

DOWN THE STRETCH

CANADA'S MOST INFORMATIVE AND ENTERTAINING HORSE RACING NEWSPAPER

Breeders' Cup
Page 4

Breeders' Crown
Page 14

WE'RE BACK IN PRINT!

Cecchin Open House
Dance Smartly
Ajax Downs
Hugo Dittfach
Melbourne Cup

Page 2
Page 5
Page 6
Page 8
Page 8

Humour
Woodbine Stakes
Pink Lloyd
H C Holiday's DQ
Scott Zeron

ALSO INSIDE

Page 9
Pages 10 - 12
Page 12
Page 13
Page 14

thestable.ca
Garnet Barnsdale
Chantal Sutherland
Paul Peters
Tommy Larocque

Page 15
Page 15
Page 16
Page 17
Page 18

OSS Gold Superfinals
James MacDonald
Tony O'Sullivan
Oddities & Entities

Page 19
Page 24
Page 26
Page 27

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Cecchin Open House



The timing could not have been more perfect. On Sunday, October 17, John and Kathy Cecchin held an Open House at their farm in Arthur. The night before, their star horse, Desperate Man looked brilliant, carrying Trevor Henry first over to a convincing victory in the 3-Year-Old Colt and Gelding OSS Super Finals. Five weeks before, Desperate Man had stormed up late in the stretch to capture the \$1 Million Pepsi North America Cup over the best pacers in Canada.

Kathy is the trainer, and she had an extra incentive to see another big win from her horse.

"My mom was here from out west," she says. "She is 87, so we were really hoping he could put in another great performance. It was a lot to ask, but we're awfully proud of him. We had a lot of faith in Trevor to make the right decisions. We thought he was in a good spot. We thought he was ready."

There's no evidence that it was John's money that knocked down the odds on Desperate Man from 3-1 to 9-5 in the final flash, but he was very confident he had the best horse in the race.

"He trained very well on Wednesday," he said. "Before the North America Cup, we took him to Grand River and the results were very



good. He trained about the same last Wednesday and the results again were very good."

The most attractive story about Desperate Man – and it has been told often – is how John and Kathy paid \$20,000 for him, then gifted half the horse to daughter Nikki and her new husband, Paul Davies. At the Open House, *Down The Stretch* teased Davies, wondering if he realized how fortunate he was, getting the girl and the horse in the same deal.

"Yeah, I guess I made the right move there," he laughs. "It was a good gift. We were going to buy into it anyway, but they insisted on it being a gift. It has worked out so far."

What was John hoping for in the North America Cup?

"If he was 5th, I would have been more than happy to get a cheque," he says. "He doesn't need to win another one, but it's always fun when he does."

Nikki watched the race with her mom, Kathy.

"First over is a tough trip," she said. "But the 6-horse field helped, and we cheered all we could down the stretch."

Nikki likes the idea of Desperate Man continuing to race.

"He's just \$14,000 shy of that million mark," says Nikki. "That's basically one more start."

As a 2-year-old, Desperate Man won 3 OSS Golds, and that made the phones ring in the Cecchin household. There might have been some disagreement.

"If it had been up to me, he would have been long gone," says John.

Fortunately, it wasn't up to him.

"We never put a price on the horse," says Kathy. "It didn't matter what the offers were, he was never going to leave here."

Unlike a thoroughbred, a standardbred horse can thrive on regular competition. Just two weeks after his stunning North America Cup victory, Desperate Man finished 3rd in an OSS Gold, and a fortnight after that, rallied from 15 lengths out for 4th place behind Mayhem Hanover in a \$28,000 pace.

Since he's a gelding, Desperate Man won't have any girlfriends or offspring. The good news is that racing fans can look forward to him week after week.

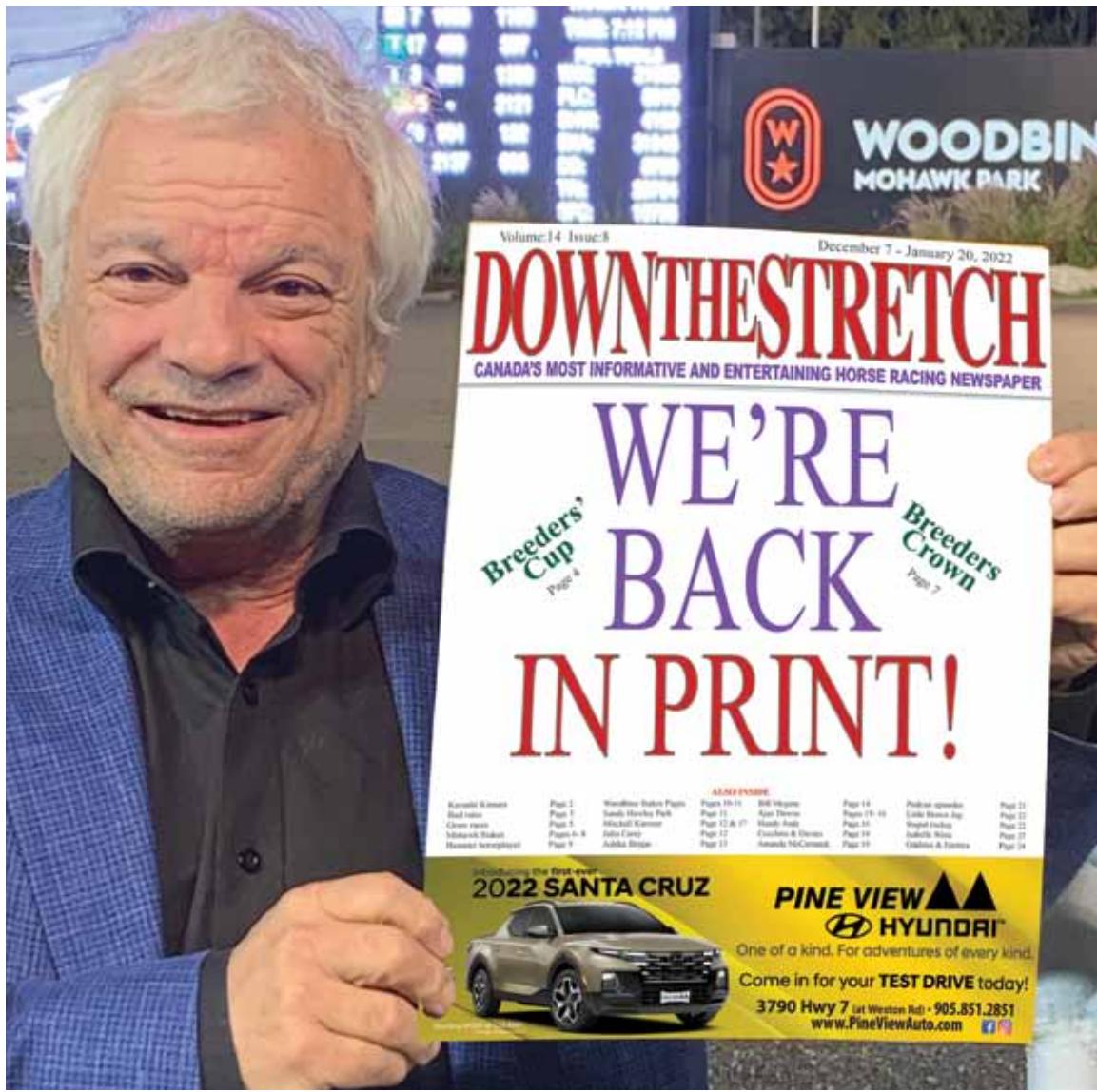
"He's a Saturday night horse," says John. "If he can keep us out of the soup line for a couple years, we'll be happy."

A can of Campbell's chunky chicken soup goes for about \$3. The Cecchins don't need to worry.



Niki and Paul Davies

THE EDITOR DRIVES HOME HIS POINT



The experience of *Down The Stretch* has not been as terrible as many other business initiatives severely compromised by the pandemic, but we were very much a microcosmic example. Except for a handful of subscribers, this publication is distributed for free. Racing fans have found us in the bins at Woodbine and Mohawk and Ajax Downs, and if we fill up Garnet Barnsdale's tank, at various smaller harness tracks throughout the province. In March of 2020, we printed thousands of copies of our second issue in our 13th year. We put them in the bins at Woodbine, and the very next day it was announced that no fans would be allowed into the tracks.

For several months, there was no point in publishing on real paper. We continued to create *Down The Stretch* and encouraged readers to find us online at www.downthestretchnewspaper.com.

But it was hardly the same. It used to thrill me to go to the track a few days after filling the bins to see that all the papers were gone. Racing fans liked the idea of a free paper that reflected their view that horse racing is a thrilling and fascinating sport. It is true that newspapers are becoming

dinosaurs and the younger generation is finding its material online, but this old-school newspaper editor (like most of my generation) likes to turn the pages of a real paper.

So colour me delighted that we're back in print for December, after 13 issues that were never stacked in our *Down The Stretch* receptacles. Let me express gratitude to so many who responded to the *Save Our Paper* campaign by contributing paid ads: Woodbine Entertainment, COSA, the HBPA, Standardbred Canada, Ontario Racing Management, Ken Middleton, Tommy Larocque, The Pineview Auto Group, Sam-Son Farm, Ajax Downs, Colebrook Farms, and leading jockey Kazushi Kimura.

Thanks to the generosity of the afore-mentioned, you have in your hands many pages of exciting, informative, and sometimes mind-blowing horse racing material.

Let's get specific. Since our last issue, the Breeders' Cup and Breeders Crown extravaganzas were conducted (don't concern yourselves with how many times the editor and associate editor Susan Nash argued over which Breeders has an apostrophe and which doesn't). There was an outrageously egregious wagering decision at

the Breeders' Cup (page 4) and a pair of wins by Scott Zeron in the Breeders Crown (page 14). On page 5, Perry Lefko reminisces about a Breeders' Cup won by Sam-Son Farm's great Canadian filly Dance Smartly.

More than 30 years ago, I hit the biggest racetrack payoff of my life when I bet a triactor putting 30-1 shot, Royal Centurian on top. Royal Centurian was ridden by Hugo Dittfach and when he brought in the winner, my tri paid \$6,996.50. Strangely, that was the thought that struck me first when I learned that Dittfach had passed away (page 8).

You will find the story on page 13 beyond incredible. Horse owner Ivan Dalos is fighting a disqualification of his horse, H C Holiday. The 3-year-old won a maiden race in June, then was kicked out 3 weeks later when it was discovered he had raced *without* Lasix. You got that right – a horse owner punished because he put no medication into his horse.

We have 3 jam-packed pages of Woodbine Stakes (pages 10-12), including another added money score by the extraordinary Pink Lloyd.

Garnet Barnsdale is a valuable resource to *Down The Stretch*. On page 15, you will grin at the picture of King Garnet, and you will be provoked by his suggestions to make the harness racing program more informative to fans. On the same page is a story about thestable.ca and their successful gamble, supplementing a 2-year-old trotter to a Stakes race at Dover Downs in Delaware.

Tommy Larocque is our Standardbred Owner of the Month. *Down The Stretch* has profiled over 100 harness horse owners, but when I met him one night at Mohawk Park, I told him he was unlike all the others. Find out why on page 18. I am equally pleased with our Thoroughbred Owner of the Month, Paul Peters (page 17). Not only does Peters march us through a lifetime of horse racing passion, but he wrote the piece himself, freeing me up for more important things (changing the cat litter, watching the \$100,000 Pyramid, hacking into Jim McKenny's HPI account and betting the double at Del Mar).

Over the past several years, we have often referred to Chantal Sutherland and we are doing so again, not because we suffer from an arrested development, but because the Canadian jockey is doing wonderful things at Gulfstream (page 16).

Equally noteworthy is the year that harness driver James MacDonald is having. Very few of us would have predicted in January that MacDonald would win the drivers' title at Mohawk Park, but with a month left on the schedule, he's a cinch (page 19).

This issue also has a wrap from Jennifer Morrison of the quarter horse racing season at Ajax Downs (page 6), a full page of silly stuff on page 9, and our regular Oddities and Entities (page 27) which has proved for every issue of the last 14 years that there is no shortage of mind-bending, brain-twisting, head-shaking occurrences in this sport we call horse racing.

As many of the contributing messages advise, have a great December, enjoy your holidays in whatever manner you celebrate, and shrug off 2021 with the thought that 2022 can only be better.

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Massive Screw-Up at the Breeders' Cup

There was simply no precedent for what happened on the first day of the Breeders' Cup race at Del Mar on November 5. The last of 5 Breeders' Cup races – all for 2-year-olds – was the \$1 million Juvenile Turf at a mile on the lawn. As the horses were being loaded into the gate, Albahr reared up in Gate 2, throwing his front legs over the top of the stall, momentarily putting jockey Frankie Dettori in peril.

"He freaked out and put his legs across the gate," said Dettori. "Thanks to the boys who got me out of there. It could have been nasty."

It got pretty nasty for the bettors. Albahr, owned by Godolphin and trained by Charles Appleby, had to be scratched after that calamity. The bettors had installed #1, Modern Games, also a Godolphin/Appleby horse, as the favourite, but as the gate crew extracted his stablemate Albahr out of his predicament, it was suggested that Modern Games had sustained an injury, so the stewards announced that he had to be scratched.

However, upon closer inspection, Modern Games had not been injured and was announced fit to race. Since the stewards had already scratched him, the ruling was that he would be allowed to run as a non-betting interest. Why he simply was not re-instated on the tote board is the question of the year.

Modern Games got an ideal trip from William Buick, saved room early along the hedge, came out 4-wide in the stretch and opened up to win by 1 ½ lengths at the wire. The second place horse was Tiz The Bomb ridden by Brian Hernandez, and it was very much as if a bomb had gone off among the bettors.

Modern Games won but no one cashed



Probably thousands of players were furious that the horse they had bet had won and they weren't allowed to cash. Anyone holding a live Pick 3 ticket on Modern Games was justifiably irate – the first winner had paid \$21.80, so a win by Modern Games would have rendered a handsome return. They had successfully selected the winning combination, seen all 3 of their horses win and were left holding useless tickets. After being a pari-mutuel scratch, Modern Games' win did not allow those who had bet on him to cash. However, Godolphin, owner of Modern Games, was awarded the first place cheque of \$520,000.

Making this more bizarre, when Albahr was scratched, all live Pick 3 and Pick 4 tickets got the favourite in the 10th race. Modern Games was the favourite until he was declared a non-participant in the betting. After all the confusion, the favourite ended up being Dakota Gold, who finished

5th. Aside from the fact that this was a great argument for consolation payoffs for scratched horses in exotic bets, it was incredibly cruel for anyone who had a live bet on Modern Games to be told their ticket was worthless.

Tiz The Bomb paid \$17.60. The double onto a horse that was clearly second paid \$65.40 for a \$2 bet. A \$1 Pick 3 was worth \$341.60, and a .50 Pick 4 returned \$419.25. Those who cashed were ecstatic for their remarkable turn of luck. Those who were denied suffered one of the greatest wagering insults in horse racing history.

As the legendary horseplayer, Ricky Ricardo might say about the stewards,

"You got a lot of splaining to do!"

Saturday's Mammoth Card



Marche Lorraine's nose got it!

Saturday's Breeders' Cup races – 9 of them – were much less controversial. There was virtually no Canadian DNA on the tote board, but there were certainly some intriguing story lines.

The 7th race of the day, and the 3rd Breeders' Cup contest, was the \$2,000,000 Filly and Mare Turf at a mile and 3/8ths. In the entire 38 year history of these races, no Japanese horse had ever won, but that changed when Yuga Kawada delivered the 5-year-old mare, Loves Only You by half a length over 29-1 shot, My Sister Nat (José Ortiz). Loves Only You is owned by the DMM Dream Club and trained by Yoshito Yahagi, and she produced a \$10.60 win ticket. The Japanese would soon have a second reason to celebrate.

