

Sunday, April 26, 2020

50-year love affair

How owner David McDuffee came to love the sport that loves him back.

by Murray Brown

TALES FROM THE CURMUDGEON



with **MURRAY BROWN**

In my many years in harness racing, there have been numerous wonderful, generous and wise people who I have been privileged to know, but none more so than David McDuffee and his wonderful wife, Mary Ellen.

For the last eight winters here in South Florida, I've seen Dave McDuffee several times a week at Sunshine Meadows. If a McDuffee-owned horse is scheduled to train, then chances are Dave will be out to watch it with his trusty stopwatch in hand.

I've never heard him say it, but similar to me, I suspect, that he might get as much and sometimes even more pleasure in seeing them train leading up to them racing, than actually seeing them race.

My dear friend Frank "The Elder" Antonacci said to me earlier this season, "What a great guy Dave McDuffee is. I really regret not getting to know him better than I have until this year."

McDuffee has been deeply involved in harness racing for over a half century.

He was first introduced to the sport by his father Duane who Dave says was even a bigger fan than he is. Dave's direct participation through the years was limited to just

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Dave Landry

Owner David McDuffee (left) and trainer Brett Pelling at the Lexington Selected Yearling Sale in 2018.

occasionally jogging his dad's horses.

His father did it all and took great pleasure in the down and dirty parts of doing things.

His participation was mostly at the fair or minor league level, but it was every bit as important to him as prepping one for the Hambletonian.

Dave has owned horses for well over half a century. However, the turning point in his harness Racing career came about through his friendship and partnership with Tom Walsh – specifically in the ownership of Magical Mike and that horse's brother Miles McCool. His greatest thrill to this day was in Magical Mike's victory in the 1994 Little Brown Jug. As though that wasn't enough, the same ownership tandem repeated two years later with Armbro Operative.

Last Monday, while observing social distancing on the telephone, we had a near two-hour conversation and question and answer session.

What do you do that allowed you the luxury of buying six-figure standardbred yearlings?

"I was in the insurance business for over 40 years. After leaving the Army, I thought of getting into and actually did dabble in real estate. Then the Army recalled me and sent me to Germany where I spent most of the time playing third base and sometimes catcher for the United States Army baseball team there. I was an average player on a team that had some real talent. Several of my teammates ended up in the major leagues. After exiting the service for the second

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time, I decided that real estate was too slow for me.

"So I presented myself at Employers Insurance Company in Boston and told them I wanted to learn all about the insurance business. I worked there for 19 years and then went out on my own. Several years ago an insurance giant by the name of Brown & Brown decided they wanted to establish a presence in the northeast. They came to me with an offer that I couldn't possibly turn down. So, I sold out.

"Since then, my major preoccupations have been in order of importance: 1. Enjoying and getting our six grandchildren though university. We are half way there. 2. Overseeing the many horses I'm involved with. 3. Spending winters in South Florida and summers in New Hampshire boating and following our horses."

What do you like best about the horse business?

"The horses themselves, specifically the standardbred. It is one of God's great wonders. In general terms, they are smart, resilient and want to do what they were put on this earth to do. I've had friends who have slipped to the "Dark Side", going to the thoroughbreds. I've been asked several times to wet my toe there. So far, I've resisted. I'm an action type of guy. I much prefer to see my horses race 20 times a year rather than maybe once every two months. Our breed is so much more hands on."

What do you like least about our sport?

"The amount of negativity that pervades it, unfortunately some of it justified. Perhaps these recent indictments will be our wake up call. The vast majority of owners and trainers are honest, hard-working folk. Unfortunately, many have left us because they felt that they were playing against a stacked deck with the bad guys winning. All most people want is a fair chance to play on an even playing surface."

Which person in your time in the sport has had the greatest influence on you?

"My father for several reasons. His passion for the horses was even greater than mine, although he did not play at the level I do and would like to continue doing. He was a perfectionist and one of the most detailed minded people I've ever known. There were times we'd go to the fairgrounds early in the morning and he'd be working with balancing a horse until it turned dark. I'm not quite that way, but I like to think I've inherited some of that drive from him."

Let's talk about some of your horses.

Magical Mike - "He was the first horse that I've owned that was a Classics winner. I suppose if push came to shove, I'd say he still might be my favorite. They say there is nothing like your first time. He was my first top horse. Of course,

being partners with Tom Walsh, one of the finest people I've known, added to the pleasure."

Armbro Operative - "A very nice horse. He wasn't a champion. But he was a good honest racehorse who was there at the right time on the right day. There is nothing like winning the Little Brown Jug — well, maybe the Hambletonian, but the Jug is a race like no other."

Pizza Dolce - "My first great trotter. She wasn't a kid's horse. But when she was good she was very, very good."

Spider Blue Chip - "Probably the best horse I had with Chuck Sylvester. He had it all, speed, gait, gameness. In retrospect I don't believe that he ever got the credit he deserved."

Bee A Magician - "She was a dream horse. She had everything. How many horses have gone through a season undefeated? How many times do you have a Horse of the year?"

Papi Rob Hanover - "I'll leave him for later."

How about your trainers?

Bill Haughton - "Unfortunately my time with him was short. Here's my favorite Billy Haughton story. Bill was looking for a ride to the airport. I quickly volunteered. I didn't know him that well and figured here was my chance to pick the brain of the greatest horseman ever. No sooner had I turned the

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UPDATE



Dave Landry

McDuffee (right) with trainer Nifty Norman (left) and Mel Hartman (center) at the 2019 Lexington Selected Yearling Sale.

car's engine over than the world's greatest horseman was fast asleep. So he remained until we got to the airport."

Chuck Sylvester - "It seems like I've had horses with Chuck forever. He's a great horseman and an even better person. If you can't find being with Chuck Sylvester enjoyable, then you don't belong in this business. We've been partners on both owning horses and with Tom Walsh in establishing Magical Acres training center in New Jersey."

Brett Pelling and Nifty Norman - "Two great horsemen and wise men who were often way ahead of the competition. They have the ability, often not found in this business, to think out of the box. People asked me when Brett left to go back to Australia was I upset? Maybe because of the loss of camaraderie, but not because of losing anything in terms of horsemanship. He and Nifty (Norman) were a team. There was very little difference in separating them. When Brett came back I left the trotters with Nifty and gave the pacers to Brett."

"As great an experience as I've had with these two guys training my horses, it has been even better having them as

my friends. I've been to Dubai with both of them; traveled to Australia to visit Brett; been to France for the Prix d'Amerique with Nifty and spent countless hours with them in person and on the telephone."

Peter Wrenn - "The first trainer/driver that I've had since Billy Haughton. He races the midwest division of the horses I have in training and races Ohio and Indiana breds. An added bonus with Peter is that he trains at Sunshine Meadows and I can come to see my horses in action all winter."

What was your biggest disappointment in all your years in the sport?

"Most people would point to the disqualification of Papi Rob Hanover in last year's Breeders Crown and they'd be mostly right. It was terribly devastating, not only because I felt I had the best colt that night, but also because I had chartered a plane and brought some dear friends to the race with me. We all were on our way to the winner's circle when that light started flashing. I felt almost as bad for my friends as I did for myself when they took him down."

