



Winning is in their blood.
What is in their joints?

CLICK TO LEARN MORE

Sunday, May 3, 2020

A road map to enhanced integrity in harness racing

Art Gray details what has worked at Tioga and Vernon Downs and what the whole industry needs to adopt.

by Art Gray

The recent serious integrity issues combined with the deadly COVID-19 pandemic have accomplished what many industry leaders have unsuccessfully attempted to establish for decades: **An opportunity to start over and get it right.**

I established this program in 2006 and was fortunate to have Jeff Gural share my concerns for our waning public perception and open the door for its implementation. There was interest in the program by other facilities, but a firm commitment never materialized. A key obstacle was racetrack management's fear of their individual commissions' negative response, viewing the move as adversarial in nature. The commissions that had joint authority over both racing and casino operations in their jurisdiction presented an additional concern for potential repercussions.

This program is based on the racetracks' court-proven right to exclude individuals whose participation could be detrimental to the business interest of the facility. Exercising this right should not create an adversarial relationship with the regulating agencies. Both the racetrack owners and the racing commissions share the same goal: a level the playing field on the racetrack for all and to regain the public trust. The right of exclusion is simply a tool that the racing commissions do not have in their tack box.

The racetrack's guidelines are laid out as house rules. Most will be consistent with other facilities, albeit the house rules for each track will be derived individually. Key components of this program are **autonomy and equitable consistent application**. It is easy to abuse. If it is, we will lose a valuable tool to address our integrity issues.

In today's HRU

Experts weigh in on how they plan to handicap cards after a long layoff	page 4
Article	page
Why there will never be a commissioner of harness racing	page 6
Tae Kwon Deo strong in Örebro as Elitloppet field shapes up	page 7
Origin story: How Brad Grant came to be one of the sport's top owners	page 8
Indiana opening up, but questions remain about where the racing industry fits	page 11

Standardbred Retirement Foundation

Since 1989



SRF is Different

- Is the most productive charity of it's kind.
- Private donations are paramount, and the primary source of support.
- Caring for more than 400 trotters and pacers.

Breeding Donations Appreciated

STANDARD BRED
Rescue



Gifts are tax-deductible

AdoptaHorse.org

42 Arneytown-Hornerstown Rd.
Cream Ridge, NJ 08514
(609) 738-3255 • SRFHorsesandKids@gmail.com

Integrity outline

Every individual must be approved by racetrack management to participate. A state license provides an individual a right to participate in the state the license is issued. The racetracks have a right to institute house rules that best protects their business. Formal stable/participation applications are required by all and available online.

A notice will be published informing the horsepeople and owners of management's intent to exercise their "Right of Exclusion" to protect the facility's business interest. Track management establishes the criteria while an individual or separate entity performs the due diligence and research that is presented to track management for their review. The information is only available to track management and otherwise kept confidential. It is important to avoid any indication of collusion between the racetracks in depriving a horseperson his or her rights to participate. Pegasus Downs cannot request a list of horsepeople who cannot participate at Happy Valley. Their decision to exclude an individual must be based on their criteria. If an individual excluded from Pegasus Downs applies to race at Happy Valley, their criteria will be utilized in performing the due diligence. The management at Happy Valley will review the records and make its own informed decisions unrelated to the activity of another facility.

Having an independent third party/entity performing the due diligence is a preventive measure against collusion, inconsistency and unethical application.

Additional due diligence will ensure that approved trainers are not misrepresenting individuals excluded from the racetrack. Horse ownership and trainer transfers will be reviewed.

Security staff is trained to observe and identify actions by individuals that may be in violation of jurisdictional rules and/or any conduct that compromises the integrity of racing. Training includes proper procedures for search, seizure, evidence collection, interrogation, corroboration and prohibited medications and procedures.

A formidable security director is necessary as are members of the staff. These individuals will be doing more than checking licenses and require the fortitude to address certain situations. When any violation is identified, the security director will ensure that all statements and evidence are corroborated and when complete turned over to the

ENTER TODAY



New! JUNE MIXED SALE

Monday, June 22, 2020
Michiana Event Center, Shipshewana Indiana

**ENTRIES ARE NOW
BEING ACCEPTED AND
WILL CLOSE ON MAY 11TH**
(or earlier when full)

In addition to all the amenities normally provided at the Fall Midwest Sale, including 50% payment of proceeds paid the day of the sale, we will offer **in person bidding and online bidding.**

For more information or to enter today, please visit midwestauctionco.com, email jeff.fought@midwestauctionco.com or call 260.463.1649.



MIDWEST
AUCTION COMPANY

LIVE ONLINE
BIDDING
Powered By:
proxibid

presiding judge/state steward. At this point the racetrack management is eligible to take immediate action to protect their business interest. Whatever action the regulating agency initiates will be a separate from the remedies issued by the racetrack.

Note: In the first year Tioga was opened, a trainer was identified by track security injecting a horse at a rest stop 10 miles from the track. The trainer was subsequently stopped at the gate and his van searched by trained security. The contraband and a detailed report were presented to the presiding judge. Tioga management immediately exercised its right of exclusion issuing a letter stating it decided the trainer's participation at Tioga Downs was not in the best business interest of the track. The exclusion also applied to any licensed individual acting on the trainer's behalf. The subsequent suspension that the commission imposed was appealed several times to the civil courts citing that racetrack security did not have authority to search and seize the contraband. The court determined that the "trained" security guards were an extension of the racing commission, hence had the right of search and seizure.

Veterinarians are monitored with irregularities reviewed and reported to the racing commission. Racetracks will continue to have the right to implement detention barns as well as their own testing program for TCO2 and/or controlled substances. Funds for drug research and testing are a concern. Designer compounds that are difficult, if not impossible, to detect are the PED du jour.

Note: An interesting program developed was the use of drug detecting dogs. Our security director at Tioga Downs is a retired PA State Trooper who headed up the K-9 unit. I asked him how many drugs a dog can detect, and he said as many as you train him to find. These dogs were trained to find 10 common illicit drugs that a trainer so inclined may think about using on race day. In a subsequent test, we put common painkillers and EPO in several syringes. We dispensed the drugs from the syringe and hid the needles in bales of hay and in the roof rafters. The dogs found all needles literally finding a needle in a haystack and scratched on the wall under needles hidden in the rafters. Once this capability became known we were informed that if the dogs were brought on the grounds the horsemen would not sign the upcoming contract.

Stan Bergstein wrote articles about the program and each of these incidents. They were in the local newspapers and garnered interest from the NY State Police and the FBI.

It is apparent that our regulatory model is beyond repair. I

have been in Washington, DC lobbying our legislative representatives to pass The Horse Racing Integrity Act. The HRIA is a step in the right direction but would not be available for 18 months.

The time to address our integrity issues is long gone in our rearview mirror. The overwhelming consensus is start over today and do it right.

CLICK HERE
To Share This Story



Working Together for a strong
Horse Racing Industry in Ontario

Three Breeds • One Vision

A promotional graphic for the "Foal of the Week" feature. It features a brown foal with a white blaze on its face, standing against a blue background with white radiating lines. The text "HRU WANTS YOUR BEST FOAL PHOTOS FOR OUR NEW FEATURE" is at the top in a stylized font. At the bottom, it says "Foal of the Week" in large, red, cursive letters. Below that, it says "SEND PHOTOS AND AS MUCH INFORMATION ABOUT THE FOAL & FAMILY AS POSSIBLE TO: DAVE BRIGGS • HRUEDITOR@GMAIL.COM". In the bottom right corner is the HRU logo with the text "HARNESS RACING UPDATE".



Experts weigh in on how they plan to handicap cards after a long layoff

by Garnet Barnsdale

It seems as though there is now a glimmer of hope that we could see some harness racing in the next couple of months and hopefully there will be several jurisdictions buzzing with action.

Action-starved bettors will be faced with some unusual handicapping puzzles, however, trying to pick winners from entire fields full of horses racing of layoffs of several months.

