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Making happy
endings for 26 years.

APRIL 2009

RENEWS

NEWS FROM THE THOROUGHBRED RETIREMENT FOUNDATION

The Jockey Club Announces a

New Check Off Program

When Thoroughbred owners and breeders in North America submit their foal registration applications in 2009, they will be able to participate in a voluntary Check Off program, created and administered by The Jockey Club, which will provide funding for the retirement of Thoroughbred horses. The announcement of this new initiative was made in November by The Jockey Club, and as an incentive to encourage participation, The Jockey Club will match the Check Off on a dollar-to-dollar basis up to $200,000 this year.

Thoroughbred breeders will have the option of selecting one of four graduated amounts ($25, $50, $75, or $100) to be designated for these Thoroughbred aftercare programs or they can fill in the amount of their choice on the Application for Foal Registration form.

"We are very pleased with this Check Off plan and hope that all breeders will participate in this program." said Diana Pikulski of TRF. "This is a huge stride in educating the industry about the importance of providing funding for the retraining, adoption and retirement of its Thoroughbred athletes when their racing days are over. This public recognition of our mission provides us with a vote of confidence as we continue to work toward industry wide funding."

Funds from The Jockey Club Check Off program will be designated specifically for the TRF farms located at correctional facilities.

Dear Friends,

This January, 2009 brought to a close our celebration of our 25th anniversary year and I would like to extend a warm thank you to all of our wonderful supporters. In more ways than one 2008 was truly a milestone for the TRF. We made great progress as an organization and for Thoroughbred racehorses in general, both during and after their racing careers.

The TRF made great gains in our efforts to increase awareness and secure industry funding for retirement of Thoroughbreds. Most recently, the industry's good news comes from Churchill Downs. They have implemented a comprehensive model for improving horse and rider safety and welfare. Additionally, they have launched a $50K matching gift program benefiting Thoroughbred retirement services. Across the country, more racetracks implemented no-tolerance policies on selling horses for slaughter, the NTRA developed a program on horse welfare and safety, and retirement programs continue to be active at Penn National, Philadelphia Park, and at the original model track, Suffolk Downs. Furthermore, beginning this year, breeders can check off to donate towards Thoroughbred retirement and adoption when they register their foals and The Jockey Club will match funds raised (see more in sidebar).

Last year, 80 TRF horses found new homes and 125 were retired from racetracks across the country. We had a 20% increase in our Annual Fund, from more than 1,000 new donors. You can visit our website, www.trfinc.org, to see a list of 2008 donors. Additionally, our annual Saratoga Gala at Saratoga National was spectacular with more than 400 attending. We are looking forward to this year's event on August 9.

While all of this sounds wonderful and it truly is, we too are deeply affected by the economic downturn. Our population has increased to service the new racetrack programs while our feed and care costs have escalated, all in a time when our endowment funds have decreased substantially. Like everyone, we have adjusted with the changing times. We are reaching out to more people for support by increasing our exposure on the web and joining social networks. Our message of hope, renewal and the incredible spirit of the Thoroughbred is a universal message that needs to be spread beyond the world of racing fans.

There is no doubt that there will be some tough times ahead but together we can get through them while we continue to achieve our mission of saving lives through the rescue and retirement of Thoroughbred race horses. As the oldest and largest organization of its kind, and the one that takes the most horses and provides thousands of second chances and careers, we will do everything we can to accomplish our goals.

From the heart, all of us at TRF thank our supporters and we look forward to working with you in 2009 and years to come.

Sincerely,

Diana Pikulski

Executive Director,
Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation
diana@trfinc.org

Cover photo by: Jon Kral

What Happens When a Thoroughbred Has Run His Last Race?

Education and adoption continue to be the goals of the Maker's Mark Secretariat Center (MMSC), a 22-acre site nestled in the historic Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington. Along with retraining Thoroughbreds for a second career and educating tens of thousands of people every year on rescue and adoption, the MMSC, operated by the Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation (TRF), is pushing forward with exciting and ambitious goals as it celebrates its 5th anniversary.

Susanna Thomas, director of the MMSC, says she feels "privileged," to work at The Kentucky Horse Park with approximately 20 volunteers as she teaches the public about adoption and rescue while retraining dozens of Thoroughbreds each year from the Secretariat Center's 10-horse barn. "We feel education is as important as adoption," Thomas said. "We are committed to The Kentucky Horse Park. To be able to share with people, children or adults, a little about these horses, to allow them to get up close and personal with them, is humbling. These horses are such powerful heroes and have so much to give." And allowing the public such an intimate experience at the MMSC is a benefit at so many levels.

