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DOWN THE STRETCH

CANADA'S MOST INFORMATIVE AND ENTERTAINING HORSE RACING NEWSPAPER



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Michael Burns Photo

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A visit to the Auciello farm

It was a wonderful morning for me and my 5 year-old grandson, Graham. Last winter, before the virus descended on us, I met Carmen Auciello at Mohawk and, at one point, I casually asked if I could sometime come out to his farm and get behind a standardbred. He agreed and that sometime was Thursday, October 1.

I gave Graham the choice of going to kindergarten or joining me and he didn't have to think twice. He's been to Mohawk a few times and begged to sit on the rail as the horses thundered through the stretch.

Auciello's farm is in Port Perry, some 114 kilometres very east of Mohawk Raceway. It's a spacious place with rolling hills and a half mile gravel track nicely nestled below the barns.

"My dad first started renting this place 30 years ago, 1990 or 1991," say Auciello, who has recorded well over 100 wins in each of the past nine years at Mohawk. "Right now, we have 48 stalls. We occupy 44 of them, and some friends and a couple of people who work for me have some stalls."

As Graham tentatively offered carrots to curious horses, Auciello identified the 'stars' of the barn.

"Right now, our best trotters are Mass Fortune, Free Willy Hanover, and On The Ropes," he says. "They have all had pretty good years so far. On the pacing side, Points North has been our best horse this year. I think he's made \$150,000 and we also have East End and Physically Inclined. We've got a 3 year-old colt, Moneyman Hill that was third in the North America Cup last month. He raced in the Little Brown Jug eliminations. He's our biggest Grand Circuit horse."

Carmen inherited his training chops from dad, Rocco, who is a constant presence in the barn. Rocco enjoyed fitting a helmet and safety glasses on Graham. The father and son have clients who go back three decades.

"Robert Burgess from Cedar Valley has been our longest client," says the younger Auciello. "He was with my dad 30 years ago and he's still a big client. He's got 12-13 horses with me right now. I've got some other big ones – Percy Elkins, Aaron Waxman, Rob Watson, some guys who have been around for a long time. Steve Klunowsky, Denarben Stables. Larry Fox...I'm trying to remember them all. I don't want to leave any out. There's a bunch."

Many in the harness community have farms in and around Campbellville, but the Auciello place requires a lot of trucking to Mohawk on the 407 toll highway.

"A little over \$4,000 a month right now," admits Auciello. "We're making 7-8 trips each week out to Mohawk and back. It's about 30-40 dollars there and 30-40 dollars back. It all adds up."

After the chat, it was time for the visitors to feel what it's like to get behind a professional race horse. Auciello was careful with the one he chose for us. The 5 year-old Born of Fire is a veteran of over 130 races. At one time or another, he was driven by Sylvain Filion, Bob McClure, Jody Jamieson, and Jonathan Drury. Safe to say all those men have superior driving chops to Born of Fire's latest passenger.

Auciello lifted Graham into the exercise bike and took him around the track once.

"I really liked that," beamed Graham.

Then it was my turn.

"This is the only time all week he will see the track," instructed Auciello. "You will go 3 miles. For the first 4 laps, give him a nice easy jog, and the next two laps, you're going to speed him up a little - not full race speed, but a good clip for the last mile, then bring him back."

All I can say is that it was a thrill. Born of Fire paced easily for two miles, then I chirped at him and I could feel the power in his legs, even if he was barely going half as fast as he might in a race. When I pulled back after the workout, he didn't fight me, and driver and horse returned safely to the barn.



Who's come to visit?



Graham made some friends



The Auciello trucks cover a lot of ground



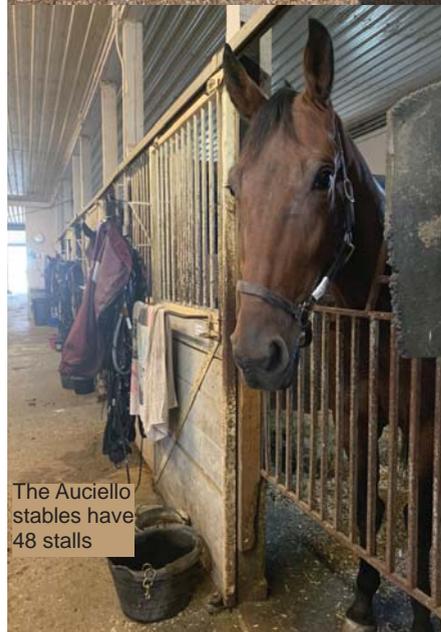
Carmen Auciello and Born of Fire



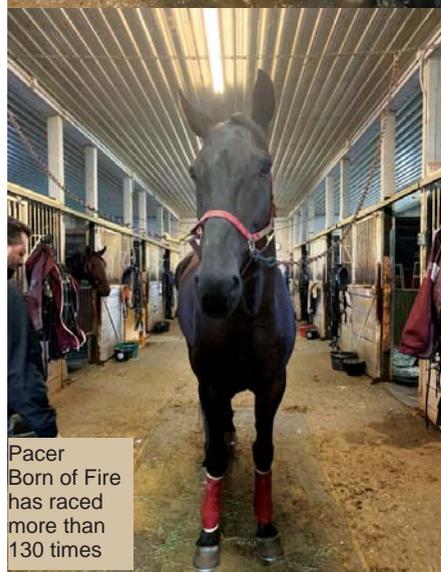
Rocco Auciello took care of Graham



Off for a ride!



The Auciello stables have 48 stalls



Pacer Born of Fire has raced more than 130 times



Look at me! I'm a harness driver!

THE EDITOR WEIGHS IN



Rod Stewart famously sung that *Every picture tells a story, story*. Well behind every horse race finish, there is always a good story. This issue of **Down The Stretch** was published just days after Mighty Heart failed to complete an historic sweep of the Canadian Triple Crown. Even though he lost in the Breeders' Stakes (page 4) his trainer, Josie Carroll, completed a very rare Triple Crown of her own, sweeping the series with the help of two horses. Siobhan Brown, the groom of Mighty Heart, is a great story. She took a gamble moving from Nova Scotia to work with horses. Mighty Heart's exercise rider, Des McMahon, was an important part of the horse's Plate and Prince of Wales wins. Carroll, Brown, and McMahon are featured in the centre spread (pages 14-15), which

proves that behind every great horse are at least two great women and the odd great man.

This on-line issue of **Down The Stretch** is jammed with wonderful stories. Not to diminish my (not quite) legendary editorial skills, but if I discovered this publication, I wouldn't read page 3 first. I'd go to page 5 and see how Mighty Heart crushed it in the Prince of Wales. Then I'd look at page 6 to see how the first Mohawk Million turned out. That would make me find the profile of harness owner Brad Grant on page 21. Grant is a fabulous story. Horses he owns won the Hambletonian and the Maple Leaf Trot, and even though he didn't actually have a two year-old worthy of performing in the Mohawk Million, he swapped out ownership of his starting position to allow Venerate to

get in and, of course, Venerate won. The great thing about Grant is that as much as he prospers in the sport, he gives back generously.

Larry Cordes, owner of Mighty Heart, is worth writing about. On page 20, he tells us in detail, the thought and process he went through to produce a magnificent champion.

And our Quarter Horse Owners of the Month (page 22) are the group that makes up First Line Racing. Through director Bob Broadstock, we see that the sizzling quarter horse industry continues to survive even as it takes hit after hit.

It may be impolite to say, but thanks to the pandemic, horse racing has had a wonderful fall. Races that were originally scheduled earlier were run in a compressed time frame. We barely got over the Queen's Plate and the North America Cup; then, in head snapping fashion, we had the Woodbine Mile (page 10), the Canadian Trotting Classic (page 7), the OSS Super Finals (page 12), and the Wonder Where Stakes, third leg of the Triple Tiara (page 16). As you will find on pages 17-19, thoroughbred Stakes races provided multiple thrills.

This issue has two pages (25-26) of quarter horse racing, thanks to Jennifer Morrison, one of the few people actually able to attend the races live this year.

Contributor Ric Chapman recently moved back to Australia and his piece, *The Aussie Angle* on page 11, will introduce you to a wonderful horse called *Classique Legend*. And we have another Ric Chapman piece on page 29 about a jockey who celebrated a huge win before the wire and the grief he got for doing so.

We lost Bill Galvin recently and that inspired an outpouring of sentiment from the standardbred community (pages 23-24). Galvin was a tireless and passionate promoter of harness racing and the sport is much better because of him. There's an interesting juxtaposition on page 24, where you will also find an essay about Heaven's Premier Race by Eric Lloyd. Lloyd imagines what would happen if the first U.S. Triple Crown winners meet for a mile and a quarter at a long gone racetrack. Wherever Bill Galvin is, maybe he'll be watching.

This issue of **Down The Stretch** also has a story on an amazing 28 hours in the life of harness driver Bob McClure (page 27), a successful season of racing at Fort Erie (page 28), and a page full of Oddities & Entities (page 30), proving there is never a shortage of weird, wild, and wacky things that happen in horse racing.

Every story in this publication proves what a viable, important sport horse racing is and how it's comprised of beautiful animals and caring people. The latter is our target audience, the former never cease to thrill us.