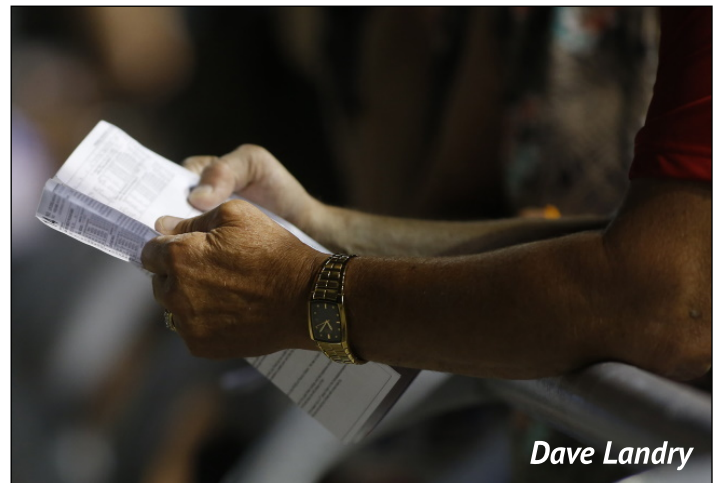
How do we solve those puzzles and how can we find value? I surveyed many of the industry's handicapping experts for some ideas that hopefully will be useful to your handicapping. Here are the three questions that they were asked:

1. What resources would you recommend using to prepare handicappers for these races? Is there any way to gain an edge?
2. Do you think you will bet some of these races right out of the blocks? Why or why not?
3. How can a bettor find value in races of these types?

Here's what the experts had to say:

Derick Giwner - DRF Harness editor

"I would say the situation of long layoffs without clean lines does occur, just not regularly. Saratoga in Upstate New York ends its season in mid-December and starts up in February and I don't believe horses are forced to qualify. But, to the question at hand, I would fall back on my knowledge of the horse and ask a few questions. Does the horse typically race well over this track? Does the horse race consistently (30 to 40 starts a year) or more infrequently (15 to 25 starts) with success? A horse that typically has 20 starts a year and wins five to seven races, might be one more



Dave Landry

apt to fire fresh. Finally, I'll be looking for barns that typically fire off layoffs. There is no list to follow. You just have to have a feel for it.

"If we are being honest, every handicapper is chomping at the bit waiting for a return of racing. We'll all be playing, perhaps just picking our spots a bit more carefully.

"Everyone is coming in blind when it comes to these races and let's be honest, most people are not going to put in the work to succeed. If horses are forced to qualify, watch each qualifier closely. If not, take a closer look at each horse in the post parade and watch them warm up. Dig deeper into the past performance lines and "class" than in the past. There will be more opportunity during these first couple of weeks than at any other time if you put the work in."

Michael Carter - Handicapper for Ontario Racing's Bettors Corner

"Look deeper than past performance lines and find out what the horse has done off a layoff before. The TrackMaster 12-line programs are really good for this.

"Yes, I will be betting. Some horses thrive off of a layoff and you may be able to catch some value.

"Read deeper than the six lines that you see on the program, do the homework and find out what the horse has done previously off a layoff. The time will pay off in the future."

Melissa Keith – Bettors Corner handicapper

"I will be looking at programs from early in the previous meet for each returning track I play, noting the trainers and owners whose horses tend to be ready right away. Watching qualifiers and baby races is also a tool I will use, because these are not always charted or reported in much detail, but they can reveal valuable information about horses: gait, attitude, liking for a particular size track or track condition or style of racing or driver. Being observant is always an edge.

"Absolutely I will be betting, in part as a show of support for the tracks in question. I would prefer to play tracks where the original opening date for the meet happens to already correspond with that state or province loosening limits on sporting events/public gatherings. Those tracks will be closer to 'business as usual,' with horses ready to race and hopefully good-sized fields. Looking at tracks forced to pause at the height of their winter season will be different when they resume. One consideration will be the absence of the trainers indicted in March, which could create more wide-open races/fewer short-priced winners at the tracks where they dominated.

"For me, it goes back to watching qualifiers, then watching the board and being attentive to which owners/trainers typically send out horses who are ready to win early in the season. That might change slightly this year, with stakes programs up in the air, so less incentive to put 2- and 3-year-olds through demanding trips for minimal gain."

Dave Brower - Meadowlands handicapper and morning line maker

"It's pretty hard to know what trainers have been keeping their horses 'in full training.' That is a darn good question.

"I will reach out to some of them for 'trainer comments' that we list in the official program. I have a few that get back to me all the time. I have many that don't respond at all. So, that will be tough.

"As for me, I will probably play sporadically, IF I think my horse is in the right spot. I will not play every race, but maybe just a few. I will also take very good notes, so I can properly handicap going forward. It won't be easy, but it will have to be done."

Greg Reinhart - DRF Harness public handicapper

"In my opinion, there is absolutely no way to bet on any race with any confidence if the various harness racing jurisdictions don't require an updated line in a qualifier before we return to pari-mutuel contests. As a bettor, how am I supposed to know what the horse has been up to, if it has been able to stay sound, or has maintained its form since March when we stopped racing? Without that information, speaking strictly for myself, I would have to sit it out."

Ryan Willis - Woodbine Mohawk Park handicapper/bettor

"My plan is to take it very easy for the first few weeks when racing does resume. I say 'plan' because I really am craving action. I'm thinking you should likely play horses sent out by top conditioners. I know Carmen Auciello has been quoted as saying he has been training them all up pretty good once a week and treating it as a race. I think that's a barn I'm going

to want to play first back. I think the value is going to be in horses that should be really short prices and maybe people are scared to back an odds on type of horse so you end up getting a nicer price. But who really knows and maybe you do get a price you think is really fair and the horse races like he hasn't seen a harness in over a month.

"I don't think on the resource front you can do much right away. I'll be focusing on making notes and watching who is bringing them in ready to race. If big trainers start having them ready, or the opposite, you might be tempted to hop on board or start completely tossing horses trained by certain connections. And if it does happen that way you will probably get rewarded the next week going back to horses that didn't race up to their potential the first start off the shelf."

Monique Vag – Woodbine Mohawk Park on-air host and handicapper

"Resources like TrackIt will have a horse's entire racing career easily accessible. By accessing the website you'll be able to see if a hiatus was ever something this particular horse endured, and it could provide a good starting point to see how the time off could potentially affect.

"Social media is also a great resource to see what a trainer/owner is saying (if anything) about how their horse is training. Keep your eyes out for those tidbits of info! Anything that can help you make a better informed decision is always useful.

"It is tough to answer if there is any edge because we are entering uncharted territory with a much lengthier than usual layoff for many.

"I'll likely be handicapping the same way, betting less, though. I'm sure for some horses the time off will be a disadvantage, but I'm not convinced that's something you can really quantify – if it is, prove me wrong.

"I think more than anything the battle internally for me for the first little while back is going to become a question of: what type of a price am I willing to accept given the amount of uncertainty.

"Is there any trend that develops right away (first couple of race cards) that I can capitalize on before the public becomes privy to it and handicappers catch on? Hopefully so."

Hopefully sooner rather than later we are all happily hunting for winners at our local tracks and – even better – cheering them on from the stands while enjoying our favorite beverages. Stay safe everyone!

CLICK HERE
To Share This Story



GUEST COLUMN



with ALAN LEAVITT

Why there will never be a commissioner of harness racing

Unlike other sports controlled by team owners, harness racing is constructed differently and governed by individual states and provinces.

by Alan Leavitt

This is to lay to rest for all time the notion that there could, and should be, a Harness Racing Commissioner.

All around the world, virtually every sports league operates under the auspices of a commission, led, of course, by a commissioner. This concept probably first became a reality as a result of the Black Sox Baseball Scandal in 1919.

In 1919, eight players on the Chicago White Sox were caught throwing the 1919 World Series against the Cincinnati Reds. Allegedly they were paid off to throw the series by a group of gamblers, led by Arnold Rothstein.

In response to what immediately became known as the Black Sox Scandal, in 1920 all the major league ball teams created the position of Commissioner of Baseball, and hired as the first commissioner a federal judge named Kenesaw Mountain Landis. His job was to restore America's faith in the Great American Pastime, and to ensure that nothing like the World Series fixing of 1919 ever happened again.