"But before Papi Rob, there was another incident.

"We had Pizza Dolce in an elimination of the Del Miller Memorial at The Meadowlands. In my opinion she was by far the best. She won fairly easily, but then that light started flashing. They took her down and of course she couldn't participate in the final. At least with Papi Rob, we still got to keep second money. In the Miller Memorial, she didn't even get a chance to race."

What was the dumbest thing you've ever done in the business?

"I was selling what I thought was a pretty nice yearling. It ended up bringing about five per cent of what I thought it should bring. I realized right then that it's next to impossible to both sell and buy yearlings in this business. If you are a buyer, then your credibility suffers drastically if you also try to be a seller.

"Anyway, I was feeling down, not so much because of the money, but probably more because my pride had been affected. In the midst of this remorse, along comes Ernie Martinez. He sits down and asks me if I would consider selling Pizza Dolce. I immediately said no. He persisted and asked if I would take half a million dollars for her.

"I thought a moment and considering the glum mood I was in, I reluctantly said yes. Ernie said, "You've got a deal. I bring you a check tomorrow." I immediately said to myself, 'What have I done?' She was my favorite horse. More importantly, she was Mary Ellen's favorite horse. I awoke the next morning hoping that Ernie wouldn't bring the check. Then I could easily back out of the deal. As fate would have it, he showed up check in hand.

"The worst was yet to come, when I told Mary Ellen what I had done. Needless to say, she was not happy.

"The kicker is that I've spent well over a million dollars since bidding on and buying all of her foals."

What are you most looking forward to?

"A horse by the name of Papi Rob Hanover and his 3-year-old season. When Papi Rob was a yearling I went to Harrisburg with the intention of buying a Captaintreacherous colt who subsequently had his name changed to Captain Nemo. I was the underbidder on him at the then staggering price of \$400,000. I was disappointed in not getting him and encountered Hanover's Dr. J outside the sales arena. I gave her my tale of woe and asked if there was another pacing colt that she felt strongly about. She said that she liked Papi Rob Hanover every bit as much as she liked the Captaintreacherous colt and that he wouldn't bring near as much as he had brought. I knew that Brett had also liked the colt. I asked her what she thought he would bring. She said

between \$125-\$150K. She was right on the money and I bought him.

"From Day 1 Brett was very impressed with him. He kept telling me that he could become something special. He never wavered in his confidence.

"Brett has said that he believes he is the best horse that he has ever trained. That is a mouthful when you consider that he has had Rocknroll Hanover, The Panderosa and numerous others. Like all other things in this great game of ours, we shall see."

* * *

Perhaps next to, or maybe even more than, the huge amount of happiness the harness racing business has afforded me in the form of these fantastic creatures that constitute the foremost element in the sport, have been the hundreds, perhaps thousands, of wonderful people that I have been privileged to have known in all my years in the sport.

Just the other day, fearing that I was running short of face masks, I posted a question on Facebook asking if any readers knew of the availability of them in South Florida.

I received several responses, most of them leading to sources where I might be able to get them.

One of the answers came from Rita Polese who said that she had a couple of homemade ones that she had received from an Amish lady in Lancaster County Pa.

They were ours for the asking if I could meet her at Barn 10 at Sunshine Meadows the next morning.

Would I ever? Yes indeed.

Upon receiving them, I asked her how much I owed her? She said, "I'll charge you what the lady charged me - nothing". I insisted, but so did she.

Finally she said "the next time you see a homeless person, or someone in need of help, please give them what you were prepared to pay me."

I digress, but I thought this act of generosity, deserved mention, because Rita is one of many who make the populace of this sport as great as it is.

Have a question for The Curmudgeon?
Reach him by email at: hofmurray@aol.com.

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Illinois Racing Board establishes working equalization group to address impact of COVID-19

by Neil Milbert

With a cloud of uncertainty hovering overhead, the Illinois Racing Board met Friday (April 24) and agreed to Hawthorne Race Course president Tim Carey's petition to establish a working equalization group to address the impact on the 2020 calendar because of Governor J.B. Pritzger's decision to extend the coronavirus pandemic stay-at-home order through May 30.

"This whole situation has created an atmosphere where there are a lot of unknowns," said the board's newly-appointed chairman Daniel Beiser. "We don't know what it's going to be like for the horsemen, for the track owners.

"I think the concept (of a group made up of representatives on the tracks, the horsemen and Racing Board members and staff) is a strong one in light of the situation we find ourselves in. That's why I think it's important to put a group together and start talking about this. It makes total sense to have everyone involved."

Beiser asked the board's executive director, Domenic DiCera, to put together the group prior to the next board meeting on May 22.

The Hawthorne harness meeting that began on Feb. 15, and was to continue through Sept. 20, was put on hold on March 15. Following the harness meeting, Hawthorne is scheduled to hold a thoroughbred meeting running from Oct. 2 through Dec. 30.

"We've lost 17 live days and 41 (simulcast) host days (out of 92 scheduled live days and 342 host days)," Carey told the board. "We have more than 400 horses on our grounds and more than 200 of them are thoroughbreds (holdovers from the 2019 fall/winter meeting that ended Jan. 4). No other racetrack in the country has that situation. There are 444 individuals working with the thoroughbreds and 80 with the harness."

Complicating the situation at Hawthorne is the situation at Arlington International Racecourse, which has May 1-Sept. 30 thoroughbred dates.

At Friday's meeting the board unanimously approved Arlington's request to suspend the opening of its meeting "due to the COVID-19 pandemic conditions and its economic consequences."

Meanwhile, the track and the Illinois Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association (ITHA) still haven't reached agreement on a 2020 contract.

The main bone of contention is the length of the contract. Arlington wants it to be for two years, while the horsemen want it to be limited to 2020.

"We stand ready to sign a one-year deal to race July 4-Sept. 26," said Chris Block, a member of the ITHA board of directors who is a thoroughbred trainer, owner and breeder. "The uncertainty with the COVID epidemic makes it very difficult to see why Arlington is asking for a two-year deal."

Presumably, because of the contract impasse, Arlington hasn't opened its backstretch but there are other conceivable impediments.



"We're working with local health officials, the Cook County Department of Health and the Illinois Department of Public Health to determine conditions acceptable to opening the backstretch," Arlington president Tony Petrillo said.

"They're concerned with individuals coming in from out of state and we (annually) have horsemen coming from a wide geographical area — Kentucky, Louisiana, Florida and Arkansas."

Block said it's important that Arlington open its backstretch as soon as possible to prepare for its meeting, which Petrillo warned might be reduced to one month in order to fund adequate purses.

The uncertainty regarding the reopening of the network of track-operated off-track betting parlors to fund the purse accounts of the harness and thoroughbred horsemen is another significant problem.

In extending his stay-at-home order, Governor Pritzger modified it and allowed some non-essential business to reopen with major limitations.

"This is something we'll have to figure out as we go," the governor said, indicating that further modifications might be made.