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Breeders' Stakes Mighty Heart foiled by his teammate

After taking the first two legs of Canada's Triple Crown, Mighty Heart faltered in the 1½ mile Breeders' Stakes and it was his stablemate, Belichick, reserved early by Luis Contreras, who swarmed past tiring horses at the top of the stretch and won easily. Mighty Heart, ridden by Daisuke Fukumoto, probably cut out fractions that were simply too fast early in the race. Prompted by longshot, Told It All (Kazushi Kimura), Mighty Heart was leading after a quarter

I was just in hand all the way to the quarter pole and I asked him to run from the stretch home and he did. I was just watching, just feeling my horse at the same time. And he was doing great the whole way. He came into this race very ready; good thing for Josie and all the crew."

Fukumoto admitted his original game plan did not include leading the field as early as he did.

"Today he broke good and I didn't plan on going to the front," said Fukumoto. "He was sharp like in the Queen's Plate. I tried to take hold and he relaxed a little bit in the backstretch, but with the mile and a half you need the stamina. I think he just got tired. He tried hard today, I tried to take hold, too...but that's racing. He gave me many experiences and I'm so proud of him. I want everyone to keep following him when he runs again next time."

Carroll didn't want to criticize the rider who had delivered Plate and Prince of Wales wins, but reading between the lines, it seems she wasn't thrilled with the way the race went for Mighty Heart.

"I told him [Fukumoto], 'Let's see how this falls out,'" said Carroll. "If you make the lead, watch your fractions...it's a long, long race.' The horse broke well, he found himself up there. Unfortunately another horse dogged him the whole way and he couldn't get the horse to come off the bridle and relax."

In a sense, Carroll had to switch leads, transitioning from her disappointment that Mighty Heart didn't win to her pleasure of the great race from Belichick.

"I've said from the very start that Belichick is a very, very special horse that's just coming into his own," she said. "I think he showed that today. He's a powerful horse. The Queen's Plate was a breakout race for him and we couldn't come back that quickly in the Prince of Wales. A horse needs a little time to regroup from something like that, a young, inexperienced horse. And regroup he did."

Belichick was not all that unlikely a winner. He came from out of the clouds and passed several horses in the stretch of the Queen's Plate. That was just his third race and surely indicated he was comfortable going long. The \$8.70 payoff is telling that many sharp horseplayers discovered a horse ready to triumph at the distance.

Belichick is now 1-2-1 from four starts in his career.

The son of Lemon Drop Kid, unraced at two, finished third in his career bow on July 4, following it up with a runner-up performance in his second start on August 1.

After his second-place finish in the Plate, Belichick's connections drew up a perfect game plan for the Breeders'.

"He's a different horse," noted Carroll. "He was so distracted the first race. I came over here with high expectations of him, I knew in the paddock I was in trouble...he was looking at a white pony and he was all googly-eyed at them, all over the place. And then off of that race, he seasoned a little, and then more so the next race, and then today when I was back at the barn, he was sleeping all day, stretched right out in the stall...just crashed. The nerves are all gone; he's just turned into a real professional."

The last Canadian Triple Crown winner was the Michael Keogh-trained Wando, who put his name into the record books in 2003 as the twelfth horse to win all three races. Jockey Patrick Husbands, who rode Wando, remains the last jockey to sweep a Canadian Triple Crown.

Belichick combined with Meyer (\$30.70, \$15.60) for a 9-1 exactor that returned \$238.20. English Conqueror (\$5.30) completed the 9-1-5 triactor, worth \$1,544.60; and Deviant rounded out the 9-1-5-3 winning superfecta combination that paid \$15,395.90 for \$1.



in :23.69 and a half mile in :47.45, clockings that spell doom at that distance on the soft turf. Consider that the next four quarters required :25.57, :27.69, :26.67, and :25.13. Belichick's winning time of 2:32.51 was over 7 seconds off the course record.

Trainer Josie Carroll was certainly entertaining mixed feelings. She sent out Belichick for NK Racing and LNJ Foxwoods so, in a rare way, she is a Triple Crown trainer. Mighty Heart was an emphatic winner of both the Queen's Plate and the Prince of Wales Stakes.



It was Meyer (Sahin Civaci) who got up for second at 54-1, and English Conqueror (Emma-Jayne Wilson) at 12-1 was third. Clayton (Rafael Hernandez) who was third in the Plate and second in the Prince of Wales was a non-challenging fifth.

"They kind of broke early in the race, so I just tried to see them and relax my horse as much as I can," said Contreras of the early front end speed. "He was very uncomfortable; this horse has a different style to run, so I just let him be happy wherever he wants to be. Turning for home,

Mighty Heart Conquers Second Jewel of Triple Crown

Because it is run on three different surfaces, the Canadian Triple Crown for thoroughbreds is probably more difficult to achieve than its counterpart in the U.S. But after the Prince of Wales Stakes at Fort Erie on September 29, Larry Cordes' Mighty Heart has all the chips on his side of the table to become the thirteenth Triple Crown champion in 161 years.

Jockey Daisuke Fukumoto employed a different strategy for the Prince of Wales from the front-running approach that worked perfectly in the Queen's Plate seventeen days earlier. Mighty Heart left comfortably from post 2 and was allowed to settle along the inside as Truebelieve

(Keveh Nicholls) and Dotted Line (Justin Stein) ran 1-2 through fractions of :47.39 and 1:11.42. As the field swept for home, Clayton (Rafael Hernandez) went aggressively to the top and had a brief lead of about 2 lengths. With an eighth of a mile to go, Mighty Heart was gaining with every stride, got the lead in midstretch, and widened with pleasure to win by 2½ lengths in 1:56.59 for the mile and 3/16ths. Clayton, the Plate Trial winner and third in the Queen's Plate, was a solid second and Dotted Line



salvaged third.

"A couple horses went to the lead so I let them go and sat behind them," said Fukumoto. "He can take a little air so I changed up the tactic, and when I asked him at the quarter pole, he went on again. Last time he won very easily, and he did it again today."

This is the greatest season long-time owner Larry Cordes has ever had and he is enjoying every wonderful moment from a horse that, despite losing his left eye shortly after

being born, probably hasn't even peaked yet. The Prince of Wales was just his sixth career race.

"He was handicapped from day one and his future looked bleak because of his injury," said Cordes. "But we had faith in him from the day he stepped on the track. We have to see how he comes out of this race, but we would like to compete for the Triple Crown."

There have been 12 horses previously that have swept the Canadian Triple Crown, but only 9 trainers have ever experienced it. (Roger Attfield has done it 3 times, Pete McCann twice). Josie Carroll has a great chance to get her name inscribed along with a few other great trainers.

"We always wait to see how the horse comes out, that's the key," said Carroll, already a Hall of Fame resident. "He's a wonderful little horse and he gets better every time."

Fort Erie officials had reason to smile. The track remained closed to the public, but the on-line gamblers poured a record \$3,028,600 into the POW race, more than \$800,000 than the previous record set in 2016 when Amis Gizmo won for Josie Carroll.

Mighty Heart paid \$3.70 to win.

Thank You

I want to thank a special group of men and women - the morning exercisers of thoroughbred horses. They are the first teachers to deal with the high-spirited colony of race horses, a high-risk job to say the least. In particular, thank you Desmond McMahon for the great job you have done with Mighty Heart.

I respect all of you good people.

Yours truly,

Larry Cordes

Larry Cordes

Owner of Mighty Heart



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Inaugural Mohawk Million: Brad Grant called the shot

There's multiple takes we can absorb from the first Mohawk Million on September 26, but let's focus on two:

1. It's a great idea – a million dollar race in which all the money is put up by the contestants and...
2. Brad Grant is a very smart man.

The winner from a field of two year-old trotters was Venerate who got a splendid drive from Aussie Andrew McCarthy. Despite having to leave from the second tier at post 10, Venerate moved up under cover down the backstretch and outdueled the 4-5 favourite, Donna Soprano to win by three quarters of a length in 1:53.2.

Venerate is owned by Pinske Stables and Andy Miller Stable, but got into the race thanks to Brad Grant. Grant and partner Marvin Katz were among the first to pay \$110,000 for a slot in the race and when their two year-old trotter, Maverick, didn't seem ready for such deep company, Grant negotiated with trainer Julie Miller and the owners to allow them to use the available spot.

"I was hoping I'd get out of there a little closer, but after scoring him down, I knew I couldn't make him accelerate



PHOTO BY NEW IMAGE MEDIA

too fast, so I just wanted to get out of there upright," said McCarthy. "He's a very strong horse, I've seen that, I didn't really care how far back I got, just figured I'd have to get through that first turn and then worry about where I'm going from there. The speed was pretty tough early, so it worked out where I could end up getting a pretty good trip, but when I looked up at the eighth-pole, I was a long way back."

Most of us agonize with the program to figure out who to take in a \$12 box. Grant had to choose one horse to justify a \$110,000 gamble.

"It makes me look pretty smart I guess," laughed Grant. "We really believed in this race when we bought our slot. What Woodbine has done is something new and I think it's great, it had a buzz to it all year long."

"I'm so thankful for Andy and Julie and Pinske Stable," said McCarthy. "And to Brad Grant for deciding to use me on this horse; I'm so thankful."

Venerate is now four for seven and adds \$660,000 - the winner's share of the \$1,320,000 (Canadian) purse to his previously earned \$188,766.

The victory for driver McCarthy gives him a sweep of harness racing's two richest races in 2020. McCarthy won the \$1 million Hambletonian on August 8 at The Meadowlands in New Jersey and he did it with Grant's wonderful filly Ramona Hill.

