

***TIMES-PICAYUNE* REPORT NOMINATED FOR STANLEY BERGSTEIN AWARD PIECE ON RASH OF DRUG POSITIVES IS THIRD AUTOMATIC NOMINATION TEAM VALOR ENCOURAGES SUBMISSIONS FOR ITS \$25,000 WRITING HONOR**

Team Valor International has issued an automatic nomination to *New Orleans Times Picayune* writer Bob Fortus for the inaugural Stanley Bergstein Writing Award, recognizing his June 14 story on new testing methods that detected the use of a powerful and illegal drug in recent races in Louisiana.



Utilizing a new test, the Louisiana Racing Commission was able to detect 10 positives for use of Dermorphin, a pain killer described in Fortus' story as far more powerful than morphine. The drug is "an amino acid found naturally in certain species of frogs but likely is being synthetically produced for improper use in horses," according to Louisiana State University's Steven Barker, a chemist who is head of the state testing laboratory. The full story is [here](#).

Barker told Fortus that use of the drug had been suspected in racing in Louisiana and other states, but a test for it only recently became available.

Team Valor CEO Barry Irwin launched the Stanley Bergstein Writing Award last fall to honor the late Bergstein and encourage his style of substantive writing about important issues in horse racing.

Stories may be submitted for consideration to Jeff Lowe at jeff@teamvalor.com by November 1. Earlier this year, Team Valor issued automatic nominations to Ray Paulick for a January 16 story from the *Paulick Report* that exposed a Pennsylvania scam involving retired racehorses and to a team of *New York Times* writers who wrote about high injury rates and lax drug testing in New Mexico.

Esteemed writers Bill Christine, Frank Deford, Richard Eng and Bill Nack will be judges for the inaugural award, carrying a prize of \$25,000 from Team Valor.