After the current order expires May 30, Hawthorne, Arlington and the harness and thoroughbred horsemen are hoping that the OTBs will be allowed to reopen and will be ready to do so by mid-June.

"It looks like we'll have to do studio racing without fans (at the track)," Carey said. "But there might be landlords (at OTB parlors in bar/restaurants) who don't reopen."

Carey wants the working equalization group to "address the loss of commissions and purses during the time the governor's order is in effect and the impact on the 2020 racing calendar and to set a hearing to modify the dates order and the allocation of host and racing dates."

"This is an unprecedented time," Carey said. "All parties have to work through the issues for the betterment of Illinois racing."

Not only is the Hawthorne harness meeting having an unforeseen recess, so too is the construction project for its on-track casino that is permitted as a result of Governor Pritzger signing the major gambling expansion bill approved by the legislature last year.

Carey had hoped that the project could be put on the fast track by discontinuing the traditional day-time spring thoroughbred meeting this year and substituting the night-time harness meet with the objective of having the Hawthorne racino-ready by the start of the fall thoroughbred meeting.

But now, with no revenue coming in and with major declines in revenue a certainty when racing resumes, the reality is that Hawthorne won't become a racino until sometime next year.

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Joey Putnam loving chasing the dream

The 22-year-old catch-driver, and son of veteran horseman Joe Putnam, was Indiana Fair Circuit Driver of the Year in 2019 and is just starting to come into his own in his fourth official year in the game.

by James Platz

Horsemen and horsewomen across North America are anxious to resume the 2020 racing campaign. Joey Putnam is just as motivated to return to the races, looking to build on the momentum of last year. The son of Indiana-based trainer Joe Putnam, this 22-year-old catch driver is eager to recapture the excitement of a 2019 season where he registered triple-digit wins in only his third season of competition, steered Rockin Nola to victory in Indiana Sires Stakes Super Final action, and led all drivers on the state's fair circuit.

Although he was born into the racing business, Joey Putnam did not aspire to following in his father's footsteps, and the trainer did not push him in that direction. Growing up, Putnam's pursuit was baseball. Chasing that dream kept him busy during the summers, but as he moved closer to graduation, things began to come into focus more, and harness racing entered the picture.

Indiana



"I always helped dad in the barn a little bit. I was just busy with sports, being a kid and playing with friends. I would jog a few and help out, but on the weekends, I was gone with travel ball," Putnam said. "Junior year, that summer I got a lot of time in the barn and started training. I liked it, and I decided I was not going to go play baseball in college. I wanted to stay local with my mowing business."

Upon graduation in 2017, he devoted more time to working in the barn, and told his father he wanted to drive on the fair circuit that summer. The learning experience began. Putnam's first career win came in third start, steering U'll Learn to victory over the fair track at Corydon, IN. The highlight was piloting Sum It Up, a veteran trotter from his father's stable, to victory in the \$12,000 Signature Series final during Jug Week at Delaware. He finished the summer with a 10-13-7 record in 59 attempts.

"There was no second guessing. I thought it was a tremendous year. It went better than I could have expected. I got a few pari-mutuel wins, that was exciting, and got to drive at several different tracks, and that helped," the young



Dean Gillette

Joey Putnam driving at the Clinton County Fairgrounds in July of 2019.

driver said. "It gave me a lot of hope that I had some ability and hoped that I could keep carrying it. I felt I was in the right spot and making the right decisions."

The 2018 season saw Putnam get more seat time as a driver. He won a Grand Circuit event at the Indiana State Fair steering Lily Grace to a half-length victory in her division of the Horseman Stake for 3-year-old pacing fillies. Putnam recorded 444 starts, winning 37 times, with 46 runner-up and 46 third-place performances. His purse earnings totaled \$281,635.

"I drove good horses, mediocre horses, and some bad horses. I learned to put horses in the right spots, be a little patient at times when needed, especially on the big tracks," he said. "I got more comfortable with the drivers on the track, and I didn't feel out of place."

The experiences of the previous two seasons prepared Putnam well for what turned out to be a tremendous 2019 season. On the fair circuit, the young catch driver made the most of his opportunities. He steered 61 winners throughout the summer – more than any other driver – to take the title as leading reinsman. Along the way, he scored a \$20,000 fair championship with Tellawoman, a Tellitlikeitis filly he co-owned with his father and Michigan-based owner Mike Lee. He collected another fair championship in the fall with the Justin White-trained Kazans Power, a gelded freshman by Cherry Hill Park.

"The fair circuit was huge to me. What a year. I got great opportunities. The Justin White Stable, I drove a lot of power for them. We had a few of our own out there," said Putnam. "I thought it was great. The first year I drove at the fairs I got a few drives. It just came together last year. People at the track are always watching the fairs and know what is going on. It was something I needed, and will continue to need to keep growing in the sport and working my way up. I love the fairs."

Those that did not take note of Putnam's success on the fair circuit could not help but see his work with Rockin Nola at Harrah's Hoosier Park. After winning the Super Final as a freshman with LeWayne Miller at the lines, the Rockin Image filly returned to defend her title in 2019. Miller had a sophomore pacing filly of his own, and the conflict opened up the door for Putnam. As it turned out, "Nola" was the only charge from his father's stable that he had not sat behind in competition.

"It was a big learning curve, especially driving Rockin Nola. I tried to tell myself there wasn't a lot of pressure. I was driving all the other horses in the stable," he said. "I just wanted to prove myself to not only our family and the owners, but to everybody else watching because everybody had their eyes on her."

In his first time out with Rockin Nola, the pair scored a 1:51.2 victory, winning by a margin of one and one-quarter



Dean Gillette

Putnam receiving the 2019 Indiana Fair Circuit Driver of the Year award from Pam Cross.

lengths. The filly won seven of 16 starts, with Putnam accounting for five trips to the winner's circle. He was in the bike for the biggest as she successfully repeated with a two-length Super Final triumph. Last July, the youngest driver in the Hoosier Park colony guided Rockin Nola to a 1:49.4 victory and a place in the Hoosier Park records, as the time matched Wisdom Tree's sophomore mark from a year earlier.

"She was awesome all year, but we ran through learning curves with her and learning curves with me," the driver noted. "I was comfortable after the first few starts, but I knew we had to be on the board every week, at least I felt we did, because our filly was one of the best."

Putnam closed out 2019 with 837 starts, nearly tripling his win total of the preceding season with 115 victories. Purse earnings reached \$849,740, pushing his career earnings over the \$1 million mark. He had been racing in Ohio over the winter, driving anything his father shipped while picking up limited opportunities. Putnam hit the board 11 times in 57 starts before the COVID-19 pandemic brought racing to a halt.

Currently, he spends each day working in the barn, helping with the stable that numbers more than 30 head. When he is not at the barn, Putnam focuses on the mowing business that he started in high school and still maintains. He is responsible for 17 yards and some landscaping work. Like everyone else, he awaits a return to racing.

"I'm very excited. I know it's a tough time, and I hope everybody can stay afloat. I'm really itching to get back," he said. "I like to stay busy all the time. You've got to chase it. You've got to chase the dream."

