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The ISA Today

Volume 8, Issue 2

December 2008



*Happy Holidays from the
Indiana Standardbred Association*

*We wish you and your family a safe and
prosperous New Year!*

*The Indiana Standardbred Association would like
to extend a sincere thank you to the breeders,
owners, trainers, caretakers, and drivers and also
to Hoosier Park and Indiana Downs for helping
make 2008 a successful racing season.*



May you all have great success in 2009!

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ISA PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

President's Message.

The Indiana Horse Racing Commission conducted a hearing on Thursday, November 20, 2008 on the ability of the Indiana Standardbred Association to reliably administer funds granted under IC 4-35-7. The Indiana Standardbred Association application was denied for reasons that have nothing to do with the Association's historical ability to faithfully manage funds entrusted to it.

The decision of the Commission was a reaction to correspondence and comments by me, and others, concerning certain actions and decisions of the Commission and its Executive Director. The Commission's allegation that I have lied to the public about various topics is without merit. However this Commission is allowed to make its charges and then to judge whether the charges they make are accurate.

One accusation was that I lied in accusing the Commission of defrauding the horsemen and the public by allowing eleven positives to accumulate against a horseman over a two and one-half month period. The Commission's position is that they defrauded neither the public nor the horsemen. I sent a letter of apology in which I apologized for assuming that they knew that they abetted the infraction.

I also apologized for a misstatement made by me relating to equipment cards. I stated that the Indiana Standardbred Association has tried to urge that the requirement for equipment cards for years. In actuality the request was deferred by the Association because of cost concerns by Hoosier Park. I apologize for this inaccuracy.

The Paddock Judge is responsible (71 IAC 3-4-1, Section 1. (2) (Page 3e (6) to be found in the IHRC Rule Book for 2008) for the "**Inspection of horses for changes of equipment**, broken or faulty equipment and head numbers." The rule for inspection exists but the Commission does not mandate its use.

The third issue brought by Commission Counsel, are comments I made when the president of one horsemen's association accepted a \$400.00 weekly honorarium from his association for serving as president of that association. This association also granted the president \$7500.00 for the production of their Application for Registration for the Commission. The ISA spent around \$2,000 in legal fees and supplies for the twenty-four bound presentations.

However, the action taken reflected on all horsemen and is illustrative of legitimate fears by the Commission and the Legislature that once the horsemen get a smell of money that they may find ways to direct it from its intended use. The ISA regards all funds as belonging to the horsemen and are not for the private use of our board. By a single board decision the QHRAI managed to breach the principles of self dealing, cronyism and nepotism and raised an alarm that reflected on all horsemen. I wanted the Standardbred horsemen to understand what had happened and that there would be no similar action occurring within the ISA. Instead, Commission counsel chose to interpret my action as a statement made to make the Commission look bad. My statement was a statement of fact dealing about the actions of horsemen to horsemen. I apologized for voicing my opinion on another integrity issue.

The Commission and the Executive Director received the Indiana Standardbred Association's Application for Registration on/about August 21, 2008. I received notice that the Commission had started its review on September 4, 2008. On November 10th the Association received notice of deficiencies in the budget proposed for the Benevolence portion of the proposed budget by Email. After receiving Mr. Gorajec's objections, we made a simple reallocation of funds to address the demands of the Executive Director. It is crystal clear in the legislation that there is no authority or provision for direction from the Commission on budgeted line items.

Since the Commission mandated that October 31st was the last date for changes to the budget there was no consideration given to the Association's changes that addressed the complaints made by the Executive Director. **This was nothing more than purposeful obstruction by the Executive Director and the Commission. This is also evidentiary that the Executive Director had no intention of approving the ISA application.**

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It should be stated that both the Association attorney and I sought information and clarification of the Commission's requirements. These inquiries were either ignored or answered with no assistance.

The Executive Director dictates that all money provided under the "Benevolence" provision be dedicated to a relatively few. This Association believes that directing a large amount of money to very few beneficiaries is both wasteful and undermines the intent of the Legislature.

The Association feels issues of safety are on an equal or greater priority with medical compensation. In discussions held with members of Fair Boards and with members of the Standardbred Advisory Board there is great interest in the expansion of the Fair Racing Circuit for 2009 and beyond. The budget was proposed to allow for the expansion of these venues which benefit Indiana horsemen. Neither the Executive Director nor any commissioner asked even one question about the reasons for the Association's desire to improve the safety and the quality of Fair Circuit harness racing. The Commission denied the proposed budget with no intent to understand the reasons for the proposals.