"The average American relates to the Thoroughbred race horse more than any other breed," said Diana Pikulski, executive director of the TRF. "No other breed has captured the imagination of the general public like Thoroughbreds. Just take a look at Secretariat, Smarty Jones, and Barbaro. If we can bring the public up close and personal with a Thoroughbred race horse, retirement will be better funded, racing will be more popular, and more retired Thoroughbred race horses will find second homes."

Thomas said the TRF's goal at the Maker's Mark Secretariat Center is to continue making it one of the leaders in the retraining of Thoroughbreds, a prominent center for education into rescue and adoption, and to have 30-to-50 horses adopted this year. "When these former race horses come off the track some are very young," Thomas said. "For them, it's like learning a new language because they're high strung and some have gone through a lot. But we're here to give them the tools to a second career, whether it is to be jumpers or be used for trail riding. The Secretariat Center provides what we believe are the tools for a horse to enter a different culture."

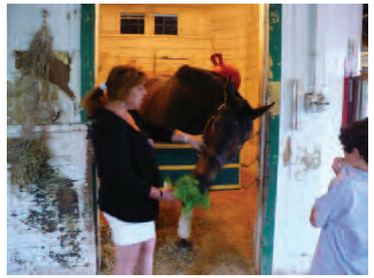
The TRF and Thomas are also excited about the World Equestrian Games coming to the Kentucky Horse Park in 2010. The 14-day series will draw more than 1,000 horses from 50 countries, 800 equestrians, and millions of visitors to the Kentucky Horse Park and Maker's Mark Secretariat Center.

"The opportunity of introducing and educating millions of visitors about the issue of retired race horses and their adoption is phenomenal," Thomas said. "There will be a number of former race horses competing, so we're planning and strategizing now on how to best serve the horses training there, the visitors, and the Maker's Mark Secretariat Center."

THOROUGHBRED RETIREMENT FOUNDATION
P.O. Box 3387, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866 | Phone: (518) 226-0028 | Fax: (518) 226-0699 | www.trfinc.org

Seeking the Money Finds a New Home

In horse racing, as in other endeavors, there are big victories and small victories. The big victories include winning a Breeders' Cup or Triple Crown race, or being selected for an Eclipse Award. The small victories are another story. Most of them take place behind the scenes, and few are noticed by those not directly involved.



One of these small victories occurred recently when Seeking the Money, a fixture on the New York racing scene for nearly a decade, was retired to the Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation (TRF). The 10-year-old gelding ran in his 77th and final race January 11 at Aqueduct, a 1-mile 70-yard claimer with a purse of $18,000.

"I loved this horse's spirit and gameness, but I just decided enough was enough," owner Nat Krohn said in a recent phone conversation. Krohn, who claimed Seeking the Money twice (the first time in July 2005) and purchased him privately once, raced the New York-bred for much of the latter part of his career.

"Different trainers had him, but couldn't win with him," Krohn continued. "Jockeys were pulling him up for no reason. The vets kept saying there was nothing wrong with him, but I figured there was no sense continuing. I didn't want him to end up at a smaller track where something bad might happen to him."

Seeking the Money made all 77 of his starts in New York: 33 at Aqueduct, 27 at Belmont, 12 at Saratoga and five at Finger Lakes. He won only seven of those starts, but he placed in 30 others and accumulated earnings of $372,420.

"There comes a time when a horse needs to be retired," Krohn's daughter Margie, who assisted her father in the decision to retire him, said. "Jockeys want to ride the best horses, and Seeking the Money wasn't one of the best horses anymore. He'd run his heart out. He deserved to be retired."

According to Krohn, the decision to turn to the Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation was an easy one. "We knew [the TRF] would take good care of him, and that he would be with other horses," she said. "They're excellent people — very dedicated."

On Feb. 12, Seeking the Money was vanned from Belmont to Wallkill Correctional's 80-acre facility in Ulster County. There he has become part of the TRF's groundbreaking vocational training program that has benefited many hundreds of horses — and inmates — over the past 25 years. According to Nat Krohn, Seeking the Money's stint there got off to a promising start.