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TWOS IN TRAINING

Paul Kelley



Paul Kelley in the HRU Twos in Training spotlight LIVE Monday at 7 pm EDT

Trainer Paul Kelley will talk about his most promising 2-year-olds, update us on veteran horses such as star Obrigado and answer some of your questions.

by Dave Briggs

HRU's Virtual Twos in Training series continues Monday, April 27 featuring veteran trainer Paul Kelley being interviewed by Jaimi MacDonald.

Viewers interested in seeing the interview live can do so on the [HRU Facebook page here](#) beginning at 7 p.m. EDT Monday (April 27).

The veteran trainer will talk about his most promising 2-year-olds, update us on veteran horses such as star Obrigado and answer some of your questions.

Kelley will field a few questions from viewers that comment live

via Facebook and also a few that are emailed to HRU in advance of the show. To submit a question in advance, email them before 3 p.m. Monday (April 27) to: editor@harnessracingupdate.com Please make the subject line: Questions for Paul Kelley and please include your full name.

After the show finishes, the complete interview will also be available for viewing anytime on both the HRU Facebook and YouTube channels.

Thank you to [Blue Chip Farms](#) for sponsoring the Kelley video.

HRU intends to feature a new live interview with a trainer every Thursday, Saturday and Monday evening.

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Barbara Livingston

Trainer Paul Kelley and star trotter Obrigado.

The continuing saga of brothers Wally and Dan Hennessey

Though blindness forced trainer Dan Hennessey to retire and move home to PEI, he still talks to his Hall of Fame brother, Wally, every day.

by Tom Pedulla

Wally and Dan Hennessey used a 25-minute drive to Fort Lauderdale International Airport last May to recall a lifetime of memories they made as one of harness racing's great partnerships.

Dan was headed home to Charlottetown, PEI, having been forced into retirement by blindness ([full story here](#)). Radiation used to eradicate cancer had caused him to lose sight in his left eye in 2002. Despite repeated operations, he had been unable to recover from a detached retina in his right eye in 2014 ([full story here](#)).

Dan had done everything possible to remain an invaluable asset to his younger brother, who had driven to victory in more than 10,000 races and earned a place in the Halls of Fame in the United States and Canada. Even after his sight was reduced to observing shadows, Dan had relied on decades of experience and his instincts to continue to work effectively at the barn.

Finally, everything in his body told him it was time to stop.

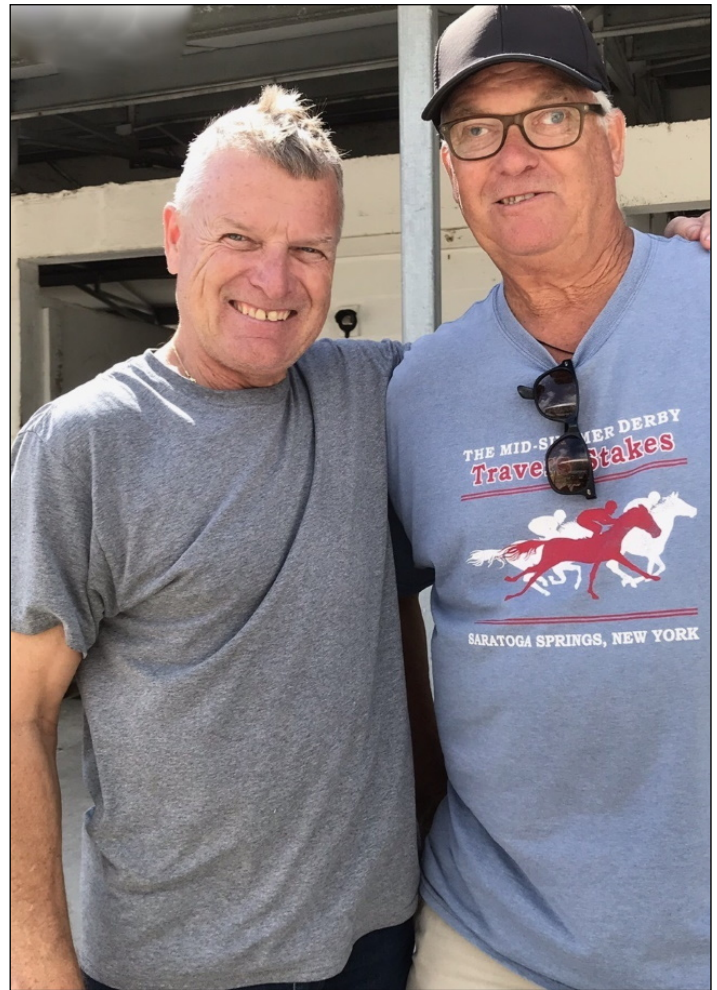
The drive to the airport could have been filled with anguish, for it marked the end of a partnership that had endured since 1982. The brothers made sure it was not.

"We talked about all the great times we had and how lucky we were to be doing what we wanted to do, all of that," Wally said. "There was no negativity to it."

Dan, now 65, and Wally, 63, are the fifth and sixth of nine children. Dan returned home to receive the great news that an apartment had opened two doors down from the house in which they were raised. That house is still occupied by Brenda, their oldest sister.

That helped ease Dan's adjustment after a lifetime around horses. Their father, Joseph, trained and drove standardbreds.

Although Wally still had racing to cling to and therefore views his transition as easier, it has been anything but easy since a two-man operation turned into a solitary one. Wally's hands-on nature led him not to hire any help. He oversees an operation reduced to five solid, but hardly exceptional, older



John Berry

Brothers and former partners Wally and Dan Hennessey.

trotters based at Pompano Park in Pompano Beach, FL.

"It wasn't that I didn't know what to do or how to do it," Wally said. "It's that I was doing it alone, and it wasn't a good feeling."

Wally said of his extraordinary relationship with Dan: "It's the connection we built throughout our life. We were never apart. Unless one was on vacation, there was never a day that we were not somehow together. We were attached at the hip and the shoulder.

"We never had to worry about letting one another down. Never, ever the whole time was that an issue, and that's really something."

The disconnect from someone he relied on so heavily and trusted so completely could be felt every morning. Only time has eased a parting that jarred both men.

Wally decided to break new ground last year by shifting his summer base from Saratoga Springs, NY, to Tioga Downs in

Nichols, NY. He returned to Pompano Park this past winter and was enjoying his usual high level of success as a driver and trainer before the COVID-19 pandemic forced racing to be halted.

As a driver, Wally was winning at a torrid 33.16 per cent clip, with 192 victories producing \$1,066,434 in earnings. Kevin Wallis was a distant runner-up with 78 wins and \$521,529 in earnings. As a trainer, Wally had sent out 68 starters, resulting in 14 wins, 13 runner-up efforts and eight third-place results. His horses won 20.59 per cent of the time.

"It's like anything else. You have to adapt," Wally said of his ongoing success. "You either adapt or your fail."

Even with Dan's departure, Wally never contemplated ending the training aspect of his career.