"It feels amazing just to be involved in a race like this," said McCarthy. "It's important to hold races like this, it draws a lot of attention and hopefully it hangs around for

next year."

Venerate, by the way, means 'to honour and revere profoundly'. The winning bettors got to venerate their \$6.80 win tickets.

Somebeachsomewhere's daughter kissed 'em, goodbye

Kissin In The Sand, a five year-old daughter of Somebeachsomewhere, brushed to the lead in the second-quarter and scooted away with ease to a 1:49 victory in the \$215,000 Milton Stakes.

Jody Jamieson guided the Nancy Takter trainee to victory, pacing home in :26.4 for the authoritative win by 5 lengths.

"I just figured we'd get away a little bit close and see how it panned out," said Jamieson. "It worked out perfectly to get back to the lead and she just did the rest. Nancy and her team had her awesome tonight and she was



PHOTO BY NEW IMAGE MEDIA

unbeatable really."

"This mare is entirely 100 per cent due to Nancy Takter," praised co-owner Marvin Katz. "From the time she was a baby, developing her as a baby, she's loved her. Nancy and I have had 50 discussions about stopping with her, because we want to breed of course, and it's Nancy who has insisted that she's good and great."

Kissin In The Sand is owned by Katz and Hatfield Stables and went over \$2 million in career earnings with the victory. She is now 3 for 9 on the season and has 22 wins.

A \$2 win ticket on Kissin In The Sand returned \$5.

A wild Shes A Great Lady

It was an eye-popping finish to the \$455,000 Shes A Great Lady Stakes.

Five two year-old fillies hit the finish line almost simultaneously; the chart shows they were all within a head of each other. At first it appeared that Scarlett Hanover and driver Andrew McCarthy, after experiencing a mid-stretch traffic jam, had scooted up the inside for the narrow win with 4-5 favourite, Caviart Audrey a very close second.

However (the worst word you can hear after your horse wins), the inquiry sign lit up and the judges saw that Scarlett Hanover, while panicking for room in the lane, bumped into Lady Arthur, who ricocheted into Twin B Sunkissed, who broke stride. Based on the video, Scarlett Hanover was DQ'd and placed ninth. Caviart Audrey was declared the winner in 1:52.2. She was driven by Yannick Gingras for trainer Nancy Takter.

A daughter of superstars Somebeachsomewhere and Darlins Delight, Caviart Audrey was a \$280,000 Lexington Selected Yearling Sale purchase. The victory



PHOTO BY NEW IMAGE MEDIA

gives her five wins in six starts and \$354,237 in earnings for owners Caviart Farms.

A \$2 win ticket on Caviart Audrey returned \$3.70.

How to Exploit the bad luck of others

Trainer Tony Alagna sent out a pair of horses in the \$720,000 Metro Pace and even he probably did not predict the winner. Driver Doug McNair mapped out a perfect second-over trip for Exploit on the back of stablemate and 1/5 favourite Abuckabett Hanover to surge by powerfully in the lane for a 1:50.4 win at odds of 35-1.

"He was feeling real good and we were following the best horse in the race I thought," said McNair. "He swelled right up in the last turn and kind of surprised me a little bit when he blew them all and he raced great."



PHOTO BY NEW IMAGE MEDIA

Abuckabett Hanover got away sixth and started the first-up bid in the second-quarter, getting to within a length of the lead at three-quarters, while giving very live cover to Exploit who followed his every move.

In the stretch, Exploit shot off cover to surge by his tired stablemate and take the victory by a head over Bayfield Beach (Yannick Gingras). Abuckabett Hanover (Andrew McCarthy) finished sixth.

Exploit is a son of Somebeachsomewhere, and on some beach somewhere in standardbred horse heaven, dad had a great night, watching his children win the Milton, the Shes A Great Lady, and the Metro Pace. Exploit was two for seven coming into the Metro final and had finished fourth in his elimination for owners LeBlanc and Kribbs, Joe Sbrocco, In The GYM Partners, and Joe Barbera.

"They do a great job," said McNair of the Alagna barn. "It's great to get to drive for them and their horse showed up tonight."

The payoffs were certainly interesting. Exploit paid \$73.90, but because there were massive sums bet to show on a 1-5 favourite that didn't hit the board, Exploit paid \$23.40 to place but \$47.30 to show.

Chestnut Hill stuns in wild Canadian Trotting Classic

McCarthy gets most of the cash

Chestnut Hill, overlooked by the bettors at 60-1, managed to stay flat while others around him disintegrated and that led to a shocking victory in the \$560,000 Canadian Trotting Classic on September 18. Driven by Andrew McCarthy, Chestnut Hill settled into sixth down



The thrill of Chestnut Hill

New Image Media Photo

the backstretch and, when buried seventh along the inside at the top of the stretch, appeared to have little change. But, one by one, rivals took themselves out. First it was the 1-5 favourite, Ready For Moni that self destructed. Yannick Gingras had steered Ready For Moni to the top as the field came into the stretch and then, suddenly, he broke into a gallop. HP Royal Theo (Louis Philippe Roy) loomed up on the outside and seemed surging to victory, but he also broke stride. With horses scrambling left and right, Chestnut Hill somehow found room along the inside with McCarthy skilfully avoiding contact with the out of control Ready For Moni. Chestnut Hill won by half a length in 1:53.2.

"Pretty close," laughed McCarthy when asked about how close he was to danger when avoiding the breaking horse. "I kind of yelled out to let Yannick know there was

someone on the inside of him. It worked out that he heard me and didn't want to crash into me, so he did a good job getting that horse out of the way safely, and it worked out good for me and I got to sneak up there."

Those 60-1 odds look pretty good on a horse that has hit the board in 16 of 22 starts. Chestnut Hill was coming into Saturday off a win in the Pennsylvania Sires Stakes Consolation.

"I've been watching this horse and he has been sneaky good," said McCarthy who was steering him for the first time. "I ended up in a spot that I wasn't too happy about heading around the last turn, but I was able to shake him out and sneak him back up the inside."

Chestnut Hill is owned by Mel Hartman, David McDuffee, and Little E LLC. He was a \$410,000 Lexington Selected Yearling Sale purchase in 2018 and he returned \$122.90 to win.

Ramona makes it a sweep for McCarthy and the 'Hills'



Ramona Hill looked Elegant

New Image Media Photo

Cue the Judy Collins 45; Andrew McCarthy looked at harness racing from both sides now. After

a wild win with longshot Chestnut Hill, McCarthy got a relatively routine trip with heavily favoured Ramona Hill in the \$350,000 Elegant Image on the same night.

Ramona Hill settled in fifth in the early going, apparently just to see what her nine overmatched opponents would do. McCarthy took her to the outside before the half and powering first-over, she took the lead from Sorella right at the top of the stretch. From that point on, the rest of the field were no more than flotsam and jetsam as Ramona Hill trotted the last quarter in :28.3 en route to a 1:51.4 mile which ties the Elegant Image record.

That was Ramona Hill's twelfth win in 14 starts in 2020. She has won 7 straight, including her heat and the final of the Hambletonian in August. She has already earned \$1,452,066 for her owners, Brad Grant, Crawford Farms, Robert LeBlanc, and The Gym Partners. Her trainer is Tony Alagna.

"She was as good as ever tonight," said McCarthy. "She's just such an amazing filly; it's just an unbelievable experience to sit behind a horse like that. She never really got out of second gear tonight, just kind of worked her way to the front and never really had to ask her at all, she just did it pretty easy."

"I've never won this race and it's on my bucket list being right in our own backyard," said Grant. "To have her here and really not know how good she is, as Andy said, she was in second gear, so if that doesn't excite you I don't know what does."

Ramona Hill paid \$3.10 to win.

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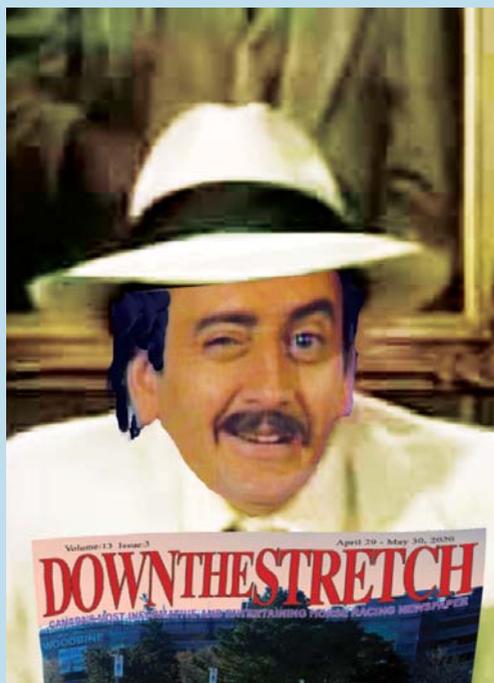
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- Keeneland January Horses of All Ages Sale
- OBS Winter Mixed Sale
- Fasig-Tipton Midlantic Winter Mixed Sale
- Fasig-Tipton Kentucky Winter Mixed

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Starship Jubilee looked great in the Woodbine Mile



Starship Jubilee in the Woodbine Mile

Michael Burns Photo

The only question was - how did Starship Jubilee go off at almost 6-1 in the Grade I \$1.2 million Ricoh Woodbine Mile on September 19?

