

# Chasing

NATIONAL STEEPLECHASE ASSOCIATION | 400 FAIR HILL DRIVE, ELKTON, MD 21921

## After a year of innovation, Promotion & Growth Becomes NSA Committee

After a year of innovation and accomplishment, the National Steeplechase Association's Promotion & Growth Task Force transitioned to a standing committee of the NSA and the National Steeplechase Foundation in August.

In early summer of 2014, NSA President Guy J. Torsilieri asked Bill Price to serve as the chair of the new task force, and Price focused his knowledge, experience, and enthusiasm on the task of attracting new owners to jump racing and retaining current owners. A horse owner with hands-on experience training racehorses, Price serves as co-chair of the Queen's Cup Steeplechase with his wife, Carrington.

At the August 27 meeting of the NSA Board of Directors and NSF, Price handed the gavel to Dr. Al Griffin, the Virginia Gold Cup's race director and an NSA director. At the meeting, Price reviewed a year filled with activity and innovation.

Price wanted the Promotion & Growth to make an immediate impact, and he worked with Task Force member Joe Clancy to create the "First Second Career" advertising campaign featuring Cot Campbell, Ken Ramsey, and Dr. David Richardson. The ads ran during the 2014 Saratoga Race Course meet, and the campaign continued in the *Saratoga Special* in 2015.

At this year's Saratoga meet, the Promotion & Growth group hosted the Go Jump Racing Saratoga Hospitality Tent at the Trackside Pavilion with the NSA and NSF. Intended to introduce flat owners to jump racing, the event is likely to be renewed in 2016.

Other innovations are likely to have lasting influences on the sport. At the suggestion of the Promotion & Growth Task Force, the NSA instituted the Ratings Handicap as a tool to provide additional racing opportunities for hurdle horses after



Promotion & Growth Chair Bill Price congratulated trainer Janet Elliot and jockey Danny Mullins after Hiwasee Gem won the Ratings Handicap at the Queen's Cup in April.

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their initial victories. The first Ratings Handicaps proved highly competitive and attracted sizable fields. Also at the Task Force's suggestion, minimum hurdle purses were increased to \$15,000 for the 2015 season.

In April, the Promotion & Growth Task Force inaugurated the Owner Symposium and Steeplechase Auction to provide current and potential owners with insights from Campbell, owner Michael Wharton, and Racing Hall of Fame trainer Jonathan Sheppard. The event was held at Shawan Downs and sponsored by Valley Motors, the NSA, and the NSF.

Price has agreed to serve as a member of the Promotion & Growth Committee.

### Want more information on jump racing?

For more information on jump racing and owning steeplechase horses, visit [www.gojumpracing.org](http://www.gojumpracing.org), the website maintained by the National Steeplechase Association's Promotion and Growth Committee.

Visit [www.nationalsteeplechase.com](http://www.nationalsteeplechase.com) for the latest headlines, race entries, and statistics. Information on the National Steeplechase Foundation is at [www.nationalsteeplechasefoundation.org](http://www.nationalsteeplechasefoundation.org).



## Go Jump Racing!





## Far Hills Races Run in Memory of Betty Merck

The 95th running of the Far Hills Race Meeting on Oct. 17 was dedicated to the memory of Elizabeth Mead "Betty" Merck, a longtime director of the race who died in April at the age of 95.