"I always felt that part of it rubbed off on my driving. I always felt that part of it completed the package. I've never ever not done it," he said. "I always felt the best way for me to be focused and mentally prepared to do my job at night was to do what I do in the morning."

John Campagnuolo is a long-time client. His admiration for

Wally as a trainer has only grown in the last year.

"Wally is a great trainer and you'd define him as an old-school trainer," he said. "He takes great care of the horses. He likes to train with the idea that this is not only an animal but an investment you want to keep working for you for years."

Campagnuolo noted that horses are not trained overly hard. When injuries occur, Wally prefers to let nature do most of the work instead of turning to injections that might be quicker fixes but are not long-term answers.

When Wally was driving, Dan arranged to listen to all of the races. Wally and Dan still confer at least once daily and often more than that.

"I guess you could say Dan is my satellite trainer," Wally said. "If I have a problem, I'm not asking anybody next to me. I'm phoning him."

No matter how great the physical distance, they will never be apart emotionally.

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Eliau Web stole the show

by Thomas Hedlund

The \$199,000 final of Paralympiatravet at Åby was predicted to be a sparkling story where many horses would show their speed from the start and where the pace in the race would be spectacular.

But predictions don't always become truth in harness racing and when inside horse Disco Volante made a break before the car left the field of 10 horses, Finnish star Eliau Web (Like A Prayer) quite easily took the lead from Cyber Lane.

Jorma Kontio, the winningest driver in the northern European countries, was allowed to let Eliau Web trot as slow as he could in front and when the field hit the first kilometer, the mile rate showed a slow 1:59.4 mark. For a race with the conditions given, it felt like the outcome was set already with a lap to go. The only interesting thing, especially at Åby, is that the track offers two open stretches and Cyber Lane, who sat in the pocket, is a very quick finisher, just like Billie de Montfort, who was placed third on the inside by Björn Goop.

Attacks three wide cost too much when the pace was higher during the last kilometer and it was clear that the trophy would go to one of the horses racing on the inside. Eliau Web, trained by Katja Melkko, is very hard to pass when he gets the lead and the 8-year-old gelding doesn't have to apologize for the victory in a mile rate of 1:56.1.

Cyber Lane got close in the finish and claimed the silver ahead of Billie de Montfort.

Eliau Web made his 64th start on Saturday afternoon and took his 26th victory. The son of Like A Prayer began his career as a 2-year-old and won the \$269,000 Derby in Finland 2016. Since then, Eliau Web has been counted as one of the best trotters in Finland and the triumph at Åby

yesterday showed that Finland stand strong in the business. Eliau Web also received a ticket to Elitloppet after the great victory.

[Eliau Web replay.](#)

Strong debut for Green Manalishi

Four-year-old Muscle Hill son Green Manalishi drew a lot of interest when eliminations for \$199,000 Kungapokalen were held at Åby on Friday night. And the Courant Stable owned horse showed that he will be one of the hottest objects in the final at Åby on May 9, since he made a strong effort from position outside the leader in his debut in Europe. Green Manalishi, driven by Björn Goop, couldn't defend the lead from post one, but Goop quickly found position in second line and when a kilometer remained, Green Manalishi sat outside leader Upset Face.

Behind Green Manalishi, Jerry Riordan's top trotter Aetos Kronos (Bold Eagle) followed easily and the two time E3-winner from last year sprinted to safe victory while Green Manalishi held to second place.

American-bred Click Bait (Cantab Hall—Fun At Parties) made an upset effort for Örjan Kihlström when the duo disarmed heavy favorite Power in the first heat.

Better known Osterc (Cantab Hall—Oh Oh Hereshcomes) made his third start in Sweden and took a wire to wire win for Björn Goop and the field is set for the final in two weeks.

[Green Manalishi's race replay.](#)

Kungapokalen final

Horse – Trainer

Osterc – Helena Burman
Aetos Kronos – Jerry Riordan
Click Bait – Stefan Melander
Power – Robert Bergh
Green Manalishi – Stefan Melander
Don Fanucci Zet – Daniel Redén
Upset Face – Adrian Kolgjini
Karat Band – Åke Lindblom
Gaylord Am – Kristian Lindberg
Exodus Brick – Jörgen Westholm
Admiral As – Reijo Liljendahl
Tabasco C.D. – Stefan Granlund

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Stakes that came back

Discontinued stakes races that returned.

by Bob Heyden

These stakes events took a year hiatus — or more — and made it back.

Let's take a look at some of those:

1. The Governor's Cup. You can go a long time without seeing a race debut at \$1 million, then repeat that, then go away. The Governor's Cup started in 1985 at Garden State Park in their debut season. The \$1,357,500 event was won by Barberry Spur. The 1986 edition went for even more, \$1,513,500, with Redskin taking the rich 2-year-old pacing event. Then in 1987, nothing. But, it's been around ever since, missing a year again in 2012.

2. Battle Of Brandywine. Held 1960-1989 at Brandywine Raceway, it took a long break, but came back in 2007 at Harrah's Philadelphia and then Pocono, skipping the 2014 edition.

3. Lady Maud. Started in 1960 featuring sophomore pacing fillies. 2004 was a skip year. Notables that have captured this event include: Handle With Care in 1974, Mistletoe Shalee in 1977, Happy Lady in 1978, and a pair of Horses of the Year Fan Hanover in 1981 and Bunny Lake in 2001.

4. Goldsmith Maid. It kicked off in 1990 at Garden State Park in Cherry Hill, NJ. Kramer Nobles took the first edition. 2012 was a skip year as the stake bounced around some. But Peaceful Way in 2003, Passionate Glide in 2005 and Snow White in 2007 got a chance for all us to preview what was to come.

5. Sheppard Memorial. Started in 1964 at Yonkers as a highlight on the schedule for 2-year-old pacing colts. From 2004-2011 it was discontinued. Remember that this was a huge focal point for the freshman. The race went for \$666,800 in 1983 when Trutone Lobell won it, \$643,000 when Praised Dignity captured it for Hall of Fame inductee Bill Popfinger and an even \$600,000 for Laugh in 1985.

6. The Review Stakes has had an interesting past. The 3-year-old pacing colt Review started in 1929, but 1894 for the sophomore trotting colt counterparts. Rain canceled it in 1975 and 1985 for the pacers, while the trotters did NOT compete in the Review in 1895, 1896, 1897, 1898, 1946, 1975, 1980 and 1985. Springfield was the host track.

7. Molson Pace. Started in 1972 as the Labatts Pace (1972-1991). NOT held in 2003. This is one of the more colorful histories. THREE horse dead heat in 1998 — Any Excuse, Emery Flight and What A Beach. Then, just two years later, a 'regular' dead heat with two — Laag Text and Windsong Flyer. The race is now called the Camluck Classic.

8. Art Rooney Pace. The 1989 kickoff at Yonkers attracted the top sophomore pacers. NOT raced in 2004 and 2005 (Yonkers under construction for a 2006 re-opening). Horses of the Year seemed to regularly on their agendas — 1991 Precious Bunny, 1994 Cams Card Shark, Gallo Blue Chip in 2000 and No Pan Intended in 2003.

