

NTWA Newsletter

Greetings fellow Turf writers, I hope this newsletter finds everyone well and geared up for a big weekend of Breeders' Cup preps with the opening of the Oak Tree meeting and the Keeneland fall meeting just around the corner.

The Breeders' Cup is just four weeks from Saturday, meaning the 48th annual National Turf Writers Association Awards Dinner is even closer. Hopefully all regular and associate members received invitations to our event this year, which promises to not only be very unique because it will be "on the water" for the first time, but also very entertaining with three charismatic and interesting award winners.

Kentucky Derby-winning jockey Calvin Borel, noted veterinary surgeon Dr. Larry Bramlage, and award-winning racing journalist Dick Jerardi are this year's honorees. The 48th annual NTWA Awards Dinner will be on a chartered yacht cruise that leaves from Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey and will sail around the Statue of Liberty and past the picturesque Manhattan skyline.

The day after the awards dinner the NTWA will conduct its semi-annual meeting at Monmouth Park at a time and place to be determined. A complete agenda for the meeting will be sent to the membership as we get closer, but topics for the meeting will include a special election to fill a vacancy on the board of directors, post-mortem on the awards dinner, and new members. Rhonda Norby and Bob Curran of Equibase Co. and the Jockey Club also plan to attend the meeting and would like to discuss services offered by Equibase to racing writers.

So long Sherry

The special election will be held to fill a vacancy on the board left by Sherry Ross of the New York Daily News, who is leaving her position as racing and ice hockey writer on September 30 to join the New Jersey Devils as the team's radio color analyst. Sherry's spot on the board will be missed and her presence at major racing events will be sorely missed by those fortunate to get the chance to know her. I've attached some of her resignation note submitted to Jill Williams and I earlier this month that may be of interest to some of our members.

"I am sorry to do this so close to the Breeders' Cup, as I'd hoped to be of some help on my home turf. Instead of being at Monmouth Park on Oct. 27, however, I will be working the Devils' home opener at their new Prudential Center Arena.

"If it is possible to get the word out, this may afford an employment opportunity for one of our members. The News is looking to replace me with a writer whose principle strength is horse racing (to cover the Triple Crown events, Saratoga, and the Breeders' Cup). This person should also be capable of handicapping, although that is secondary to writing/reporting. An ability to cover hockey (as a backup/Devils writer) would be ideal.

“Anyone interested should e-mail (DO NOT CALL!!!) the Daily News sports editor, Leon Carter, at: lcarter@nydailynews.com.

“I am really going to miss racing, and the people who care about it as much as I do.”

Another loss; and a gain

Although he was not a current member of the NTWA, I would be remiss if I did not mention a noteworthy retirement from the Turf writing ranks that surfaced earlier this month. Paul Moran, longtime racing writer and columnist for (New York) Newsday, announced he would retire after more than 22 years with the paper.

According to a statement distributed by Fran LaBelle of the New York Racing Association, Paul cited “severe and ongoing cutbacks in racing coverage by Newsday in recent years” and a desire to pursue opportunities in other areas of journalism and racing.

Prior to joining Newsday in 1985, Moran covered racing for the Fort Lauderdale News and Sun-Sentinel of South Florida. A two-time winner of the Media Eclipse Award, Moran also won a distinguished deadline writing award from the National Association of Newspaper Editors, a Red Smith Award for coverage of the Kentucky Derby, and awards from the Society of Silurians, Long Island Press Club, and Long Island Veterinary Medical Association. He was selected as New York’s best Thoroughbred handicapper in 2002 by the New York Press in that newspaper’s annual Best of Manhattan edition.

One of the few writers to cover every running of the Breeders’ Cup, Moran also covered 30 Triple Crown series and 23 meetings at Saratoga Race Course.

The retirement of Paul Moran came just a few days before another major metropolitan newspaper, the Los Angeles Times, reshuffled some personnel and assigned Larry Stewart to the horse racing beat.

Stewart is a longtime sports radio and television columnist who wrote his first column on that subject for the Los Angeles Herald Examiner in May 1973. A familiar face at Santa Anita Park through the years, Stewart is enthusiastic about his new job and wrote in his farewell TV-Radio column, “After today I’m moving full time to the horse racing beat. One might say I’m being put out to pasture. But I don’t see it that way. It’s a new chapter in my life, and I’m off and running.”

The racing industry and fellow Turf writers will miss the wonderful words of Paul Moran. At the same time we should be glad to have Larry Stewart on board.

Asian Racing Conference

NTWA member Ellen Hilts-Gossett sends this note along to fellow members:

"I will be one of a number of journalists (perhaps the only one from the U.S.) invited to cover the 32nd Asian Racing Conference in Tokyo, Japan, December 9th through 12th, 2008. I already have one client, but I wonder if any members' newspapers might want a small recap or perhaps some information in stringer form. As the U.S. is not a member of this organization, there will probably be few who are interested, but since one of the stated objectives of the Asian Racing Federation is: 'to meet and foster goodwill and mutual understanding through the medium of periodic conferences and other racing events in the member countries (and) to promote horseracing and breeding and the integrity and prestige thereof . . .' I think I can come up with a few viable paragraphs. Twenty-one member countries, including Australia, Japan, United Arab Emirates, India, New Zealand, Pakistan, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, will be represented for racing and conversation. This is not the first time I've compacted the racing/breeding/gambling aspects of a country's history into a few pages or less, which is why I've been asked to attend.

"Anyone who has a need for more information or questions answered is cordially invited to get in touch with me through any of the means listed in the NTWA Directory. Alternatively, feel free to give a copy of this note or my e-mail address to editors who might have a need for it.

"Thanks to all of you."

Media Eclipse Awards

Jim Gluckson, senior director of event communications for the NTRA, sent a reminder that entry deadline for the 2007 Media Eclipse Awards is Friday, November 9. Rules for the Media Eclipse Awards will be released on Thursday, October 11. The Eclipse Awards will be presented on Monday, January 21, 2008 at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel in Beverly Hills, California.

As always, please reach out to me with any additional questions or concerns at tlaw@thoroughbredtimes.com, my office at 859-260-9800 ext. 125, or on my cell phone at 859-396-9407. Thanks for your time, and best of luck at the races,

Tom Law
NTWA President
September 26, 2007