The ball clubs wanted a strong figure, and that is what they got in Landis. His first act as Commissioner was to issue lifetime bans for eight White Sox players, even though they had all been acquitted in a Chicago trial. He wound up banning a total of 18 players from various teams during his tenure, and he succeeded in restoring a clean façade to major league baseball, the job for which he was hired.

But enough of this guy with the crazy name, and baseball in general. We're here to talk about harness racing, and why there will never be a commissioner in our future. To understand why, you first have to understand what has happened in every sports league that is under the control of a commissioner. That happened because the owners of all

those teams, in all those leagues, all agreed to give up the autonomy and control to an outside entity, a commission, personified by a commissioner.

But harness racing is not made up of individual entities that together form a cohesive group, or league. Harness racing operates in various states in the union, and each of those states retains total control of it. Each state requires participants to be licensed by that state, so to own, train, drive, or groom a standardbred, you first must be licensed by that state.

Further, each state regulates racing, each according to its own rules, so that a whipping offense in one state can cost a driver \$50, and in another the fine can be \$200. And there is no way in the world that any state is ever going to relinquish one iota of its power and authority to an outside entity, whether he's called a commissioner or a fairy godfather.

That's the reality, and it will ever be thus, so let's not waste any more breath talking about a Commissioner of Harness Racing.

CLICK HERE
To Share This Story



HARNESS RACING UPDATE

About Harness Racing Update

Harness Racing Update is owned by HRU Publications of Millwood, NY and will publish Fridays and Sundays from fall through late spring. HRU will add Saturday editions early summer through fall, publishing 3 days per week, and will add editions throughout the year as major news breaks.

Editor: Dave Briggs

Production: Brian Fuller

Graphic Design, Ads & Placement: Lisa Bihuniak

Advertising Sales: Wilma Van Vaerenbergh | [contact for ad sales/questions](#)

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

Advertising info & rates:

If you are interested in advertising with us [please contact Wilma](#)

EUROPEAN REPORT



with THOMAS HEDLUND

Tae Kwon Deo strong in Örebro as Elitloppet field shapes up

by Thomas Hedlund

Adrian Kolgjini trained 5-year-old Tae Kwon Deo (Muscle Hill—Brigham Dream), who won \$199,500 Sprintermästaren in Halmstad last summer, showed no mercy to his opponents when the gold division was held at Örebro racetrack on Saturday afternoon. By tradition, the winner of the particular race usually gets a ticket for Elitloppet, if the performance is good enough and Tae Kwon Deo glittered in impressive style.

From position first over, the 5-year-old Muscle Hill son came home in 1:52.1 over the mile and equaled the season best mark in Sweden, which was a performance good enough to receive a spot in Elitloppet at Solvalla in the end of this month.

The Elitloppet will be held, as we've told before, without spectators, but with the purse of \$612,000 and on Saturday night, five horses have got their invitations to the mile race in Stockholm.

Vivid Wise As (Italy), Elian Web (Finland), Chief Orlando (Finland), Attraversiamo (Sweden) and Tae Kwon Deo (Sweden) are all ready for two heats at Solvalla on May 31.

Attraversiamo — the 5-year-old Swedish Derby winner by Kiss Francais, trained by Svante Båth — got his ticket for the Elitloppet earlier this week and it is interesting that all that qualified this year are all new names ahead of the invitation process on Solvalla's part.

Propulsion is still not a safe card in the race this year and other well-merited trotters in Europe are either stationed in countries that are under lockdown due to the COVID-19 situation, or in business beside the racing track as studs (Readly Express, Ringostarr Treb for example).

Sixteen trotters will eventually gather at Solvalla and it seems like Elitloppet 2020, despite the strange situation

with no on track spectators, will be a fresh year where the new generation of trotters breakthrough in a serious way.

More news regarding the Elitloppet: The post time for the final heat, will be 8:30 p.m. CET (2:30 p.m. EDT) on Sunday May 31 and that fact gives television viewers the opportunity to see the race broadcast live on one of Sweden's largest TV channels.

[Tae Kwon Deo replay.](#)

CLICK HERE

To Share This Story





Origin story: How Brad Grant came to be one of the sport's top owners

The third-generation horseman once completely quit the game, but now owns more than 75 horses.

by Murray Brown

I have heard that Brad Grant has something like 75 horses in training. When asked, the owner from Ontario said he wished it was only 75 and that he might be risking divorce to reveal the real number.

In all my years in the sport, I have never known of an owner who had both the number of horses and the diversity between overnight and stakes performers that Grant has. There are others such as the Burkes and the Weaver-Bruscemi team who might have more in partnerships, but Grant's overnight horses are owned by him alone.

What got him to this point you might ask?

One might say that he was born into it. He is a third generation horseman. His paternal grandfather Bernard Grant and his uncle Walter were followed by Brad's Canadian Hall of Fame father John Grant.

Bernard raced at the fairs in the Ottawa Valley area and Walter trained some of John's horses as well as drove the odd one, too.

John father made his mark in the sport as a builder and as an owner probably best known as the owner of superstar racehorse and stallion Bettors Delight. In the early years of the Ontario Sires Stakes program, John owned many stars, including the great mare Classic Wish. He also bred many under the Hornby name.

What most people don't know about Brad is that he trained and even drove a few for about a decade, before he realized



Claus Andersen

Owner Brad Grant.

that he was better suited for bigger and better things.

Those who knew John Grant know he could be a tough and demanding person. He was that way perhaps more so with his son than probably anybody else. They had a love/hate – or perhaps more accurately, a you're fired/I quit – relationship for all the years they were together.

In his own words, Brad lost his passion for the horses and started working in the other family's trucking business. He worked with his dad on and off for six years from 1978-1983. The "off" times were when his dad fired him or Brad quit, only to be back the next day pretending that nothing had happened. The last time it happened, his father called him and asked why he wasn't at work. Brad responded that he wasn't coming back. He had decided that he was ready to fly with his own wings.

Ironically, it was during the glory days when his father had Bettors Delight that Brad was pretty much divorced from the horse business. In retrospect, he now says he feels sorry to have missed those times as he remembers watching the colt win the Jug on his computer at work. He said he was happy for trainer Scott McEneny and thrilled for his dad – who had done a lot for the industry and deserved a horse like Bettors Delight – but was disappointed that he wasn't there to see it happen.

So, what brought Brad back to the game? He said the credit goes to the late Ted Huntbach.

"If you knew Ted, you knew it was darn near impossible to say no to him. He told me that I had to get back in the game, that I was missing a lot of fun not being in it," Brad said.

"I would say the turning point in my ownership career was when I purchased Apprentice Hanover."

He realized it was a lot more exciting to own top contending horses than it was to own ordinary ones. From that point on, Brad's primary focus was on quality. That didn't necessarily mean he didn't want overnights. Far from it. What he wanted were ones that could race and comport themselves well at our major racetracks.

Here are a few notes from our conversation.

How is this horrible pandemic affecting your primary business?

"There is no doubt that its slowed us down some, but being classed an essential business has kept us going. The regulations are understandably more stringent. Here in Canada we have what is known as a carbon tax that our government put in mid-April, that really hit us in the gut on top of everything else. Thankfully, the recent diminishment in fuel prices certainly helps. But we are doing our best. I have no doubt that we will get through it. I fear that right now it's probably hurting the horse business more than it is the trucking industry."

What is your favorite horse?

"That's a very difficult question. I've been blessed to have many good ones. But like Dave McDuffee said last week, your first good one holds a special place in your heart. Actually there are two that I can't separate. Apprentice Hanover. He wasn't the best or the fastest, but his acquisition marked a significant turning point in my life in the sport. Together with him, I'd say Sandbetweenurtoes. She's still racing and doing well. She's become a quasi-member of our family. I've been fortunate to have so many good ones — Atlanta was my first special trotter and she turned out to be a Hambletonian winner and Horse of the Year; Stay Hungry, my first horse to stand at stud at the greatest farm in the business and my Saturday Night special Easy Lover Hanover. Lots to pick from."