9. Betsy Ross. It was around in 1962 to start at Brandywine, went away and re-emerged in the 2007 season, though it didn't actually kick off until the following year when

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Southwind Tempo won the first of her two straight scores.

10. George Morton Levy. In 1978, Sirota Anderson got things going. Maybe the most interesting edition was the 1979 one, held late in the season, when Try Scotch led all the way. Two sophomores tried their luck to no avail. Hot Hitter – the first ever horse to bank \$3/4 million in a single season (1979 \$826G) – and Direct Scooter, the \$800G career earner who would sire HOY Matts Scooter (1989). The Levy was a staple on all free-for-allers schedule until 1997 when it took a decade off. It remains to be seen how the 2020 edition will figure on the schedule.

11. Breeders Crown Mare Trot. Started in 1986 when Grades Singing called this race her own, taking it again in 1987 and 1989. But the Trot was NOT Held from 1996 to 2003. Yet that did not stop ladies from beating the boys on the combined Breeders Crown Trot – 1998 Moni Maker en route to her first of two HOY titles, this coming after C R Kay Suzie beat the boys and the world in the Open Trot and then called it a career.

12. Colonial made a big splash kicking off in 1968 with Triple Crown winner Nevele Pride scoring. Mack Lobell took it in 1987, and Chuck Sylvester did it again in 1993 with Pine Chip. The Colonial was NOT held in 2004-2005-2006 and 2014.

13. The World Trotting Derby took a break in 2003. This was for many colts the NEXT biggest test behind only the Hambletonian. The WTD ran for three decades missing the 2003 edition. Panty Raid the 1981 Trotter Of The Year, won the inaugural and paved the way for other outstanding ladies to do the same, notably Peace Corps in a lifetime best of 1:52.4 in 1989.

14. The Three Diamonds was a nomadic race. It started in 1989 at Garden State Park and Miss Easy took it in 1990. It was not raced in 2012. Five different tracks hosted the

freshman filly contest in the first 21 years – Garden State, The Meadowlands, Mohawk, Woodbine and Chester.

15. Roosevelt International was held from 1959-1987 at Roosevelt Raceway and today at Yonkers as the sport's only million-dollar test for older performers.

16. Fox Stake. This event for 2-year-old pacers started in 1927 with Sep Palin taking it with Red Pluto. There was no race in 1962 due to rain. Bret Hanover won it in 1964 as part of his 24-race win streak en route to his first of three HOY titles.

17. Maple Leaf Trot. Maybe the most colorful past of all. Started in 1950. Did NOT fill in 1955. NOT held in 1956. Twice, a horse has three-peated in the MLT: 1969-1970-1971 Grandpa Jim. 2009-2010-2011 San Pail, the last vaulting him over the top as the HOY. John Chapman did something in 1975 unprecedented in the sport's history. He won a split division of the Maple Leaf Trot with two Horses of the Year – Delmonica Hanover (1974 winner) and Savoir (1975 winner).

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HRU FOAL OF THE WEEK

Foal of the Week

photo by Emily Dever

Jeff and Emily Dever of Converse, IN welcomed their first homebred foal on Feb. 8 — a Check Six colt out of Rockin Image mare Rockin Kimage that is also the mare's first foal. Rockin Kimage earned some \$20,000 on the track in 2016.

The Devers have named the colt Checks on the Beach, aka Checkers. The photo was taken when he was one week old.

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New Jersey for New Jersey stallion auction to benefit SBOANJ Benevolent Fund

The auction of 2020 breedings to four stallions standing at Deo Volente Farms – Six Pack, Lazarus N, Trixton and Lis Mara – goes live on ongait.com starting Wednesday.

by Dave Briggs

New Jersey stallion owners are pitching in to help the state's horsepeople most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. One hundred per cent of the proceeds from an auction of four stallion breedings will be donated directly to the Standardbred Breeders and Owners Association of New Jersey's (SBOANJ) Benevolent Fund.

The auction will be held on <https://ongait.com/> starting Wednesday, April 29 and ending on Saturday, May 2.

Deo Volente Farms' owners Thomas Pontone and Michael Gulotta are donating 2020 breedings to Lazarus N, Trixton and Lis Mara. In addition, the original ownership group of Six Pack – Jeff Gural, Svanstedt Stables, Stall Kalmar Inc., Lars Berg, and Knutsson Trotting – are also generously donating a 2020 breeding to Six Pack to the fund.

All four stallions stand at Deo Volente, which is located in Flemington, NJ.

"Anything I can do to help the horsemen is a no brainer," Gural said. "I remain in contact with the governor's office to try to convince them that we can operate racing safely at the Big M without customers and remain hopeful that they will consider our request once they see a decline in the number of residents who are effected by the virus."

SBOANJ president Mark Ford said, "horsemen in New Jersey are very thankful to Jeff Gural for this very generous donation. When times are tough, he always finds a way to help. Furthermore, Mike Gulotta and Tom Pontone have not only stepped up by donating both cash and breedings to this fund, they spend several hours a month managing our investment accounts, and we thank them."

Bids for Lazarus, Six Pack and Trixton will all start at \$5,000 and the bid for Lis Mara will start at \$500.

New Jersey



"Bidding will start at 50 per cent of the advertised stud fee for these breeding rights," said Gulotta. "Hopefully, together with contributions to the fund we can generate a significant amount so that we can ease some of pain being felt by our brothers and sisters in the standardbred world."

"COVID 19 will be recorded as one of the most devastating tragedies in modern American history, or world history for that matter. Many are suffering physically, emotionally and financially as a result. I'm proud to be a part of the SBOA's effort in establishing a fund specifically to help those most affected by this pandemic. A special shout out to Tom Pontone and Jeff Gural and the original Six Pack ownership group as well as my partners at Deo Volente Farms for their donations of 2020 breedings. We're hoping that horsemen everywhere will step up to help those most in need."

Pontone emphasized the close-knit nature of the standardbred community.

"I hope that those who can do so will step up to the plate and alleviate some of the pain caused by this horrific virus," Pontone said.

Winning bidders will be offered one breed back opportunity in a subsequent breeding season in the event that the 2020 breeding does not result in a live foal.

Gulotta added that donations to the SBOANJ's Benevolent Fund would also be greatly appreciated by sending them to the SBOANJ headquarters at: 64 Business Route 33, Manalapan NJ 07726.

Questions about the auction may be directed to Joe Savare at Deo Volente Farms at (908) 399-8400 or to joe@deovolentefarms.com.

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BREAKING STRIDE

with TREY NOSRAC

Hoofprints in Fog

Scene 4 (Fellowship)

by Trey Nosrac

The setting is a room in an Alzheimer's ward. A young couple continues to visit an old horse trainer, Martin Kilbane. In his lucid periods, Martin describes events in his life with remarkable clarity.

[Part 1](#) | [Part 2](#) | [Part 3](#)

In earlier sessions, he has talked about serving in the U.S. cavalry, the death of his young wife, and his struggle with alcohol.

