

Letter from the Publisher, continued...

on our great horse rescues here in Maryland. 2021 will introduce new challenges for the METS program as the initial grant funding will run out and we will need the program to be self-sustaining.

We have a great staff and steering committee that have shaped METS through the last three years and have set the program up on a strong foundation. To focus on the sustainability of the program we have recently hired a full-time development officer, Jessica Avila-Franco. Jessica will be responsible for developing programs that will allow us to continue

to fund this important program and allow us to continue to help transition horses into new homes and careers.

Once again, I want to wish you a happy new year and ask that you think about how you might be able to help us build a stronger Maryland Horse Council and therefore strengthen the Maryland horse community. Please feel free to reach out to me at nagate@mdhorsecouncil.org if you have any suggestions or ideas on how we can grow MHC or address any specific issues within our community.

Dear Advertisers and MHC Members:

Thank you so much for maintaining your advertising presence in *The Equiery* and for renewing your memberships with the Maryland Horse Council. We truly appreciate it!

In January of 2020 we had no idea what was waiting for us. By March, the horse industry, like most every industry in Maryland, came almost to a standstill. Every day since, we are reminded of the goodness and the resilience of the members of the horse community.

The Maryland Horse Council and *The Equiery* know how hard it was for barns to turn away their students and boarders; how hard it was for tack stores to keep their doors open and their employees safe; how hard it was for vets to treat patients and maintain a six-foot distance from the owners. As the voice of the equestrian community, we worked with elected officials and government agencies to reopen the barns, to find a way for the tack stores to stay open, and to help all the support businesses work within the new format.

We became accustomed to Zoom instead of meeting in person. The Maryland Horse Council hosted seminars to help business owners avoid financial difficulties. We kept you informed through our website, social media and, primarily, through *The Equiery*, in print and online.

This year has proven again that the Maryland Horse Council and *The Equiery* are integral parts of the horse industry, protecting your interests and keeping you informed. But we can do nothing without the support of you, our members and our advertisers.

The Equiery, through our print and digital formats, offers advertisers a built-in, targeted, favorable audience. Independent studies show that consumers perceive advertising in print magazines twice as positively as they do advertising on social media. Print is just considered more credible than social media, as are print's digital platforms. With people spending so much time on computer screens for work and meetings, they want to step away from the screens - and thus print is rebounding in popularity. *The Equiery* is delivered straight into the hands of thousands of Maryland horse people each month.

Like many of you, *The Equiery* has not had an easy year. But we know that many businesses are still struggling, and we value and want to support our partners in this wonderful community. So the Maryland Horse Council has decided to maintain *The Equiery* rates unchanged for 2021. Meanwhile, we have added new features to *The Equiery*, and we will be freshening our look. We will also be offering new services for our members and advertisers. Stay tuned! And don't forget that members of MHC are eligible for special discounts on your *Equiery* advertising!

We look forward to working with you in 2021. If you have any comments or suggestions on how we can improve our service to you, please let us know!

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