Owned by Blue Heaven Farm, Starship Jubilee was the oldest starter and the only mare in the field, but she had won 18 of her previous 37 races and accumulated just under \$2 million and she had already shown multiple times she was a monster on the grass.



Trainer Kevin Attard could not mask his delight

Michael Burns Photo

Add to the mix that her jockey was Woodbine's leader, Justin Stein, and his first assignment with Starship Jubilee was triumphant. Stein had the seven year-old sitting fourth down the backstretch as Admiralty Pier (Steve Bahen) and Value Proposition (Luis Contreras) battled up front. War of Will (Rafael Hernandez), the 2019 Preakness champion and 2-1 favourite, was almost beside Starship Jubilee as the field went around the far turn. The first 6 furlongs went in 1:09.12, an advantage to a come-from-behind specialist like Starship Jubilee.

In the stretch, Stein found an agreeable seam through which Starship Jubilee advanced willingly, pulling away from War of Will and rejecting a late move by March to the Arch (Patrick Husbands) who had to settle for second, a length behind the winner.

The time was sensational - 1:32.06, just a heart beat off the course record of 1:31.75 set by the legendary Wise Dan in the 2013 Woodbine Mile.

"Sitting inside the three-eighths pole, around the 5/16ths pole, I had tons, and I waited for a chance to tip her out and ask her to run," said Stein. "She's so honest and wants to win more than anybody else out there. I watched her replays... she's just gritty. She just waited for her cue and took off like a scalded cat. She was gone."

That was the nineteenth win in 38 tries for Starship Jubilee, last year's Canadian Horse of the Year, and her credentials in 2020 are even better - 5 wins in 6 starts this year. She is the third filly to win the Mile.

Making this even a much better story is the fact that Starship Jubilee was claimed for \$16,000 at Gulfstream in February of 2017 by Tino Attard. Tino's son, Kevin, has been the trainer since that claim and, if anything, he was somewhat annoyed that Starship Jubilee paid \$13.50 to win.

"This mare doesn't get the respect she deserves," exclaimed Attard, channeling his best Rodney Dangerfield. "She's a winner of 19 races out of 38 starts; I was really disappointed to see her at 6-1 on the board... just kind of forgotten about. Time after time, she comes up and proves that she's a top horse in North America."

"I paid attention to what other people had said," said Stein, who is currently holding a slim lead for most wins in the Woodbine riding colony. "I expected War of Will to be up there. Instead he was on my flank and we were in company down the backside, and Shirl's Speight was up there, and Admiralty Pier. It kind of shaped the way I thought. I was in great position and I was just happy with the trip I got."

Entered in the 2018 November breeding stock sale at Keeneland, Starship Jubilee failed to meet her \$425,000 reserve and was subsequently sold privately to Bonnie Baskin's Blue Heaven Farm. Now, she's likely headed to the starting gate for a shot at Breeders' Cup glory. If she does run in the Breeders' Cup she will do so under Stein, who came out of the weekend in first place in the jockeys' standings. Stein is having a spectacular year, his second season after retiring for three years in the spring of 2016.

"It's pretty special," admitted Stein. "Life's funny; I had an opportunity to come back and I've just kind of seized the day and I keep going."

"It's obviously a special feeling to know that this race has produced so many horses that have gone on to win the Breeders' Cup," said Attard. "So, I'm really ecstatic right now and that's somewhere we've been aiming to go all year long. This is just one step closer."

The Grade I Ricoh Woodbine Mile, which was contested as the ninth race on Saturday's program, generated a record handle of \$3,098,339 for the race.

Count Again in the Singspiel

The \$143,900 Grade III Singspiel Stakes at 1¼ miles on the turf on September 19 was a race the bettors apparently could not figure out, but Count Again (Luis Contreras) sure did. There was no clear favourite in the race as both Standard Deviation (Justin Stein) and defending champion, Tiz A Slam (Steven Bahen), went off at identical 3.65-1 odds and Nakamura (Kazushi Kimura) was 3.80-1.

None of those three hit the board.

Count Again, a five year-old gelding by Awesome Again, was near the back of the pack for the first mile as Tiz A Slam cut out fractions of :49.91, 1:13.65, and 1:37.20. Tiz A Slam stopped abruptly in the stretch as Count Again rallied with a three-wide move to pass rivals.



You could count on Count Again

Michael Burns Photo

Although racing a little erratically, he took the lead before the eighth pole, and pulled off to win by 1¼ lengths in the nice time of 2:00.67.

Jockey Contreras and trainer Gail Cox had to sweat out a steward's inquiry regarding the second-place horse, Sir Sahib (Daisuke Fukumoto), but the officials determined there were no grounds to change the order of finish.

"I was in the perfect position the whole way," said Contreras of his seventh Stakes win of the meet. "Just before the turn, a horse came on the outside and made a little move and gave him a bit of trouble, but my horse was nice and relaxed. I just held him a little bit longer...when I turned for home, I was loaded with so much horse."

Let go at 9.55-1, Count Again was well-prepped for the Singspiel; in his previous race he had finished second at the same distance on the lawn.

The Singspiel was Count Again's third career win from just six outings and was the fourth time a Sam Son Farm owned horse had prevailed in this race. The three others were Aldous Snow in 2014, 2015, and 2017 for now-retired trainer Malcolm Pierce.

Count Again returned \$21.20.

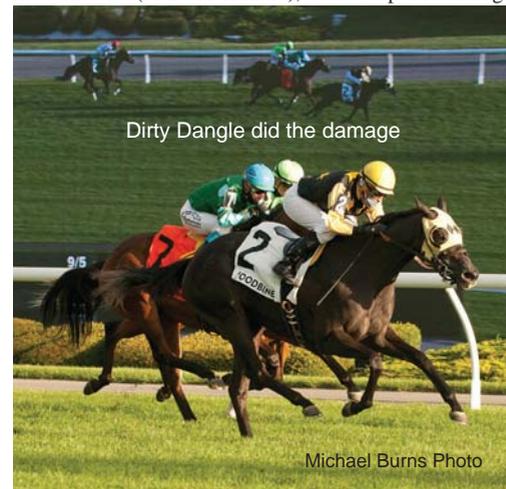
Dirty Dangle a clean winner in Woodbine Cares Stakes

The \$135,810 Woodbine Cares Stakes on September 19 required 7 two year-old fillies to go 5 furlongs on the turf and it was Dirty Dangle who ran the fastest, roaring up in the stretch to win 1¼ lengths.

It was the second running of the Woodbine Cares Stakes and, appropriately, the second career race for Dirty Dangle who had won her first. Jockey Sheena Ryan was aboard.

"I had so much horse going around the turn and I'm like, as soon as we get a clearing. I had lots of horse; she ran really well and I'm really impressed with her," said Ryan. "They did a great job, Ralph and his crew... they did a great job and they got this filly ready really well."

Ryan chose to let Dirty Dangle settle in fourth as first Chatelet (Kazushi Kimura), then Souper Munnings



Dirty Dangle did the damage

Michael Burns Photo

(Patrick Husbands) led the field through early fractions of :22.14 and :45.15. Rocket Reload (Justin Stein) briefly found the front, but Dirty Dangle, out in the middle of the track, soared past to win by pulling away in :56.82.

"We always thought she was pretty good," said trainer Ralph Biamonte, who shares ownership with his wife, Mary, and Carmen DeMizio. "And Sheena did an excellent job both times. Today she looked like she got into a little bit of trouble, she kept her composure, moved to the outside, and away she came." Dirty Dangle returned \$11.30.

The Aussie Angle

By Ric Chapman



Trainer Les Bridge with Classique Legend

Racing fans the world over have always wanted to see their stars travel abroad and compete.

Most of the world was desperate for the great mare Enable to race against Australia's wonder mare Winx.

It never happened.

Or what if Justify had come back after his Triple Crown triumphs and gone to England to compete? That would have been something. How about if Canada's super sprinter Pink Lloyd went to Europe to tackle, say, BattashATTAASH, the fastest galloper to race in England in sprint races for two decades or more?

Japan and Hong Kong and even the United States have superstars that would add so much more interest, intrigue etc., if they just travelled abroad.

Well, meet Bon Ho.

He lives in Hong Kong, is fabulously wealthy, loves horse racing, and owns 70 racehorses. One of them is Classique Legend, a huge, muscular thing who, in mid October, won the world's richest race on turf - The Everest over 6 furlongs at Randwick in Australia. The race is worth \$15million which in Canadian dollars is \$14,106,000.

So, we are talking a substantial race and to win it you need to be a substantial racehorse. Bon Ho believes Classique Legend is such a thing, and certainly the way he won the race on less than lightning fast grass surface in 1.08.42 suggests so.

"I think he is one of the top two or three sprinters in the world and I want to prove that," said the owner after the race.

And here's where it all gets interesting.

To facilitate the businessman's global domination dream, Bon Ho is moving Classique Legend to Hong Kong in late October. Casper Fownes will train him and

the reason he is moving this hulking grey superstar is, well, Bon Ho will tell us.

"I believe the horse has a better racing future if living there and it's easier to take on the world from a Hong Kong base," says Ho. "I will run him in the Hong Kong International in December (worth \$3 million Canadian over 6 furlongs), then we can attack the best sprinters in Japan, then go to Dubai for Grade I races and then on to Royal Ascot for a few Group 1 sprints there too. By this time next year, he will have raced the best sprinters in the world and I think he will have beaten them. I'll take him back to Australia to defend his Everest crown in October next year. I believe the world needs to see how good this horse is and I love the concept of taking on the best horses all over the world."