SCENE 4

(Music intro)

(ambient sounds of hospital hallway)

MANDY: (calls down the hall - indicate with an echo of voice) Ryan, Ryan, wait up! (footsteps in the hallway)

RYAN: Hi, how was work?

MANDY: Boring, long, low paying. How's he doing today?

RYAN: Don't know, I was just about to go in. Hey, before we go inside, what was that idea you teased me about before we left last night?

MANDY: Why don't we record his stories? A push of a button on our phone to start, another push to stop. He's not going to be around much longer. When he dies, his stories die. That's a shame. It's amazing the way he remembers details. It's like listening to a book

RYAN: And do what with them?

MANDY: I don't know, store them, so they don't just vanish. Maybe we could make them into a book.

RYAN: (enthusiasm) I like it. I'm very impressed.

MANDY: (coyly) Damn right, I'm a very impressive woman, not to mention attractive and available for a certain male who should wake up and smell the roses.

RYAN: Would you do the recording? Nobody handles a phone the way you do.

MANDY: I'll take that as a compliment.

RYAN: Don't. Until I glue a phone to my forehead, you'll always have a roving eye.

MANDY: With a phone stuck to your forehead, you would be a fascinating boyfriend. (pause) Did you know he was a blackout drunk?

RYAN: Nope, he was old when I met him. He seemed to live on coffee and Cheerios.

MANDY: Did he sober up to get a horse? That sounds too simple.

RYAN: I don't think it was simple, but he did get the horse, I looked it up. Let's go in and ask him. If he's talking today, if he starts to tell a story, hit record.

(Sounds of door knocking, footsteps, then of Mandy fluffing his pillow)

MANDY: Hello Martin, are you having a good day?

MARTIN: (speaks tentatively) Fair to middling.

RYAN: You were about to tell us how you got your racehorse.

MARTIN: Who? Who are you?

MANDY: That's Ryan, he's your great-grandson. I'm Mandy, a friend. We enjoy visiting with you. Last time you were telling us about a rich man giving you a racehorse after you got clobbered with a bottle. Remember...the man who helped you?

MARTIN: (tentatively) Euley...Euley K Dobbs?

RYAN: (sharply) Yes.

MANDY: He gave you the trotting horse.

(Pause as Martin struggles to remember)

MARTIN: (stronger) Euley K. Dobbs gave a lot of us a lot of things. He gave some of us our lives back.

MANDY: It sounds to me like he sent you to an AA meeting.

MARTIN: In 1954, we just called it the Fellowship group, or just the fellowship. We were copying a group that started in Akron. Up till then, most drunks just stumbled along. I stumbled more than most. When I was on the sauce, which was all of the time, I was a sorry excuse for a man.

MANDY: What was it like, the first meeting?

MARTIN: I was jittery as a June bug. Luckily for me, standing next to the coffee pot, I saw another tall guy in a floppy suit, another groom from around the racetrack circuit. He recognized me, strolled over to talk, and reminded me that his name was Ted. I can still see his face clear as yours. It helped to talk about racetrack gossip. Horses, racing, Lordy be, the backstretch of a racetrack is a fountain that never runs dry. Some racetrack folks keep their heads down and listen. (he chuckles). But Ted was a talker. As we talked, somebody strolled in holding an apple pie with a little



Listen to this story here



candle stuck in the middle to celebrate Ted's one-month anniversary of sobriety. One month may not sound like a big deal to you, but it is.

MANDY: Then, what happened?

MARTIN: The leader said to have a seat, said a few words, and then everybody read the pledge from little cards. Then the leader asked if anyone wanted to talk. After a few minutes, a fellow said his first name, we don't say our last names, and then he said he was an alcoholic. He said something about his wife and kids but didn't get far when he started to cry. That first night, I was the fourth person to talk. I didn't cry but rambled like a fool.

MANDY: What did you say?

MARTIN: I told them that I was a member of the 26th Cavalry, that I fought from a horse, I'd seen men die, and that my wife died. I told them that I began to drink after her death and had not stopped, couldn't stop. The group, I think there were about a dozen, were not impressed. They had seen others fall farther, faster. To them, I was just Martin, who like everyone else in the room was a drunk scared of tomorrow.

MANDY: Scared of drinking.

MARTIN: Sure. Mostly I was afraid of losing my job with the horses even though Euley K. Dobbs said he would stick with me. I remember Ted stood up and gave his talk. He thanked them for the pie and told them how he worked at the racetrack. How we started early in the morning around six, worked with the horses, harness racehorses, and then sometimes, if they were racing, we worked some more. Then some other fellows talked.

MANDY: Were there any women?

MARTIN: I don't recall any at first. Years later ladies began drifting in. After the first meeting, I walked out the door with Ted. He said that if I ever needed help that I should look him up, that if he was not in barn C and if they didn't know where he was, to leave a note in his box in the tack room.

MANDY: Was he your sponsor?

MARTIN: No, Ted was too green. But it gave me some courage to know Ted was there and that we were traveling the same road.

RYAN: The road to recovery?

MARTIN: It was a short road for me. I got loaded two days after my first Fellowship meeting, woke up on the straw in a stall with a mare looking down at me. It's a wonder she did not stomp the stupid out of me that night.

MANDY: Oh, Martin.

MARTIN: I had my best chance to do right, and I did not last TWO days. NOT TWO DAYS. It shamed me so much that I couldn't show my face at the racetrack. When the sun came

out, I just pulled my cap down over my head, threw my duffle over my shoulder, and headed down the road to the trainyard to hop a train, any train, to wherever it took me.

MANDY: And?

MARTIN: About a mile down the road, a big black Lincoln Continental passed me from behind and rolled to a stop on the berm. The car just idled with the exhaust coming out in little clouds. Then the driver's door opened, and Euley K. Dobbs got out. He walked back to me, threw his meaty arm around my shoulder, and walked me to his car.

MANDY: What did he say?

MARTIN: He didn't say one single word. Neither did I. He didn't smile. He didn't frown. The car was as quiet as a tomb while he drove me back to the racetrack. I got out of the car, shut the door, and he just drove away.

MANDY: So you showed up at the next meeting?

MARTIN: No. On the way to the next meeting, I got drunk again.

MANDY: (Loudly) Well, that's ridiculous.

MARTIN: Being an alcoholic is ridiculous.

MANDY: How long did this go on?

MARTIN: I would go to a meeting and then slip back. But one day Freddy J showed up, and he told the story of another horse, another racetrack, another time. Freddy changed everything.

(Martin drifts off to sleep, soft snoring and hospital sounds)

MANDY: (whispers) Martin, Martin, (pause, sighs). Dammit, I swear he falls asleep just to piss me off.

RYAN: (chuckles) Maybe he does it to make sure you keep coming for visits, like a cliffhanger or clickbait. He did the same thing to me before you started visiting, same stories, same cliffhangers.

MANDY: Does it all check out? What he says?

RYAN: That was his life (chuckles). I had that same chat that you just had a week ago, pretty much word for word. Did you record it?

MANDY: Of course (taps phone). What should I name the file?