The 9th race was the \$2,000,000 Cup Mile with a huge field of 13, and when William Buick got Space Blues up by half a length at the wire, it was the 2nd win in two days for Godolphin and trainer Charles Appleby, but the first in which those who backed the horse were paid off. Space Blues improved to 11 wins from 19 races and paid \$6.20.

The most thrilling of the 14 races on the weekend at Del Mar was the \$2,000,000 Distaff at a mile and an eighth. When all the favourites went much too fast (:21.84, :44.07, 1:09.70), the race set up perfectly for the late arrivals. Dunbar Road (José Ortiz) had rallied from 10th around the far turn to take the lead with maybe 50 yards to go, but Marche Lorraine and Oisin Murphy had slingshot from 9th and was steaming down the centre of the track. The two horses hit the wire together. Various replays provided no conclusive proof of a winner, but the photo finish camera showed that the 5-year-old mare, Marche Lorraine had prevailed by a slender nose. This was the second win on the afternoon for a Japanese horse. Marche Lorraine is

owned by U Carrot Farm, and she gave trainer Yoshito Yahagi his 2nd Breeders' Cup trophy. Here's the best part – Marche Lorraine was a dime short of 50-1, with her 9th win in 21 starts. She paid \$101.80 to win.

The \$2,000,000 Breeders' Cup Turf at a mile and a half had 14 competitors, including Channel Maker, a horse bred by Ivan Dalos' Tall Oaks Farm. This was the only CanCon on the second day of races, and while Luis Saez had Channel Maker at 55-1 on the lead after 1 ¼ miles, the 7-year-old had no final punch and finished 5th. In the deep stretch, Broome and Irad Ortiz seemed home and cooled, leading by open lengths, but Yibir, under William Buick came cascading way out in the middle of the track, a lightning bolt from 13th down the backstretch to find the finish line by a half length in 2:25.90, setting the record for 10 furlongs on the lawn at Del Mar.

Yibir is a 3-year-old gelding winning for the 6th time in 12 races. He gave Buick, trainer Charles Appleby, and Godolphin their 3rd championship race on the weekend, making them the biggest winners. Yibir paid \$19 and we can only hope that some of the bettors who were cheated out of a payoff on Modern Games cashed in on this one.

The massive weekend of horse racing culminated in the \$6,000,000 Breeders' Cup Classic at 1 ¼ miles. More than \$2.4 million was wagered on Essential Quality who went off at 9-5. Essential Quality had won the Belmont, Jim Dandy and Travers Stakes in the previous 5 months, so clearly that confidence by the bettors was justified. But Knicks Go is a remarkable horse. Ridden by Joel Rosario,



Knicks Go

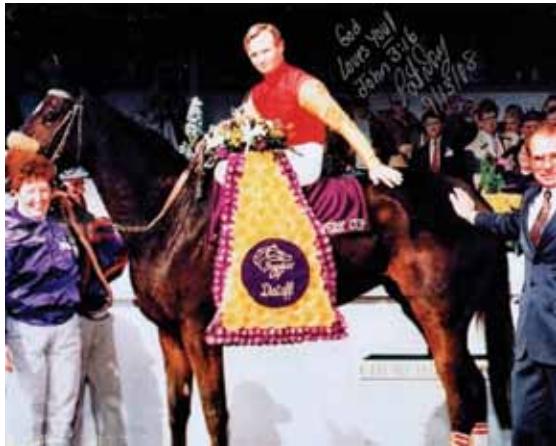
the plan was obviously to go as fast as possible for as long as possible. Knicks Go sizzled past the half in :45.77, hit the ¾ in 1:10.04, and was timed in 1:35.28 for the mile. Lesser horses would have needed a nap by then, but Knicks Go just kept on galloping. He was 3 lengths the best at the wire in a sensational 1:59.57, just .46 off the track record. Medina Spirit (John Velazquez) was 2nd and Essential Quality was 3rd. Trained by Brad Cox for the Korea Racing Authority, Knicks Go has accomplished something unprecedented. Last year, he set insane fractions to destroy a field of 12 in the Breeders' Cup Mile, setting the track record of 1:33.85 at Keeneland in the process. No horse in Breeders' Cup history has ever won the Mile then the Classic. Knicks Go won for the 10th time in 24 starts and paid \$8.40.

Even though millions of dollars were refunded in the Modern Games fiasco, the overall wagering of over \$154 million for the two days of racing is a Breeders' Cup record. The Saturday card at Del Mar attracted bets totalling \$112,070,000.

Race	Winner	Jockey	Mutuel	Race	Winner	Jockey	Mutuel
\$1M Juvenile Turf Sprint	Twilight Gleaming	Irad Ortiz	\$12.40	\$1M Dirt Mile	Life Is Good	Irad Ortiz	\$3.40
\$2M Juvenile Fillies	Echo Zulu	Joel Rosario	\$3.60	\$2M Filly & Mare Turf	Loves Only You	Yuga Kawada	\$10.60
\$1M Juvenile Fillies Turf	Pizza Bianca	José Ortiz	\$21.80	\$2M Sprint	Aloha West	José Ortiz	\$24.60
\$2M Juvenile Colts	Corniche	Mike Smith	\$4.80	\$2M Turf Mile	Space Blues	William Buick	\$6.20
\$1M Juvenile Colts Turf	Modern Games	William Buick	Purse only	\$2M Distaff	Marche Lorraine	Oisin Murphy	\$101.80
\$1M Filly & Mare Sprint	Ce Ce Victor	Espinoza	\$14.40	\$2M Turf	Yibir	William Buick	\$19.00
\$1M Turf Sprint	Golden Pal	Irad Ortiz	\$7.00	\$6M Classic	Knicks Go	Joel Rosario	\$8.40

Dance Smartly's Breeders Cup Win, 1991

By Perry Lefko for Woodbine Entertainment



November 2 was the 30-year anniversary of Dance Smartly's historic accomplishment, becoming the first Canadian-bred and Canadian-owned horse to win a Breeders' Cup race.

It was a moment that stood out for various reasons, and I remember it well because I was there that day and wrote about it in my book *The Greatest Show On Turf: A History Of The Breeders' Cup*.

Ernie Samuel, the successful steel businessman known as the Big E. and patriarch of Sam-Son Farm, had done just about everything in the sport, but one thing missing was a victory in the annual world championship of racing.

The closest he came happened in 1987 when homebred Regal Classic placed a distant second to Success Express in the \$1 million Juvenile at Hollywood Park. In 1990, Dance Smartly placed third in the \$1 million Juvenile Fillies at Belmont Park in New York.

When Dance Smartly returned to the Breeders' Cup a year later for the \$1 million Distaff, 18 horses that were either Canadian-bred or Canadian-based had come up short in Breeders' Cup races.

By Danzig, out of the mare Classy 'N Smart, Dance Smartly had the physical appearance of a colt – stout and robust. With trainer Jim Day and jockey Pat Day, the big, dark bay filly waltzed through the Canadian Triple Crown, becoming the first female to sweep the series in the modern era.

She followed up on her Triple Crown feat beating male horses in the \$1 million Molson Export Million Stakes at Woodbine. How Dance Smartly would fare away from her home base would be the salient issue.

Horsemen from the U.S. had mixed opinions about the filly.

"I've yet to see her run hard," said trainer Carl Nafzger. "I've only seen her win easily."

Wayne Lukas, never shy about expressing his opinion, offered what could best be described as a backhanded compliment.

"I think Dance Smartly is going to find this is area code 502, and it's a lot different than Canada," he said. "I think she's a good filly in a year where it's not that tough a Distaff. Therefore a good, solid filly – not a great one – can win this year. She might be that. I don't see her as an absolute, mortal lock, a single in the Pick 7."

Pat Day, an American who had become one of the top riders in North America, picked up the mount on Dance Smartly earlier in the year when Woodbine-based jockey Brian Swatuk missed a scheduled workout with the filly.

The fact Pat Day could ride any horse in Canada while Canadian-based jockeys could only ride Canadian-based horses south of the border because of U.S. immigration rules at the time had become a sore spot.

Pat Day viewed the situation from a variety of angles, sympathizing with the plight of Canadian riders, but also looking at it from a personal business standpoint.

"I'm out here trying to make a living and I'm not going to turn down an opportunity to ride a top horse," he said. "The game is not entirely fair."

To underline the interest in Dance Smartly, some Canadian supporters held up a sign in the paddock area that read: "Breeders' Cup 1991, Go Canada." The left part of the sign had the words Sam-Son Farm and a drawing of its red and gold silks.

Jim Day was no stranger to the Breeders' Cup, having raced horses in six of the seven previous editions. He was asked by the media what winning a Breeders' Cup race would be like compared to his gold-medal victory as a member of Canada's equestrian team in the 1968 Olympics.

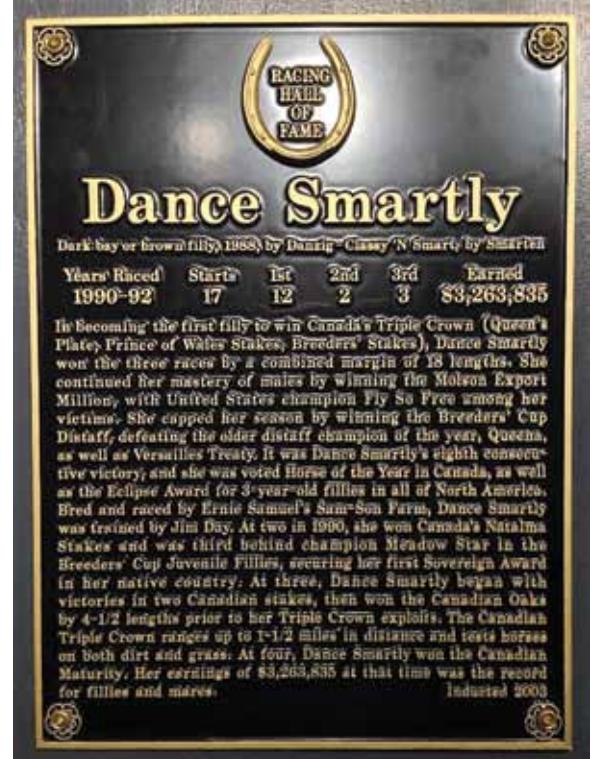
"Naturally the Breeders' Cup is the ultimate in horse racing, but it's like comparing great athletes from one era to another," he said. "You can't compare thrills 20 years apart. It would be a great honour and a great thrill to possibly have a chance to win (a Breeders' Cup race). To be here with a horse that has a chance is an honour. If we get fortunate to win one of those races it would be a dream come true."

The Sam-Son team would also be sending out home-bred Sky Classic in the \$2 million Turf, three races later on the card. The four-year-old colt had won his last six races, most recently the Grade I Rothmans International Stakes at Woodbine. Hopes were high for Sky Classic, too.

Dance Smartly and Wilderness Song were coupled as an entry and went postward as the 1-2 favourite in the field of 13. Wilderness Song was ridden by Francine Villeneuve.

There was a lot on the line going into the race. Firstly, a win would give Dance Smartly a record of eight victories without a loss on the season. Secondly, a win would put her in contention for U.S. Horse of the Year honours. Thirdly, the winner's share would catapult her to the top as the filly or mare with the most career earnings in North America.

At precisely 1:21, the gates sprung open in the mile and one-eighth race on the dirt. Dance Smartly was positioned comfortably by Pat Day, sitting fifth on the outside, five lengths in arrears of pacesetter Richard's Lass through the opening quarter of a mile. Wilderness Song was two lengths ahead in fourth on the inside of her. After half a mile, Dance Smartly was in sixth, slightly more than 5½ lengths back of Richard's Lass, while Wilderness Song was fourth by 3½ lengths. It was around this point that Day moved close to Villeneuve and told her to sit tightly. The message had been conveyed beforehand to not have the pair battle one another. After three quarters of a mile, Day had begun to make his move and was up to fourth, about 2½ lengths back in fourth, passing Wilderness Song. At the top of the stretch, Dance Smartly was about



to seize the lead.

Samuel, nervous at the best of times watching his horses race, was caught on camera watching the stretch drive. It provided some interesting entertainment.

"Hurry up, hurry up, you're gonna get caught!" he was overheard shouting.

Though he had the race well in hand, Pat Day still gave his mount a few cracks of his whip.

In the final few yards to the wire, Samuel's wife, Liza, tried to hug him, but he was still overly nervous, saying to Dance Smartly, "Hurry up, hurry up."

Only when she crossed the wire did Samuel let out a visceral victory yell, signalling it with both arms outstretched like a referee signalling a successful field goal.

Pat Day admitted in the post-race interview, he may have been a little amped up whipping his mount.

"A million dollars, Horse of the Year, all-time top-earning mare, it was a lot on the line, and I certainly didn't want to get caught sleeping at the switch," he said.

CBC announcer Brian Williams, working with sagacious Woodbine analyst Jim Bannon, put everything in perspective.

"If you listen carefully, you can hear the fans cheering at Canadian racetracks from coast to coast," he said.

Williams suggested that in the annals of Canadian racing, it ranked up there as one of the three greatest wins, alongside Northern Dancer winning the 1964 Kentucky Derby, and Sunny's Halo duplicating that feat in 1983. All of those happened at Churchill Downs.

"We're just in heaven," said Samuel in the winner's circle, "And Jimmy Day did a wonderful job nursing her along. It's magic, just magic."

The principals of Sam-Son Farm have either passed or are no longer in the game. The operation began dispersing its breeding and racing stock last year and it will soon come to an end. All that will be left will be the memories, in particular the one 30 years ago.

What a day it was.

It was a Good Year at Ajax Downs

By Jennifer Morrison



Cassandra Jeschke won the first 'hook' race

Considering the pandemic and several days of racing cancelled, 2021 was a great year of quarter horse racing at Ajax Downs, which experienced an increase in wagering from 2020. This, despite the fact that living, breathing fans weren't allowed into the track until July.

The final card of racing took place on November 6, and it was a history making day for the sport, as Ajax Downs held its first "hook" race, a 770-yard test that originated on the backstretch. All previous races at Ajax Downs went through the main strip. The 440-yard races start at the end of the chute, but QROOI President Bob Broadstock had this vision for years, and the stewards' camera tower was built so they can view the top of the backstretch run. For this first time event, there was no betting and just a comfortable field of 4. It was Jess A Deal and jockey Cassandra Jeschke who broke first and carried their lead right to the finish line, winning by 2 1/4 lengths in :42.022, which is now the track record. Jess A Deal, appropriately, is trained by Broadstock and is owned by his wife Marie and the Picov Cattle Company. Those in attendance loved the race – there was a standing ovation and a lot of hoots and hollers from everybody in attendance.

"You want to still be up there early in the race," said Jeschke about getting Jess a Deal out of the gate quickly, while still reserving her mount for the longer distance. "I was a little worried because the turn comes up a bit quickly for a big mare like her, and we were wide, but she just had so much to give. We were both a little tired at the end."

Broadstock advised that fans can look forward to a greater variety of races at Ajax Downs.

"Getting the new tower built and opening up our races to more than just strictly races on a straightaway has been a goal for several years," he said. "It sends a message to everyone out there that we are going to run these races on a regular basis and make it a part of our program. We want to offer more excitement for our fans."

Jockey Cory Spataro won the jockeys' title for the first time, though you might want to put an asterisk on that statement. Spataro actually won the most races at Ajax several years ago, but because of the Quarter Racing Owners' point system, he didn't win the championship. But this year, he won 32 races and garnered the most points. He rode for a lot of local connections and was a focused, hard-working rider. He'll get his first trophy at the QROOI banquet March 5.

"I felt like I worked hard, persevered, and had a whole lot of positivity and confidence," said Spataro, whose main client in 2021 was owner and trainer Craig Spada, who won a career best 18 races to be second-leading trainer at Ajax Downs. "I also had the support of many people who believed in me."