Presumably, if he wins the races Ho thinks he will over the next 12 months, Classique Legend may even come to the Breeders' Cup Sprint. But the problem there is that may well be around November and it could be hard to walk away from a \$15 million race in Australia in October, a race he has already won, then run in a race worth much less in the United States a month later.

And being a gelding, he doesn't have to chase Black Type...just big purses. But Bon Ho wants to prove that he is the best sprinter on the planet, so who knows?

Ho's ambitions with his superb horse translates into a dream result for racing fans all over the world.

"I'm quite hands on with my horses, and for me also, it is just easier to plan his international career from Hong Kong where I am," he said.

Now this Classique Legend story is a good one.

He was purchased out of a yearling sales ring in Sydney by Carmel Size, who works as the Racing Manager for Bon Ho in charge of the Ho racing team of horses that are

based in Australia. On behalf of Ho, she paid A\$400,000 (\$395,000 Canadian) and gave him to 82 year-old trainer Les Bridge who trains a small team at Randwick in Sydney.

After Classique Legend won the Gr 2 The Shorts, an 1,100m race (5½ furlongs) back in September, a race worth A\$502,000 (\$494,000 Canadian), Bridge was interviewed and was asked if he could compare Classique Legend to the great Sir Dapper, who was crowned in his day Champion Australian 2YO and then Champion Australian 3YO. He has always been considered one of the greatest juveniles ever produced in Australia.

"Oh, this bloke's better," he fired back.

That was a stunning retort that shocked everyone who remembers Sir Dapper.

"This bloke is the best horse I've ever put a bridle on."

That lone comment, more so than the horse's magnificent win in The Shorts which sent him into equal favouritism for The Everest, grabbed all the headlines. It was sacrilegious many thought, and a growing number of observers even thought that the old boy was losing his marbles.

"He has a girth bigger than anything I've seen," he defended when challenged. "He is extremely sound, and every important gene from both his father and his mother have been put into him. He is just a freak."

It became a profoundly big issue with racing media and punters. On one hand, here was the venerable Les Bridge talking and, as such, that needed to be respected. Listened to and acted upon. But he rated him above Sir Dapper. How, why? That would be like someone rating a modern day star above Northern Dancer, before the modern day star had actually ever won something big.

But then came The Everest.

It attracted an astonishing field of 12 speedsters. Seven of them had won at Gr 1 level. The remaining five had all won multiple Gr 2 races. Of that Gr 2 winning quintet, all of them bar one had been Gr 1 placed.

Classique Legend was that bar one who hadn't earned any money at Gr 1 level.

He was also the least experienced runner, yet all that mattered for zero when his jockey, Kerrin McEvoy, pulled him out into clear, running from sixth around the home bend. He went out after the leaders like he had just joined in and roared by them to win by 2½ lengths with his ears pricked.

"It's bitter-sweet for all of us, and me in particular, now that he's leaving Australia to take on the world," said Ho's racing manager, Carmel Size, after the win. She began to cry.

"He deserves his shot at global glory, but I truly pray he comes back to run in next year's The Everest as well."

If Ho has his way, and he will, this giant grey flash who already has a cult following in Australia, will be seen all over the world...and back in Sydney.

Classique Legend, beautifully named given his regal looks and running talents, has had 12 starts only now for 6 wins and 4 placings earning A\$8,635,500 (Cda\$8,095,100).

Not a bad ROI of \$400,000...with PLENTY more to come.

OSS Super Finals

If anyone ever considered buying a standardbred, the sensational card at Mohawk Park on October 17 would be quite persuasive - 8 OSS Super Finals, each one worth \$250,000.



Dashing Muscle gave James MacDonald a first

All Photos by New Image Media

The night started with the two year-old trotting fillies and driver James MacDonald gunned Dashing Muscle to the top, cutting out the first quarter in :27.4. Dashing Muscle maintained her lead into the stretch where she was challenged by Up The Ready who came out of the pocket for Doug McNair. The two fillies battled through the stretch with Dashing Muscle getting to the finish line first, by just a nose in a lifetime best 1:56.1.

This was MacDonald's first OSS Super Final win.

"This has been a wretched night for me the past few years," said MacDonald. "It's good to get the monkey off my back."

Chantal Mitchell trains Dashing Muscle for James Armitage. The win ticket was \$9.70.

In the \$250,000 Final for three year old filly pacers, Rose Run Victoria had to start from post 8 for Jody



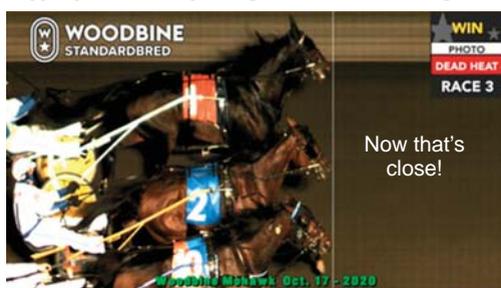
Rose Run Victoria took the long way home

Jamieson and, despite the fact that she never got near a pylon, she won by a length in 1:51.4.

"This trip, tonight, was the best trip you could possibly get with the eight hole," said Jamieson, who wisely got cover from the race favourite, Laura's Love. "I ended up being parked the whole way, but this mare's been sharp her last three or four starts, and showed that finishing kick she's got if you can save it down the stretch."

Trained by Rob Boyd and owned by Rick Philips and Mark Harder, Rose Run Victoria paid \$14.40.

The three year-old filly trotters produced a mind-boggling finish. Magic Cape (Mike Vanderkemp) and



Now that's close!

Shape Shifter (Phil Hudon) were both flying late with Royalty Deal (Louis-Phillippe Roy) right there along the rail. The judges could not separate Magic Cape and Shape

Shifter at the wire, so they declared a dead heat for win with Royalty Deal maybe an inch behind in third. Magic Cape was 8-1 and Shape Shifter was over 100-1. Magic Cape, trained by Vanderkemp, is owned by her breeder, Sonja Booth, and she paid \$9.90. Shape Shifter paid \$99.10. She is trained by Gerald Lilley for owner Tom Crouch.

The two year-old colts and geldings paced for \$250,000 as Bulldog Hanover pulled Jody Jamieson to an emphatic



Bulldog's bite was better than his bark!

win by 9 lengths in 1:50.2.

"I was really impressed and happy with him," said owner/trainer Jack Darling. "We go to the yearling sales every year and we're searching for this type of horse and you're training him down hoping that he'll get to this level, and then when you see them do it, it just doesn't get any better than this for us."

That gave Jamieson two Super Final wins on the night. Bulldog Hanover paid \$5.10.

Macho Martini looked like a near cinch in the two year-old colts gelding trot, but a perfect drive by Sylvain Filion allowed Fashion Frenzie to pop out of the pocket in the



Fashion Frenzie was finessed by Filion

stretch and then repel a late-charging Macho Martini in 1:55.1. Fashion Frenzie is trained by Richard Moreau and owned by John Petrik, Quebec's Ecurie Francis Richard Inc., Ferme Auclair, Pierre Guillemette, and Mario Bourgea. Fashion Frenzie paid \$10.20.

Rose Run Victoria's win after being parked the entire trip was outstanding, but the most brilliant performance of the night came from Scarlett Hanover in the two year-



Scarlett Hanover was brilliant

old fillies pace. Driven by Ed Hensley, Scarlett Hanover made an early move to the front, lost the lead, reclaimed it, then allowed Voelz Delight (Sylvain Filion) to take over, then gobbled up Voelz Delight in the stretch to win by a head in 1:52.1. Scarlett Hanover is owned by

Burke Racing Stable, Frank Baldachino, Silva and Libby Purnel, and Weaver Brusceci. The win is the sixth in 12 starts for Scarlett Hanover, lifting her bankroll to \$378,640, and it marks the first Super Final for Ed and his wife, trainer Ashleigh Hensley. The win ticket was \$3.80.

The second last OSS Super Final was for the three year-



A pummeling from Pemberton

old trotting boys and this one was all Pemberton. Driven by Trevor Henry, Pemberton had the lead at the half in :56.1 and dared his rivals to take him on. No one could and Pemberton strolled home to win in 1:52.8.

"He's the nicest little horse I've ever driven," said Henry. "He's just got the manners and you can do whatever you want with him."

And the Walker family loved it. Paul Walker is the trainer and Pemberton is owned by Brenda and Christine Walker. Win bettors had to settle for a \$2.40 payoff.

The three year-old colts and pacers were the eighth and last Super Final and it just showed how difficult it is to dominate the series than win again in the Final. That's a reference to the sensational Tattoo Artist (Bob McClure), who came into the Final as the points leader, thanks to victories in all five of his OSS series races. However, in



Revenge for Rhythm in Motion

the stretch when normally we expect Tattoo Artist to pull away, he wilted as Sylvain Filion parlayed another nifty pocket trip into a win for Rhythm In Motion. Beaumont Hanover (Jody Jamieson) took second, Indictable Hanover (James MacDonald) was third, and Tattoo Artist came fourth.

Rhythm In Motion had not won a previous OSS series race, losing four times to Tattoo Artist, but this night gave Filion a Super Finals double. Filion figured it was about time Rhythm In Motion got the better of his rival.