"Wallkill is the place for horses coming directly off the track," said TRF executive director Diana Pikulski. "Sometimes these horses will be sore and have issues, and our people there are best equipped to deal with these things."

Two weeks after arriving at Wallkill, Seeking the Money is adjusting well. Jim Tremper — who in dual roles as vocational instructor (teaching inmates how to care for horses) and farm manager has overseen the TRF program since its inception — said the 10-year-old gelding is in "super shape" for a horse his age.

Seeking the Money's retirement comes at a time of increased public awareness of equine welfare issues. According to Pikulski, this includes an increase in the number of owners who want to do the right thing.

"Horses that might have gone to a livestock auction before aren't going there now," she said. "People are more conscientious about looking for homes for them. People are still looking to adopt horses. We've also seen an increase in the number of people who want to foster horses, people who want to help and who will be responsible for feeding them."

On an institutional level, more and more tracks and racing associations are taking measures to prevent horses from ending up at slaughterhouses in Canada and Mexico. In addition, the National Thoroughbred Racing Association (NTRA) and American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) have urged the industry to take an active role in facilitating (and financing) the transition of horses coming off the track.

The organized participation of the racing and breeding industries in the welfare of their horses cannot come too soon, especially given the current economic situation.

"We've seen a decrease in our general donations and in our endowment," said Pikulski, "so we're going to have to work harder to raise the same amount of money. We're always looking to new sources and for ways of tying what we do to the racing community."

Seeking the Money's retirement to the TRF is indeed a victory of sorts. However, not all horses leaving the track are as fortunate. The larger victory will come when an individual horse's successful transition is no longer considered newsworthy, when — with all aspects of the industry doing their part — all horses are given a chance at a second life when their racing days are over.

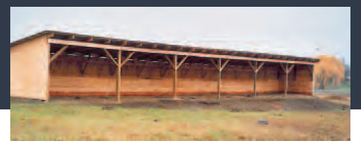
Jeff Scott writes about horse racing Tuesday in ***The Saratogian****. He may be reached at utahpine1@aol.com.*

Thank you for funding our run-in sheds & allowing us to expand our capacity at Wallkill!

NYTHA

Suffolk County Off Track Betting

ASPCA



THE RACE IS ON!

WHEN EVERY PENNY COUNTS, YOU WANT TO MAKE SURE THAT ANY INVESTMENT YOU MAKE PAYS BIG DIVIDENDS.

The TRF's track record speaks for itself. As the oldest Thoroughbred Retirement organization, we have rescued more than 3,000 horses and receive requests for more horses every day. With your support we can continue our mission of saving horses and saving lives. Please give today and make your first wager of the season with us.

THOROUGHBRED RETIREMENT FOUNDATION

Saving Thoroughbred horses no longer able to compete on the racetrack from possible neglect, abuse, and slaughter.

518-226-0028 | https://trfinc.org/donations.php

When Second Chances Become A Reality

When Wild Eyed Dreamer stands on his front legs and kicks his heels ten feet into the air, it is an inspirational moment for a long line of people who have given this handsome bay gelding a second, third, and fourth chance.

A GOOD MOVER AND A TERRIFIC ATHLETE, DREAMER MAY YET HAVE A SECOND CAREER — A REMARKABLE JOURNEY.

Among Dreamer's saviors are the inmates in the TRF-James River program at James River Work Center near Richmond, Va. Established in 2007, the program has nine men, seventeen horses and a broad, enthusiastic cadre of volunteers and supporters. The Department of Corrections is a great partner, providing additional land and building facilities at an economical cost.

Reid McLellan teaches the "Groom Elite" curriculum on bi-monthly visits. Correctional Officer Jesse Barker, a certified Groom Elite instructor, and part-time TRF employee, Debbie Hamman, provide the daily instruction. In January, our second class of grooms was certified. Two are retained from each class to serve as teaching assistants for the next class. Counselor Brandy Nixon has selected capable candidates for the program. Two graduates are going to work release soon and will hopefully find horse farm jobs. We are confident they will be good stewards for the program.

Because of our facilities and our labor force, our program is well-suited for lay-ups and rehab cases like Wild Eyed Dreamer. Dreamer hobbled off the track at Delaware Park in May with a freshly-bowed tendon in his left front leg to go with the old bow in his right front. A stakes winner of $166,000, Dreamer joined another injured horse, Kong's Revenge, in the care of an angel named Diane. With the help of Stephanie Nixon, a TRF-JR supporter, they were able to move both horses to Virginia.