Jockey Ismael Mosquera had his best season at Ajax Downs, with 27 wins for second place.

For many weeks before the final card, it was evident

that Jason Pascoe would cop his third straight trainer's title. Pascoe won 39 races, including Stakes scores by top 3-year-olds Streakinlilwagon, Countryfried Chicken and the 2-year-old colt, First Cold Wave.

It was a wonderful year for Milena Kwiecien of Burlington, and she compiled 20 wins to claim her first owner's title. Kwiecien sent out Stakes stars such as Maryland Magic, Spy for the Senate, and Countryfried Chicken. The Picov Cattle Company led breeders with 13 winners.

Ajax Downs' simulcast and off-track betting area will be open throughout the winter. Quarter Horse racing is set to resume in May 2022.

Visit www.ajaxdowns.com for news and updates. To find out how you can get involved in owning a Quarter Horse or joining a syndicate, contact the QROOI at www.qrooi.com.



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Our multiple graded stakes winning homebred mare, **AMALFI COAST**, here winning the Grade 3 ONTARIO FASHION STAKES. Terra Racing Stable would like to thank Kevin Attard and his entire staff along with Justin Stein and Antonio Gallardo for a terrific 2021 season.

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Hugo Dittfach 1936-2021

(Story courtesy the Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame)



The Canadian horse racing community was saddened to learn that Hall of Fame honoured member, jockey Hugo Dittfach died at the end of October at the age of 85. We extend our sincere condolences to his family and friends on his passing.

During a career in which he won 4,000 races, there wasn't a harder working jockey on the grounds than Hustlin' Hugo. One statistic hailed in each season was most mounts. It was this work ethic that enabled Hugo Dittfach to get his start in Western Canada, and one he never discarded during a career which was highlighted in 1991 when he was awarded the Avelino Gomez

Memorial Award. The award goes to a jockey who had made a significant contribution to the sport. Another huge moment in his career occurred in 1975 when The Jockey Club of Canada inaugurated the Sovereign Awards to honour horses and people in the industry. The first winner of merit to a jockey went to Hugo Dittfach.

Dittfach had to overcome more obstacles than most jockeys. He came to Canada after World War II, a refugee from East Germany who had spent time in a concentration camp in Poland. It was while working as a busboy in a Calgary restaurant that a patron suggested he was the right size to ride horses at the track. Dittfach knew nothing about riding horses, but through hard work and persistence he rose to the top of his profession.

His career began in 1956. Hugo was the leading rider at Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatoon, and Regina before heading to Ontario. Runner-up for seasonal honours in 1958 to Al Coy and to Avelino Gomez the following year, and third behind these two jockeys in 1960, he finally hit the top in 1961, which turned out to be an especially gratifying year. He won the Queen's Plate in one of the closest finishes in the history of the race. Aboard Colonel K.R. Marshall's Blue Light, a 20-1 outsider, Dittfach hustled his mount

down the stretch in a stirring duel with the world's leading race winning jockey, Johnny Longden, and the heavily favoured Just Don't Shove. The photo went to Dittfach and Blue Light by a nose. Dittfach during his career won countless important stakes races at Woodbine, Fort Erie, and Greenwood, many of which came on Anita's Son and other horses from Lanson Farms, Windfields Farm, Stafford Farms and Conn Smythe. He also led all jockeys in 1965 with 177 wins. He retired in 1989 to pursue a career as a trainer.

"So many individuals in our racing industry, including myself, are lucky to have cherished memories of Hugo," said Jim Lawson, CEO of Woodbine Entertainment. "Hugo was a hard-working, earnest man, that gave his all every time he got on the back of a horse. Hugo rode regularly for Jim Dandy Stable, and I fondly remember his ride on Ruthie's Run to win the Princess Elizabeth Stakes in 1974. A true gentleman, Hugo made an incredible contribution to our sport in Ontario and will be missed by all."

Hustlin' Hugo won the Sovereign Award as Canada's Outstanding Jockey in 1975 and was inducted into the Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame in 1983. He received the Avelino Gomez Memorial Award in 1991 for his contributions to the sport.

Brilliant Mare Wins the Melbourne Cup

Verry Elleegant, the spectacular 6-year-old New Zealand bred mare, ran brilliantly to capture the Lexus Melbourne Cup (G1) at the Flemington Racetrack on November 2. With that, Verry Elleegant gave trainer Chris Waller his first win in this AU\$8 million race at the trying distance of 2 miles.

Starting from stall 19, Verry Elleegant, under rider James McDonald, was never far back. She galloped into contention as the field turned for home and was much the best in the long Flemington stretch to overhaul the favourite, Incentivise, winning by 4 lengths.

The race appeared to be going in favour of Incentivise who was leading in mid-stretch, but it was discovered after the race that he suffered some swelling to his near-foreleg, which he apparently hit on the approach to the straight.

Waller, the trainer of the incredible mare, Winx, was not at the track for Australia's most important race. He was in Sydney, watching with his family.

"When she crossed the line, I was very emotional," he said. "I really wanted to be there to share it with the staff and those who have worked so hard, but to watch it with my family, made it very, very special. It makes it pretty special to have another mare like this one. She's so brave, so determined, and so good. We've had some great wins and important wins, and this is certainly one of them. It's going to take a while to sink in. She was the class horse and showed that with a finish I'll never forget."

The jockey, McDonald was the beneficiary of great luck, even to have the ride on Verry Elleegant. Just 5 days earlier, he expected to be the rider of Away He Goes, but suddenly found himself seeking a ride when Away He Goes had to go away due to a tendon injury.



Trainer Waller was probably thrilled that McDonald was available. The veteran jockey had ridden Verry Elleegant in 20 of her previous races, taking her to the winner's circle on 6 occasions.

"I was booked for Away He Goes and sadly he went amiss, but when one door closes another one opens," said McDonald. "Myself and Chris have had a lot of luck together and it helps when you get horses like this."

As for winning his first Melbourne Cup:

"This means everything," said McDonald. "And to do it on Verry Elleegant is extra special as she's been along for the ride for so many seasons now. This has cemented her place right at the top with those real good horses because

what she's done over varying trips over the years is just incredible. I love her to bits, and she's been so good to me. I've always dreamed of winning the Melbourne Cup, but never thought I would win one as it's so hard to do it."

Verry Elleegant is the 17th female horse to win the Melbourne Cup in its 160 year history. The last filly or mare to even finish in the top 3 was Makybe Diva in 2005.

It was a great day at the track for part-owner, Brae Sokolski. He has a share of the winning mare and a piece of the second place horse, Incentivise.

"Incentivise was the hype horse and we did think he would win, but we still had so much faith in Verry Elleegant," said Sokolski. "At the 300-meter mark when I saw those colours on the outside, I knew the race was over. To do what she has done takes her to the upper echelons of the pantheon of Australia's greatest racehorses. It's a dream come true having a runner, let alone a winner, let alone the Quinella. It's a special day and a privilege."

Canadian racing fans will appreciate just how much Northern Dancer blood flows through the impressive body of Verry Elleegant. Her sire, Zed is a great-grandson of Nureyev on his male side and Danzig on the dam's side. Verry Elleegant's dam, Opulence also has Danzig on her sire's report card and Sadler's Wells on the dam side. In other words, Northern Dancer connects with Verry Elleegant no less than 4 different ways.

The victory in the Melbourne Cup was Verry Elleegant's 10th Group 1 win. The Australian Racehorse of the Year for 2020/2021 improved her record to 15-7-3 in 34 tries, for earnings of AU\$14,090,744 (CAN\$13,008,825).

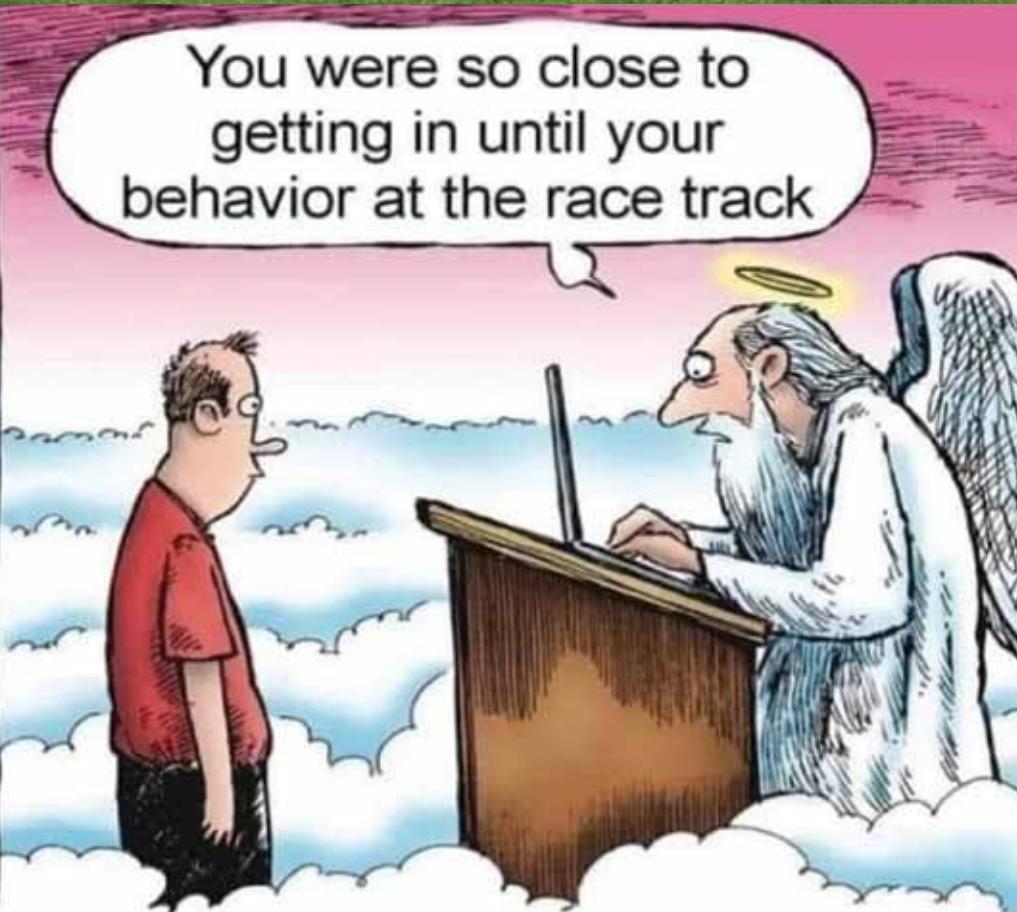


RACETRACK HUMOUR



Perry & Mooch

Halloween costumes at Ajax Downs. Talk about losing by a head!



THE HARNESS RACING RAILBIRD



HARNESS RACING CAREER STATS

HORSES DRIVEN: 0	BEERS CONSUMED: 14,567
TRIPS TO WINNERS CIRCLE: 0	TICKETS TORN UP: 25,987
TIME DRIVERS CRITICIZED: 14,467	PROGRAMS THROWN: 458
DECISIONS CRITICIZED: 3,456	SCREAMED AT MONITOR: 1,987
TIMES TRAINER BLAMED: 11,678	CHANGED LUCKY CHARM: 136

Trainer Joke

The Australian Taxation Office suspected a Horse trainer wasn't paying proper wages to his stablehand and sent an agent to investigate him.

ATO AUDITOR: "I need a list of your employees and how much you pay them".

Horse trainer: "Well, there's my stablehand, he's been with me for 2 years. I pay him \$600 a week plus free room and board. Then there's the mentally challenged guy. He works about 14 hours every day, works weekends, rides all the rank horses and does about 90% of the work around here. He makes about \$50 per week, pays his own room and board, and I buy him a bottle of bourbon every Saturday night so he can cope with life. He also gets to sleep with my wife occasionally".

ATO AUDITOR: "That's the guy I want to talk to - the mentally challenged one".

Horse Trainer: "That'll be me. What'd you want to know"?

Woodbine Stakes

October 8



Michael Burns Photo

There were two stakes races Friday at Woodbine as the 2-year-olds got to cash.

The \$150,000 Shady Well stakes was for rookie fillies at 5 ½ furlongs. Justin Stein put Marie Mackay on the lead early and they could not be caught as the 1-2 favourite, Aubrieta (Patrick Husbands) was about 2 ¼ lengths late. Marie Mackay, breaking her maiden on her second try was timed in 1:04.03. She is trained by Danny Vella and owned by Track West Racing and Donald Whelan. The \$2 win ticket returned \$11.10.

The 2-year-old colts and geldings were also asked to sprint



Michael Burns Photo

5 ½ furlongs in the \$150,000 Clarendon Stakes. The bettors loaded up on Ironstone, crunching him down to .25 on the dollar. That optimism was well-founded as Ademar Santos delivered Ironstone by an emphatic 6 lengths in 1:03.53. Ironstone broke his maiden with a win in the Simcoe Stakes at the end of August and is now 2 for 4. He is trained by Willy Armata and owned by Tequesta Racing and Jupiter Leasing. He paid just \$2.50 to win.

October 9

The Overskate Stakes was supposed to go 7 ½ on the inner turf, but rain scuttled that idea, and the race went 7 furlongs on



Not So Quiet

Michael Burns Photo

the Tapeta. Not So Quiet was the defending champ, but he was asked to retain his crown on a different surface. Not a problem – Rafael Hernandez had Not So Quiet on top before the turn and the 6-year-old gelding was too much for his 7 opponents. With a final time of 1:21.46, Not So Quiet won by 3 ½ lengths. He is now 8 for 16 in his career for trainer Mark Casse and owner Tracey Farmer. Not So Quiet paid not so much – \$3.30.

Not So Quiet was Casse's 5th training win on the day. He took both ends of the daily double, scoring with the 2-year-old Similar Taste (\$5.30) in the first, and the 3-year-old filly Ostracize (13.20) in the second. Both those horses were ridden by Rafael Hernandez.

Casse also captured the 4th, as Patrick Husbands delivered Swot Analysis (\$7.90) and Casse sent out La Libertee who carried Kazushi Kimura to a win in the 5th, paying \$12.00.

Talk about making friends and influencing people! Casse's wins were for 5 different owners. We hope someone bought him a drink.

October 10



Special Forces

Michael Burns Photo

Mighty Heart, the Sovereign Award winner as 2020 Horse of the Year in Canada was the big attraction in the \$155,000 Grade 3 Durham Cup, but the bettors didn't pay enough attention to Special Forces in the mile and a 16th event. Without a start in 2020, Special Forces came to the Durham Cup off a 3rd place finish to Tap It to Win in the Seagram Stakes a month earlier.

Tap It to Win (Rafael Hernandez) did the early work in the Durham Cup leading to the half in :47.96, as Halo Again (Shaun Bridgmohan) took the baton, carrying the field of 5 to the ¾ mark in 1:1:43. In the stretch, Special Forces, under Justin Stein, passed all 4 rivals and got there by a half length in the very good time of 1:42.36. Special Forces is trained by Kevin Attard and owned by Attard and Soli Mehta.

"I was just the lucky jock to get on him," shrugged Stein in the winner's circle. "He crushed today. He's a champ."

Special Forces, now 6 for 20, paid \$15.60 for the win.

Then it was the Mark Casse show. After winning 5 races



God of Love

Michael Burns Photo

the day before, Casse sent out God of Love. With Rafael Hernandez aboard, God of Love surprised in the \$251,200 Cup and Saucer Stakes at 1 1/16 mile on the turf.

God of Love rallied from 8th at the half, picked off rivals one by one, and stormed to the front in the final 16th to win by 1 ¾ lengths in 1:47.86, paying \$17.10 for the win.

