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Message From the Chair



At the beginning of the Bar year, the Executive Committee drew up a set of goals for 2023. Since the Section was revived from its nine-year dormancy in 2020, it has experienced tremendous growth, even winning Section of the Year for 2020-2021 and Section Award of Achievement for 2021-2022. We had set a high bar and building on that momentum for 2022-2023 was the driver behind each individual goal. In no particular order, they are as follows:

1. Host a roundtable discussion amongst the members and moderated by a member
2. Plan and hold one social event
3. Increase membership by 10 new members
4. Develop a social media presence

With four months left in the Bar year, I wanted to take a moment to reflect on our goals and what we have done to achieve them, as well as the work we have to do in the remaining days of 2023.

As detailed in a separate article, we sent out a survey regarding the roundtable discussion and were encouraged by member responses. We have several people interested in moderating. The purpose of the roundtable format versus another CLE is to encourage active member participation, and to offer our members the chance to share their own wealth of knowledge with each other in addition to receiving instruction from our excellent CLE experts. Please be on the lookout for additional details for the roundtable.

Our social event is in the works, and we are reaching out to The Chastain to be our venue. They hosted us last year and did an excellent job. It is difficult to beat the equestrian ambiance of an old barn for a group of equine attorneys!

At the time we set the goal to increase membership, which was on July 27, 2022, we had 58 members. Our membership currently sits at 69, so we already achieved this goal. In light of that accomplishment, we discussed moving the goalposts to 70 members, and while it may be daunting to obtain even one more member with just a few months left, we have never shied away from a challenge.

We are very excited that we created our first social media post with the help of the State Bar of Georgia and we have our next post teed up for distribution this week. This post will cover a recent CLE by Assistant United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Tennessee on the first federal prosecutions of horse soring under the Horse Protection Act of 1970. Please feel free to comment, like, share and repost when you see it!

We have an incredible event coming up: a live in-person CLE by renowned equine surgeon Dr. John Peroni followed by a lunch reception AND private tour of the large animal hospital at the University of Georgia Veterinary Teaching Hospital. I have been to the clinic myself and can attest that it is an incredible, state of the art facility. Dr. Peroni is a leader in his field and this opportunity should not be missed by any practitioner of equine law or representative of a horse owning client. The lunch reception is an excellent opportunity for our members to network. Please keep reading for a tentative schedule and stay tuned for the email blast containing the link to register.

With the in-person CLE and tour at UGA, roundtable and social event, we have a packed couple of months ahead. I have always liked the phrase “begin as you mean to go on.” I think we started the year by creating specific targets and have successfully worked toward delivering on each one. If you have thoughts or suggestions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at lvance@mmmlaw.com. I am humbled and honored to serve as Chair of this Section and welcome member input.

I would also like to take a moment to thank Mary Jo Sullivan, Lane Sosebee and Challie Smith, who have provided the Section with tremendous support and

guidance this Bar year. We could not do what we do for our members without them.

I personally look forward to the next few months and to hopefully meeting many of you in person!

Social License and Equine Sport

*By: Lisa Blackstone***



When most of us think of a license to operate, we think of a business license of some sort, something you apply for and receive as a prerequisite to operate. Unlike a business license, a “social license” is an unwritten contract between a community and the public, granting that community the ability to continue its conduct as perceived by the public. If the community’s conduct is deemed unacceptable and they do not self-regulate, then they lose their social license, and either are socially banned or another regulatory body intervenes. Because of social media and the prolific spread of photos and videos worldwide, now more than ever, protecting your community’s social license is paramount.

We have witnessed this at work in many sports. For example, consider the evolution of football helmets. In the early 1900s they were optional and made of leather. Now they are required and constructed with ever-improving technology. This, all because of increased knowledge and social demands to protect our athletes. The same can be said of helmet use in skiing and bicycling. Consider the demise of greyhound dog racing. A popular sport at one time, now banned in almost all states due to the public’s concern with animal

welfare. The public's social license standards change over time and each community must pay attention and adapt accordingly.

At the recent USEF Annual Meeting the importance of the equine community maintaining its social license was the topic of a two-day workshop that generated very fruitful discussions. Seats were assigned at each discussion table so people from the many breeds and disciplines, which vary substantially, could share their unique concerns. Our community recognizes the vast differences between disciplines such as racing, reining and dressage, but the general public does not. The public perceives us as one big community that "rides horses". Therefore, we must work together, no matter our breed or discipline, to prevent any negative public perception of equine sport. Each person shared concerns within their field that need addressing and a consensus was had that we must be diligent going forward to be aware of the public's perception of our practices and behaviors.