RYAN: (exhales) Let's organize them chronologically, enter the year - 1955, and then - Martin Kilbane, horse trainer, AA meeting.

MANDY: (tap tap tap sound of a keypad) Done.

RYAN: His story is a long way from done.

(Music fades)

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Racetracks and horse owners eligible for PPP loans under new guidance from the SBA

The Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association announced Friday (April 24) that the Small Business Administration today has issued new guidance clarifying that racetracks and small entities such as horse ownership entities are eligible for loans under the Paycheck Protection Loan Program.

The new guidance is as follows:

"d. Part III.2.b. of the Third PPP Interim Final Rule (85 FR 21747, 21751) is revised to read as follows:

Are businesses that receive revenue from legal gaming eligible for a PPP Loan? A business that is otherwise eligible for a PPP Loan is not rendered ineligible due to its receipt of legal gaming revenues, and 13 CFR 120.110(g) is inapplicable to PPP loans. Businesses that received illegal gaming revenue remain categorically ineligible. On further consideration, the Administrator, in consultation with the Secretary, believes this approach is more consistent with the policy aim of making PPP loans available to a broad segment of U.S. businesses."

This guidance makes clear that while the exclusion for entities that receive revenue from legal gambling activities does not apply, the entity must still satisfy the other loan requirements.

We are grateful to the NTRA and THA representatives on Capitol Hill for getting this done.

—USTA via The Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association

Directive for harness horses hair sampling

Pursuant to the directive for harness horses linked to alleged drug violations issued March 17, 2020, all horses claimed, sold or otherwise transferred from a summarily suspended, indicted trainer or a trainer named in a criminal

complaint in the 60 days prior to the date of the announcement of the indictment or criminal complaint, were placed on the Steward's List. Such Commission Directive provided that hair sampling could occur once 30 days have passed since the claimed, sold or otherwise transferred horse arrived at the new trainer's barn.

In furtherance of such directive, the Commission has determined to commence hair testing on standardbred horses on Wednesday, April 29, 2020. Until further notice, such testing shall be conducted at the following locations:

Buffalo Raceway — 5600 McKinley Parkway Hamburg, NY

Monticello Raceway — 204 State Route 17B Monticello, NY

Saratoga Raceway — 342 Jefferson Street Saratoga Springs, NY

Testing will only occur on an appointment basis, secured through the Presiding Judge of the appropriate racetrack. Should qualifiers be authorized, the Commission will expand testing availability.

For horses outside the State of New York, the Commission will only accept hair sampling if performed by the State's racing regulatory office. Such office may make arrangements for the submission of such samples through the Office of the Equine Medical Director by contacting me at

scott.palmer@gaming.ny.gov.

—New York State Gaming Commission

HARNESS RACING UPDATE

About Harness Racing Update

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Editor: Dave Briggs

Production: Brian Fuller

Graphic Design, Ads & Placement: Lisa Bihuniak

Advertising Sales: Wilma Van Vaerenbergh | contactforadsales@harnessracingupdate.com

Results & Stats Editor: Lisa Duong

Founder: Bill Finley

Contributors: Claus Andersen, Garnet Barnsdale, Tim Bojarski, Jerry Connors, Frank Coto, The Curmudgeon, Paul Delean, Bill Finley, Joe FitzGerald, Dean Gillette, Ron Gurfein, Thomas Hedlund, Bill Heller, Bob Heyden, Dean Hoffman, Victoria Howard, Melissa Keith, Dave Landry, Lauren Lee, Dave Little, Chris Lomon, David Mattia, Trey Nosrac, Tom Pedulla, Andrea Pietrzak, James Platz, Bob Roberts, Sandra Snyder, Brett Sturman, Jay Wolf

Get in touch with HRU

PO Box 230 | Millwood, NY | 10546 | Telephone: (226) 374-9999

Editor/News Stories: editor@harnessracingupdate.com

Advertising: advertising@harnessracingupdate.com

Customer Service: customerservice@harnessracingupdate.com

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Campbell offers a little levity for Feedback

I'd like to respond (with tongue firmly in cheek) to Mr. Tom Santoro's comments/question in the latest Ask the Guru column ([full story here](#)) regarding my on-camera talent, or admittedly lack thereof.

I assume Mr. Santoro, based on his opinion and critique of everyone mentioned in his question to Ronnie, has a background in sports broadcasting or television production.

Heck, he could be the next Boone Arledge or Don Hewitt (if you are young, Google them) for all I know.

As harness racing history is recalled and written about I will leave it to other people to determine where my place in that is. However, I did have a lengthy career and a list of accomplishments that I am very proud of.

I have been fortunate and am grateful to have been inducted into a NUMBER of Halls of Fame.

Mr. Santoro expectations of me are that in addition to this I should be Jimmy Kimmel like on air.

Come on, man. Be realistic. Nobody is good at everything.

I was just a harness horse driver.

Everyone be safe.

—John Campbell / Westwood, NJ

What an opportunity we have to fix a broken system

What an opportunity we have. Let's turn a negative into a positive. Let's turn a half-full glass into a glass overflowing. As a horseman/owner of over 50 years, I think I have seen just about everything, from the heyday of harness racing in the 1970s to the recent indictments. What an opportunity we have to fix a broken system. We should embrace change, change in that if you see a problem, speak up. I love harness racing and the only way it survives is to lose the bad apples. I think that change must happen.

#1 no trainer of raceway horses can possibly obtain a 400

average without extraordinary medicine.

#2 no state commission is exempt from playing favorites with positive tests of connected horsemen.

#3 if a trainer earns a positive/suspension his horses race the very next week without any interruption.

My conclusion is, bring on the federal oversight no matter what the cost. Just imagine the same test in every state with no favoritism. I usually own half or all of 15 to 30 standardbreds and I am more than willing to put my money where my mouth is. Are you? If so speak up. Remember, the squeaky wheel gets the attention. Believe me, there are more of us than them.

—Frank Chick / Harrington, DE

Faraldo letter sent to NY Gaming Commission regarding qualifiers at Goshen

With the vast open paddock space at Goshen Historic Track, I reiterate that it would be doable to have qualifiers there and insure that all social distancing mandates, wisely put in place, are observed. Goshen will not permit spectators, only one groom, perhaps a limited number of trainers will be present and certainly a very limited number of drivers will be on hand.

Goshen being a betting free Fair Track, any racing activity there is under the jurisdiction of the USTA. In the past, whatever charted lines were prepared were incorporated into the USTA database and then used as part of the official breed registry records. Records which are relied upon for years as both accurate and reliable when inserted into official racing programs at pari-mutuel track in all of North America. Even assuming there may be a waiver of the existing 30-day qualifying rule, some horsemen still want and need to tighten up their horses and further educate their babies.

We understand that the coronavirus has changed everyone's mindset as to what is or is not doable but we are confident that we can achieve and insure a safe environment and serve the future needs of racing.

I hope we can get some further guidance and your approval to go forward. I have spoken with the Goshen Historic Track and they will do anything to help harness racing and I know the Gaming Commission feels the same way.

—Joe Faraldo, president SOA of NY

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