

Another successful celebration

On Jan. 22, the industry gathered at the Delta Guelph Hotel to continue the Standardbred Breeders of Ontario Association's tradition of honouring the province's best. The top money earners from each Ontario Sires Stakes division were recognized, along with a number of people and horses who have made an exceptional contribution to Ontario's standardbred industry.

Dr. Ken Grant earned the Chris Van Bussel Memorial Award for his outstanding contributions to both the SBOA and the provincial breeding industry, while Liz Waples was honoured with the Lloyd Chisholm Award for meritorious service.

Formerly awarded to a top racehorse, the Masterfeeds Award will now be presented to one of Ontario's top trotting broodmares and one pacing broodmare each year, and Dial Nile and J Cs Nathalie shared the inaugural honour.

The dam of two-time SBOA and O'Brien Award winner Text Me, trotting mare Dial Nile has produced the winners of \$1,266,628 from her eight offspring. In addition to \$931,853 winner Text Me, she is also the dam of Balanced Image mare Direct Dial (\$137,370) and gelding Wireless Image (\$130,553). Bob McIntosh and CSX Stables share ownership on the daughter of Super Bowl.

J Cs Nathalie has produced not one, but two millionaire pacers — Dreamfair Vogel and Dreamfair Eternal. The 23-year-old Flight Of Fire daughter also claims Dreamfair Luckivee (\$102,531) and Dreamfair Zoya (\$124,933) among her progeny. John Lamers owns J Cs Nathalie, who earned \$258,921 and paced in 1:55.2 during her own racing career.

CHECK OUT THE NEW WEBSITE

A fresh new layout and regular updates are part of the recently relaunched SBOA website www.standardbredbreeders.com. Breeders are encouraged to submit foal arrivals to Barb Lennox at barb@sboa.info for inclusion on the site, which also features breeding industry news, details about the SBOA stakes and New Owners initiatives, as well as information about the Ontario Resident Mare Program.

EXECUTIVE UNCHANGED FOR 2011

Anna DeMarchi-Meyers, Larry Morrison and Laurie Poole will continue to serve the SBOA membership as President, Vice President and Treasurer for 2011. DeMarchi-Meyers and Morrison, along with Liz Waples and Sanford Zimmerman, were re-elected to three-year terms at the Annual General Meeting in January. Also currently serving on the SBOA Board of Directors are Jim Bullock, Keith Colquhoun, Larry Drysdale, and Poole, whose three-year terms began in 2009, and Ken Grant, David Heffering, Tammy McNiven, and Walter Parkinson, whose terms began in 2010.

WORKING TOGETHER FOR THE FUTURE

Through the coming months, the Board of Directors will continue to serve as the voice of Ontario's breeders, offer the New Owners Mentorship program and SBOA Stakes, and partner with other stakeholders to promote the provincial breeding industry.

Part of the SBOA's mandate is to offer education opportunities, and the keynote speaker at this year's banquet provided the industry with extensive fodder for discussion. Dr. Joan Zielinski, adjunct professor of marketing in the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University, and president of Joan Zielinski and Associates, shared some of the findings and recommendations from a report prepared for the United States Trotting Association in March 2010.

The 2010 report served as a follow up to a detailed study commissioned by the USTA in 1991, and 20 years after her first analysis, Dr. Zielinski found that the industry has not taken any steps to sustain itself over the long term and continues to fail in the areas of strategic understanding and focus.

While she praised Ontario for taking a stand on whipping infractions, Dr. Zielinski emphasized the need for broad-based industry cooperation to ensure harness racing continues to exist through the coming decades. Among nine recommendations made in the 2010 report, "Foster Industry Cooperation" ranks as number one. The other eight recommendations are:

- 2) Hire a Boss
- 3) Organize and Conduct Industry Best Practices Summit
- 4) Establish Legislative Liaison Office
- 5) Conduct Market Research Segmentation Study
- 6) Conduct 20 In-depth Interviews of Current Heavy Bettors
- 7) Stop Whipping Horses
- 8) Develop Strategies
- 9) Support "Harness the Stars"

The complete report can be read from the SBOA website. The link to the report is <http://tinyurl.com/3qsnrdq>

"It's important that as an industry, we come together, put our individual agendas aside and start focusing on the big picture," noted Anna DeMarchi-Meyers, in response to Dr. Zielinski's thought provoking presentation. "We need to become proactive rather than reactive."

"Standardbred racing needs to evolve and change if we are going to effectively compete in today's market where consumers are presented with more choices than ever for their time and money. This means a willingness to take a critical look at our product, to think outside of the box, to try new approaches and to deliver what the consumer is looking for."

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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.