We have seen what happens when we fail to act. Within our equine community, the soring of walking horses became a public outcry. Our community failed to self-regulate and the federal government passed legislation to protect the horses. The same is happening now with racing. There is a public uproar at the number of horses who have died on racetracks in recent years. Now the federal government has stepped in to regulate across all states the variables that pose dangers to racehorses.

The equine community as a whole must be able to justify to the public that all our training techniques for our various breeds and disciplines will stand up to strict scrutiny. Equine experts may recognize that a certain act may look suspect, but is not actually harmful to the horse. For example, if a knowledgeable horse person is asked to identify their biggest concern about horse racing, they'd probably say the use of drugs or poor footing. The public, however, says jockeys striking the horse with the bat is the biggest concern. This doesn't even rank in the top ten to experts. But, we must be sensitive and responsive to the public's perception. In other words, if it simply looks bad to members of the public, it is detrimental to the industry's social license to

operate. We must always illustrate that animal welfare truly is our priority. As USEF's Chief of Sport David O'Connor concluded "Can we celebrate to any audience the joy, the fulfillment, the emotional connection that we have with horses while we're playing games with them as a partner? That's the goal."

***Lisa Blackstone graduated with an undergraduate degree in Philosophy and a law degree from the University of Georgia. She practices law in the Atlanta, Georgia area and is a founding member of the Equine Section of the State Bar of Georgia. Lisa began riding horses as a child and continues to compete as an amateur on a local, regional and national level. She also holds her Arabian judges license and regularly judges some of the industry's largest shows. She is an active participant in the political process governing equine sport. Currently Lisa serves as the Vice President of the Arabian Horse Association. She is also Chair of the USEF Ethics Committee, co-Chair of the USEF Hearing Committee and member of the USEF Licensed Officials Committee.*

Legislative Update

SB 57

By: Elena Sanchez

Sports betting bills have been introduced in each of the last three years in Georgia and another, SB 57, has been proposed during the 2023 legislative session. Before any bill could pass, such proposition would likely require a constitutional amendment and subsequent vote by citizens, and none have made it that far yet. If legalized, Georgia sports betting could be run by the state lottery as it is one of the few states without commercial or tribal casinos.

SB57 states "A BILL to amend Title 50 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to state government, so as to authorize and provide for the regulation and taxation of sports betting in this state; to provide for additional powers and duties of the Georgia Lottery Corporation; to change certain provisions relating to the shortfall reserves maintained within the Lottery for Education Account; to provide for the Georgia Lottery Corporation to engage in certain activities related to sports betting; to provide for a short title; to provide for legislative findings; to provide for definitions; to create a public corporation to regulate sports betting; to provide for such corporation to be governed by the Georgia Sports

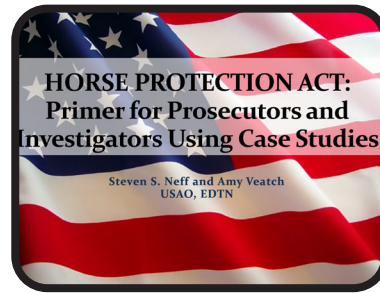
Betting Commission; to provide for the qualifications, appointment, removal, and powers of the commission and its members; to provide for the appointment of a chief executive officer; to provide for the procedures, limitations, requirements, and qualifications of the licensing of any person offering, operating, or managing sport betting in this state; to provide for criminal background checks; to regulate wagers and provide requirements for bettors; to provide for bettors to restrict themselves from placing certain wagers; to provide certain resources for individuals with problem gambling or a betting or gambling disorder; to provide for the collection and disposition of fees; to prohibit certain conduct by commissioners, employees of the commission, licensees, and other persons; to provide for certain penalties; to provide for construction; to amend Title 48 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to revenue and taxation, so as to exempt wagers placed as part of sports betting; to provide for related matters; to provide for an effective date and applicability; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.”

Those events eligible appear to be as follows:

1. Professional sporting or professional athletic event, including motor sports sanctioned by a national or international organization or association;
2. Collegiate sporting event;
3. Olympic sporting or athletic event;
4. Sporting or athletic event sanctioned by a national or international organization or association;
5. Sporting or athletic event conducted or organized by a sporting events operator;
6. Esports event;
7. Live, in-person equestrian track racing events when conducted by a Type 2 eligible retail entity that meets the qualifications of subparagraph (f)(3)(A) of Code Section.
8. Other event authorized by the commission

For a full read, please see the link below:
<https://www.legis.ga.gov/api/legislation/document/20232024/213139>

Federal Prosecution of Horse Soring



Steven Neff, Assistant United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Tennessee and United States Army Veteran, with the assistance of his paralegal Amy Veatch, a fellow horse

owner and enthusiast, presented a fantastic CLE to our section members on February 15th covering the first federal prosecutions of horse soring under the Horse Protection Act since its passage in 1970.