Owned by Gary Barber and Eclipse Thoroughbred Partners, God of Love broke his maiden in this race after starting his career with a 7th place finish in a 5-furlong maiden special weight in September. He paid \$17.10 to win.

Casse's 4th winner of the day came in the \$150,300 Ontario Matron Stakes, a mile and a 16th on the Tapeta for fillies and mares. Emma-Jayne Wilson urged Art of Almost from last in the field of 6 to a 1 ¼ length win in 1:43.99. Art of Almost has



Art of Almost

Michael Burns Photo

often lived up to her name with several 2nds, 3rds and 4ths. This was her 5th win in her 25th race. She is owned by D.J. Stable, and her victory gave Mark Casse a total of 9 training wins on the weekend.

Art of Almost paid \$19.80.

October 22



Lorena

Michael Burns Photo

The Friday afternoon card kicked off with the \$80,000 Thunder Bay Stakes for 3-year-old fillies whose sires stood in Ontario for the entire season. It was a 7-furlong race, and the favourite, Lorena was just too good. Jockey Gary Boulanger rocketed her to the front, and after a half in a comfortable :48.74, the filly had plenty in reserve. Jill Marie (Steve Bahen) gave it her best shot, but when a rival got within a length, Lorena just galloped away to win by 1 ¼ lengths in 1:25.54. Stuart Simon is the trainer, and he shares ownership with Brent and Russel McLellan and Kai Olguin. This was Lorena's 5th win in 6 starts and she paid just \$4.40.

The \$80,000 Lake Superior Stakes was for 3-year-old colts and geldings at 7 furlongs, and 11 went postward. Most of the money was on Secret Reserve and that was wise money. Rafael Hernandez gave the gelding a nicely timed trip, scooted to the front along the inside coming for home, and found the wire 2 lengths the best in 1:24.70. Trained by Michael Mattine, Secret Reserve is owned by Carlo D'Amato



Secret Reserve

Michael Burns Photo

and Stacey Van Camp. Secret Reserve has won 4 of 5 lifetime races which accounts for the modest \$4.80 payoff.

October 23

Just 6 fillies and mares contested the \$150,000 Grade 2 Hendrie Stakes at 6 ½ furlongs. Our Secret Agent, ridden by Kazushi Kimura was the 6-5 choice, and Amalfi Coast with Justin Stein went off at 9-5. Those two came into the stretch battling for the lead and it wasn't until the final 8th of a mile that Our Secret Agent was able to break free for the 3 ½ length win in the very good time of 1:15.68. The 4-year-old mare is owned by Gary Barber and trained by Mark Casse, though really a horse named Our Secret Agent belongs in the barn of H. James Bond. The win price was \$4.50.

The feature race was the \$250,000 Princess Elizabeth Stakes for 2-year-old fillies at a mile and a 16th. There were 10 in this one and Moira, performing in her first pari-mutuel race, got a brilliant ride from Justin Stein. The pair was 8th as the field circumvented the far turn, but Stein weaved in and out of horses, found a nice seam in mid-stretch and Moira rose to the occasion, winning by a widening 4 ¼ lengths. This filly is owned by Sam-Son Farms and is trained by Kevin Attard. Some bettors saw something shiny in a first time starter – Moira paid \$10.60.

October 29

The Eternal Search Stakes offered \$100,000 for fillies and mares. Originally booked for 7 ½ furlongs on the turf, it went 7 on the tapeta. The change in surface did not bother Summer Sunday, ridden by Rafael Hernandez. On an autumn Friday,



Summer Sunday

Michael Burns Photo

the 6-year-old mare got an easy lead after a quarter mile in :23.7, strolled past the half in :46.62, and after increasing her lead to about 2 lengths, just withstood the late challenge from Royal Wedding (Daisuke Fukumoto) to win by neck in 1:23.74. That gives Summer Sunday 11 wins in 21 career starts. She is owned by Anne and William Scott, trained by Stuart Simon and she paid \$4.30.

October 30

A field of 6 two-year-olds contested the Display Stakes at 7 furlongs for a purse of \$125,000 and it was Hicksy who displayed the most stamina. Under Antonio Gallardo, the rookie colt stalked the speed of Ironstone (Ademar Santos),



Hicksy

then passed that rival in the final 100 yards to win by ¾ of a length in 1:23.38. Kevin Attard is the trainer for Lanni Bloodstock. Hicksy won for the second time in 3 starts and paid \$6.60.

The Coronation Futurity offered \$250,000 and asked 14 two-year-olds to travel a mile and an 8th. The 8-5 favourite was God of Love (Rafael Hernandez), but that one finished 5th, as The Minkster and David Moran pulled off the 13-1 upset. The



The Minkster

Michael Burns Photo

Minkster was always close to the pace, had the lead at the head of the stretch and galloped to the wire the best by 2 ¼ lengths in 1:52.51. Dancin in Da'nile (Shaun Bridgmohan) was 2nd at 9-1, J M R Best of Turf (Christopher Husbands) came 3rd at 89-1, and it was Shamateur (Emma-Jayne Wilson) 4th at 50-1. The Minkster is trained by Danny Vella for Sea Glass Stables, and he paid \$29.20. The superfecta returned \$15,922 for a .20 bet.

In the \$125,000 Glorious Song Stakes, Aubrieta, ridden by Patrick Husbands was much the best at the end of 7 furlongs. The 2-year-old filly surged to the lead after 6 furlongs in 1:10.12 and threw a 22.75 final furlong at her 7 opponents to win by 2 lengths in 1:22.85. Aubrieta won for the 2nd time in 3 starts for trainer Mark Casse and Conrad Farms. She paid \$8.90.

October 31

By winning the \$150,000 Ontario Damsel Stakes at a mile and a 16th, Munnyfor Ro assured herself of the Sovereign



Munnyfor Ro

Michael Burns Photo

Award as Outstanding 3-Year-Old Female. With Justin Stein calling the shots, Munnyfor Ro exploded from 4th in the stretch to win by a length in 1:45.36. In her 10 races this year, Munnyfor Ro won 4 times, including the Woodbine Oaks and the Wonder Where Stakes. She was also 4th in the Queen's Plate. This is another brilliant horse trained by Kevin Attard. She is owned by Raroma Stable, and she produced a \$5.30 win ticket.



Frosted Over

Michael Burns Photo

The final Stakes race of October was the Ontario Derby for 3-year-olds at a mile and an 8th for \$150,000. Eight 3-year-olds left the gate, and it was Frosted Over and Kazushi Kimura finding the wire first in 1:50.50. The margin was almost 3 lengths, and that was Frosted Over's 3rd win in 4 races in 2021. He is trained by Mark Casse and owned by Gary Barber. The leading trainer and leading jockey confounded the bettors – the \$2 win ticket was worth \$19.40.

November 13



Lady Speightspeare

She may be problematic, but the 3-year-old Lady Speightspeare is still perfect after an impressive win in the Grade 2 \$175,350 Bessarabian Stakes at 7 furlongs. Ridden by Emma-Jayne Wilson, Lady Speightspeare stalked from 2nd for the first 6 furlongs, galloped past the favourite, Our Secret Agent (Kazushi Kimura) at the head of the stretch, and flashed a 12 second final 8th to win by 4 lengths in 1:21.03. This was the 4th win in 4 starts for Lady Speightspeare, and a big sigh of relief for trainer Roger Attfield. Owner Charles Fipke had sent the filly to Keeneland to race in the Grade 1 Queen Elizabeth II Challenge Cup on October 16, but she had to be scratched when she acted up in the gate.

This was Lady Speightspeare's first try on a synthetic surface and she definitely passed the test.

"The main thing was to get this gate thing sorted out and it seemed like we did today," said Attfield. Lady Speightspeare paid \$12.90.

The other Saturday Stakes was the Grade 3 \$153,800 Maple Leaf Stakes, and a field of 10 was required to go a mile and a quarter. This was just another in an encyclopedic history of Mark Casse-trained horses ridden to victory in a Stakes race by Patrick Husbands. Husbands made a move on the far turn, rocketing the 4-year-old filly, Skygaze from 3rd to 1st in a virtual eye-blink. The rest of the field found themselves battling for minor shares, as Skygaze galloped to the wire

Skygaze



alone by 4 ½ lengths in 2:03.65 – an excellent time for 10 furlongs (Safe Conduct won the Queen's Plate in 2:02.85). Also, this was Husbands 3,501st career riding victory (he hit 3,500 aboard Carl G the day before).

The Casse-trained Skygaze is now 6 for 15 in her career. She is owned by Tracy Farmer, and she paid \$8.30.

November 14



Mighty Heart

Michael Burns Photo

The one Stakes race on Sunday was the \$210,000 Grade 2 Autumn stakes at a mile and a 16th. The 2020 Queen's Plate winner, Mighty Heart went off as the 3rd favourite in the field of 7 and got a nicely orchestrated front-running strategy from Patrick Husbands.

Mighty Heart was leading the pack after 6 furlongs in a reasonable 1:11.36 and he was still calling the shots after covering the mile in 1:36.11. The 3-2 favourite, Sir Winston (Antonio Gallardo) was a mild threat in the final 16th, but Mighty Heart got to the wire ¾ of a length the best in the excellent time of 1:42.51, just .36 off the course record of Freitag which has stood for 5 years.

This was Mighty Heart's 6th career win from 15 races. He is trained by Josie Carroll and owned by Larry Cordes. This was a very popular win, as at least 26 thrilled individuals crowded the winner's circle to get in the picture.

Mighty Heart paid \$9.20 to win.

November 19

Two Stakes races, held for the first time, completed the Ontario Sire Heritage Series. Ontario Racing and the Thoroughbred Improvement Program (TIP) began the 8-leg competition earlier in the year with segments at Fort Erie and Woodbine.



Michael Burns Photo

The \$100,000 Ashbridges Bay Stakes required five 3-year-old fillies to go a mile and a 16th, and Lorena, ridden by Gary Boulanger was clearly the best. She led right from the start and was able to impose on her rivals easy fractions of :50.98, 1:15.23 and 1:40.11 for the mile. After that, Lorena scampered to the finish line in 1:46.61, home free by 3 ½ lengths. The filly is trained by Stuart Simon who shares ownership with Brent and Russell McLellan and Kai Olguin. Lorena did not win any of the ladies Triple Crown races, but with 5 wins in 2021 that included 4 Stakes, she should be considered by Sovereign Award voters when they select the Outstanding 3-Year-Old Filly. The \$2.70 win ticket indicates she was certainly considered by the bettors. And the win was worth a \$20,000 bonus to the owners as Lorena was the top points earner in her division of the Series.



Artie's Storm

Michael Burns Photo

The \$100,000 Lake Ontario Stakes was for 3-year-old colts and geldings. Secret Reserve (Rafael Hernandez) was pounded down to .45 on the dollar, but after leading most

of the way, he gave it up in the stretch to a perfectly ridden Artie's Storm, whose jockey David Moran saved ground every step of the way. The time of 1:42.47 was not only 4 seconds faster than Lorena's mile and a 16th, but it was just 3/10th of a second off the course record. Artie's Storm is trained by Paul Buttigieg for the Buttigieg Training Centre, and the win ticket was worth \$8.20. There was consolation for the 2nd place finisher – Secret Reserve earned the most points in his division of the Ontario Sire Heritage Series, and that was worth \$20,000 to owners Carlo D'Amato and Stacey Van Camp.

November 21



Ya Mar

Michael Burns Photo

The South Ocean Stakes offered \$100,000 to the 2-year-old fillies going 6 ½ furlongs, and the great season of jockey Kazushi Kimura got a little bit greater. He was aboard the 3-2 favourite, Ya Mar against 6 others, and Ya Mar was so much the best. She had the lead after half a mile and strolled to the wire 2 ½ lengths the best in 1:17.16. Ya Mar has won 2 of her first 4 races. She is owned by Gabe Grossberg and trained by Mark Casse, and a win bet on her was worth \$5. The 2-year-old colts got to go 6 ½ in the \$100,000 Frost King Stakes. Silent Runner benefited from a well-timed ride from David Moran to eke out the win by ¾ of a length over a late-moving Sir For Sure (Luis Contreras). This race was timed in 1:16.96. Michael Doyle is the trainer and Scott Abbott Racing Stable owns Silent Runner and, for you trivia buffs, the win ticket was \$8.70.



Silent Runner

Michael Burns Photo

Pink Lloyd – That Was Amazing!



In the final race of his extraordinary career, against 7 others – all younger than he – Pink Lloyd came up with maybe the most thrilling performance of his career, passing 2 rivals in the deep stretch to win the Grade 2, \$200,550 Kennedy Road Stakes on November 27 at Woodbine.

It didn't start out like an ideal trip for the 9-year-old Pink Lloyd. He left ok but was 4th down the backstretch as Clayton (Antonio Gallardo) led the field to the quarter in :22.75. Jockey Rafael Hernandez was probably feeling more confident after Clayton sizzled to the half in :44.72. But Pink Lloyd had to go 3-wide into

the stretch as Clayton hugged the rail, and Richiesinthehouse (Emma-Jayne Wilson) was between horses and not quitting.

But winning is what Pink Lloyd does and late in the stretch, he was going the best, getting to the wire a half-length ahead of Richiesinthehouse. Jockey Hernandez is hardly a showboater, but a stride or two before the finish line, he punched the air emphatically, knowing the great horse had written the best possible ending.

Just after the wire, Emma-Jayne Wilson, riding out on Richiesinthehouse, reached over to Hernandez and the two exchanged fist bumps. The time for the 6 furlongs was 1:08.84, 79/100^{ths} off the course record held by...Pink Lloyd.

"He's the kind of horse that can do anything," said Hernandez. "He is the kind of horse you can take him back and relax. We had a hole, and he was coming, running, always going to give you 100 percent, like the many times he's already done it." Simply put, no other horse in Canadian racing history comes close to Pink Lloyd. He raced 38 times, won 29 of them and captured 26 Stakes races. He earned over \$2.4 million for the Entourage Stable. This was his 3rd conquest of the Kennedy Road.

THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES

PINK LLOYD

7 X SOVEREIGN AWARD WINNER
2017 HORSE OF THE YEAR

WOODBINE

"I think it's amazing," said his Hall of Fame trainer, Bob Tiller. "You know he's a legend. He proved today he was a legend. I didn't think he'd win today. It looked awful tough to me and the only thing I liked was all the speed in the race because I've been saying all along, and not too many people listened, but he loves to run at horses. I was just hoping Rafi would get room. I said at the head of the lane, 'You know what? Here he comes.' We're blessed to win this race and it's a tremendous way to go out. You know, he's been Woodbine's horse and he's been Canada's horse."

All 38 of Pink Lloyd's races have been sprints, on the dirt, and all at Woodbine. Frank DiGiulio, speaking for the Entourage Stable, explained there was never any plan to do it differently.

"It was really the right thing to do from our point of view because the races were here," said DiGiulio. "There was no temptation to run him on the grass. There was no temptation to take him out of town because we had the opportunities here and we know he loves it here. He has some quirks, so you don't know what's going to happen when you ship, or get into a new stall, and things like that. We just thought it was the right thing

to do. Maybe other people would have done it differently, but I don't think they would have had the success."

And would someone please explain this – Pink Lloyd paid \$9.40 to win.

Pink Lloyd has won 7 Sovereign Awards. He was voted Horse of the Year in 2017, has 4 trophies as Outstanding Sprinter and 2 more as Older Horse. His final win assures a 5th St Simon sculpture as best Sprinter in Canada.

All racehorses deserve the comfort of a safe place to live when the racing career is over and be assured Pink

Lloyd will live the rest of his days in dignity and respect. His next appointment is to join 50 other happy former thoroughbreds at the LongRun Farm in Erin, Ontario. "It's just an awesome privilege for LongRun to be chosen to give Pink Lloyd his happy retirement home," said Vicki Pappas, a founding member and long-time chairperson of LongRun.