Funding for safety and improvements was initially selected to be placed in the Benevolence section of the budget. The Association believes that subsidizing health insurance is the long term answer as the solution for better health care. Director Mike Merkel enlightened the Board about a service that provides enhanced medical and prescription service used by his corporation and has been working with this company for several months. A description of that service was included in the revised budget that was not allowed to be presented to the Commission.

At the one ISA meeting that Mr. Gorajec and Mr. Babbitt attended, they were directly asked for their definitions of "Benevolence". Their answer was that they did not have a definition and that it was whatever the Association wanted it to be. **This was the answer of the true intent of the Legislature. The Legislature placed no priorities on the use of these funds other than the Association's use must be for the best interest of the breed.** But, we found that they were ingenuous in their answer as they used their own definition to disqualify the Association's application.

Neither I, nor the Association, in its 82 year history, have ever been anything but forthright and honest in handling our charge of horsemen's funds for the best interest of the horsemen. I was a stockbroker for over 25 years with not one complaint or violation. I have managed millions of dollars and yet Commission counsel inferred that a person like me was capable of embezzlement. And, the Commission was in accord with the inference.

The hearing went, as the Commission scripted it. It was a venting and public flogging of me with reference to other Directors of the Association who do agree with every opinion and action of the Executive Director or the Commission Chair. I expected the public harangue and flogging because of my position on some Commission actions. It is a known tactic of the Commission. But, what is not deserved nor authorized is the withholding of monies intended to help people that need it.

I offered to resign at the hearing so that the horsemen would not be impacted by the Commission's unbridled vengeance. This offer was rejected by Commission counsel.

This is not the end of the story. The application will be resubmitted if required. We are awaiting a determination letter from the Internal Revenue Service on the tax status of funds received from slots. If it is determined that such funds are taxable then the Association will attempt to see that accrued payments are not issued until after the first of the year. The Association will endeavor to change legislation to insure the most favorable tax status for these funds. Whatever happens in the future it has been a pleasure to serve.

Jack Holton



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~ 2008 MEMBERSHIP SETS NEW RECORD ~

The Indiana Standardbred Association has established a new record in paid memberships for the year 2008 totaling 849 through October. We already have two new applications on file for 2009. We have seen a steady rise in memberships the last three years after experiencing a fairly stable number between 600 to 650 since the start of the new decade. With the implementation of the new Standardbred Breed Development Fund program and the infusion of new slot revenue to the track purse accounts, that number is expected to rise well over 1,000 in the near future. The I.S.A. Board of Directors' various committees have been working diligently to develop new programs for the membership which will expand services on the backstretch including new health care proposals. Equine welfare will receive high priority status along with proposals to improve conditions for horseman and horsewomen working on the backstretch. Both Hoosier Park and Indiana Downs have been cooperative in these discussions. A large increase in Scholarship funding is planned. Discussions with Standardbred Breed Development and Standardbred Advisory Board are ongoing to improve conditions for fair racing tracks and facilities at Indiana county fairs. This is an exciting time to be a participant in the Indiana harness racing industry. We welcome you to be a part of it!

In June '08 on Hoosier Cup Day at Hoosier Park's big Million Dollar Night which included Sires Stakes Finals on the program, the Indiana Standardbred Association and Indiana Standardbred Breed Development co-hosted a Sires Stakes luncheon for owners, trainers and grooms in all the finals. This was the 3rd year for this event at Hoosier Park. The luncheon smorgasbord was very capably handled by Becky Donohue's Backstretch Kitchen and was most appreciated by the horsemen in attendance.

Saturday, September 5, 2008 the Indiana Standardbred Association and Indiana Standardbred Development Committee co-hosted a luncheon for Sires Stakes participants in ten finals on Indiana Downs Million Dollar Night at the races. The second series of Sires Stakes finals (2 Yr. Olds) was Saturday, October 5th. Both luncheons were catered by Todd Green, Manager of the Backstretch Kitchen at Indy Downs and horsemen were very complimentary to the hosts and Mr. Green.

Expenditures in the Driver's Lounge at both Hoosier Park and Indiana Downs for coffee, tea, lemonade and pizza totaled \$13,312 in 2008. This courtesy program for horsemen confined to the paddock during detention time and racing will also be expanded in 2009.

A prime example of how well the Indiana harness industry is working together to benefit our horsemen is the sponsorship of the Indiana Awards Banquet co-hosted by Indiana Standardbred Association, Indiana Standardbred Development Committee and Indiana Standardbred Advisory Board, all sharing in the costs equally to keep ticket costs at a minimum for families attending the awards ceremonies. Preliminary plans for the 2009 event are being developed with Hoosier Park at Anderson in February. Our Director of Standardbred Racing in Indiana, Jessica Barnes, and her Assistant Director, Kelly Roush are excellent representatives for Breed Development and Standardbred Advisory Board along with the I.S.A. Board in planning this event. More specific plans will be announced as soon as they are available. We hope to see you there.

