

Vet Lecture Benefits TB Rescues

By Jane Meggitt

LONG BRANCH, N.J. — Dr. Patricia Hogan, a prominent equine surgeon, came as guest of honor to a gathering here to talk about some of the famous racehorses she has treated.

The gathering was geared toward helping horses whose racing careers were over. Held Aug. 18 at the Ocean Place Resort and Spa, Long Branch, it was for the benefit of two horse rescue organizations, the Pa.-based Mid-Atlantic Horse Rescue and the national Rerun organization.

Approximately 70 people, many of them prominent in Thoroughbred racing, were in attendance.

Dr. Hogan currently practices at the New Jersey Equine Clinic, Millstone Township. Among her patients are 2004 Kentucky Derby and Preakness winner Smarty Jones, whose eyesight she saved, and 2005 Preakness and Belmont Stakes winner Afleet Alex. Hogan shared her feelings about performing an operation on Afleet Alex's leg, knowing he was insured for 37 million dollars.

The theme of her lecture was how veterinary medicine has significantly advanced in the last 30 years since, as a 10-year-old girl, she saw Ruffian break down. She discussed current techniques and items such as the Kinsey horse ambulance, new splints and how the ability to e-mail radiographs to Barbaro's surgeon in Florida within hours of his Preakness injury helped plan for a successful surgery. She also discussed the importance of knowing that highly stressed athletes whose adrenaline is pumping during a race need to receive pain medication to make them more stable and relaxed for both surgery and recovery. She pointed out that Barbaro's surgery was scheduled for the following afternoon after his injury, contrasting 30 years ago when surgery was done immediately on Ruffian. She also discussed the advances in pain



Horse News: Sabina Louise Pierce/University of Pennsylvania

BARBARO spends some time on the grass at New Bolton Center, Kennett Square, Pa., with Dr. Dean Richardson. The Kentucky Derby winner benefits from modern veterinary medicine after breaking his leg in the Preakness in May. For an update on his condition, see page 30.

management and anesthesia for modern equine athletes. Finally, an important point was that many horses with substantial injuries can not only be saved, but returned to successful racing careers, a difference from just a few years ago.

"The event was a great networking opportunity as well with owners, trainers, jockeys and horse lovers talking about horses, having fun and knowing they were supporting two horse rescue and adoption programs at the same time. Everyone who heard Dr. Hogan came away not only impressed with her expertise and professionalism but also her concern for horses both during and after their racing careers," said Felice Busto, Rerun's

vice president.

Laurie Condruso Lane heads the Rerun program in New Jersey, and praised Dr. Hogan. "She is an incredible person, a brilliant surgeon and for her to give up her time was just so appreciated," said Lane. Although Lane was "born and raised in racing," the attendance of so many people she sees at the track day in and day out affected her. "I'm always saying 'there are good and bad in everything.' The thing people don't realize is there are a lot of wonderful, caring people in racing," she said. Among those attending were trainers Kelly Breen, Tim Hills, Greg Sacco, Joe Orseno, jockey Joe Bravo and Monmouth Park announcer Larry Colmus, among others. "[It] just proves me right!" said Lane. Currently, there are 11 Rerun horses available for adoption in N.J., and a total of 32 in the program. Lane said that donations of wormers, joint supplements and halters are needed, as well as a copy machine, paper and stamps.

Bev Strauss, executive director of Mid-Atlantic Horse Rescue, said, "I truly enjoyed meeting so many people involved in racing and supportive of rescue. When you are in the trenches rescuing horses, it is heartening to step back and realize how many people do appreciate our work!"

Mid-Atlantic Horse Rescue buys slaughter-bound Thoroughbreds from the New Holland auction in Pa. After a quarantine and evaluation period, they are placed in new homes as pleasure and sport horses. **Strauss said that safety and suitability are of the utmost importance.** "We want it to be the horse you have been looking for, and one that can do what you want. Potential adopters can come see the horses under saddle, ride them, have their trainer see the horses and have them vetted. We will disclose all that we know, but do recommend vet exams," she said. Since the organization started in September 2002, about 200 Thoroughbreds have been saved. Approximately 85% are slaughter rescues, and the rest are donated horses.

Many of these horses are doing well in their second careers. Strauss said that one of the rescues, Reds Ready, just placed 4th at his first preliminary event, and would have been first had his rider not forgotten her track in the stadium jumping phase. Ft Monmouth and Beyond the River are also constantly winning now, she said. Many rescues are leading happy lives as pleasure and trail horses. Strauss said that one adoptee marched in a town's Halloween parade with his proud 10-year-old owner, and another mare hacks out regularly with her 70-something rider. "Because these horses have not been competitive at the track, they are very well suited for other disciplines," she said.

Adoption fees run between \$2000

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ferred, said Strauss. She said Mid-Atlantic Horse Rescue wants adopters to have a solid commitment and by transferring ownership, liability issues are also addressed. Horses have been placed as far away as Wisconsin, Florida and Kentucky, although most go to homes in the Mid-Atlantic area. "Most of our horses go to private individuals but we do also place horses with professionals who put training and mileage in them, and then give them to clients. Then they come back to us for another, and then one more horse that ends up in a good home! We do stand behind our horses, but because we have such a good record of making suitable matches, we have only had a handful not work out," she said.

Strauss said that many of the horses come from the sale in excellent shape, fit and shiny and have been in training, but some have been neglected since the end of their racing careers. "Unfortunately, we try to buy only the sound ones — no bows, knees, ankles, etc. — and have to leave the unsound ones to their fate. It is very, very difficult, but we can't save them all, and it takes much longer to find a suitable home for a "pasture pet". While we are trying to place that horse, several sound horses go to kill instead," she said. Strauss added that they are proud to say that they also buy horses for several other rescues, which has resulted in close to 300 additional lives saved.

According to Strauss, awareness needs to be raised among the racing industry that these horses are being discarded at the end of their racing careers and something needs to be done now. She noted that awareness must also be increased about the great things these off-the-track Thoroughbreds can go on to do, as well as awareness about the many rescue groups out there. For more information about Rerun and Mid-Atlantic Horse Rescue, visit rerun.org and midatlantichorserescue.org. All donations are tax-deductible.