And let the charismatic Tiller have the last word on the greatest sprinter in Canadian horse racing history.

"The next time some horse wins 26 stakes in 29 races at Woodbine," says Tiller, "Let me know about it."

Horse DQ'd Because He Didn't Take Lasix



Ivan Dalos

We love a sensational headline, but the case of H C Holiday is certainly bizarre, and the truth is, it is very much about a horse's first place finish being reversed because the horse raced *without* any medication.

H C Holiday, now a 3-year-old, is owned by Ivan Dalos, who bred the colt through his Tall Oaks Farm. Ivan Dalos is a prominent Canadian thoroughbred owner, whose horses have won over 200 races for purses in excess of \$13 million.

As a 2-year-old, H C Holiday entered the Lasix program. Under the rules, a horse must remain in the protocol for 100 days. H C Holiday did not run in Canada in 2020, but made his racing debut on December 31 at Turfway Park. This Kentucky racetrack does not allow 2-year-olds to use Lasix. With Rafael Bejarano riding, H C Holiday finished 11th.

In the spring of this year, H C Holiday was back in the care of trainer Kevin Attard who entered him in a maiden race on June 13. Under normal conditions, the fact that he raced on the last day of December without medication would have meant he was not on the Lasix program. Had this been spotted, he would have been scratched by the stewards. Determining the Lasix status is the responsibility of the AGCO (the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario). At the time of this race, the database and the website that would normally track such information and inform the Woodbine race office was not functioning.

No one noticed, so H C Holiday ran. And he ran very well, carrying Kazushi Kimura to a half length victory over 11 opponents, stopping the clock in 1:23.34 for the 7 furlongs. The race was declared official – H C Holiday paid \$22.10 to win and the first place cheque of \$38,580 was awarded to Dalos.

Three weeks passed and H C Holiday was entered in another race. This time the computer was feeling better, and the race office detected the problem with H C Holiday's Lasix protocol. When the AGCO was notified, it was determined that H C Holiday needed to be disqualified from the June 13 race and all purse money had to be forfeited.

This would be the 3rd time a horse was disqualified after a race for the same problem. Apparently in the first two instances, the horses did not win and the relatively small amount of money their owners won was less than the cost of appealing the decision, so no action was taken.

But Colleen Dalos, daughter of Ivan was disturbed about the whole sequence of events.

An appeal was filed by her father. Colleen insists there was nothing frivolous in this action.

"Ivan Dalos has been in this industry for 45 years and he has never filed an appeal," says Colleen. "That shows you just how strongly we feel that the decision that was made is wrong and extremely unfair."

The Dalos' have been frustrated by the response from the AGCO.

"This has been an incredibly frustrating and disheartening process for us," says Colleen. "It has added weeks and tons of extra money to our legal fees. At the last moment, they tried to dismiss us and not allow us to have a fair appeal. They have been holding disclosure, and we have been gaining a lot of distrust in the process."

After Dalos filed his appeal, his lawyer, Stephen Jack received some disclosure documents. But based on many conversations with racing officials, Colleen was certain that there was more information not yet provided by the AGCO. Twice Jack requested the extra documents. It was only after a September 16 motion was filed demanding that the AGCO cough up more relevant documents that more evidence "magically" appeared.

"Throughout the course of this appeal, AGCO has unequivocally lied to the Applicant regarding disclosure," wrote Jack in the motion. "Specifically, AGCO has denied on multiple occasions that certain disclosure did not exist, only to subsequently reveal the very same disclosure they denied existed."

After months of legal arguments over the disqualification, the AGCO attempted to have the appeal dismissed. They submitted that argument to the Horse Racing Appeal Panel.

Here is part of Jack's argument against this motion:

The Appellant's position is that the Alcohol and Gaming Commission's motion is tantamount to raising a defence which it knows not to be true, conduct which the Appellant asserts is both unprofessional and unethical.

That submission was heard by HRAP Chairman Stanley Sadinsky on October 25, and he ruled against the AGCO, advising that Dalos appeal should go forward. In his decision, Sadinsky, without quite tipping his hat, told the AGCO that if he determined they had lied during their communications with Dalos and his lawyer, there would be "consequence".

Down The Stretch attempted to get a comment from someone at the AGCO. The response was as follows:

As you may know, a horse racing participant can appeal a decision or ruling by Racing Officials to HRAP. The panel acts as an independent adjudicative body mandated to hear appeals of decisions made under the Rules of Racing.

This hearing is continuing. You can contact HRAP to confirm the hearing dates and that they are open to the public (and of course media).

As this is an active case, and to respect the jurisdiction of HRAP on the matter, it would not be appropriate for the AGCO to offer any comments on this appeal outside of the hearing room.

We can say that the AGCO and its officials always strive to perform their duties with the utmost of integrity and professionalism. Racing Officials are mandated to apply the Rules of Racing, in particular those related to the use of



medication. These rules are in place to protect the health and welfare of the horse and provide transparency to the general and betting public.

Regards,

RK

Raymond Kahnert (He/him) | Senior Advisor, Communications

Kahnert was kind enough to send along a copy of the original decision to disqualify H C Holiday. And here it is: "we took the win away because the horse had no medication in its system".

Take notice that the horse H C Holiday, trained by Kevin Attard and owned by Ivan Dalos which participated in the twelfth (12th) race on June 13, 2021, and finished first (1st), was ineligible and is hereby disqualified and unplaced for all purposes except pari-mutuel wagering. The horse H C HOLIDAY did not have the medication "Furosemide" administered for the purposes of racing when the horse was certified on the Ontario EIPH program.

Ivan Dalos' argument is that there is simply no rule that covers the unique circumstance of a horse ceasing to be on Lasix, competing in a race where the stewards should have been informed, then winning and being disqualified 3 weeks later. In Jack's argument, he states:

It is not the duty of this Panel to expand upon and change the definition of scratching so that it can be applied to the present factual situation. Rather, it would be entirely inappropriate for the Horse Racing Appeal Panel to interpret the definition of scratching in any other manner than which it is defined. If the legislature intended for the definition of scratching to include retroactively disqualifying a horse that has already run a race, it certainly would have included same when defining the term.

It's not unreasonable for a casual bystander to scratch his or her head over this. In June 2015, Magic of Brussels, a trotter owned in part by Tammy Aspden, finished second in a race at Georgian Downs. The winning horse was disqualified when an illegal substance was detected, but several weeks after that, the AGCO determined that the first place money awarded to Magic of Brussels be returned and given to the owners of the original winner. Aspden fought this decision and ultimately won.

The reference to that case shows that on the one hand, the AGCO has fought to give back purse money to a horse with a positive test, while on the other hand, battles to withhold purse winnings because a horse was *not* on a medicinal protocol.

Zeron's Two Breeders Crowns

A dozen Breeders Crown races were conducted at The Meadowlands on the weekend of October 29-30, and Scott Zeron captured 2 of the big money events. His first win came on Friday in the \$600,000 Pace for 2-Year-Old Colts and Geldings. In the sulky behind the 3rd betting choice, Monte Miki, Zeron took an aggressive plan, moving in the second quarter to the front and leading the field to the half in :56.4. From that point on, it was anything but easy, as Gulf Shores (Yannick Gingras) found a very narrow seam on the inside and appeared to get a head in

front with maybe 50 yards to go. But right on the wire, Monte Miki surged back to win by a nose in 1:53.2. That \$9.40 win ticket looked pretty generous considering that Monte Miki won for the 6th time in 7 starts. He took down the \$824,000 Metro Pace at Mohawk in September and pushed his earnings to \$761,796. Monte Miki is owned by Velocity Standardbreds and trained by Mark Evers.

The older horses went to work in 8 Breeders Crowns on Saturday, October 30 and Zeron scored in the \$330,000 Final for Fillies and Mares. Paired with the terrific

Rocknificant, Zeron orchestrated another front-end journey, putting Rocknificant at the front of the train after a quarter, and throwing a :26.2 final quarter on the sloppy track to survive by a head in 1:49. This was Rocknificant's 15th win in her 46th start. She has now hit the board 37 times for trainer Linda Toscano and the owners, Enviro Stables, South Mountain Stables and Little E. The winner's purse of \$165,000 pushed Rocknificant's earnings to \$1,164,354. The bettors did not do as well – Rocknificant paid \$7.40.



Rest of the Breeders Crown results:

Class	Winner	Driver	Trainer	Payoff
2-Year-Old Colts Trot (\$600,000)	Rebuff	Tim Tetrick	Lucas Wallin	\$7.80
2-Year-Old Fillies Pace	Niki Hill	Dexter Dunn	C Ryder	\$3.40
2-Year-Old Fillies Trot	Joviality S	Brian Sears	M Melander	\$18.40
3-Year-old Fillies (\$600,000):	Test of Faith	David Miller	Brett Pelling	\$2.60
Fillies & Mares Trot (\$300,000)	Felicity Shagwell	Ake Svanstedt	Ake Svanstedt	\$23.00
3-Year-Old Colts Pace (\$600,000)	Perfect Sting	David Miller	Joe Holloway	\$4.40
3-Year-Old Fillies Trot (\$650,000)	Bella Bellini	Dexter Dunn	Nifty Norman	\$5.20
3-Year-Old Colts Trot (\$650,000)	Jujubee	Andrew McCarthy	Greg Wright	\$3.20
3-YO & Up Trotters (\$650,000)	Ecurie D DK	Ake Svanstedt	Ake Svanstedt	\$3.00
3-YO & Up Pacers (\$650,000)	Ocean Rock	Daniel Noble	Chris Noble	\$34.80

Happy Holidays

TO OUR MEMBERS AND RACING FANS

A huge thank you to our racetracks, industry stakeholders, grooms, trainers, drivers, owners & breeders for all of their efforts to keep racing going under difficult circumstances these past two years.

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Thestable Gambles...and Wins



If thestable Three Point Group, a syndicate run by Anthony MacDonald, wanted their 2-year-old trotting colt, Threepointbluechip entered in the \$179,200 Matron Stakes at Dover Downs on November 4, they needed to cough up a \$20,000 U.S. supplemental fee. This was quite a risk. The winner's

purse would be almost \$90,000. Second would be around \$40,000, and they might have broken even with a 3rd place finish.

Not to worry. With James MacDonald (Anthony's brother) handling the driving, Threepointbluechip



went to the lead, passing the first quarter in :28.4, daring the rest of the field to go with him. Nobody could, and Threepointbluechip never relinquished the lead, hit the wire in 1:55, half a length better than Slay (Andy McCarthy).

This was an interesting gamble to say the least. Two weeks earlier, Threepointbluechip had finished 4th in an elimination for the Breeders' Cup final at Meadowlands. Before that, there had been a rough trip at Woodbine in a \$17,000 condition race that resulted in an 8th place finish. As the 9-5 favourite, Threepointbluechip had to leave from post 10, got a bad start, and when moving late had to weave around a galloping rival in front of him.

The win at Dover Downs is Threepointbluechip's 3rd in 6 career races. He paid \$11 to win. He is trained by Jason McGinnis.

If Garnet Ruled the World (or at Least the Racing Program)



There are very few people as plugged into the sport of harness racing as Garnet Barnsdale. He handicaps multiple tracks for Ontario Racing Management, writes for *Harness Racing Update*, and the *Down The Stretch Newspaper*, and it seems, at least once a week, he posts a 4-figure Pick-5 that he hit.

The following is Barnsdale's 3 Suggestions to Improve the Harness Racing Program:

1. I want to see the measurement of wind in the program. With winter coming at Mohawk, it's so wide open there, wind always seems to have an effect on the races. It's important to know if there was a tailwind or a headwind, because one helps front-runners quite a bit and the other one does not. So I think it's an important factor to note. I don't think it would be that hard to record something like that.
2. We have measurements of how horses' first time off the claim do. I want to know how often horses win on the night that they are claimed. So for example, before the 3rd race, Ken Middleton announces that there is a claim on a certain horse in the fifth race. How often do these horses win? Nobody's ever measured that.
3. I want more information about how often drivers with outside posts leave in the top three. Give me a stat on posts 8, 9 and 10 – how many times do they hit the quarter in the top 3? So James MacDonald when he's driving a 9 horse, 22% of the time he's racing in the first 3 at the quarter. And when he's driving a 10 horse, 18% of the time, he's into the top 3 at the quarter. That would give the player a better idea of which guys
4. There are more \$7,000 Conditioned Claiming races than anything else at Ontario "B" Tracks. But all \$7,000 Claiming races are not created equal. Some are restricted to non-winners of a certain dollar amount in a specific set of races, while others are for "winners over". Example: "For Non-winners of \$1,000 Last 3 Races" vs. "For Winners over \$1,499 Last 5 Races". This is a big issue if you are reading a track program, because the only designation you see is \$7,000 Clm Cnd, which signifies only that the race in question was a \$7,000 conditioned claimer. It's critical to know the condition of every one of these claimers, don't ya think?

We can tell you this: When Garnet orders steak and fries, 78% of the time he will eat up to 3 fries before cutting into his steak, but close to 91% of the time, he will completely consume the steak before polishing off the fries. When at Turtle Jacks, Garnet will order the Muskoka butter tart no less than 95% of the time, with crème brûlée coming in at just 5%. When you have the statistics, you are a more confident and well-researched bettor.

Sutherland's Streak

For a typical jockey, winning at least one race a day is very hard. The Ortiz brothers can do it. Sandy Hawley did it for years. Kazushi Kimura and Rafael Hernandez come close to daily victories at Woodbine. But what Chantal Sutherland is doing at Gulfstream is beyond remarkable. We point out that she's 46 years old, knowing that referencing her age annoys her. We don't have to point out that she's a woman. But how many 46 year-old professional female athletes are doing what Chantal Sutherland is doing? The answer is...none.

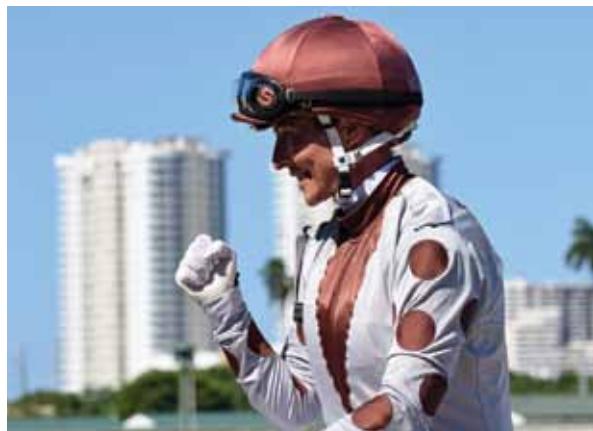
From October 31 through November 7, Sutherland had a streak of 6 consecutive days at Gulfstream in which she won at least 2 races. On the afternoon of Halloween, she had 8 mounts. She won the 6th aboard Unbridled Chrome (\$22.20) for trainer Benny Cadahia. She took down the 8th with Queen Domina (\$5.60) trained by Rohan Crichton. The next racing day, November 4, out of 4 assignments, she won twice: Creative Kid (\$7.60) for Elizabeth Dobles in the 5th, and She Nasty (\$3.60) for Jorge Delgado in the 7th.

On November 5, Sutherland scored 3 times in 6 rides. She won the 1st with Cidstayinurlaine (\$6.20) for trainer Delgado, then she captured the 6th with the David Fawkes-trained My Destiny (\$9.60), and she also won the 9th with Crumb Bun (\$6.20), again for Delgado.

The next day, Sutherland was the best with Emoji Guy (\$6.60) in the third for trainer Kathleen O'Connell, and she made Delgado smile again by delivering Front Loaded (\$12.40) to victory in the 9th.

The streak continued on November 7 when Sutherland scored with Backstretchbeauty (\$7.20) in the 1st. Backstretchbeauty rallied from 6th at the half to win by half length at the end of a mile and a 16th. Andy Williams trains this 3-year-old filly. Sutherland also won the 8th, surprising the bettors aboard Doc Amstel (\$19.40), giving her favourite trainer, Delgado another win.