Let's go back to that horrible night at Classy Lane when so many horses were lost in the stable fire including your Apprentice Hanover.

"Obviously, I was terribly shocked and just felt numb. I couldn't even bring myself to go to the farm. But I realized that everything I was going through was being experienced tenfold by my friend (and trainer) Ben Wallace. His career had literally gone up in smoke. My first priority was to help get him back in business. Fortunately, the Meadowlands Winter Sale was coming up shortly. Although I couldn't completely compensate him for his terrible losses, I'd try to help. From that sale came Easy Lover Hanover who has been a terrific horse for both of us and although he can't replace those lost, he helped ease the pain.

From a personal standpoint, it was the first real interaction I had with Tony Alagna who had previously trained Easy Lover. Everything he told us about him was 100 per cent. I had watched Tony operate while racing against 'The Captain,' and liked what I had seen. When I started buying high-end yearlings he was an easy choice to send them to."

What's the smartest thing you've done in the business?

"Almost without exception I've been blessed to have been associated with good people, not only good horsemen, but just good folks. People I trust and with whom I enjoy spending time. Surround yourself with good people and good things will happen."

What's the dumbest thing you've ever done?

"Believing that I once thought I could be a top trainer/driver. Thankfully, I realized the folly of it in time and did what I was far better prepared to do."

What's been your greatest thrill in the business?

"I suppose that would be Atlanta winning the Hambletonian. The icing on that cake was Stay Hungry winning the Cane Pace on that same day."

Any big mistakes that stand out?

"I was the underbidder on Tall Dark Stranger. I really wanted him badly. I obviously regret not going on."

What was your biggest disappointment?

"Stay Hungry easily won the first heat of the Little Brown Jug and then they took him down for interference. They placed him fourth, which meant that he'd have the eight hole in the final heat. Tony Alagna wisely scratched him. The eight hole, especially going a second heat is a death knoll at Delaware, Ohio. Courtly Choice, the eventual winner, is a very good horse and proved it that day. But I feel certain that if Stay Hungry had not been disqualified, he would have won

the Jug. What made it especially bad is that if he had won the Jug, he would have been a Triple Crown champion since he also won the Cane and the Messenger.”

Are you in regular touch with your trainers?

“Some more than others. But I speak with them fairly regularly. All I ask of them is to tell me the truth – good or bad. I’m a big boy. I can handle bad news.”

Do you watch all your horses races?

“I certainly try to. If not in person, then via the internet. If at all possible, I don’t want to know how they did, before watching the race. Both my wife and I enjoy going to the racetrack, but are content to just watch from the comfort of our home.”

What don’t you like about the business?

“I suppose like most people in it, I hate the fact that most of the publicity we get is negative. It’s really a great and most enjoyable sport. It’s unfortunate that the only people who realize it are already in it.”

Let’s talk about Maverick...

“When I got my Kentucky catalog, I was most impressed with his page. In terms of pedigree there was nothing lacking. He is full-brother to Greenshoe, a horse that some

believe might have been the fastest trotter ever. I watched his video. It was spectacular. I spoke with Tony and he said that in his opinion he was the best colt in the entire sale. When I got to Kentucky I looked at him and fell in love. Most everybody I spoke with agreed with Tony. There was talk that he could bring a million dollars. To be quite truthful I didn’t think he’d bring quite that much. But, he checked all the boxes. There was nothing with which you could fault him. I went into the sale fairly certain that I would own him.”

What were you thinking when the bid was at a million dollars?

“I said to Tony who was sitting alongside of me, ‘I hope they stop bidding soon, because I’m running out of money.’”

Author’s note - I’ve been privileged to see Maverick at least once a week from early December until now. As Brad Grant said, “He checked all the boxes.” He continues to do so.

Have a question for The Curmudgeon?

Reach him by email at: hofmurray@aol.com.

CLICK HERE
To Share This Story



JOIN OUR GROWING AUDIENCE TODAY!

Harness Racing Update is the only harness racing publication that provides thorough and provocative coverage of the sport from across North America - all delivered to you within hours of the horses crossing the finish line.

HRU is the industry’s leading information source for owners, breeders, drivers, trainers, racing executives and fans.

HRU is published in PDF format and distributed by Internet link, via email, to industry professionals around the world, allowing them to keep up with everything that is going on in harness racing.

HRU covers it all – race news, results and entries, commentary from some of the sport’s best writers, sales results, video replays, major stakes handicapping, letters from readers and so much more.

SUBSCRIBE TODAY FOR FREE

WWW.HARNESSRACINGUPDATE.COM/SUBSCRIBE

Indiana opening up, but questions remain about where the racing industry fits

by James Platz

The COVID-19 pandemic has created a great deal of uncertainty in the racing industry, particularly with plans to return to action. Horsepeople and industry leaders in Indiana have awaited a date to point toward as stay-at-home orders were repeatedly extended. Friday afternoon, Governor Eric Holcomb unveiled his plan to reopen Indiana, but the measures leave the racing industry seeking further clarification.

According to Holcomb's five-stage plan, billed as "Back On Track Indiana", the state will slowly lift restrictions between now and July 4. There are milestones set for each stage. However, those in the racing industry were left guessing Friday as to just where Harrah's Hoosier Park and thoroughbred track Indiana Grand fit into the roadmap. The only time racing and/or gaming are defined in the plan is in Stage 2 (May 4-23) where casino operations are noted as remaining closed.

The question lies in how the state defines Hoosier Park and harness racing, as they are not identified outright in the plan. If the racetrack is categorized as an "entertainment business," it could open at 50 per cent capacity beginning June 16 as part of Stage 4. However, if harness racing is deemed a sports event, for example, Hoosier Park would remain closed in Stage 4 and would open instead on July 4 as part of the fifth and final stage. Jessica Barnes, director of racing and breed development for the Indiana Horse Racing Commission, said that the regulatory agency has reached out



to the governor's office for clarification on Hoosier Park and Indiana Grand opening. They have yet to receive a response.

Under the governor's plan, fairs are part of Stage 5 and will not open until July 4. The current Indiana Sired Fair Circuit schedule calls for nine programs leading up to that date. Fair championships are currently slated for mid-August at the Indiana State Fairgrounds, just over a month after the proposed opening.

Regardless of whether racing can begin June 16 or July 4, there is much work to do in the interim. Barnes explained that stakeholders have to address many issues. Some of the items to consider are 2020 program budgets and event schedules, updated racing calendars on the pari-mutuel and fair circuits, and when horses can ship in to Hoosier Park and the track can conduct qualifiers. Opening the casinos at Hoosier Park and Indiana Grand is also crucial, as revenue from those operations play a big part in funding the industry. The question is not whether there will be change this season, but to what extent the changes reshape racing.

"A lot of planning will take place once we get answers," said Barnes, who has fielded calls nonstop since Friday's announcement. "Everybody is waiting to get some guidance before doing anything."

CLICK HERE
To Share This Story



HRU EDITIONS FROM THE PAST



**Previous HRU editions are available any
time for FREE on the HRU website**

www.harnessracingupdate.com/archives

HOME

SUBSCRIBE

PAST EDITIONS

ADVERTISING

ABOUT US

January

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

February

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				

March

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

April

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						



Trish (Schaut) Soulsby – PR pro turned horse owner

by Victoria M. Howard

Growing up in the small town of Mt. Carroll, IL (pop. 2,000), harness racing was the exciting thing to go watch. If you were a member of the Schaut family, the 140-mile trip to Chicago to see a 10-race card of trotters and pacers was made frequently, fanning flames to one day become participants.

Richard and Evelyn Schaut were big harness racing fans and decided to take the plunge and buy a racehorse. They took partners on their first venture—a horse named Date Line.

The pacer had some success on the Illinois circuit at 3 and shortly after, achieved notoriety.

So it was no surprise that their three children, Nancy, Rick, and Trish were avid horse lovers and would make the exciting sport their life careers.

“My sister Nancy rode and showed horses,” said Trish. “Brother Rick used to tie lines to our barbecue grill and ‘play drive,’ and on my 5th birthday I got a Shetland pony – my first of many 4-legged kids I would own in my life.