Mr. Neff discussed common soring tactics, played excerpts from interviews given by the defendants, displayed images of horses suffering from various soring practices, outlined the process of the prosecution and its outcome and provided an update on the impact this particular prosecution had on the Tennessee Walking Horse industry. It was perhaps the toughest CLE material we have seen (and I am including the CLE on horse slaughter we had in September!) and the most emotionally challenging.

It was also incredibly informative. Personally, I was surprised to learn that horse soring is not a federal crime under the Horse Protection Act. That begs the question: what is? The answer: knowingly transporting a sored horse, selling a sored horse, and/or entering a sored horse into a competition, all of which are misdemeanors. This is an interesting distinction which limits the Department of Justice from intervening until something has been done to the horse other than soring him or her.

We are thrilled we were able to offer our members trial credit for this CLE and hope that you were able to join. If you missed the CLE but would like to benefit from Mr. Neff’s knowledge and experience, a link to the recorded CLE can be found here: <https://youtu.be/Wk40aMnI3HE>

Upcoming In-Person CLE Event featuring Dr. John Peroni!



The Executive Committee is thrilled to confirm that Dr. John Peroni, renowned equine surgeon at the University of Georgia Veterinary Teaching Hospital and Co-Chair of the Regenerative Bioscience Center at the University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine, will be giving a live, in-person CLE at the University of Georgia in Athens this spring! Although we are in the process of finalizing the event schedule, it will likely be as follows:

10:00 - 10:30 a.m.	Dr. Peroni Presents on Topic #1
10:30 - 10:45 a.m.	Coffee & Pastry Break
10:45 - 11:15 a.m.	Dr. Peroni Presents on Topic #2
11:15 - 12:15 p.m.	Private Tour of the Large Animal Hospital
12:15 - 1:15 p.m.	Catered Lunch Reception

In order to determine how many of our members would be interested in this type of in-person gathering, we circulated a brief, three-question survey and received 14 responses. Of the 14 responses, 12 people indicated they would travel to Athens for such an event and 2 people said they would not. We asked respondents to rank four Saturday morning dates in order of preference: March 11, April 8, April 15, and May 13. Currently, April 8th leads with 6 people putting it as their preferred date and May 13th follows as a close second.

Topics being considered for presentation are: (1) common findings and controversies associated with equine pre-purchase exams, (2) kissing spine syndrome – diagnosis du jour?, (3) the use of biological therapies (stem cells and platelet-rich plasma) for the treatment of ailments and (4) colic surgery and potential outcomes. As attorneys that practice equine law and/or represent horse owning clients, each of these topics has a lot to offer. If you are planning on attending and have a topic suggestion or preference, please feel free to email me at lvance@mmmlaw.com.

The Executive Committee will continue to work with UGA and Dr. Peroni to solidify the details and will follow up with an email blast containing a link to register - so be on the lookout! **Please make sure to register via the link you'll receive in an upcoming email blast so we can ensure sufficient catering.**

Annual Social Event

We are in the process of planning our annual social event! The Executive Committee discussed potential venues at recent meetings and evaluated several possible options. Ultimately, we decided that The Chastain is the best of all worlds: it is located in an old barn (wonderful equestrian atmosphere!), is conveniently located, has an incredible food and wine selection, boasts indoor and outdoor space and best of all, they hosted us last year. We will be reaching out to The Chastain shortly to coordinate and will keep you posted with a date and time. If for some reason The Chastain is not a viable option, we will find an equally suitable and fun location for our social gathering. Fun fact: our very own Communications Chair Philip Burrus is a certified sommelier and will be in charge of the wine menu! We look forward to seeing you soon.

Bylaws

Our revised set of bylaws approved by the Office of the General Counsel of the State Bar are ready to be voted on by the section members! Since early numbers indicate that we will have enough members present to qualify as a quorum at the CLE event at UGA, we plan to hold the vote a few minutes before Dr. Peroni begins to speak at 10:00 a.m. A copy of the bylaws will be distributed prior to the event so that everyone has a chance to review before voting commences. If you are attending the event and would like to vote on the bylaws, please plan to be there about five minutes early.

Roundtable Discussion

In December, we circulated a two-question survey regarding a members-led roundtable discussion. We received 32 responses, most of which preferred a virtual format and 2 of whom volunteered to be moderators. We received some very interesting topic suggestions and are working to put together an exciting roundtable discussion that will be led and moderated by YOU! Stay tuned.

Open Positions

Volunteers Needed! We need assistance! The Executive Committee has an opening for a Social Chair and will soon have an opening for a Treasurer upon adoption of the new bylaws. The Social Chair would help to plan social events, be they virtual or (soon!) in person. If you can help, please let us know! Each position is a great way to help with our efforts to relaunch the Section. No previous experience is required, and ample assistance is available. So please help!



The State Bar has three offices to serve you.

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