The ensuing Thursday, racing resumed at Gulfstream and so did Sutherland's winning ways. She won the 4th, a 6 1/2 furlong maiden race with Aeronaut. Sutherland put Aeronaut on top after



a quarter mile and found the finish line with 2 1/2 lengths to spare. The trainer was Kelsey Danner and Aeronaut paid \$6.

And no one was calling Sutherland naughty after she won the 8th aboard Pannoti. The 3-year-old filly was 6 lengths behind down the backstretch of this mile and a 16th maiden race, but Sutherland had her in full throttle by midstretch, and she roared up to win by 1 1/2 lengths for Juan Avila.

There are so many valid angles to this story. Through that November 11th card at Gulfstream, Chantal Sutherland had 68 wins this year in Florida. Every one of those wins came against men. After her 6-day stretch of multiple victories, she was second in the Gulfstream Autumn session jockeys' race, with 24 winner's circles to the 30 by Edgard Zayas. Sutherland is outriding Edgar Prado, Luca Panici and Samy Camacho, long-time regulars on the Florida circuit.

This is all notable simply because this doesn't ever happen. Sutherland has announced her retirement at least twice. She hung it up at the end of 2012, only to resume in the middle of 2014. She had married Dan Kruze in May of 2012, but that marriage came to an end 4 years later.

She also hung up her tack at the end of July 2014, after riding Bugs Girl to a 2nd place finish in a 5-furlong claim race at Woodbine. But clearly the urge to compete bugged this woman, and in January 2016, she was riding at Santa Anita. From 2016 to 2020, Sutherland was paying the rent, but not blowing the doors off. She also rode at Del Mar, Los Alamitos, The Fair Grounds, Woodbine, Indiana Grand, Churchill Downs, Keeneland, Turfway Park, Ellis Park and Kentucky Downs. Somewhere along the line, she got her real estate licence in Kentucky. But for 5 years, the numbers were modest –never more than 27 wins in a year, and never posting purse winnings of over \$1 million.

In 2018, while riding at the Fair Grounds, she had a bad spill and broke her left clavicle and fractured both her right knee and tibia. That had her on the shelf for 3 months.

That's what makes 2021 so mind-boggling. After 2 retirements and injury down time, Sutherland is winning at the highest percentage rate of her career. She will finish 2021 with over 500 riding assignments, more than any previous year since 2011. Her horses will earn more than \$2 million.

A common saying at the track is that success breeds success. Earlier in 2021, Sutherland might have earned 2 or 3 rides per card. Now, she's pretty well the "it" rider, with 6, 7 or even 8 mounts a day.

If there's a secret, it's really about fitness. Sutherland works out religiously, maintains a rigorous diet and practises yoga, which keeps her mind in the right place.

Meanwhile her body keeps finding the right place – the winner's circle.

During her streak, Sutherland won 14 of 37 races. That's almost 38%. When the Gulfstream fall meet ended, Sutherland had 29 wins and a strike rate of 19% - both good for 2nd in the jockeys' standings behind Edgard Zayas who had 43 wins and a 24% win rate.

**The Board of Directors
and staff of the
HBPA of Ontario
wish you and your
family a very
Merry Christmas and
Happy New Year.**

Photo Courtesy:
LongRun Thoroughbred
Retirement Society (Tanglefoot)



presented by WEG

Dad started taking me to the racetrack when I was 8 years old – and I was hooked. From that first outing at what was then called Exhibition Park (now Hastings Park) in Vancouver, I embarked on a journey that would become a continuous backdrop to the story of my life.

Family moves throughout Western Canada meant new homes away from home at Victoria Park (later Stampede Park) in Calgary, and Assiniboia Downs in Winnipeg. We (sister Pam and brother Glen in tow) would scour the ground for winning tickets that might have been thrown away by mistake. When we occasionally stumbled across a winner, we felt like we'd struck it rich! Better yet, mom and dad would treat each of us to a \$2 show bet that inevitably led to a series of favourite horses. Dave's Mistake in Vancouver was my first (you never forget your first) and Follow My Shadow became even more memorable in Winnipeg (more on her later). They may not have been the best horses on the grounds but if they scored you \$3.60 to show, they were stars! And what Winnipeg race fan can forget the local 2-year-old filly Liz's Pride with Irwin Driedger aboard edging out Woodbine's regally bred Medaille D'Or in the '78 Winnipeg Futurity? In the bigger picture, these were the glory days for North American racing that featured Triple Crown triumphs for Secretariat (happy tears when he won the Belmont), Seattle Slew and Affirmed. I named my goldfish Affirmed and Alydar. Not surprisingly, Affirmed outlasted Alydar.

For a Grade 10 history project, I wowed Mrs. Mortell with quotes from Trent Frayne's *Northern Dancer and Friends*, and with what was back then a colourful array of betting slips from Exhibition Park (green \$6 combo tickets were Dad's fav). In 1979, I led a group of U of Manitoba marketing students to do some research for the local *Racing Spirit* magazine, scoring an honorary press pass at Assiniboia Downs that I displayed proudly for the rest of the year.

After graduating from the U of M, I talked my dad into partnering with me in owning a racehorse. Trainer Bill Bilous nabbed a low level claimer named Jubilee Bend who provided us with a summer of enjoyment at Assiniboia Downs as first time owners. In her final race for us, she gave up a big lead at the top of the stretch ("Jubilee Bend in full command!") and got nosed out at the wire by none other than – you guessed it – Follow My Shadow. The same Follow My Shadow who became so dear to me earlier that year by being the key horse



in my first ever winning triactor bet that paid \$1,315 – a fortune for me at that stage of my life! Jubilee Bend was claimed back by the original owners that race, so we never did get to the winner's circle with her and, as it turned out, it would be many years before I owned a racehorse again. But I added to my bucket list a goal to make it to the winner's circle with my dad and brother Glen someday.

My love of horse racing continued to grow. I remember a driving trip with Dad to New Jersey for the 1980 Meadowlands Cup, and to see Spectacular Bid paraded before the grandstand to honour a stellar career. And there were trips with Dad and Glen to old Hollywood Park, Santa Anita and Del Mar (Breeders' Cup '17), Churchill Downs for the Breeders' Cup (Dance Smartly, '91) and Kentucky Derby (Smarty Jones, '04). Later in life, my wife Jan was more than a good sport, as our love of travel invariably included visits to Flemington in Australia for the '83 Melbourne Cup, Ellerslie for the '84 Auckland Cup in New Zealand, Belmont Park in '99, Aintree in England for the '00 Grand National, Pimlico for the '13 Preakness, Fair Grounds for the '15 Louisiana Derby, Happy Valley and Sha Tin in Hong Kong later in '15, Chantilly in France for the temporarily displaced '16 Arc, Epsom Downs for the '18 Oaks, and finally The Curragh in Ireland for the 1000 Guineas in 2019.

Moving to Ontario in 1997 meant Woodbine was my new home base for racing. After years of just being a fan (Glen and I flew to Toronto and Woodbine for the '96 Breeders' Cup) and enjoying things like Sam Lima's Toronto Thoroughbred Racing Club, I tiptoed back into horse ownership by purchasing a micro share in a group named "Sport of Queens Racing" (Francine Villeneuve and Amanda Roxborough). It was fun and a great way to meet new people, but Queen's Honor developed some problems and was retired to the LongRun Thoroughbred Retirement Society without making it to the winner's circle.

In 2018, I got a big break though, when a friend

Full Circle

by Paul Peters

introduced me to a gentleman named Doug Anderson. In the spring of 2019, Jan and I accepted Doug's invitation to go into a 10% partnership with him (through Braconcrest Inc. that he owns with Rita Eskudt) and long-time racing friend Peter Mosakos, on a well bred filly named River of Pearls, purchased at Keeneland the previous fall and to be trained by Catherine Day-Phillips. Over the past two and a half years, I have enjoyed many early Saturday morning trips to the Woodbine backstretch with them to watch the workouts and visit Catherine's Kingfield barn. Doug and Peter have been unfailingly generous in their efforts to introduce me to their many racetrack acquaintances, educate me on the business of thoroughbred horse ownership, and ultimately get me to the winner's circle.

"Pearl" ("River" to others) developed some physical issues over the years, so this summer, after one more race in Woodbine Maiden Allowance company, we shipped her to Fort Erie for some class relief. Under the care of trainer Myckie Neubauer, she ran a good third as the favourite in her first race there. In her second start, I thought she was a lock when, after Jan and I drove through the town of Pearl in Northern Ontario and crossed over the Pearl River, we pulled off the highway to watch the race. It wasn't to be, though, as the best she could do was a game fourth.

However, on Sept 27th, the stars lined up even better. Principle owners Doug and Rita were away in France getting acclimatized for their traditional visit to the Arc at Longchamps. Over the years, every time Doug had a horse racing in Ontario while he was away for the Arc (four times at that point), the horse had won. Jan and I, along with Peter and his wife Barbara represented the partnership, as "Pearl" went to the post as the second favourite in the 6-furlong Maiden Allowance dash at The Fort. She was being ridden this time by promising young jockey Michael David, who was to benefit from a five pound apprentice allowance – except that he came in four pounds overweight – yikes! No matter though, as after a brief hesitation at the start, Pearl dueled on the front end, put away challenges from Chiefswood Stables' Street Joy on the rail and Space General on the outside to open a slim lead halfway down the long Fort Erie stretch. Then, with her owners screaming support from the grandstand, she was all heart in holding off a hard charging Regal Billee by a diminishing nose at the wire. It was a photo finish, but we knew. What a way to get to the winner's circle! At an outdoor café in Lyon, other patrons (and Rita) thought Doug was pretty loud (and pretty cool) as he cheered Pearl home from the livestream on his phone. For me, 41 years, 1 month and 4 days after that disappointing finish at Assiniboia Downs, I had come "full circle" and had an opportunity to fulfill a long ago promise. Though Dad had passed away a few years earlier, I carried a photo of him, Glen, and me (taken at the 2004 Kentucky Derby) with me into the winner's circle. Jan would tell you that, like the 1973 Belmont, there were happy tears all the way home!

Update: River of Pearls has been retired to what we hope will be a 2nd career as a broodmare. For our partnership, though, we have other "Dreams and Schemes" (our 2 yo filly) in mind!



**WOODBINE
MOHAWK PARK**

presented by WEG

We selected Tommy Larocque as our Standardbred Owner of the Month because of his remarkable 14-year-old trotter, Zeus Lightning. However, the more we talked with Larocque, the more it was clear – he is even more interesting than the horse.

Now 61, Larocque had an attraction to the sport as a much younger man in Quebec.

"When I lived in Montreal, the racetrack was a place to go betting," says Larocque. "And I always admired the horses. I was hanging around in those days at Blue Bonnets and working in the stalls."

Larocque is an animated storyteller, and he relates an incident that convinced him he needed to be involved with racehorses.

"It was late at night, and I was grooming and picking stalls," he begins. "I was tired, and I fell asleep for 3 ½ hours beside a horse that was lying down. When I woke up, someone said to me, 'Wow, that horse really must have known you were there because normally the only way they rise is to throw their neck up and they need room to do that. This horse lay beside you for that long because he knew he would injure you.' That was quite moving for me. Later on in life, I started buying horses en masse."

It was about 12 years ago, that Larocque purchased Zeus Lightning. He admits that every equine purchase comes with risk, but this was a young horse with untapped potential.

"One man's workload becomes another man's treasure," says Larocque. "Brian Brown had that horse, and I guess he thought he wasn't going to pan out. When you've got 40 head, you can't pay attention to everyone. And so, that was a gift."

As a gift, it just kept giving. In his first 11 races, Zeus Lightning won 3 times and earned about \$6,400 for trainer Brian Brown. Incredibly, he would be owned by Larocque Racing Stable for his next 277 starts, during which he won 34 more times and hit the board 141 times. Steve Charlton has often driven Zeus Lightning, who has earned about \$825,000 since he was acquired by Larocque. In 2021, the veteran trotter has raced 6 times in claiming races and non-winners. Since standardbred horses cannot race past the age of 15, the old fellow is nearing the end of his competitive days. He has just one 3rd place finish in his half dozen starts.

Other horses that did well come to mind for Larocque.

"I got JM Terror from breeder Joe Miskokomon, and he did very well for me," he says.



JM Terror paced from 2002 into March of 2010. He entered Larocque's stable in 2004. When he retired, JM Terror had raced 221 times, with 36 wins, 40 seconds and 30 thirds for \$581,733.

"I have had over 400-500 horses through the claiming game," says Larocque. "Bolero Charles did really well for me as well as Major Hottie."

Bolero Charles won 43 of his 168 starts and put \$609,515 in the bank. In 2009, as a 7-year-old, he had a fantastic 3 weeks during which he took down two \$40,000 Preferred Pace events at Mohawk and then a \$50,000 Open timed in 1:49.4. In his best year as a 9-year-old in 2011, he posted 11 wins.

Major Hottie, now 16, paced to the starting gate 217 times and got photographed in the winner's circle on 38 occasions. The son of Art Major earned \$769,718.

As an owner, Larocque has always entrusted his horses to Steve Charlton, with Marty Fine helping out occasionally.

"Steve and I have known each other since we were 18," says Larocque. "I met him at Blue Bonnets. I do believe that certain horsemen know a lot more than other horsemen. It's the idea of identifying and describing to the owner why a horse maybe isn't that good. And so I've always appreciated that about Steve. I've always believed his honesty and that's what he brings to the table. Although I'm the owner, the credit should all go to Steve. He is and has always been the lifeline for these horses. I just feed them and give them a home."

When Zeus Lightning turns 15 on January 1, 2022, he will no longer be a competitor. Larocque assures us the old warrior will live out his days in comfort.

"I always said to Steve, 'Let's find a good home for him or you can keep him,'" says Larocque. "I've done the math. If you assume the horse lives to be 30, that's going to cost \$60,000. But this has nothing to do with money. Ten years ago, I started adopting out the horses that I had. When their racing careers are over, I try to do the best I can. If I need to keep them for a year, I will until I find a home for them. I will give the horse for free on the condition that they don't 'meat' the horse. I have sold some to the Amish. I'm not claiming to be a saint, but I do believe that we need to do our best for these animals."

There's a bittersweet side to Tommy Larocque. His

wife, Tatum died of cancer in 2016. She was just 40. It's still painful for him as he recalls his favourite person and his favourite horse

"She used to say, 'I have such a connection with that horse,'" says Larocque softly. "She

was an amateur equestrian rider and she liked to walk him around after a race. I can still see this picture in my mind of a 5'11" girl, who had this ginger type of red hair. She was a beautiful woman. She used to comment on how he was such a gentle giant."

Losing his wife triggered something inside Larocque.

"It changed my personality," he says. "I'm an entrepreneur. I've had some pretty successful businesses and I'm trying to become a benevolent person. If you can give someone else a smile and happiness, that would be success to me."

Larocque is still enduring a sense of loss, but he's managing to parlay his grief into committing random acts of kindness.

"After I lost my wife, something triggered inside me" he says. "I didn't know what to do. I had everything. I had a house in the Caribbean. She had a Porsche. I had 40 horses, I had 5 restaurants. I had a pharmaceutical company; I had a wine store and part of 2 hotels in Montreal. But money doesn't solve people's problems. Sometimes helping others does. Now I go to the Seaton House every Sunday and give out parkas and clothes."

Larocque doesn't need to earn more money, but he tells *Down The Stretch* he's going back to work and there's a good reason for that.

"I want to get involved in this opportunity with a pharmaceutical company," he says. "My whole premise is the possibility of making free medicine and giving it to those who couldn't otherwise afford it."

There's a pause over the phone.