"He's been racing against Tattoo Artist all year and he was tough to follow," admitted Filion. "But I think my horse is getting better and maybe Tattoo Artist is getting a little tired. It was perfect for me."

Rhythm In Motion is trained by Ben Baillargeon and owned by Santo & Nunzio Vena. He rung up a \$23.20 win price.

How a brilliant filly got a brilliant ride in the Preakness



She was the only filly in the race, but Swiss Skydiver got a brilliant ride from last-minute jockey Robby Albarado to repel the favourite, Authentic, and win the 145th running of the Preakness Stakes.

Typically, the Preakness is the second jewel of the Triple Crown for three year-old thoroughbreds and it has always been run in May, so it was weird to have it conducted in front of empty stands at Pimlico in October.

That disconnect aside, Swiss Skydiver went off at over 11-1, even though she had won 5 of her first 10 races, including an impressive romp by 3½ lengths in

the mile and a quarter Alabama Stakes at Saratoga in August. Most of the money in the Preakness went on Kentucky Derby winner, Authentic, who was pounded down to 3-2.

Authentic, under John Velazquez, actually looked to be the winner, especially when he took the lead down the backstretch, but Albarado wisely snuck Swiss Skydiver inside Authentic at the 6 furlong marker and that made all the difference. Authentic and Swiss Skydiver produced a thrilling stretch run with nine others so far behind, they simply didn't matter. The outcome of the race was in doubt for the entire last quarter mile, and even though Authentic appeared to lunge forward just before the wire, Swiss Skydiver got there first by maybe a neck in 1:53.28.

That Swiss Skydiver and Robby Albarado teamed up to win the Preakness is very much a result of impulse and happenstance. Trainer Ken McPeck made a last-minute decision to allow the filly to race against the boys. When McPeck was unable to get Tyler Gaffalione to ride, he turned to Mike Smith, but Smith was unable to get to Baltimore and pass the quarantine protocol, so McPeck

turned to the oft-injured Albarado who, at 47, appeared to be somewhat past his best before date.

Albarado agreed that going inside Authentic around the far turn made his filly the winner.

"If I make that move now, I got a shot," Albarado recalled thinking. "If I wait, I get smothered."

"It was a genius move by Robby," McPeck. "He saw a hole and the rail, and she took him there."

Even with the superb race riding, Swiss Skydiver's time for the mile and three sixteenths is impressive - 1:53.28 - it's the second fastest Preakness ever, just 28/100ths of a second off the time set in 1973 by Secretariat.

Swiss Skydiver is the sixth filly to prevail in the Preakness. The last one was Rachel Alexandra in 2009 and you would have to go all the way back to Nellie Morse in 1924 for the next winning filly.

Owned by Peter Callaghan, Swiss Skydiver improved to 6 for 11 and she is quite the versatile thoroughbred - her 6 wins have come at 6 different tracks - Churchill, Gulfstream, Santa Anita, Oaklawn, Saratoga, and Pimlico.

Those who recognized in advance what a fine racehorse she is were rewarded with a \$25.40 win ticket.

Man o' War Named 2020 Legend Honouree

by Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame



In a special online event on October 12, 2020, exactly 100 years to the day after Man o' War and Sir Barton competed in a match race at Windsor's Kenilworth Park, the Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame is naming Man o' War its 2020 Legend Honouree. The announcement is the culmination of a week-long social media campaign celebrating the original "Big Red's" monumental win which placed an emphatic exclamation mark on his remarkable career.

What some have called 'the greatest day in Canadian horse racing' the Kenilworth Gold Cup took place in Windsor, Ontario, October 12, 1920, when the two biggest names of the day competed in a historic match race

The immortal Man o' War, holder of more records than any other horse and the leading three-year-old of 1920, was owned by Samuel D. Riddle of Philadelphia;

Sir Barton, the Canadian-owned champion of the older-horse division and America's first Triple Crown winner in 1919 owned by Commander J. K. L. Ross of Montreal, faced off to settle the supremacy of the North American turf.

Man o' War was the prohibitive 1 to 20 favourite, with bettors wagering a reported \$220,000 on the race organized by the track's operator, Mr. Abe Orpen and considered a major coup in a time Canadian racing needed a boost, following the government's wartime ban on betting in 1918 and 1919. It was a highly anticipated event that would become the first horse race filmed from wire to wire, with the footage later shown in movie theatres across the continent.

Originally proposed as a contest that might also feature a third great racehorse of the time, Exterminator, the terms of the race at a mile and a quarter and a weight-for-age format was not to the liking of Exterminator's owners, so he was not entered, resulting in a match race between Man o' War and Sir Barton. The two competed for a \$75,000 US, winner-take-all purse with accompanying Gold Cup, designed by Tiffany & Co., and valued at \$5,000. That same trophy was later donated to Saratoga Race Course by Mrs. Riddle, the wife of Man o' War's owner, and is now known as the Man o' War Cup, presented each year to the winner of The Travers Stakes.

Following the race, the Canadian Sportsman and Live Stock Journal carried a photo of Man o' War on the cover of its October 18th, 1920 issue accompanied

by a caption reading "MAN O' WAR - Winner of the \$75,000 race at Windsor on Tuesday, October 12th, defeating Sir Barton in a most decisive manner and showing himself to be a wonder horse".

Man o' War's race at Kenilworth Park was his final career start and win, something that was repeated by Exterminator and a later "Big Red", Secretariat, who also concluded their careers with wins at Canadian tracks.

The recognition bestowed on Man o' War exactly one hundred years to the day after his win on Canadian soil became possible when the Directors of the Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame expanded eligibility to the Hall to include those who have significantly impacted Canadian racing. Since that decision, such greats as Secretariat, Dahlia, and the venerable Dan Patch have all been honoured by the Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame.

As a charity and 'not for profit', you can help us continue to fulfill our mandate of honouring the best of the sport and promoting and protecting the history of horse racing in Canada by making a donation to the Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame. Your support will help us continue to tell the stories of horses like Man o' War, who made such a significant impact on Canadian horse racing. Contributions can be made online on the Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame website by contacting:

linda.rainey@horseracinghalloffame.com

416-417-9404

The trainer, the groom, the exercise rider: The team that produced a champion horse

The trainer – Josie Carroll

Josie Carroll keeps topping herself. Her Equibase statistics go back to 1994. She would have been 36 then. Even in her first years, she was able to send out horses that won at 10% or higher. In 1999, horses trained by Carroll amassed more than \$1 million in purse earnings. She sent out 144 horses that year, winning with 25 of them. A three year-old filly named Brushed Halory was responsible for five of those wins and two came in Stakes. She carried Eddie Martin Jr, to victory in the mile and 16th Grade III Delaware Oaks at 4-1, then scored at the same distance in the Indiana Breeders' Cup Oaks at Hoosier Park. Brushed Halory was also 4-1 in that race. We'll never know, but did male chauvinism amongst the bettors discourage them from backing a horse trained by a woman?

For several years after that, Carroll continued to pump out the winners with a hit rate that was steadily around 17%, a strong figure in a tough game. In 2006, she trained Edenwold up to the Queen's Plate. Even though he was a close third in the Plate Trial, Edenwold went off at 16-1. After all, no woman had ever trained a Queen's Plate winner. Of course, Edenwold, ridden by Emile Ramsammy, took over the lead after a mile and repelled all others to win by three quarters of a length, putting Josie Carroll in the record books.

It was five years later that Carroll inscribed some more history, as Inglorious pulled off the feat of winning both the Woodbine Oaks and the Queen's Plate within a span of three weeks. The list of trainers with two Plate victories is fairly exclusive.

In 2019, Carroll was inducted into the Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame. Often that's the reward for a career that has either come to an end or is nearing the finish line. Carroll doesn't qualify in either department and she proved that in the 2020 Queen's Plate.

Mighty Heart went off at 13-1, but rider Daisuke Fukumoto, in his first Queen's Plate, took his mount

straight to the front from post 13, sailed around the track, repelled a strong bid from Plate Trial winner Clayton at the top of the stretch, and pranced away to win by almost 8 lengths. By passing seven others very late in the stretch, Belichick at 26-1 under Slade Callaghan, was second. Both horses are trained by Carroll as is the filly, Curlin's Voyage, who went off as the 5-2 favourite, but finished fifth. The \$2 exactor of Mighty Heart and Belichick was worth \$730.40 but the outcome was not a complete surprise for the trainer.

"I actually had a lot of confidence in all my horses," says Carroll. "They all went in their training really, really strongly. Curlin's Voyage, of course, was the most accomplished. So, the expectations for her were the highest. But I certainly expected a good performance from the other two."

Before the race, very little was known about Mighty Heart. Of course, once he won, the story of his missing eye made all the headlines. He was barely two weeks old when he lost his left eye as a result of a stable accident. Since he can't see to his left, you might be inclined to think he'd be better off inside at the starting gate, with other horses on his right side. But when it came time to choose the post position for the Plate, Carroll took #13 and she did so with intention.

"We selected the outside post position because the horse has tactical speed," she says. "We thought he could break and drop over and get himself in good position."

The plans of many trainers and jockeys have a way of falling apart as soon as the gates open, but this time, the plot went exactly the way Carroll scripted. Fukumoto gunned Mighty Heart to the lead, they were against the rail before the first turn, and except for a brief moment around the top of the stretch when Clayton appeared, led every step of the way.

