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JANUARY 23, 2005 | SUNDAY | METRO FINAL EDITION 1

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WRONG SIDE
OF THE TRACK

AT THEIR OWN RISK



PHOTOS BY DAVID STEPHENSON | STAFF

Clyde Bramble checked one of his stepbrother's horses in Tampa, Fla. Bramble's arm was amputated after a horse threw him during training.

Horse industry fails to insure many unsung workers

If Kentucky thoroughbred racetracks had signs like those found in factories — the ones that say “___ days without a lost-time accident” — the number would not get higher than seven, on average.

But unlike factory workers, many of the blue-collar folks who get high-strung thoroughbreds ready to run have no real economic protection in case of work-related injuries.

Only about a third of the trainers licensed in Kentucky report carrying workers' compensation insurance for the grooms, hot walkers and exercise riders who work for them. Uncovered workers who are injured have nowhere to turn but to charity, or to the government.

In a very real sense, these backside workers are the biggest gamblers at the track.



Bramble struggled to repair a latch on his horse trailer. “This is where you need another arm,” he said. He used to be able to care for horses by himself, but no longer.

By Janet Patton
HERALD-LEADER STAFF WRITER

Clyde Bramble took a horse out for a friend, just a \$10 training ride around Turfway Park's track on a cold, gray March morning.

A week later, he woke up in the hospital without his right arm. And without any way to pay his mounting medical bills.

Bramble had become one of the many overlooked casualties of Kentucky's signature industry.

Behind the glamour, horse racing rides on the backs of thousands of grooms, hot walkers and exercise riders who work dangerous jobs in a world far removed from the millionaires and celebrities in the grandstands at Churchill Downs and Keeneland.

Tracks provide \$100,000 in accident coverage for jockeys, but often no one offers insurance for those who do the dirty work that keeps the sport of kings on track.

These workers, who are paid by trainers to care for valuable thoroughbreds, are some of the least-protected in the state and some of the poorest in the billion-dollar horse business.

Kentucky law requires that anybody with even one employee must provide workers' compensation coverage. But a loophole allows many trainers to avoid paying for workers' comp — sometimes without stable hands ever knowing.

Continued on A12

PART 1 OF 4

Blizzard blankets Midwest, East

NORTHEAST EXPECTS 20 INCHES; FLIGHTS CANCELED

By Larry McShane
ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — Hundreds of airline flights were canceled yesterday and fleets of road plows were warmed up as a paralyzing snowstorm barreled out of the Midwest and spread across the Northeast with a potential for up to 20 inches of snow driven by 50 mph wind.

Storm warnings were posted from Wisconsin to New England, where the National Weather Service posted blizzard warnings in effect through today. By afternoon, snow was falling across a region stretching from Wisconsin and Illinois to Virginia and the New England states.

One man died after falling through ice on a pond in Ohio, where two others died of apparent heart attacks while removing snow, authorities said.

Temperatures in Maine fell to 36 below zero at Masardis, and Bangor dropped to a record low of 29 below. Meteorologists predicted wind up to 50 mph would push wind-chill readings to 8 below zero in New York and New Jersey.

In New York, residents were advised to keep their cars off the road for the weekend as snow removers tried to clear 6,300 miles of roadway.

See STORM, A15

Storm hits state

Eastern Kentucky gets up to six inches of snow; others mostly get cold. Page C1

General calls for faster Iraqi training

By Eric Schmitt

NEW YORK TIMES NEWS SERVICE

WASHINGTON — The retired four-star Army general who was sent to Iraq two weeks ago to assess operations there has concluded that the U.S. military must speed up and strengthen the training of Iraqi security forces, by assigning thousands of additional Army advisers to work directly with Iraqi units, said senior defense and military officials here and in Iraq.

The officer, Gen. Gary E. Luck, largely endorses a plan by U.S. commanders in Iraq to shift the military's main mission from fighting the insurgency to training Iraq's military and police forces to take over more security duties and become increasingly self-reliant, eventually allowing U.S. forces to withdraw, the officials said.

Americans are training Iraqi police officers and army and national guard troops to replace them in securing the country, but the results overall have been troubling, with growing desertion rates in the most violent provinces, gaps in leadership, and poor battlefield

See IRAQ, A14

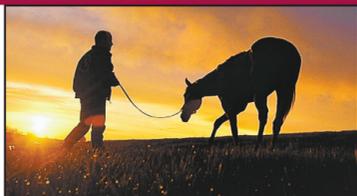
Two soldiers convicted

Horsing around, they shot their Iraqi translator friend in the head. Page A9

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A FOUR-PAGE SPECIAL REPORT | A10-A13

A PAINFUL PRECEDENT | A10

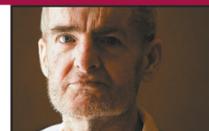


Horrific injury's aftermath shows how system can fail backside workers.
Wednesday

View photo gallery online.
www.kentucky.com

Coverage helps rider live with paralysis.
Friday

How can Kentucky fix its system?
Next Sunday



Ex-jockey recalls court ruling that limits backside workers' coverage.

>KNIGHT RIDDER<

INFORMATION FOR LIFE



SNOW ENDING
Chance of precipitation
less than 20%. Weather, B16

19 | 10
HIGH | LOW

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