"I'm trying to be the best version," he says with a laugh. "Just better than I was yesterday."

In the meantime, harness racing helps fill a void in his life.

"I do love horses. I do like the socialization and the competitiveness," he says. "I used to be a big handicapper. I got a big rush about winning and cashing. I am hoping one day to just be self-sufficient and stay in the game, attached to the fabric of the horse community. I think there's a lot of good people there."

MacDonald's Huge Night and Middleton's Epic Call: OSS Gold Super Finals at Mohawk

The massive card at Mohawk on October 16 featured 8 OSS Gold Super Finals – each one worth \$225,000.

James MacDonald will end the year with his first Mohawk driving championship and he was the star this night. He began his excellent evening by steering the heavy favourite Prohibition Legal to an authoritative length and a half win in the 2-Year-Old Fillies Pace. Prohibition Legal was timed in 1:52.1.

"I was going to race her like she should win," said MacDonald. "Obviously, great horses, that's what they do, they get the job done when you put them in the right spot."

Trained by Nick Gallucci for owner/breeder Millar Farms, Prohibition Legal won all 6 of her OSS races this year. She is 8 for 9 in her career and that explains the \$2.40 win price.

The next OSS Super Final was for 2-Year-Old Trotting Fillies and once again, MacDonald had the heavy favourite. Adare Castle was not only the best, but she also got the most efficient trip, as MacDonald stalked from behind Mischievous Rose, tipped out at the top of the stretch, and simply blew the rest of the field away, winning by 6 lengths in 1:56.3.

"She's just a champion. She sees a helmet and then when you move her off it, she just knows it's 'go,'" said MacDonald. "She just does it so effortlessly. It's just a fun ride with her, and it's been a fun ride all year."

Adare Castle is trained by Mark Etsell, who shares ownership with Robert Newton, Graham Hopkins and Peter Porter. This was Adare Castle's 7th win in 8 starts and she paid just \$2.90. The double of Prohibition Legal and Adare Castle also paid just \$2.90.

The parade of favourites continued with the Gold Super Final Pace for 3-Year-Old Fillies. Scarlett Hanover and Yannick Gingras strolled to a 5-length win in 1:50. With her 6th win in 13 starts, Scarlett Hanover paid just \$4.30. She is trained by Ashleigh Hensley and owned by the Burke Racing Stable, Frank Baldachino, J And T Silva-

Purnel & Libby, and Weaver Brusce.

In the OSS Gold Super Final for 3-Year-Old Trotting Colts and Geldings, Fashion Frenzie took Louis-Philippe Roy for a first-over tour, and that translated into victory by 2 lengths in 1:53.4. Richard Moreau trains Fashion Frenzie for Ecurie Francis Richard, Pierre Guillemette, Sylvain Richard and Mario Bourgea. Since Fashion Frenzie won half of his 6 races in 2021, the \$4 win price seemed accurate.

After 4 low-priced winners, the crowd might have been ready for a longshot, but even the most fantastical script writers might not have imagined the finish to the 2-Year-Old Colts and Geldings Pace. Stonebridge Helios and Bob McClure were the 3-5 selection, but up in the announcer's booth, Ken Middleton was wondering how Bob Loblaw (the horse he bred, trains and co-owns) would do. When Bob Loblaw seemed hopelessly out it, 10 lengths behind in 7th as the field came into the stretch, Middleton found himself focusing on the front runners. As he tried to sort out a mad scramble to the wire, the track announcer almost missed a remarkable surge in the final 8th of a mile from Sylvain Filion and Bob Loblaw. Maybe 5 strides from the finish, Middleton spotted his horse roaring up on the outside to win by a head.

"It's about time!" exclaimed Middleton, breaking out of his normal relaxed delivery, and why not? Bob Loblaw was timed in 1:53. It was his 3rd win in 12 starts. Middleton is co-owner with Dave Walls, James Grant and the Starting Centre Stable. Bob Loblaw produced the most exciting payoff of the night – \$77.20 to win. Coupled with Magical Arthur who finished second, the 5 and 10 exactor – hardly nickels and dimes – paid \$1,096.20.

The 2-Year-Old boys went at it in the OSS Gold Super Final Trot. Duly Resolved had been 1st or 2nd in all 8 of his races, so show betting was wisely taken off the board. Duly Resolved went off at 35 cents on the dollar, but Twin B Archie gave James MacDonald his 3rd win on the night, parlaying a stalking trip, then cruising past the heavy

favourite down the lane to win by 2 ½ lengths in 1:55.3. Twin B Archie is trained by Scott McEneny who shares with Domenic Chiaravalle, Floyd Marshall and Martwest Racing Stable. That's 4 wins in 10 races for Twin B Archie and he paid \$9.60.

The great story that is Desperate Man got nicely punctuated. Desperate Man won the North America Cup 5 weeks earlier and in the 3-Year-Old Colts and Gelding Pace, the bettors spread their money around 3 sons of Shadow Play. Bulldog Hanover went off at 4-5, Power Train was 2-1 and late money whittled Desperate Man down to 9-5. The field went down the backstretch in single file, with Power Train and Sylvian Filion calling the shots, so Trevor Henry had to pull Desperate Man first over. In the stretch, Desperate Man was clearly the best, winning by over a length, despite a final surge from Bulldog Hanover (Jody Jamieson).

Much has been written about how the owners John and Kathy Cecchin gifted half of Desperate Man to daughter Nikki as a wedding gift when she married Paul Davies. Nice wedding gift! Desperate Man has now earned \$986,266. He paid \$5.70 to win. Kathy Cecchin is also his trainer.

"We still can't believe this is happening to us and that we have him. It seems like some sort of altered reality or something," laughed Kathy. "It's been incredible, and we are thankful. And those horses that we have raced against for two years now, we think the world of them, too. They're great competitors and we have the utmost respect for them."

In the 8th and final OSS Super Final, it was 3-Year-Old Fillies on the trot and the bettors went heavily on HP Mama B, making her 6-5. But she faded to 4th as Doug McNair delivered Up and Ready to win by an impressive 5 lengths. It was just the 2nd win in 13 starts this year for Up and Ready, but timing is everything. The filly is trained by John Bax and owned by Al Libfeld, Marvin and Lynn Katz and Sam Goldband. Up and Ready paid \$10.80.

Ross is Battin 5,000

Long-time harness driver Ross Battin hit a big number at The Raceway at Western Fair on Tuesday, November 9 when he rallied Dazzlin Rosie from off the pace to win the 3rd race, an \$8,000 pace. This was Battin's 5,000th career driving victory.

Leaving from post 7 – a very difficult starting point on the London, Ontario half-mile track – Battin had Dazzlin Rosie tucked in 3rd early in the race, took her out around the ¾ mark with cover, and ripped home with a :29 final quarter to win by 4 ½ lengths in 1:58.3. Battin also trains the 5-year-old mare and shares ownership with Paul Rutherford.

These days, Battin is not as immersed in the sport as he was as a younger man. For 3 decades,

starting with the 80s, he put up prodigious numbers, driving mostly at the "B" tracks in Ontario. From 1983 through 1993, he steered home more than 2,000 winners. He drove mostly at Western Fair, with occasional visits to Greenwood, Mohawk, Flamboro, Barrie, Elmira and Hiawatha Park in Sarnia.

Battin has won the Lampman Cup as the leading driver in the Ontario Sires Stakes program 7 times. No less than 24 times has he won more than 100 races in a single season and his horses have earned in excess of \$26,938,000.

Dazzlin Rosie, winning for the 5th time in 25 starts, paid \$14 to win.



(Moudy Ezzat)



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Central
Ontario
Standardbred
Association

From the Directors
and Staff of COSA

Ken Middleton, Mohawk Park Announcer:

I want to thank everyone who helped make 2021 such a great year for me - the grooms, the drivers, the fans and the horse owners. A special shoutout to Sylvain Filion, who gave my horses such great drives. And of course, if Bob Loblaw could read down The Stretch, thanks buddy for the greatest thrill I have ever had in horse racing.

	WIN	WOU	WOUWU
5 44	3063	522	
SCR	-		
7 6	1035	3348	
31	1874	730	
35	2196	225	

POOL TOTALS
WIN: 26780
PLC: 9255
SHM:



Bob Loblaw and Sylvain Filion won the \$140,000 Nassegaweya Stakes (1:52.4) and the \$225,000 OSS Gold Final (1:53)

We wish all the horsepeople, owners and
breeders of Ontario



a joyful
Season

and a prosperous
New Year

The Great Year of James MacDonald



The Mohawk Park standardbred meet will present live racing right to the end of the year, with a card booked for December 31, but the driving title is already in the bag. James MacDonald, now 35, has had a remarkably consistent and successful year in the bike. By the middle of November, he was in first place among the Mohawk Park drivers, with at least 30 more wins than Sylvain Filion. His win mark of 18.7 % was the highest of any driver with more than 30 assignments, and his UDRS (a complicated figure reflecting a driver's performance) of .319 was by far the best at the track. Though MacDonald never exceeded \$4,315,000 in earnings during his first 12 years of driving, he's on pace to crack the \$7 million mark with ease.

Not that it's all that easy to get him to brag about his breakout year.

"Just good owners and good trainers," he says when asked for the secret of his success. "I've got good people in my corner. You need great horses and I have been blessed with lots of those."

Could we get him to admit that his skill level had been elevated?

"I've heard that a lot," he admits. "Everyone says, 'Since you went to the states during Covid', so maybe it's true."

When racing was suspended at Mohawk in April, MacDonald shipped himself to the Meadowlands. Several weeks competing against the best drivers in the world obviously helped him up his game.

James is the youngest of a large brood of MacDonalds from Prince Edward Island. He has 4 older brothers – Anthony, Mark, Curtis and Lloyd, with a half-brother

in the mix as well. Anthony runs the phenomenally successful [thestable.ca](#) syndicate and Mark has been a regular driver at the Meadowlands for several years. James acknowledges that Mark was a valuable asset as a cheerleader, critic, promoter and unofficial agent.

"Mark was terrific," he says. "If he saw me do something on the track, he would tell me constructively, always saying it in the right way. He was always trying to help, and I could see just see how excited he was getting when I was doing well. He was cheering me on hard and pushing a lot of people to use me. It was definitely very helpful for me."

It wasn't just the Meadowlands in the spring for MacDonald. He drove at Pocono, Yonkers, and Harrah's Philly as well.

"Driving with all those great drivers, it jacked up my confidence," he says. "Success breeds success. A driver with confidence can be a scary thing."

But there was nothing scary for anyone betting on MacDonald. He wasn't winning just 1 or 2 a night. There were countless 3-baggers, a few 4-win nights and during a sensational week in June, he won 5 races on a single card – not just once, but twice! The first fiver came on Monday, June 14 and the second one occurred 3 nights later.

On November 4, MacDonald took a road trip to Dover Downs in Delaware. His brother Anthony's syndicate had entered their nice trotting colt, Threepointbluechip in the \$179,500 Matron Stakes. In fact, they supplemented the colt for \$20,000. MacDonald gave Threepointbluechip a perfect trip, moving out for the lead just past the first quarter and repelling all challenges to win by almost a length at odds of 9-2. Because of this, we would like to

point out that in 2021, James MacDonald won harness races at Mohawk Park, Western Fair, The Meadowlands, Yonkers, Pocono, Harrah's, Clinton, Grand River, Georgian Downs, Flamboro and even the Hiawatha Horse Park in Sarnia. Can someone cue *I've Been Everywhere Man*?

We asked MacDonald to list his most thrilling races of 2021.

"Obviously, the Maple Leaf Trot was massive," he says. "I've never had a real good chance in that race, so that was pretty special. I won the Battle of Waterloo, so that stands out, but Super Final night was pretty awesome. I won three Super Finals. To have a night like that was amazing. And then The Matron because I had never won a Grand Circuit race in America, so to get that monkey off my back was very cool."

Just to jog our memory, MacDonald won the \$546,000 Maple Leaf Trot with Lindy The Great (\$17.80). He took down the \$251,051 Battle of Waterloo at Grand River Raceway with Betterhavemymoney (\$2.80) and he scored on OSS Super Final night with Prohibition Legal (\$2.40), Adare Castle (\$2.90), and Twin B Archie (\$9.60).

In a family stacked with horse people, it's inevitable that James might find himself in a stretch battle with either Anthony or Mark. We had to know just how much "smack" goes on when the horses are neck and neck.

"My family knows how competitive me and Anthony and Mark are," laughs James. "We like to win no matter if it's the other guy's birthday or even if it's our mother. So yeah, there's some trash-talking. On the way by you might give a little jab. Actually, I'm a good sport, but Mark would."

Professional sports are full of men with gigantic egos. Reggie Jackson is famous for saying, "It's not bragging if you can do it." Boxer Floyd Mayweather filled YouTube with videos of himself lying on a bed with a million dollars. Try as we did, we could not provoke Macdonald into a self-serving editorial. He's a lock, a cinch, 1-9 to win the O'Brien as Canada's Outstanding Harness Driver, but we need to say that, because he won't.

"I'm not commenting on that yet," he says politely. "I don't want to. I'm just hoping that the voters recognize the year I have had. It would be a real honour to be considered. I'm going to let the cards fall the way they will, and hopefully they fall in my favour. I've seen stranger things happen."

And we need to point out that MacDonald is an accessible and friendly guy. He's also got a nifty sense of humour. On Monday, November 1, James MacDonald drove at Mohawk Park. But just an hour after the last race there, James McDonald rode the mare, Verry Elleegant to a stunning victory in the \$8 Million Melbourne Cup at the Flemington Racecourse in Australia. We asked MacDonald about that incredible accomplishment.

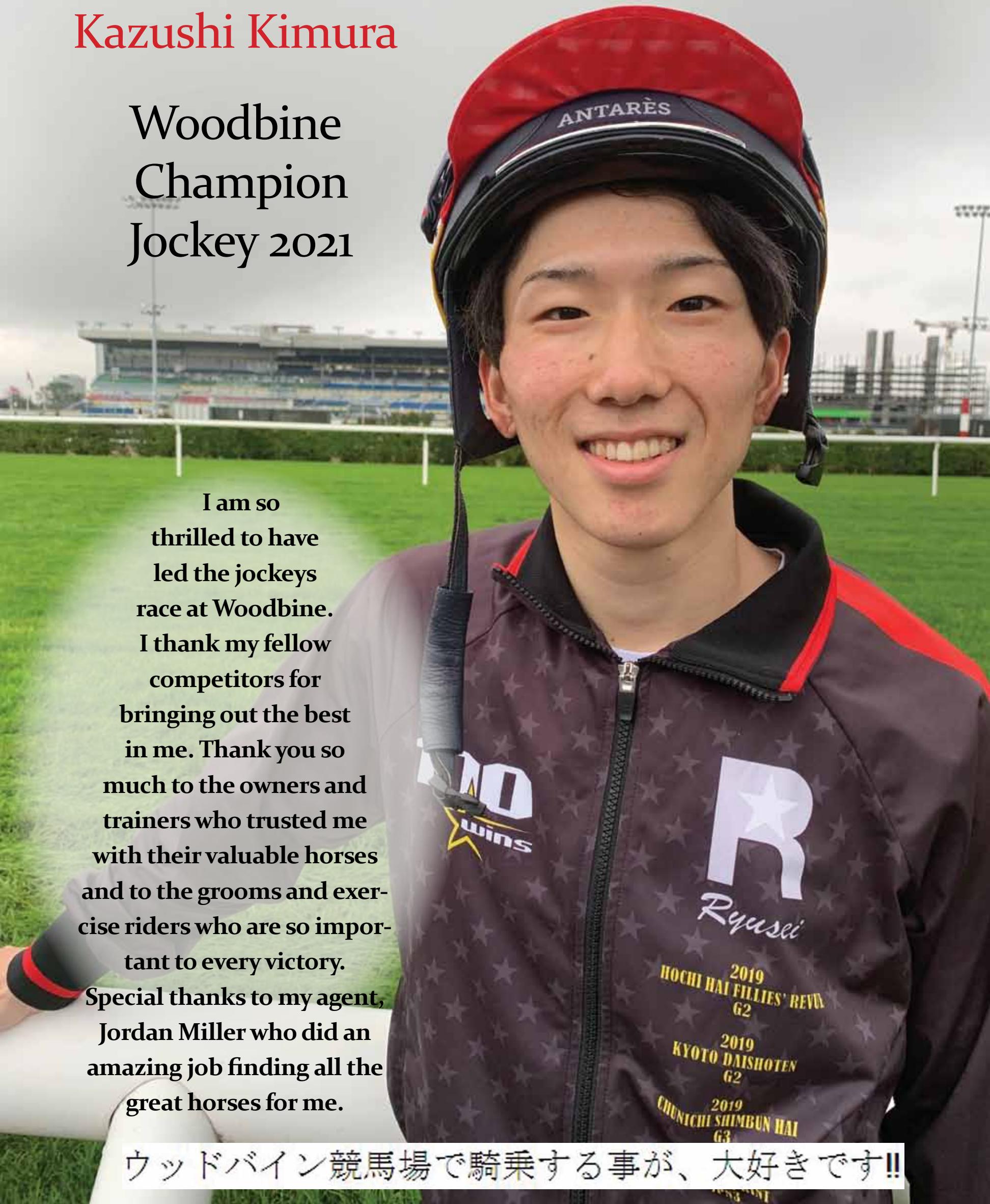
"I had quite a few people asking about that," he says, playing along. "The traveling wasn't the hardest part. It was shedding the 50 or 60 pounds. That was the problem, but I got it done."