"He's bred to be a stayer," says Carroll. "But I certainly didn't expect that burst of speed at the end."

That was maybe the most impressive thing – Mighty Heart ran the last quarter mile in :24.48 and was timed for the 10 furlongs in 2:01.98. That is the fastest Queen's Plate ever on the synthetic and just the second time in Plate history a horse has gone faster than 2:02.

"I heard that it was second to Izvestia," says Carroll. "And I think that's wonderful for this little horse. You know, he really kicked in at the end."

Carroll was also not very surprised that Belichick ran a good race. It was just his third contest, after two second place finishes in maiden races.

"Belichick came to me this winter, very highly regarded," she says. "He has a lot of pedigree and a lot of talent. He has just been very late coming to hand and the connections were willing to take a shot at the Queen's Plate, because you only get that one shot with the restricted race for a million dollars, rather than sticking with the maiden company. But he was a horse that was definitely on the improve."

With her third Queen's Plate win, Carroll is working her way up into the stratosphere of great trainers. Among those with as many wins in Canada's classic race are Barry Littlefield, Jonathan Scott, Erasmus Burgess and Yonnie Starr. Those with four wins include Richard O'Leary, Mark

Frostad, and Gil Rowntree. John Nixon won five Plates. John Walker is noted for winning his six Queen's Plate in consecutive years (1891-1896, all for Joseph Seagram). Gordon McCann won six Plates; five for E.P. Taylor; and Windfields Farm and William Burgess is also credited with six Plates. At the top of the list is the long-gone Harry Giddings with eight Plates and the still punching Roger Attfield, also with eight.

There's a nifty comparison between Josie Carroll and Roger Attfield. Both are in the Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame and both have, on at least one occasion, finished first and second in the Queen's Plate. Attfield did it in 1993 when Peteski won and Cheery Knight finished second.

Carroll quickly dismisses any thoughts that she will ever catch Attfield in total Queen's Plate wins.

"I don't think so," she laughs. "I think he's pretty safely ensconced there."

After the Queen's Plate, Carroll found herself high on the leader board among trainers at Woodbine. She had 22 winners from 97 starters, which put her neck and neck with Robert Tiller (24), Kevin Attard (23), and Mike De Paulo (22) for second place behind Mark Casse, whose 51 winners came from 289 entries. Carroll's strike rate of 23% is higher than any other trainer. Which, arguably, makes her the best conditioner on the grounds.

"I always compare the trainer to the coach of the team," says Carroll. "And you're really only as strong as your players. I began this year with a strong bunch of horses, and I have a really good barn team that has been with me for a long, long time. They keep it running like clockwork."

The next stop for Mighty Heart was the Prince of Wales (see page 5). Carroll was deeply impressed with the adaptability the horse showed by rating, then rallying.

"I thought Mighty Heart really showed that he was a real racehorse in the Prince of Wales," she says. "There were some doubters that thought he got the lead in the Queen's Plate and was able to win just by getting the lead. The Prince of Wales showed he was a versatile horse that didn't need to get the lead and he was still able to win."

Mighty Heart's defeat in the Breeders' Stakes just shows how difficult the Canadian Triple Crown can be. Carroll gives her horse full props for competing at the highest level.

"Mighty Heart showed up for all three of these races," she says passionately. "You can't take anything away from him in this third race. He was hooked by a speed horse on the lead and set very fresh fractions that certainly weakened him for the stretch drive. He still tried to hang in there and finished mid-pack. I thought that was a gutsy, gutsy move on his part."

The groom – Siobhan Brown

Siobhan Brown is the groom for Josie Carroll and probably the one person who has spent more time with Mighty Heart than anyone else. Brown's heart was throbbing in her throat as she watched the Queen's Plate on a TV screen and saw her horse charge to the front.

"Everything was so surreal," she says, her voice filled



Josie Carroll, groom Siobhan Brown, exercise rider, Des McMahon with Mighty Heart



Mighty Heart and his groom Siobhan Brown

with amazement. “I just remember when they broke from the gate, he went to the lead and I said, ‘Oh, no,’ because it’s just too often you have a horse break to the lead, and they usually get caught. I know he had the speed, and he definitely has the endurance, but I still got that feeling in the pit of my stomach. And then when they are on the back side, the camera zoomed on Daisuke and he wasn’t really struggling to hold him back, but he wasn’t pushing him. He looked relaxed. He looked happy and they came around the turn, and the group was kind of starting to catch up to him, and my heart was starting to pound. And when they started to catch up to him, he switched his leads, and I was so excited.”

Brown’s nickname for Mighty Heart is ‘Willie’ and those around her heard that name a lot as Mighty Heart started to pull away in the stretch.

“The only thing I could yell was ‘Willie!’” she recalls, laughing. “I couldn’t get any other words out of my mouth. I was so excited. I was kind of hopping up and down and the girls that work for Woodbine were beside me. They were laughing. It’s hard to describe how happy and excited and proud I was. He’s such a phenomenal horse and he just deserves everything in the world.”

Brown, 32, has been with Carroll for two years now. She came here from Nova Scotia. She has 5 horses under her care but Mighty Heart, because of the missing eye, requires something special from her.

“He needs a lot of extra trust,” she says. “We’ve spent a lot of time building that. There’s a couple of different things he was unsure of, like working around parts of his face, so I would cut up carrots and bribe him with carrots and touch his face and if he didn’t react, he’d get a carrot. Essentially, I had to build that bond with him because everything you do is on his left side and that is the eye he is missing. I try to keep his routine the exact same every morning, so I come in, I do his buckets and do his bandages, and then I muck his stall so that he can lay back down. And he loves having a nap before he goes out to train.”

Anyone who has a beloved pet will not find it all that weird that Brown feels she can have an intelligent conversation with a horse.

“I tell him everything,” she says, the humour obvious in her voice. “Like our plan for the day. I might look like I’m crazy, but if Des, his normal rider is coming, I say, ‘Uncle Des is coming’ or if he’s going to breeze, I’ll tell him, ‘Hey, you’re going to go fast today,’ and I just always kind of explain it to him and, as silly as it sounds, it’s almost like he listens, and every time I talked to him, I had his full attention and he’s just wonderful. But now we’ve got a bond that I’ve had with very few horses and I believe to my core that he trusts me to the fullest, and I think I can do just about anything with him. He’s really something.

I wish everyone could experience a horse like this.”

Working for a great trainer like Josie Carroll is obviously a huge blessing and Brown offers that it’s not exactly a vacation.

“She has such a high standard and I would expect the same if I was a Hall of Fame trainer. What we have to remember as grooms is it’s her business. So, she wants everything to look nice and you have to have your shed clean. I’m notorious for having stuff on my ledge. I think I drive her crazy with that. She runs a tight ship and it works perfectly for us. We know our jobs and know what’s expected. Our day is always the same. There’s nobody kind of flailing back and forth or wondering what to do. And I feel, because of how she runs everything, we could all go for a job anywhere and succeed because we’ve got the discipline and all the basic values in life to do any kind of job.”

One most excellent benefit for Brown from the triumph of Mighty Heart was the reaction she got from her peeps down east.

“Here’s the underdog with one eye and you know he’s overcome so many odds and he just won such a huge race,” she says emotionally. “And I know a lot of my friends and family back home in Nova Scotia, they’ve never paid attention to thoroughbred racing because we don’t have it there, and they watched the Plate and they were so excited. And they’re lifelong fans now because all they’ve ever heard was negative. And now they see, there’s real people here that care about their horses.”

After winning the Prince of Wales, Mighty Heart elevated everyone’s hopes of completing the Triple Crown. When the other Josie Carroll trained horse prevailed, Brown was hardly despondent.

“I think Belichick ran an amazing race,” she says. “I am excited for the owners and Josie. Before the race I said, ‘Let’s keep the win in the barn.’ Mighty Heart did nothing less than expected and put in a fantastic effort. I’m as proud as I have been. These races were demanding on the horses.”

I had to interview Siobhan on the phone, as a visit to the backstretch these days was discouraged. She sounded so nice, I suggested one day perhaps we could bump elbows in person (or whatever is allowed).

“Any time,” she replied. “You’re welcome to come see my little crew. My island of misfits. I called them.”

The exercise rider - Des McMahon

Des McMahon, 49, has been working horses for Josie Carroll for at least 13 years. He’s the son of former jockey Bill McMahon who rode over 6,000 horses and became a steward for two decades.

“For this stint, I have done three years with Josie,” says McMahon. “For 10 years, when I lived in Fort Erie, I would go away every winter with her to the Fair Grounds.”

McMahon had a unique vantage point when Mighty Heart was destroying 13 opponents in the Queen’s Plate.

“I actually have a bunch of jobs,” he says. “Because I was an assistant starter at Fort Erie, they asked me to help on the gate at Woodbine, and I was walking

back on the turf course when they turned for home. I could see that he was in front and he was starting to open up. It was just a lot of excitement and I was so happy for him because he’s such a nice horse. I couldn’t wait to get back to the winners circle and back to the barn that night to see him.”

Working with a horse that has only one eye demands a different approach. McMahon always understood that.