“My dad built a cart for my pony and Rick would drive him around. That was it – my brother was hooked and became a trainer/driver, operating a stable in Illinois, Michigan, Florida, Ohio and Indiana throughout his career.”

He is still going.

“In my younger years, my first job was hanging numbers at Northville Downs,” Trish said, “but my ambitions were much greater. In a series of wearing different hats, I was a secretary to the horseman’s representative for the Michigan Harness Horsemen’s Association and worked as a charter at Hazel Park and Jackson Raceway before setting my sights on



Courtesy Trish (Schaut) Soulsby

Trish Schaut at The Meadows with Roger Huston (center) and Jerry Connors.

publicizing in the sport I loved.

“My big break came when I convinced management at DRC/Wolverine Harness Raceway to hire me in the publicity office.

“I earned \$12 a day working with Frank Schlessinger, and supplemented that by waitressing in the clubhouse at night. I submitted weekly stories to newspapers and trade publications to *The Horseman and Fair World* and *Harness Horse* magazines. Not long after I became the publicity director, handling all press related matters and writing articles.”

This was the beginning of a full-blown career in the sport that would continue for decades.

“I heard of an opening in the PR department at Hollywood Park. I really wanted the job and after my persistent numerous phone calls, I was hired. I started to do television – doing features to help educate people, such as, ‘No Shoes, No Horse: The art of shoeing a horse’; ‘What qualifying races are and their purpose’; and ‘The tattoo man: How a horse is identified.’ I also co-hosted a weekly show on KCSM with announcer Robin Burns during the meet.

“From there I worked alongside Dick Feinberg for Lloyd Arnold in the publicity department at Los Alamitos. Arnold pushed me to exercise my knowledge and educate the public. My job there was to write a cover story for each night’s racing program and interview horsemen with a human-interest slant. Never could a story appear two nights in a row.

"I wrote stories that were unique to harness programs. For example, a UC Davis student who worked with horses; a man who quit making draperies to make racing colors for the drivers; Suzanne Broughton – a major female figure in the California breeding business, and Jimmy Greene who ran the drivers' room, and literally more than a hundred others.

"Eventually, I did the circuit – Bay Meadows and Sacramento (Golden Bear Raceway) and even won a dash race in a Pacing Pony Race. What a thrill it was to get behind the gate and win."

After Trish left California, she moved to sunny Florida where she worked with brother Rick at Pompano Park Raceway.

"I got my trainers' license and that year a horse we purchased from Jerry Procino was sent to our stable. He was a pacing gelding named Fly Fly Jules who was named 'Claimer of the Year' at Pompano Park.

"Jules had been racing at The Meadowlands and needed some rehabilitation. He was and always will be one of my all-time favorites for he was a determined, gritty racehorse.

"Although Jules gave me lots of thrills, I also got my first heartbreak when he was sent out east and never heard from again. That's the part of the business I hate."

After leaving Florida, Trish went to work for Frank DeFrancis at Freestate Raceway, writing articles, operating the new Racetrack System known as RTS, working in the program department and chartered at night.

"I worked at Freestate for two summer meets. DeFrancis was one of the best bosses I ever worked for – even though he intimidated most people. I remember one time talking to him about publicity. He pointed to several magazines which had his photo on the cover and said, 'I AM the publicity!'

"My next move was back home to Illinois where I worked at both Sportsman Park and Maywood Park. I did double duty, working with Phil Langley in the race office, and the 'Clerk of Course' at Sportsman Park.

"At Maywood I was in the press box doing publicity and television. At night I did interviews in the winner's circle with the regulars and special guests like the great Herve Filion. I also handicapped and shared live televised tidbits called 'Maywood Alerts' with track announcer Tony Salvaro."

Trish then moved on to Pennsylvania joining The Meadows Network that was operated by Ladbrokes. She got a job as the color person and on-air talent, interviewing owners, trainers, and pioneers in the field of live racing broadcast from the paddock.

"At The Meadows we did a weekly show called 'Racing Wire-To-Wire'. The broadcast team consisted of inimitable announcer, Roger Huston, and the late handicapping guru, Jerry Earnstein. We also did simulcast shows from Delaware, Ohio, for the Little Brown Jug."

In 1996, Trish left The Meadows for perhaps her best assignment yet – marrying PGA professional golfer and horse owner Bruce Soulsby, whom she met while interviewing him on The Meadows Racing Network. She re-located to Powel, OH and gave birth to son J.R. who is now 21 and a student at Kent State.

"Harness racing has been a very important part of my life and the horses are my 'other' children – starting with my first horse, a homebred named Performer who was born in 1974," Trish said.

"The first horse I purchased in partnership with my husband (before marrying him) was a colt I picked out named Helsa's Sam. My brother Rick broke him in Florida and he won the Preview series for 2-year-olds before shipping to Ohio.

"When Helsa's Sam came back to Florida he captured the Artsplace Race at Pompano Park. Sam was definitely one of my heart horses."

That brings us to her all-time favorite.

"In 2014, Rick picked out and bid on a horse at the Ohio Select Sale – a \$7,500 trotting bred yearling named ATC Queenie. I can't say enough good things about what she is like on and off the track. Her statistics speak for itself.

"Her record is 1:53 on a 5/8's and 1:53.2 on a ½, and she's earned \$410,000 for us. My brother and I share custody of her. He has her during the winter months in Florida and I am her caretaker 7 days a week in the Steck Stable at Delaware County Fairgrounds in Ohio during the spring/summer months.

"Today, my husband, Bruce and I have so many nice horses – most notably former Levy stakes winner Domethatagain, who is now standing stud at Abby Stables in Ohio. (His first crop will be racing this year)

"We also co-own 4-year-old trotting filly and Hambletonian Oaks winner Whendovescry, Grand Swan Ostro Hanover, Springsteen, Air Force Hanover, Smalltownthrowdown, and others."

CLICK HERE
To Share This Story



Standardbred Retirement Foundation needs support; online auction now open

The Standardbred Retirement Foundation, (SRF) online auction is now open.

It may be accessed through the website at <https://www.adoptahorse.org>. The auction closes on Tuesday, May 5 at 8 p.m. and new items will be added daily. Donations are still much appreciated.

SRF presently has 383 trotters and pacers under its expense and care. With the annual social fundraisers cancelled due to the pandemic, SRF is in great need of help, donations to feed the horses. Your generous support is greatly appreciated. Gifts are tax-deductible

When SRF had to cancel its 28th annual golf outing due to COVID-19, it moved its annual auction to an earlier date.

The auction features about 150 items from solid sterling silver jewelry, bales of hay, swim packages for your horses, Airbnb trips, collectibles, and so much more. Please know that this is to raise much needed funds during COVID-19 so these horses can continue to be fed and be provided needed medical care.

SRF particularly thanks its sponsors who usually step up in such a great way for the golf. They generously moved their sponsorship to the auction. SRF appreciates all donated items and services. They are what makes an auction, and what feeds the horses. Our sponsors, and donors are recognized on our website.

SRF's staff time has been reduce by 75 per cent and coordinating from remote locations may have caused information to be in transit and not available on the auction. Some donated items may not be seen here as they will be included in other auctions and events in the future. All donations received are appreciated.

Some items require pick up so please check each individually. Most are new, some are pre-owned.

Donations are still being graciously accepted. Gifts are tax-deductible. For questions please contact Tammy at: (609) 738-3255, SRFHorsesandkids@gmail.com.

— **Standardbred Retirement Foundation**



Are You a Member?

Help support the effort to preserve and celebrate harness racing's history by joining the Harness Racing Museum & Hall of Fame.

Membership levels start at just \$35!

Make your check payable to the:
Harness Racing Museum and mail to:
240 Main St., Goshen, NY 10924
or **CLICK HERE** to join online at: harnessmuseum.com

HARNESS RACING MUSEUM & HALL OF FAME

OWN YOUR YEARLINGS' STEM CELLS!

The exciting world of Regenerative Medicine is coming back for the 3rd year in a row with more yearlings' stem cells stored than before.