From June until October, Groom Elite teaching assistant Will Washington iced and poulticed Dreamer's leg twice a day, every day. After the tendon was set, Sean McClure began hand-walking the horse. When Dreamer began to chafe at his continued confinement, teaching assistant Tamio Holmes took over, turning the horse out in a small round pen. Soon Dreamer will go out with the rest of the herd. A good mover and a terrific athlete, Dreamer may yet have a second career — a remarkable journey. (He recently has been tracked down by the woman who cared for him as a weanling in Florida and she is willing to take him home.)

Adoption is the ultimate goal, despite the challenges of re-training horses in a prison. We currently have five horses being ridden, with photos posted at thoroughbredadoption.com and our local website, JamesRiverHorses.org. We adopted out three horses last year with hopes of more in 2009. Our focus on being an intensive care unit would not be possible without great support from the local equine veterinary practices. We are exploring the possibility of discounted surgery for such things as removal of bone chips to make more horses adoptable. We also hope to benefit from our proximity to the veterinary school at Virginia Tech.

Adoptions

IVORY LADY

At the ripe old age of 52, in June of 2005, I became a HORSE OWNER! The Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation gave me the opportunity to adopt a 23 year old retired Thoroughbred mare. Ivory Lady by Sir Ivor, out of a Native Dancer mare is now MINE!

Ivory Lady was a blue-blood of Thoroughbreds. By a legendary European champion, out of a mare of US Champion bloodlines, she was destined to be a great one! She sold for $400,000 as a three year old, to be a broodmare. But as luck would have it she had a hard time carrying foals to term, and those she did foal, well they weren't the champions the owners dreamed of. She sold a few times and in January, 2000 she was again on the sale floor in Lexington. Michael Blowen, then with the TRF, saw Ivory Lady in the catalog and feared the worst. She had no bids so he bought her for $600.

I love this old broodie and she loves me. My childhood dream finally came true. She is my heart. I have always loved animals but this beautiful, majestic Thoroughbred is the love of my life. She gives me so much more than the money and fame her former owners dreamed of. My girl is living out the life she deserves in a lush pasture and I am living the dreams of a pre-adolescent girl. Just as it should be…

— Paulette Wachtel

BAY BLEU

When Sassy came to me, Daphne kept telling me she has attitude. Well, over the years that attitude has garnered us well in the event world. After I figured out how to stay on with the help of my coach and friend, Jane Hamlin, Sassy improved in her showmanship and work ethic in the dressage arena. Her stadium jumping is still a "whoa" in progress, but her cross-country is "wow." I forgot how fun it could be.

This past year, we were nationally ranked tied for tenth in the Training Master Amateur Division for the whole of USEA, as well as winning Training Master Amateur rider and placing third in Training Open Adult division for our New England Area 1. Sassy has qualified for the AEC Eventing championships every year since I have had her, as well as qualifying for our Area I Beginner Novice, Novice, and Training championships. This coming year, our goal is to move up to prelim. in July, and compete at the Area I half star Training Three Day Championship in Vermont.

All who ask me about purchasing horses or looking for a companion, I tell them about TRF. I know not all horses are like Sassy, but many need homes such as she.

— Nancy Grout

Sponsorship

CHERRY STREET GAL

The joy of sponsoring a horse can be seen in the faces of Jon and Eva, visiting Cherry Street Gal at the Lowder farm in South Carolina.

Visit our sponsor a horse page at: **trfinc.org/sponsor/sponsor_why.php**

NOTABLE NEW ADDITIONS TO THE TRF FAMILY

ASK THE LORD
Starts: 83 | Wins: 23
Earnings: $769,640

Retired at 11 years old, this amazing campaigner is still sound and came to TRF with his own fan club. By Lord At War, the bay gelding is retired in Kentucky at our Blackburn facility.

SWING FOR THE FENCES
Starts: 15 | Wins: 4
Earnings: $523,371

By Boston Harbor, this bay gelding of 2001 has acclimated easily to retirement at the TRF Wallkill location. He loves all the attention he receives from his caretakers and visitors.

MULTIPLE CHOICE
Starts: 74 | Wins: 9
Earnings: $692,449

This 11 year old gelding has won the hearts and respect of the men at James River Correctional. His easy-going personality makes him one of the best horses for demonstrations and hands on teaching.