By: Phyllis Edwards
Membership Committee Chair



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Congratulations to the New 2009 ISA Directors! 2009 ISA Director Election Results

On Thursday November 13th, directors and volunteers gathered at the ISA Office in Greenfield to count the election ballots. The votes were counted and the results are as follows:

Andy Bryner Jeff Edwards
Ted Engel Mike Merkel

Directors are elected for a three year term.
Congratulations to these gentlemen who were selected
from a field of six worthy candidates

2009

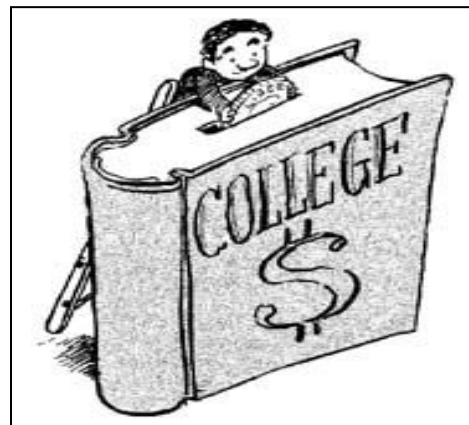
Membership Applications

The Indiana Standardbred Association will be sending out 2009 Membership applications at the beginning of the year.

- The Indiana Horse Racing Commission will be mailing out the 2009 Indiana Stallion Directory a week before Christmas.
- The Standardbred Breed Development Program Guide is available at www.in.gov/hrc (click on Standardbred). Program Guides are also available at the ISA Office.

2008 – 2009 ISA SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS ANNOUNCED!

Randy Fisher and Melissa Landis were each awarded a \$3000.00 scholarship from the ISA. The association wishes them the best in college and in their future endeavors.





Horsemen's Representative

The Indiana Standardbred Association is currently accepting applications for the 2009 Horsemen's Representative

This is a contracted position covering 160 Live Standardbred Race Dates for the 2009 racing season.

Hoosier Park Representation: Beginning – **March 25, 2009**
Anderson, Indiana Ending – **July 11, 2009**

Indiana Downs Representation: Beginning – **July 24, 2009**
Shelbyville, Indiana Ending – **November 10, 2009**

The 2009 Horsemen's Representative is expected to report to duty at Hoosier Park beginning on or around March 1st 2009.

The Horsemen's Representative reports to the Indiana Standardbred Association (ISA) Director named chairman of the Pari-Mutuel ISA Committee as well as answering to the full ISA Board of Directors.

QUALIFICATIONS:

1. USTA Member in good standing
2. ISA Paid member for current year and reside in the state of Indiana during employment as the Track Representative.
3. Demonstrates knowledge of:
 - USTA Rules, regulations and procedures
 - Indiana Pari-Mutuel Law
 - Indiana Horse Racing Commission Rules
 - Indiana Standardbred Association By-Laws
4. Written and verbal communication skills
5. Have a vision for Standardbred racing within the Indiana Standardbred Association
6. Ability to interpret contract language
7. May not be an employee of Hoosier Park or Indiana Downs during the term of contract for Track Representative
8. Ability to obtain an IHRC License.
9. Commitment to excellence

Qualified candidates please mail, fax, or email your resume to:

Indiana Standardbred Association
147 Green Meadows Drive, Suite 2
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(317) 462-7240 fax
isaracing@sbcglobal.net

If you have any questions please call the I.S.A. Office toll free (800) 565-5725.

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2008 ISA ELECTED DIRECTORS

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Larry Rheinheimer
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Publications

Hoof Beats (USTA Monthly)

(614) 224-2291

www.hoofbeatsmagazine.com

The Horsemen and Fair World (Weekly)

(859) 276-4026

www.harnessracing.com

Mid-American Standardbred & Harness News(Monthly)

(630) 963-0398

www.trotandpace.com

The United States Trotting Association

(877) 800-8782 Fax (614) 224-4575

Integrity Hotline: (800) 887-8782

www.ustrotting.com

Indiana Racetracks

Hoosier Park

(800) 526-7223

www.hoosierpark.com

Indiana Downs

Scott Peine, Director of Racing

(866) 478-7223 / (317) 421-0000

www.indianadowns.com

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Horse Racing Contacts

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Ellen Taylor, Executive Director

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USTA District Directors

Jay Cross (574) 825-7523 or

Jerry Landess (260) 726-7859

USTA Tattoo Technician

Donna Williams (765) 208-0622 or (765) 354-4697

or contact the USTA (877) 800-8782

Standardbred Retirement Foundation

Paula Campbell, President

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Website: www.adoptahorse.org