Look for yearlings labeled "Stem Cells Stored" from these pioneering breeders:

- Winbak Farm, Blue Chip Farm,
- Concord Stud, Crawford Farm,
- Sugar Valley Farm, Cane Run Farm,
- LMN Bred Stable, Marvin Raber and more

CLICK HERE to learn more about the exciting advantages these breeders have invested in for you to own your yearlings' stem cells.

(313) 269-7606
tara@equi-stem.com
www.equi-stem.com

EQUI-STEM LLC
Preserving today for the equine athletes tomorrow

Photo: Dave Landry

Foal of the Week

photos by Patty Hogan

This colt from the first crop of Tactical Landing was foaled on April 25 at Fair Winds Farm in New Jersey. The colt, the sixth foal out of New York Sires Stakes winner Miss Fidget (\$137,000), is owned by Patty Hogan. Miss Fidget has produced racing aged Muscle Mass gelding Yuge (\$178,754), Muscle Mass gelding Brady Bunch (\$201,947) and RC Royalty filly Flotus (\$52,224) to date. Miss Fidget also has a Donato Hanover yearling filly named Melania and a weanling Cantab Hall colt named Bigly.

CLICK HERE

To Share This Story





**TWOS IN
TRAINING**

Casie Coleman



Casie Coleman in the HRU Twos in Training spotlight

Trainer Casie Coleman talked about her most promising 2-year-olds new, how she's coping with COVID-19, Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame inductee McWicked and much more. She also answered some viewer questions in the latest edition of HRU's Virtual Twos in Training series.

by Dave Briggs

HRU's Virtual Twos in Training series continued Saturday (May 2) featuring trainer Casie Coleman being interviewed live by Jaimi MacDonald.

Viewers interested in seeing the interview can do so on [YouTube here](#) and [Facebook here](#).

Special thanks to [Blue Chip Farms](#) and [Winbak Farm of Ontario](#) for sponsoring the Coleman video.

Coleman talked about her new Canadian Horse Racing Hall

of Fame inductee McWicked, how she's coping with COVID-19 and her most promising 2-year-olds. She also answered some viewer questions, described how she got her start in the business in British Columbia and the long list of stallions she trained.

HRU has confirmed a live HRU Virtual Twos in Training interview with Tony Alagna on Monday, May 4 beginning at 7 p.m. EDT with Heather Vitale and a live interview with trainer Noel Daley on Thursday, May 7 beginning at 7 p.m. EDT.

Special thanks to [Winbak stallion Artspeak](#) and [Crawford Farms](#) for sponsoring the Alagna video and to [Blue Chip Farms](#) for sponsoring the Daley video.

To make sure you don't miss a video, subscribe to HRU's YouTube page - for free - today.

CLICK HERE
To Share This Story





TWOS IN TRAINING

2020 - Casie Coleman





Somebeachsomewhere and Muscle Hill – A mirror image of two of the best ever

by Bob Heyden

Let's take a look at the similarities for what many think are the two best on their gaits ever – Somebeachsomewhere and Muscle Hill:

BOTH were 20-for-21 Lifetime

BOTH lost once by a neck

BOTH lost only at the Meadowlands

BOTH hold the all-time money per start marks for both a season and a career: 2009 Muscle Hill \$204,670 per start and 2008 Somebeachsomewhere \$163,208 per start; 2008-2009 Muscle Hill career \$155,874 per start; 2007-2008 Somebeachsomewhere career \$153,395 per start

BOTH raced at six different tracks.

BOTH were in world record events for a million dollars – 1:50.1 Muscle Hill's Hambletonian win; SBSW 1:47 flat in the Meadowlands Pace (he finished second to Art Official).

BOTH competed on the 2008 Meadowlands Breeders Crown card – the one and only time they were on the same track on the same night.

BOTH had the sires of their dams as million-dollar race winners at the Meadowlands. Where's The Beach was a son of Beach Towel, 1990 Meadowlands Pace winner and Yankee Blondie was by 1993 Hambletonian winner American Winner.

BOTH finished their careers with a Breeders Crown win.

BOTH won their Triple Crown tries – Muscle Hill the Kentucky Futurity and the Hambletonian and SBSW the Messenger.

Some of the most famous 1-2 combos ever

1. Magician and Moni Maker finishing 1-2 in the very first \$1 million Breeders Crown in 2000 – BOTH were bred by Fredericka and David Caldwell of Georgetown, KY.

2. Jeff Snyder is the only owner to finish 1-2 in the Meadowlands Pace – 2005 Rocknroll Hanover and Village

Jolt.

3. Jimmy Takter has twice gone 1-2 in the Hambletonian – 1997 with Malabar Man and Take Chances and 2014 with Trixton and Nuncio.

4. Brett Pelling has gone 1-2 in the Jug twice – 1998 Shady Character and Cam Knows Best and again in 2004 with Timesareachanging and Western Terror.

5. Billy and Tommy Haughton taking the 1-2 spots in the 1980 Hambletonian with Peter's prized colt Burgomeister. Tommy got second money with first heat winner Final Score, and became the youngest ever Hambletonian heat winner at 23.

6. Market Share and Chapter Seven in the Linda Toscano barn in 2012 going 1-2 in the HOY balloting, the first time this had happened since Stanley Dancer's Albatross and Super Bowl in 1972 did the same.

7. Jan Johnson and Berndt Lindstedt won the Oaks of 1988 with Nans Catch (dam of Moni Maker) and they ALSO teamed up with John Campbell to take the Hambletonian that same year with Armbrø Goal.

8. Bob McIntosh taking home the HOY in consecutive seasons with Artsplace and Staying Together in 1992-1993.

9. Foiled Again (\$7.6 million) and Won The West (\$3,939,836) as stablemates in the Burke Barn to end the 2000s and start the 2010s.

10. Brian Sears twice taking the Hambletonian and the Oaks on the same afternoon – 2009 Muscle Hill and Broadway Schooner and 2013 Royalty For Life and Bee A Magician.

11. Brian Brown with the leading money winners of 2017 – Downbytheseaside and Fear The Dragon.

12. Su Mac Lad 1965 and Cardigan Bay 1968 retiring as the richest trotter and pacer of all time to that stage as one-time stablemates in the Dancer barn.

13. Billy Haughton taking both the Cane and the Jug in 1955 with Quick Chief, but he couldn't win the Messenger because it did NOT start until the following year – and he did win it in 1956 with Belle Acton.

14. Team Allen in 1995 each won a Triple Crown race – Mike taking the Kentucky Futurity with C R Trackmaster and brother Rod the Yonkers Trot with C R Kay Suzie.

15. Walter Dear and Volomite finishing 1-2 – Walter Cox would also take the next two checks in the 1929 Hambletonian.

16. Alf Palema and King Conch going 1-2 in the 1992 Hambletonian for 31-year-old Per Eriksson – his third Hambletonian.

Driving milestones

Which drivers were the first to important milestones? Take a look:

200 wins – 1961 Bob Farrington 201

300 wins – 1964 Bob Farrington 312

400 wins – 1968 Herve Filion 407

500 wins — 1971 Herve Filion 543
600 wins — 1972 Herve Filion 605
700 wins — 1986 Mike Lachance 770
800 wins — 1989 Herve Filion 814
900 wins — 1,000 wins: 1998 Walter Case, Jr. 1076
1100 wins — 2007 Tim Tetrick 1189

Holy, Toledo! It's Wilt Chamberlain

In 1965, 15 of the top 22 most expensive yearlings sold that year were Hanovers. The top selling Hanover went to none other than Wilt "The Stilt" Chamberlain. Toledo Hanover — #3 on the season overall.

#3 Toledo Hanover — \$61,000
#4 Leahy Hanover — \$60,000
#5 Hartack Hanover — \$53,000
#6 Payson Hanover — \$46,000
#7 Starglow Hanover — \$40,000
#9 Romulus Hanover — \$35,000
#12 Magpie Hanover — \$30,800
#13 Tempest Hanover — \$30,000
#15 Bolger Hanover — \$30,000
#16 Liberace Hanover — \$27,000
#18 Marvel Hanover — \$27,000
#19 Boven Hanover — \$27,000
#20 Mombo Hanover — \$26,500
#21 Scully Hanover — \$26,000
#22 Pocono Hanover — \$26,000

Runner-ups...