It has been a very good year for anyone named James MacDonald.

Kazushi Kimura

Woodbine Champion Jockey 2021

I am so thrilled to have led the jockeys race at Woodbine. I thank my fellow competitors for bringing out the best in me. Thank you so much to the owners and trainers who trusted me with their valuable horses and to the grooms and exercise riders who are so important to every victory. Special thanks to my agent, Jordan Miller who did an amazing job finding all the great horses for me.



ウッドバイン競馬場で騎乗する事が、大好きです!!

Tony O'Sullivan

the New Standardbred Racing Secretary



Effective November 29, Tony O'Sullivan began to take over duties as the racing secretary for the standardbred races at Mohawk Park. Technically, the incumbent racing secretary, Scott McKelvie is hanging in until the end of March, so the transition should be a smooth one. For O'Sullivan, a trainer of close to 1,200 winners since 2000, this is simply a case of closing one door and opening another. **Down The Stretch** asked the questions and Tony O'Sullivan gave us crisp, informative answers.

DTS: How did this change in careers come to pass?

O'Sullivan: I've trained horses for over 20 years, and I had decided early on this year that I was probably going to finish up at the end of the season and take a break, and the secretary job was advertised with the retirement of Scott McKelvie. So I went through the process and applied, and they took me on.

DTS: Does your history of training standardbreds suggest that you have a real grasp of what's required in the racing office?

O'Sullivan: I think so, and I think the team at Woodbine thought the same. I've been in the trenches so to speak for the longest time, and I've raced a variety of calibre of horses, so I would like to think that I've got some experience to lean on.

DTS: What is the most common type of race that you would put together?

O'Sullivan: The most common type will be the overnight condition type races, the non-winners of the last five or six earnings. Claiming races obviously, but I would say the nuts and bolts are the condition races and the non-winners of one and two for the younger horses.

DTS: Do you anticipate finding yourself getting pressured by horsemen and women to create races that benefit their horses?

O'Sullivan: Well, I've been on that side, too. So you always want your horses to be looked after. I don't anticipate any problems. There won't be any pressure because of who I am, or because I've come from the other side.

DTS: Sometimes you will hear people complaining that their horse keeps getting the outside post and suggesting there's some sort of conspiracy. Can you assure us that the draws are perfectly fair?

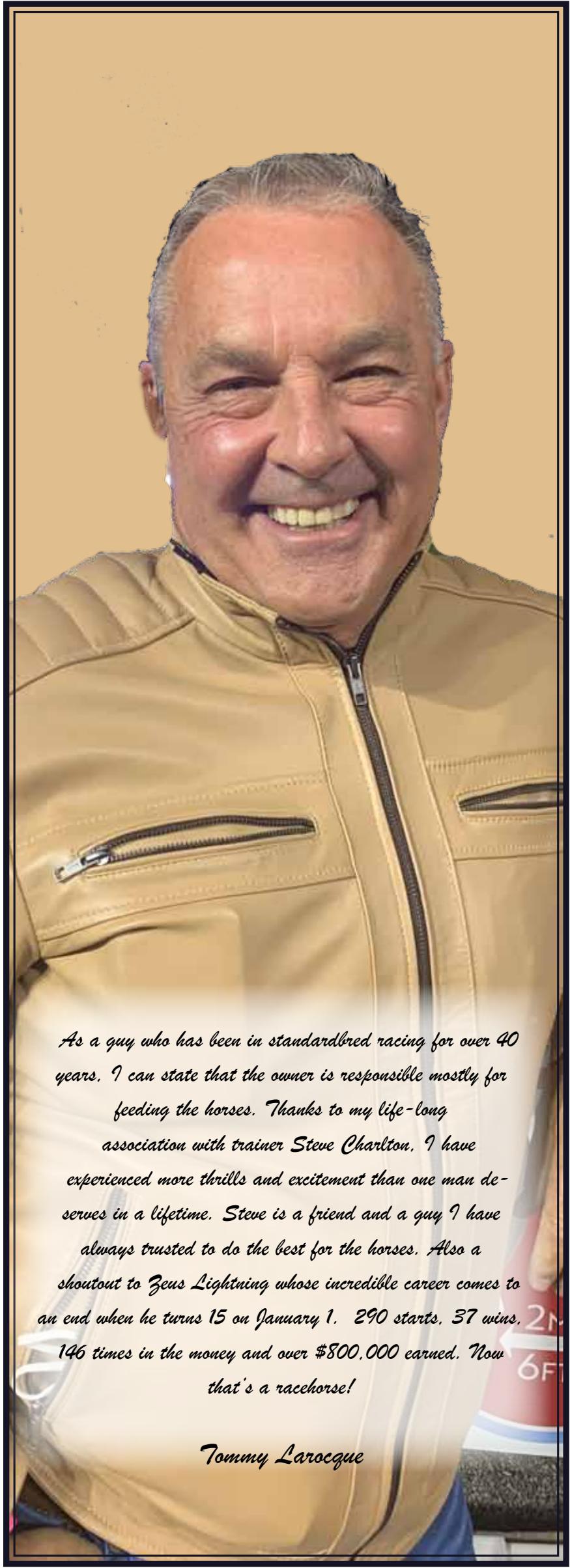
O'Sullivan: Of course they are. It's all done by computer draw and it's randomized. Hey, I've had horses over the years that always seemed to draw the outside. So some horses are lucky in some art, but it is fair. It's done randomly. There are no games played unless it's a handicap race, and that's clearly published.

DTS: What's your biggest challenge?

O'Sullivan: This time of year is always a challenge. Scott doesn't finish until March 31st of next year. So I'll have a good four months underneath him, adapting to a different place and a different schedule. I've been my own boss for a long time. Now I will have targets to meet and people to manage. It'll be enjoyable. It'll be a challenge. What I would like to try and achieve is to figure out ways that that the average owner can make a little bit more money over the year. The system can be top heavy, and for the smaller owner, it's tough for them, right? So if I can play a role and make things a little bit better for them, then that's my aim and that would be a success.

DTS: Being from New Zealand, do you see aspects of the racing there that you think might be applicable and beneficial to the harness racing here?

O'Sullivan: They have a totally different condition rating system than we do. That's something that I've looked into, and it could be applicable. You have to work out what's best for the population that you have in front of you. In New Zealand, they call it a racing system and it's quite different to ours, and certainly something that I may be carrying across.



As a guy who has been in standardbred racing for over 40 years, I can state that the owner is responsible mostly for feeding the horses. Thanks to my life-long association with trainer Steve Charlton, I have experienced more thrills and excitement than one man deserves in a lifetime. Steve is a friend and a guy I have always trusted to do the best for the horses. Also a shoutout to Zeus Lightning whose incredible career comes to an end when he turns 15 on January 1. 290 starts, 37 wins, 146 times in the money and over \$800,000 earned. Now that's a racehorse!

Tommy Larocque

ODDITIES & ENTITIES



Ten you see ...for Hennessey

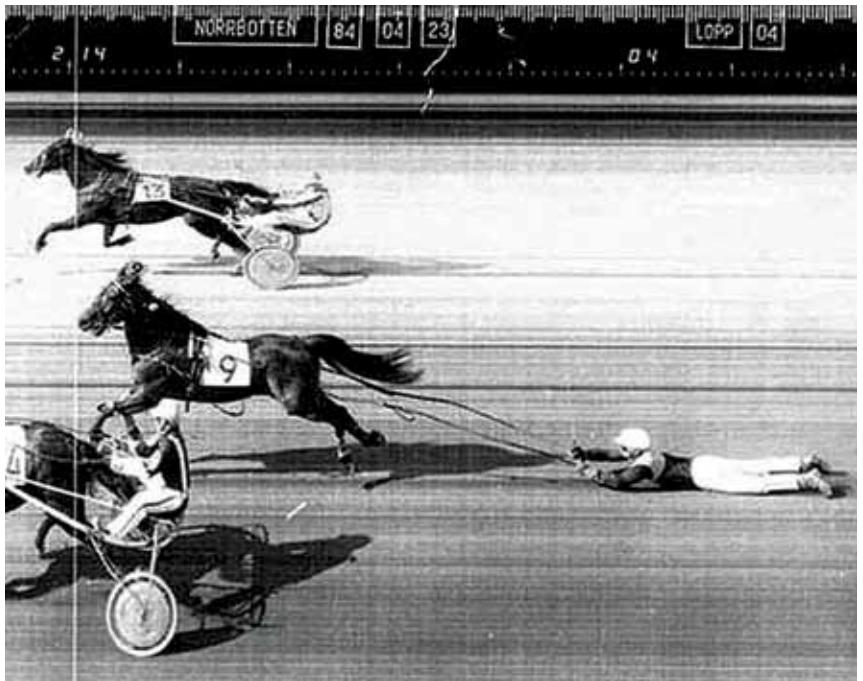
Pompano Park in Florida opened its 100-night season of harness racing on October 24th and veteran driver Wally Hennessey had a night for the ages. Hennessey won 10 of the 15 races presented that evening. He began his monster mash by sweeping 4 non-betting races to start the card; included here was a 53 length win by a 2 year-old trotting filly named Charis followed by a 64 length crush job by a two year-old trotting colt named Prince of Sussex. Hennessey then proceeded to win 6 of the 10 pari-mutuel races. He won the 5th and the 6th, they took down the final 4 races. Hennessey, who has won over 11,000 races produced win ticket that paid \$2.40, \$2.60, \$3.60, \$2.20, \$10.40 and \$2.40.

How Predictable Was That?

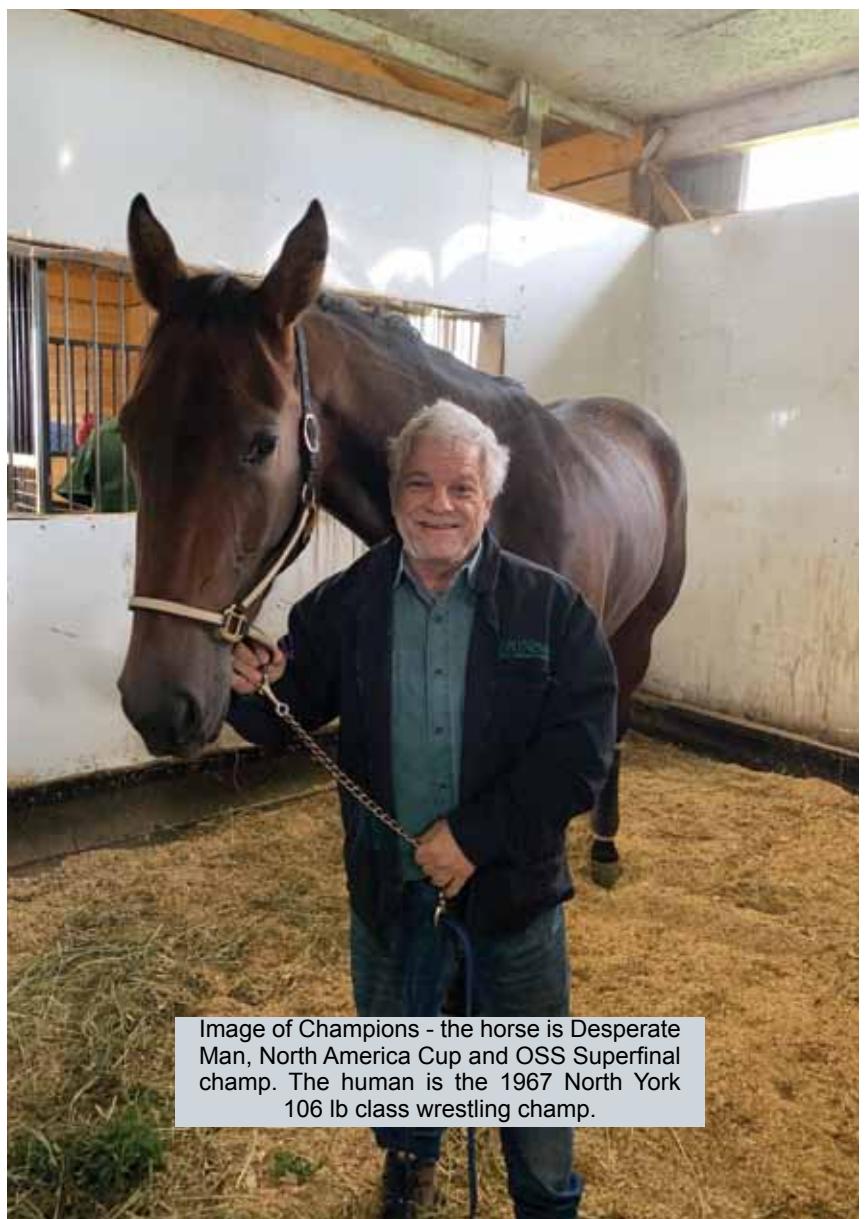
The challenge in betting the horses is that most races have a certain level of unpredictability. Except, apparently, when SOS Justified and Windsong Napoleon pace at Leamington. On October 31, SOS Justified won the \$7,000 claim race by 2 ¼ lengths in 1:59.4 with Windsong Napoleon second. This was the 6th straight time those horses had finished 1-2 in the exactor. On September 26, the combo paid \$23.70. A week later, the same exactor returned \$7.50. On October 10, SOS Justified beat Windsong Napoleon for a \$5.50 exactor. The same finish on October 17 produced a \$5.90 exactor. Then, on October 24, those two paid \$4.80 for the 1-2 finish. And on October 31, the Halloween exactor of SOS Justified and Windsong Napoleon returned a popular \$5.10.



Linda Davis and Bode's Tipsy are both smiling because Davis was gifted by the HBPA as one of the 3 top grooms at Woodbine. Davis cares for the horses in Santino DiPaula's barn. The two other honorees were Joseph Ferris from Sid Attard's barn and Sara Hall who tends to horses owned by Phil Hall.



Many years ago at Skidsville Downs, the obscure sport of Harness Skiing was introduced to a less than impressed crowd. The idea was quickly abandoned after competitors complained of dislocated wrists, skin abrasions and excess gravel in their pants.



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Photos by Dave Landry

