. Freehold Dodge sponsored the hole-in-one contest with the opportunity to win a 2022 Dodge Durango. Unfortunately, no one was able to drive away with a new Durango. Patty Hogan took home the prize for the women’s longest drive, with Keeland MacDonald taking it for the men. Symon Spicer won the closest to the pin competition and the putting contest went to Pat Welsh. The Winners of this year’s tournament were Tyler Jones, Jake Jones, Pat Welsh, and Charlie MacDowell, pictured above.

After the golf tournament ended everyone gathered in the bar and dining room to wind down with a few drinks and catch up with old friends. This was also the chance for people to check out all the amazing raffle prizes available. Andy Miller took home the 2022 Spyder Bike donated by Chad Foulk and LZR Wheels donated by Tony Morgan. This year Doug Overhiser outbid everyone for the very popular beach wagon full of adult beverages.

Special thanks to all of the gracious sponsors of the event. Especially to our platinum sponsors: Team Miller Stable, Burke Racing Stable, AMG and Meadowlands Racetrack. All proceeds from the event benefit TrotPAC and the horsemen’s benevolent fund.

At the end of the day the event was a huge success both on and off the golf course. Big thanks to the golf committee, office staff, and volunteers that came out to support and help put together another awesome event again this year. We cannot wait to see you all again next year.

The SBOANJ would like to remind all mare owners of the Resident Mare Rebate Program requirements. All applications must be submitted with the USTA foal registration, a basic USTA Pathway horse report is acceptable proof for the program, no later than October 31, 2022.

We have recently received applications for the rebate program without the USTA foal registration attached. These will be considered incomplete applications and you will not receive your rebate if the USTA foal registration is not received by October 31, 2022. Please be sure to send them in immediately if you have not already done so.

For more information call the office at 732-462-2357 or log on the sboanj.com.
Medical Clinic Gaitway Farm

The BCAP Medical clinic at Gaitway farm will begin on Monday, September 26th and continue through December. The clinic offers free medical checkups, renewal of medications, blood work and more. BCAP’s Medical Clinic is located in Chris Samaha, Ph.D.’s office at Gaitway Farm (next to barn 17).

Chris Samaha’s office (BCAP: Backstretch Community Assistance Program), at Gaitway Farm is opened on Mondays during the summer months and on Monday & Wednesdays after Monmouth Park Closes. Free and confidential counseling, advocacy and more assistance is provided for all NJ licensed horsemen. Feel free to call Chris @ 732-740-5376 for further information.

**2022 CLINIC DATES**

Monday, September 26  
Monday, October 3  
Monday, October 17  
Monday, October 24  
Monday, November 7  
Monday, November 21  
Monday, December 5

Please Call to make an appointment. Walk ups are accepted based upon availability.

2022 SBOANJ & BCAP SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

The Standardbred Breeders and Owners Association of New Jersey & The Backstretch Community Assistance Program of New Jersey (BCAP of NJ) would like to congratulate the following recipients of the 2022 scholarship: Jennifer Booth, Katie Kelley, Emma Krouse, Oliva Miller, and Karly Warner.

Each student will be attending a 4- or 2-year college or university, they are either a son or daughter of a full-time participant in New Jersey Harness horse racing or are a full-time participant in New Jersey harness horse racing.

Congratulations to all of the recipients and their families we wish you the best of luck in the upcoming school year.

TrotPAC invited a number to Legislators to Hambletonian Day at the Meadowlands Racetrack. The attendees included Assemblyman John DiMaio, with his wife Gina. Assemblyman Kevin J. Rooney, with his wife Hayley and Chief of Staff Matt Conlon. Assemblyman Ralph R. Caputo, with his aide Joseph Cocuzza. Assemblywoman Kim Eulner and Assemblywoman Marilyn Piperno. TrotPAC trustees entertained the guests by giving them a tour of the grandstand including the Meadowlands Rooftop, introducing them to other SBOANJ board members, and joining them in the winner’s circle for a photo to remember the occasion. TrotPAC trustees took this unique opportunity to educate and promote our industry with a first-hand look at the most prestigious day in harness racing.
PRESIDENT’S LETTER

It has been a busy and productive summer for the SBOANJ.

Most recently, the annual Horse Racing Impact report necessary for the state to release the funding from the final installment of the five-year purse appropriations created in 2019 was completed and submitted. The report emphasizes the positive impacts the appropriations have had on the racing industry as a whole in New Jersey.

Among the highlights was the fact that combined track wagering in 2021 exceeded $500 million for the first time since 2016. Wagering outside of New Jersey was just shy of $400 million, representing the highest total since 2015 and a 31-percent increase from the year prior to the start of the appropriations.

In addition, the number of Standardbreds on New Jersey breeding farms has grown from 1,164 in 2016 to 1,800 in 2021. The number of Standardbred broodmares being bred to New Jersey stallions has increased from 209 to 727 during that same period.

Furthermore, the number of horses in training at Standardbred centers increased in 2021, with all age groups – but particularly 3-year-olds – being trained in higher numbers compared to 2016.

It was imperative to complete this project ahead of the upcoming yearling sales so that buyers are aware of the incentives and benefits of racing New Jersey-sired horses. That includes not only our reinvigorated Sire Stakes program and new SBOANJ-sponsored races that were created to lead up to the Sire Stakes series at The Meadowlands.

Thank you to everyone who helped us collect the data necessary for this invaluable report.

As I mentioned earlier, the five-year purse appropriation ends with the 2022-23 New Jersey state fiscal-year budget. We are already looking ahead to determine opportunities for future revenue enhancements. As part of that process, the SBOANJ is working with partners on a study that will focus solely on racing and related businesses to highlight the economic importance of the industry in New Jersey. This report will be presented to the State Legislature prior to discussions regarding the 2024 budget.

The SBOANJ and its members, in conjunction with TrotPAC, has done a great job in stepping up and making our industry’s voice heard in the Legislature. We will continue to invite legislators to our events, such as we did on Hambletonian Day, and our facilities as we maintain our commitment to build relationships with our state leaders.

At this point I would like to remember one of those leaders, Ron Dancer, who passed away in July at the age of 73. Ron was a great friend to all of us and will be missed. First, of course, he was a horseman. And after he was elected to the State Assembly two decades ago, Ron shared his knowledge as a horseman with his colleagues and was instrumental in preserving, protecting, and advancing racing in New Jersey. Where we are today is in large part due to his work, and I am grateful for his efforts and friendship.

Finally, thank you to everyone – sponsors, staff, directors, and participants – who helped make the annual golf outing a success. The event benefits two important programs, the Horsemen’s Benevolent Fund and TrotPAC, and continues to get better every year.

Mark Ford
# Standardbred Breeders & Owners Association of New Jersey

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