... to Billy Haughton's eight straight earnings titles from 1952-1959:

1952 — James Jordan
1953 — Del Miller
1954 and 1955 — Joe O'Brien
1956 and 1957 — John Simpson, Sr.
1958 — Stanley Dancer
1959 — Clint Hodgins

... to John Campbell's national earnings titles:

1979 — Herve Filion
1980 — Carmine Abbatiello
1983 — Bill O'Donnell
1986-1987-1988 — Bill O'Donnell
1989-1990 — Mike Lachance
1992-1993-1994 — Jack Moiseyev
1995 — Mike Lachance
1998 — Mike Lachance
2000 — Luc Ouellette
2002 — Dave Miller

CLICK HERE
To Share This Story



After They Race, Give Them a Place

Accepting horses from racetracks
across the country.
NewVocations.org
winnie@horseadoption.com || (734) 320-7918
A 501(c)(3) Public Charity



www.sjohnsonphotos.com

BREAKING STRIDE

with TREY NOSRAC

Hoofprints in the Fog

Scene 5 (Freddy J)

by Trey Nosrac

The setting is a room in an Alzheimer's ward. A young couple, Mandy and Ryan, continue to visit Martin Kilbane, an elderly horse trainer. In his lucid periods, Martin describes events in his life with remarkable clarity. In earlier sessions, he has talked about serving in the US cavalry, the death of his young wife, and his life-long struggle with alcohol

[Scene 1](#) | [Scene 2](#) | [Scene 3](#) | [Scene 4](#)

SCENE 5

(intro music)

(ambient hospital sounds in the background, sound of a door closing)

MANDY: Sorry I'm late, work stuff. I picked up egg rolls (paper bag rustling).

RYAN: No problem, he's dozing. He's not going anywhere.

MANDY: How was he yesterday?

RYAN: Not good; he just sat in his wheelchair. I couldn't get him to talk. I honestly think he responds better to a female voice, especially yours.

MANDY: I'm glad someone listens to me, even if it's a poor old guy who has a mind that comes and goes. Hey, did you ever find out who Freddy was?

RYAN: Who?

MANDY: Freddy J. Just before he nodded off Monday, Martin said Freddy J helped him stop drinking?

RYAN: Oh, yeah, I forgot the name... No, yesterday was radio silence in here (insert sounds, yawning, coughing). Well, looks like he's joining us. Maybe you and your sugary voice can get

some action.

(pause)

MANDY: Hello, Martin, it's me, Mandy. How about we raise you up a little more (sound of motor on hospital bed). There, that's better. How are you feeling? Need anything?

MARTIN: (Raspy, sleepy) I'm fine. Thanks for coming, but don't you have better things to do?

MANDY: (sound of patting pillow, etc.) Here, take a sip of juice (slurping sound). How about a bit of egg roll?

MARTIN: No, I'm not hungry.

MANDY: Last time, you were talking about your trouble with alcohol. Do you remember?

MARTIN: (tired) No. Sorry. I can't remember.

MANDY: You told us about waking up in a hospital, going to a fellowship meeting, and about the rich owner, Mister Dobbs, who helped you, and....

MARTIN: (interrupts, brightens) Euley...Euley K Dobbs?

MANDY: Yes, yes. That's him. You were also telling us about someone named Freddy.

MARTIN: (stronger) Freddy J, who worked with horses.

MANDY: Yes, yes, that's him, where did you meet?

MARTIN: (pause) At a meeting (chuckles). He wasn't more than five feet tall. When he stood to make his pledge, he didn't have far to go. He was the first to talk that night. Freddy said he'd been in the program for four years and hadn't stumbled. So we clapped our hands.

MANDY: What made Freddy special?

MARTIN: When Freddy began his talk, it seemed aimed at me. He said, days at a racetrack are up early and hard work, but lots of days we put the last horse away around lunchtime. That leaves a long afternoon with a lot of time for drinking. There's booze in front of you from morning to night. Then, if you race and your horse wins the race, you celebrate. Hell, owners think they are doing us a favor after a win by sending back a case of beer or a fifth, but those celebrations were a big problem for some of us. But on the backstretch he said that if folks did the work and didn't make too big a mess, they could live their lives working with the horses and get by. He said he did it for a long time.

MANDY: Did Freddy become your sponsor?

MARTIN: No, no, he was just in town to race, but he told me



Listen to this story here



something I never forgot. We were standing by the coffeepot and I asked him how he did it, how many times till he got it right? Freddy said he slipped back plenty of times. It was hot that night, and he said we should go outside and sit at the picnic bench behind the church. When we sat, I asked him what made it stick. He surprised me by saying that it was a horse.

RYAN: A horse? Does everything in your life circle back to horses?

MARTIN: Pretty much. Freddy said that it was a horse and a change he had to make in his way of living. He said change ain't easy on the backstretch.

MANDY: How did a horse help?

MARTIN: (Martin sighs) Freddy said the bottom for him came on the floor of the church down the street from Maywood racetrack. One night he stumbled to the steps of the church, so drunk he could hardly stand. The pastor found him in the morning, got him up, and took him inside for coffee.

MANDY: (Smugly) He found religion and bingo...a miracle.

RYAN (scolding) Come on Mandy.

MARTIN: Freddy said he broke down like a baby and poured out to the pastor how the night before he let drink hurt his work. He said he almost got a horse and driver killed because he didn't fasten the gear on the way he should have. He didn't check to see if the horse was rigged right before they went out on the track. There was an accident. Freddy said that he had let people down all his life, but that was the first time he ever let a horse down. He said horses grow to trust people like him and me; they don't ask much. He knew his being drunk could have killed that mare. When that horse went down on the track, it bothered him more than if he had let a person down. When they led her back to the stall, he took off her tack and spent an hour just looking into her big brown eyes. Then he went drinking, bad drinking. He said that accident and that horse put him on the steps of that church the next morning.

MANDY: That night was Freddy's last straw, rock bottom, tipping point, whatever you call it?

MARTIN: He claims it was. He looked me in the eye and said that it took that horse to lead him to the bottom. When the pastor got him up, they talked a bit and agreed that he had to live outside the racetrack. He scraped together enough to rent a room in town. From then on, after he put the last horse away, he walked out of the racetrack gate

every day, right away. Doing wrong to that horse and finding a new place to live changed things for him.

MANDY: I have a few friends who are addicts. I wish kicking it was that easy.

MARTIN: (sharply) It wasn't that easy for Freddy, it ain't easy for nobody in that rut. Freddy said it was the hardest thing he ever did. Not so much kicking the booze, like all of us he was sick and tired of being sick and tired, it was the people he missed, the horses, the talk, the life. He said his shabby little room got real small and real quiet. He went to meetings three, four, five times a week. Slowly, he started getting a little more confidence and met a few nice people who did not drink. Every day was a little better. The horses, the racing, it was still in his blood. He loved the horses, the people, and the game. He loved them more than ever. He said he would never leave the smell of morning coffee and liniment, the sounds, the excitement, the sweat, and hard work. He couldn't see himself doing anything else. He said he would always have them, but now he had more. Then he said that I could get off that floor, too. The way Freddy said it, I could almost believe it.

MARTIN: (Yawns) Now how is that for a story Miss Mandy?

MANDY: Interesting. But that was HIM, that was Freddy's story. What about YOU Martin, how did YOU get sober?

MARTIN: It's hard to believe, but it was another horse. A horse did it for me too. I can still see that horse in my dreams.

