

Sparkling evening on tap for annual SBOA banquet

A new venue and an outstanding guest speaker will be featured at the Standardbred Breeders of Ontario Association's annual celebration of excellence on Saturday, Jan. 21, 2012.

The annual SBOA banquet and silent auction will be held at the Sheraton Toronto Airport Hotel and Conference Centre, located at 801 Dixon Road, and gracing the dais will be New York native Jeff Gural.

Passionate about the sport that first grabbed his interest as a child, Gural has been a Standardbred owner and breeder for over three decades and in recent years added the title of racetrack executive to his list of accomplishments with the creation of American Racing and Entertainment LLC, which operates Tioga Downs and Vernon Downs in upstate New York. Over the past year Gural has spearheaded the effort to revitalize racing at The Meadowlands, heading up the group which leased the East Rutherford, NJ racetrack from the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority.

The chairman of Newmark Knight Frank, a full-service commercial real estate firm headquartered in Manhattan, Gural has been vocal about the need for change within the harness racing industry and looks forward to sharing his message with SBOA Banquet attendees.

"I appreciate the invitation (from the SBOA)," said Gural. "I will be speaking about The Meadowlands and working together with WEG to try to improve our product."

Tickets for the Jan. 21 banquet — which also features the popular stallion and silent auctions — remain a reasonable \$60 and are available from SBOA administrator Aimee Adams, who can be reached at aimee@sboa.info.

More information about the Sheraton Toronto Airport Hotel and Conference Centre can be found at www.sheratontorontoairport.com or by contacting the hotel at 1-800-325-3535. A special room rate has been arranged for banquet attendees who wish to combine an overnight stay in Toronto with the evening's festivities.

CASHBACK BONUS REWARDS YEARLING BUYERS

In addition to watching eight outstanding Super Final battles at Woodbine Racetrack on Nov. 12, four purchasers of Ontario-sired yearlings went home with a \$5,000 Cashback bonus, compliments of the SBOA.

The names of all Ontario-sired yearlings sold at the Canadian Yearling Sale and the Forest City Yearling Sale were placed in two drums, and two names were selected from each drum. Of the yearlings sold at the Canadian Sale, Dont Do Jets (Hip No. 60), a Jeremes Jet filly out of Dont Do Windows consigned by Preferred Equine Marketing, Agent, and Emil Oaks (Hip No. 304), an Oaklea Julian son out of Semiconchess consigned by Oaklea Farm, were the yearlings selected. Delighted owners James MacEachern of Baileboro and Gerry Coleman of Peterborough, who offered up \$9,000 for Dont Do Jets, and Ballykeel Racing of Tillsonburg, who spent \$8,000 to acquire Emil Oaks, were each awarded a Cashback bonus of \$5,000.

Of the yearlings that went through the ring at the Forest City Sale, For Oneiftytwo (Hip No. 7), a Jeremes Jet filly out of Book Smart consigned by Preferred Equine Marketing, Agent, and Hip Hop Be Bop (Hip No. 154), a Muscle Mass son of Unique Rhythm consigned by Kentuckiana Farms of Lexington, KY, were the names selected in the Cashback draw. Len Gamble of Etobicoke and Tammy Lynn Turner of Rockwood purchased For Oneiftytwo for \$3,000, while Hip Hop Be Bop was sold for \$4,000 to Terrance McVeay of Port Perry.

The Cashback for Yearlings initiative was designed to recognize and reward owners who support the province's breeding industry by purchasing Ontario-sired yearlings at Ontario sales.

WINNING CONTEST A REAL THRILL FOR DUNDAS RESIDENT

Having her ballot selected as the Grand Prize recipient in the inaugural Win The Thrill contest capped off a remarkable year for Dundas resident Beth Wallace. The longtime harness racing fan entered the contest at Flamboro Downs on July 11, just months after receiving a kidney transplant.

"This (racehorse ownership) has always been our dream, my husband's and my dream, but I had to retire and with three kids in University, there's no money for that now," said Wallace, who underwent a kidney transplant in the spring of 2011 after 14 months of dialysis. "So we thought this is not going to happen, and so... it has."

Wallace joined the other eight members of the SBOA New Owner Mentoring Group, the proud owners of Badlands Hanover son Bad Boy Matt, who was purchased for \$22,000 from the Canadian Yearling Sale consignment of Craig Turner and Mhairi Kersel of Ingersoll.

This year's group of enthusiastic new owners — who selected The Dream Team Stable as their moniker — will be ably mentored by Brian Webster of St. George Brant and trainer Tony O'Sullivan of Cambridge.

The Win The Thrill contest, a partnership between the Ontario Sires Stakes program and the SBOA, generated excitement at participating tracks all summer and culminated a reception for finalists at Woodbine Racetrack during the Oct. 1 Grassroots Championship night.

In addition to the Grand Prize of a share in the eleventh SBOA New Owner Mentoring Group, two ballots were also selected for runner-up prizes. Dinner for four during the Nov. 12 Ontario Sires Stakes Super Finals at Woodbine Racetrack and one night's hotel accommodation was won by Corry Price of Centralia, who qualified as a Win The Thrill finalist at Clinton Raceway, and a stunning framed print by photographer Matt Waples was captured by three-time finalist Jack Kearney of Scarborough, who entered the Win The Thrill contest at Grand River Raceway.

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OUR MISSION:

The Standardbred Breeders of Ontario Association (SBOA) endeavors to maintain and improve the racing program for Ontario's breeders through representation on various committees and boards including the Ontario Sires Stakes Publicity & Promotion Committee, the Standardbred Review Committee, the Horse Improvement Program and as the Breeders' representative on the Ontario Horse Racing Industry Association Board of Directors.