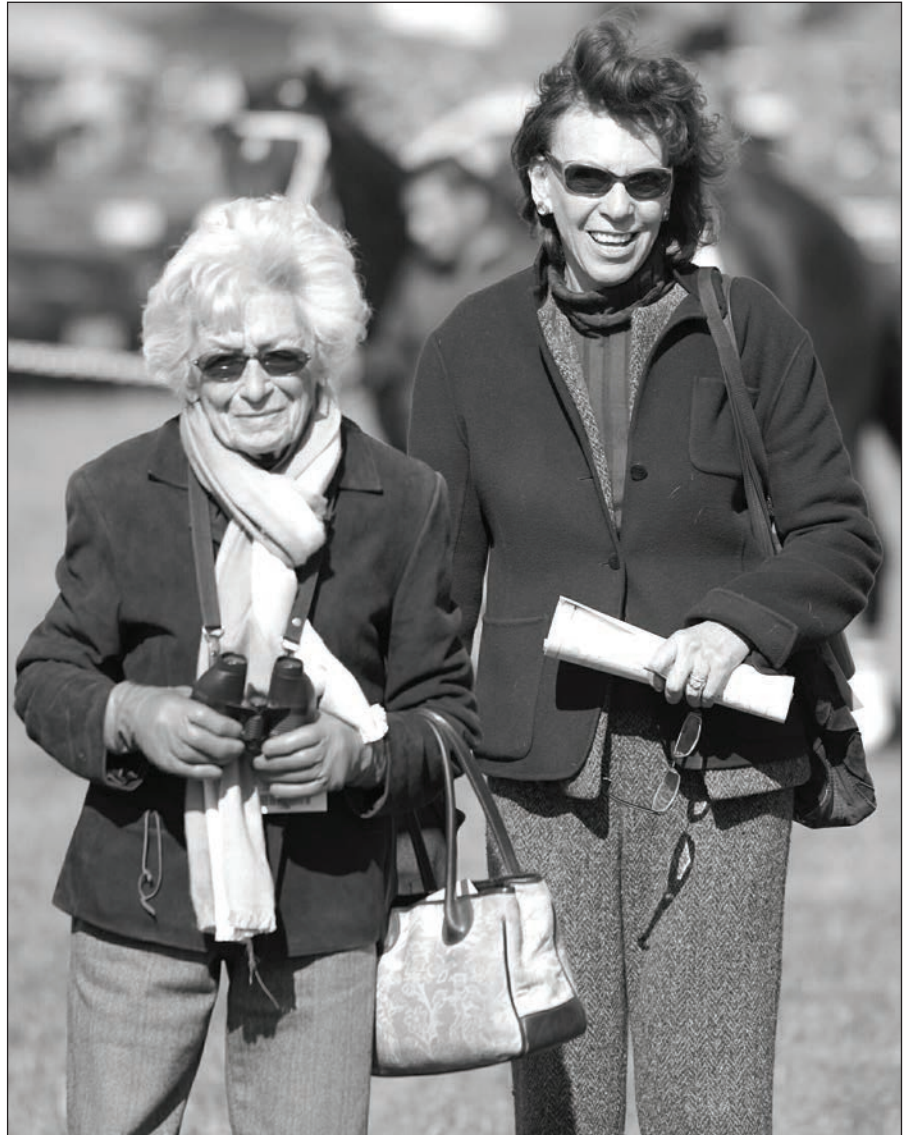
Betty, who lived on her beloved Bedminster, N.J., farm, The Fields, was a prominent steeplechase owner whose horses were some of the race meeting's most prestigious entrants.

A rider since the age of 5, Betty virtually grew up on a horse. Her love affair continued well into her twilight years as she rode her beloved horse Smokey until she was 94.

The late Tom Voss, who trained her horses, once complimented Betty Merck as the perfect owner who not only cared for the horses she owned, but never failed to be on hand when they ran, including at the 2014 Far Hills Race Meeting, where she was glued to a television monitor throughout the day.

The Fields was the National Steeplechase Association's leading owner in 2009, when it won Far Hills' two leading races, the Grand National with Your Sum Man and the Foxbrook Champion Hurdle with Left Unsaid, who earned the year's novice title. Among all-time NSA owners, The Fields ranks 18th.

In addition to her work with horses, Betty was a noted conservationist who served on the boards of numerous organizations, including the Bedminster Open Space Farmland Advisory Committee, the Lamington Conservancy, and on the boards of the New Jersey Nature Conservancy, Raritan Headwaters Association, the Lamington.



Mimi Voss accompanied Betty Merck at the 2010 Far Hills Races.

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## National Steeplechase Association

400 Fair Hill Drive  
Elkton, Md. 21921

Phone: (410) 392-0700  
Fax: (410) 392-0706

Website: [www.nationalsteeplechase.com](http://www.nationalsteeplechase.com)  
E-mail: [info@nationalsteeplechase.com](mailto:info@nationalsteeplechase.com)

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