(fade music)

CLICK HERE
To Share This Story



WOODBINE STANDARD BRED EARLY PICK

\$75,000 GUARANTEED 15% TAKEOUT

SELECT THE WINNERS OF THE FIRST FIVE CONSECUTIVE RACES

#BetWoodbineSB
Know When To Take The Reins. ResponsibleGambling.org

WOODBINE STANDARDS



Listen to this story here



HRU NEWS



News in harness
racing, notes and
announcements

www.harnessracingupdate.com

Keystone USHWA awards presented; Huston given highest honor

Roger Huston, the Communicators Hall of Fame member who ended a 44-year announcing career at The Meadows racetrack last November but continues harness involvement in his native state of Ohio, has been voted the highest honor annually given by the Keystone Chapter of the United States Harness Writers Association (USHWA), the Mary Lib Miller Award, named for the lifelong helpmate of “Mr. Harness Racing,” Delvin Miller, founder of The Meadows – a couple Roger knew quite well.

Huston got his start in broadcasting at a radio station in his native Xenia OH; his uncle Don was the announcer at Lebanon Raceway and some nearby fairs, which became Roger’s introduction to going behind the microphone in the sport. Besides announcing at The Meadows, Roger will in 2020 calling at Delaware OH at the Little Brown Jug for the 53rd straight year, and he has been the announcer at several western Pennsylvania fairs.

Besides his new role as “brand ambassador” for the Ohio horsemen’s association, Huston continues to serve as a Director of USHWA for the Keystone Chapter (for whom he served as founding president), and he was the Director with the most years of USHWA membership (52) at the association’s Florida annual meetings in February.

About the only harness racing “force” that has been going longer than Roger is Hanover Shoe Farms, which again was voted Pennsylvania Breeder of the Year. The Shoe Farms has been the sport’s leading breeder every year since records started to be kept in 1948, and while recording their 72nd straight win they established a single-season high for the winnings of their produce, \$34.0M.

Another repeat winner is George Napolitano Jr., who was voted his second straight Pennsylvania Driver of the Year award and fourth in the 12 years the award has been given. Napolitano, who recorded his 10,000th career victory at The Downs at Mohegan Sun Pocono on Oct. 12, won 638 Pennsylvania races between The Downs (337), where he was the top sulky winner for the eighth straight year, and Harrah’s

Philadelphia (301). “George Nap” was third in all of North America last year with 651 driving wins.

Kim Hankins, the long-time executive director of the Meadows Standardbred Association and one of the most well-rounded and well-respected individuals in harness racing, was named a Friend of Pennsylvania Harness Racing for his leadership of his horsemen’s group in such diverse areas as racetrack negotiations, marketing, and intrastate partnerships and communications. A long-time top horseman in Illinois for many years, Hankins is currently 1st Vice President of Harness Horsemen International, and served for many years on the board of directors of the U.S. Trotting Association.

Two smaller stables raised their profiles in 2019 to a degree that they were voted awards by Keystone USHWA. Long-time Meadows horseman Bill Bercury, campaigning a five-horse stable most of the year, saw his barn earn over \$590,000 for the sixth straight year (with only 123 starts), and he posted the #1 trainers percentage in North America for those with fewer than 300 starts, a .580 “batting average.” The constant sharpness and success shown by his stable earned Bercury Pennsylvania Trainer of the Year honors.

Bob Rougeaux III campaigns the horses of the Brocious Racing Stable of the late Harold “Lefty” Brocious, and the “Rocky Top” stable, as they style themselves, sent out four of the eight blanket winners at the Pennsylvania Fair Banquet for having amassed the most points in their respective divisions during the twenty-stop fair season in the Keystone state. As with Bercury, “quantity” trumped “quality” here, and the Rougeaux/Brocious “team” were named the Small Stable of the Year in Pennsylvania.

Missy Rothfuss, the outrider at The Meadows, is this year’s recipient of the Keystone Unsung Hero Award. Rothfuss started her career while a senior in high school and has been at The Meadows 24 years. She is the first responder when accidents happen on the racetrack, often anticipating problems and arriving before anyone else at the site of trouble, and because of her record is well-respected by Meadows horsemen. Between races Missy is meeting fans, letting them pet her equine partner, and educating them about harness racing. She has ridden in Breeders Crown events and also is the head outrider at The Little Brown Jug in Delaware, OH. And after many years toiling in semi-anonymity, Missy is not only receiving this award but was also recently featured in Vicki Howard’s “Superstar Females of Harness Racing” column in HRU ([full story here](#)).

The now-11-year-old pacer Atta Boy Dan started his season in the western part of the state, but the record he put up while operating at Pocono was the major contributor to his being named Pennsylvania Horse of the Year, for horses making over half their starts within the borders of Pennsylvania. The winner of over \$900,000 lifetime won 19

times (earning over \$200,000) during 2019, the most victories of any horse in the United States, and he set an unofficial record by being claimed in fourteen consecutive starts.

The state writers initiated a Keystone Chapter Member of the Year this past season to recognize outstanding efforts made by those within their ranks, and in this inaugural season a recognition will be given to a member in both the western and the eastern parts of the state. Chris Gooden, who has been a Smallsreed Photo award winner in the national competition for the last two years, was selected as the top Keystoner from the west; on the eastern side, the honors went to Jennifer Starr, the multitasking and tireless racing marketing manager at The Downs at Mohegan Sun Pocono.

Ordinarily, the Keystone USHWA award winners would have had a moment in the spotlight as they received their awards in a trackside ceremony. But with the coronavirus throwing unprecedented uncertainty into everyone's schedules, it was thought to send the recipients their trophies through delivery, before the shine of their 2019 accomplishments became too faded by time.

—*USHWA Keystone Chapter*

Huston, Settlemoir, Gangle on COSA TV tonight

The legendary Roger Huston, the long-time voice of the Little Brown Jug, will join the Meadowlands' Jason Settlemoir and Raceway at Western Fair District's Greg Gangle on COSA TV's Facebook Live show tonight (May 3) at 7:30 p.m. (ET).

Huston, who retired from his full-time announcing duties at The Meadows in Pittsburgh this past October, has enjoyed many memorable moments from calling harness racing's premier pacing event over the past 52 years. He will talk Little Brown Jug memories and much more on the show.

Settlemoir and Gangle are anxiously awaiting the return of racing to their respective venues and will join Huston along with host Greg Blanchard to discuss that and much more.

Viewers will once again have the chance to ask questions and can do so ahead of time by submitting them through COSA's Facebook Page. They can also take part in the night's poll question and trivia where one winner will be drawn for a \$25 COSA gift card. The Facebook Live show will be aired on both the COSA Facebook page and on the Standardbred Canada website.

—*COSA*

Feedback!

Sponsored by

PREFERRED EQUINE

BREEDINGS FOR SALE

[Click here](#) to view what's available. Looking for other stallions? Call and let us see if we can help!

PREFERREDEQUINE.COM | (914) 773-7777

Loved the Ray Schnittker interview

I loved seeing Ray (Schnittker) and Heather (Vitale) ([replay here](#)), best video ever. I like seeing Ray's thoughts on harness racing. He doesn't really worry about kissing the right ass.

—*Mark Behl / Aiken, SC*

Schnittker's beer drinking a distraction

I enjoyed the frankness of the overall interview with Ray Schnittker, but the three cans of Bud Light were a major distraction. My thoughts are the interview should be with a relaxed atmosphere, but with some guidelines in place. The

beer seems to affect the credibility of the whole process. It would be difficult to imagine such an interview with D. Wayne Lucas or the late Billy Haughton. Respectfully submitted.

—*Dave Pitts / West Chester, PA*

Kay responds to Gurfein

Mr. Gurfein, thank you for mentioning my comment in the latest edition of HRU ([full story here](#)). Unfortunately, although you categorized me as a chronic complainer, you did not refer to the specifics of my concern about racing a 2-year-old. My opinion is based on the science of the matter. Such experts as Dr. Deb Bennett, PhD, a widely known and respected authority on the physical development of the equine has said, and I quote, "the training and racing of two years olds is a recipe for disaster," and Dr. Bennett backs this up with clear and convincing science. To ignore the science because, as you put it, "the harness horse is a hale and hearty breed," advances no legitimate argument at all. Thanks for reading this.

—*Gary Kay / Attorney / CPA / thoroughbred licensed trainer / harness owner / licensed NJ off-track farm owner*

CLICK HERE
To Share This Story