“I think I just had to be patient with him,” he says. “Missing his left eye, some things bothered him, and he could be a little quirky with different aspects of walking out to the track and starting off his gallop. So, I just took my time and let him do his own thing and get used to things, and he started trusting me a lot. I have been on him for two years now. I was on him all last summer when he was a two year-old, and now this summer. He has been gaining his confidence – that was the main thing.”

McMahon doesn’t think that Mighty Heart even realizes that there’s anything wrong with his eyesight.

“He lost it at such a young age,” he says. “He was two weeks old when he lost it. He doesn’t really know any different. He doesn’t know he’s not like the other horses. Of course, you’re always aware if horses are coming up on his inside, which is where the eye is missing, but he senses it, like he knows the horses are around them. Once he gets into his gallop, he doesn’t do anything wrong.”

The exercise rider has the benefit of being the first person to realize a horse has special potential.

“We always thought he was a pretty good horse,” says McMahon. “After he broke his maiden, he just got better and better, and coming up to the Queen’s Plate, he was training amazing. And we really thought he could be the sleeper and pull off the upset. We weren’t expecting the actual race that came out of him. That was above our expectations. But it wasn’t a surprise that he won the race.”

Several days after the Plate, Mighty Heart looked great winning the Prince of Wales from off-the-pace.

“I thought he ran great,” says McMahon. “He changed his tactics. In the Queen’s Plate, he went to the lead, and in the Prince of Wales, he sat in the fence in traffic, angled out in the stretch, and ran down Clayton. I thought he ran a really good race.”

As for the loss in the Breeders’...

“I think he had to go a little quick up front,” says McMahon. “He was pressured by the horse outside him. He hung in there pretty good and he came back good, so that’s all that matters.”

Not sweeping the Triple Crown did not in any way diminish the respect McMahon has for Mighty Heart.

“Not at all,” he says emphatically. “In fact, after the Breeders’, I went in to see him the next morning and he took a nip of me, so he’s feeling fine. He’ll be back whenever they decide to run him again.”

Throughout the course of Canadian horse racing, there’s a very limited number of men and women who have had the experience of being on the back of a Queen’s Plate and Prince of Wales winner. Where does working Mighty Heart fit on Des McMahon’s bucket list?

“It’s up there pretty high,” he says. “I have galloped a lot of years down at Fort Erie. This is my sixth year up at Woodbine. I know Josie has always had nice horses, so there is always that chance of getting on a Stakes horse. But getting this horse, with the problems he had with the one eye and the wolf tooth that affected him as well, it’s just great. Now I’m just along for the ride, wherever he goes.”

Mighty Heart's secret revealed

Mighty Heart's secret revealed. It turns out that Larry Cordes' amazing Queen's Plate and Prince of Wales winner, Mighty Heart,



had a 'secret weapon' that enabled his historical accomplishments and **Down The Stretch** is the first to report that it's an inside job.

Cordes' granddaughter, Jennifer Perrin, owns and runs PEMF – Pulsed Electromagnetic Field Therapy, a non-invasive strategy that, simply put, improves the performance of a race horse.

"It sure is beneficial," says Perrin. "It reduces soreness, swelling, and stiffness. It can also increase their speed and their strength and the range of motion."

Perrin applied the program to Mighty Heart.

"For the past year and a half, he got done every 3 to 4 days," she says.

No doubt in Perrin's mind, the electromagnetic treatment helped Mighty Heart.

"For sure," she exclaims brightly. "It's been pretty impressive what he has done."

We asked Perrin to describe exactly what happens to the horse in a typical 40 minute session.

"You plug the machine in and we have a long tube with a hose and a circle at the end and it creates

an electromagnetic field through that, and you place it on the horse's body from their head all the way down to their hind."

According to Larry Cordes, Mighty Heart was able to increase the length of his stride thanks to PEMF.

"That's true," says Perrin. "It increases their range of motion, allowing them to be more supple. The stiffness isn't there. And their muscles are nice and loose, so it allows them to reach longer with their stride."

Perrin says this is a very popular therapy in the U.S. but fairly new to Canada. Apparently the Triple Crown for 2020 is already spoken for, but she'd be pleased to have more clients, and you can get in touch with her at pulsedenergy@hotmail.com. Her phone number is 905-244-2731. She is also easily found on Instagram and Facebook.

Wonder Where Stakes

By Brittney Mayotte

The bettors couldn't quite agree on which horse deserved their money before the running of the \$250,000 1¼ mile Wonder Where Stakes on October 25. They did put the most on Oaks champion, Curlin's Voyage (Patrick Husbands), but at a lukewarm 2-1, she was clearly not odds-on. Afleet Katharine (Justin Stein) was 3-1 on the board, based on the fact she had been first twice and second twice in her four career races. Somewhat unnoticed was Merveilleux and Rafael Hernandez who went off a dime short of 6-1. Trained by Kevin Attard, Merveilleux was third, more than 2 lengths behind Curlin's Voyage in the Oaks, and a non-threatening sixth in the Queen's Plate. This was Merveilleux' second try on the grass – in her very first race, she pulled up.



Merveilleux is French for Marvelous

Michael Burns Photo

Merveilleux got a very well timed ride from Hernandez. Justleaveitalone (David Moran) and She's a Dream (Luis Contreras) went forward and Justleaveitalone cut out early fractions of :24.90, :50.89, 1:16.60 and was still a half length ahead of She's a Dream after the opening mile which was timed in a very comfortable 1:41.16. Merveilleux, at that point, was making her move. She had been as far back as sixth down the backstretch, but as the field turned for home, she was overtaking Justleaveitalone and pulling away from the rest in the 10 horse field. Merveilleux' last quarter was :24.16, the fastest quarter of the race as she won by 3 lengths in 2:05.34, a time that was almost 3 seconds over the course

record of 2:02.40 set in June of 1995 by Desert Waves.

Gun Society (Kazushi Kimura) came from far back to be second and it was the Josie Carroll-trained Curlin's Voyage who flattened out a little in the stretch to be third.

"We've been having a rough meet with this one," noted Hernandez. "I was impressed with the performance and we had a clean trip today. She was relaxed in the first turn and all the way down the backside. Turning for home, she switched leads and I said, 'Come on baby, keep it up, we have to do it!'"

Bred in Ontario by Mike Carroll and owned by Al and Bill Ulwelling, Merveilleux showed her potential as a youngster, finishing a close second in both the Princess Elizabeth Stakes and Ontario Lassie to complete her two year-old campaign in 2019.

She won her 2020 debut on June 21 in allowance company by parlaying a front running strategy into a 1¼ length win in a mile and a sixteenth Tapeta race. After that it was a fourth in the Selene Stakes, a troubled third in the Oaks, and that sixth place result in the Plate.

"She's been hard luck," said Attard. "We've always liked her a lot. We thought heading into the Oaks, we had the right kind of horse and even heading into the Plate with her, we were really excited. Unfortunately, things haven't gone her way. It's been a tough season for the Ulwellings to boot, so it's just kind of the way the cards stack up and everything lined up our way today and she just had a good trip and ran to our expectations."

The Triple Tiara for fillies in Canada produced three different winners – Curlin's Voyage in the Oaks, Mizzen Beau in the Bison City, and now Merveilleux. The last filly to sweep the series was Sealy Hill in 2007 and, in fact, since the Triple Tiara was initiated in 1965, Sealy Hill is the only filly to take all three races. She was owned by Eugene Melnyk, trained by Mark Casse, and ridden by Patrick Husbands. Husbands is also the last rider to complete the Canadian Triple Crown sweep – he rode Wando to victories in the Plate, the Prince of Wales, and the Breeders' Stakes in 2003.

Merveilleux paid \$13.80 to win and now has a record of

3-3-1 from 10 starts with earnings climbing over \$550,000.

There went Jojo

There goes Jojo, trained by Mike De Paulo and owned by Samotowka Stables, didn't even have to run in the fourth leg of the Turf Endurance Series and, by virtue of taking down two of the first three legs, was declared the winner of the series and has been awarded \$25,000 in bonuses for his connections.

There goes Jojo earned 27 points to top the standings

Jojo didn't even have to go there!



Michael Burns Photo

through the first three legs of the series. The five year-old English Channel gelding, who was second to Artistico in the 1 and 3/8-mile opening leg at the beginning of August, won the 1½ mile second round by 3 lengths on August 29 and the 1 and 5/8ths mile marathon on October 8 by 3½ lengths in rein to Kazushi Kimura.

A total of \$40,000 in bonuses were awarded to the top three finishers, with the winning connections receiving \$25,000.

Artistico, trained by Sylvain Pion for 4U Thoroughbred Racing Stable, was second in the point standings with 16, and Peace of Ekati accumulated 12 points to place third for trainer Ashlee Brnjas and Colebrook Farms.

The fourth leg of the series was cancelled due to lack of entries, therefore concluding the series for 2020.

Woodbine Stakes

September 20



A breakaway for Gretzky the Great

Michael Burns photo

There were two big money Stakes races at Woodbine on September 20, each offering purses of \$250,000 and each granting the winner a free berth in the Breeders' Cup. The Summer Stakes required 7 two year-old colts to battle a mile on the turf and, with the Stanley Cup being contested in September, it seemed appropriate that a horse named Gretzky The Great stickhandled his way to the winners circle. Ridden by Kazushi Kimura, Gretzky The Great hounded the early leader, Ready to Repeat (Luis Contreras) until taking over at the head of the stretch and romped home safe by 3¼ lengths in 1:34.53. Gretzky the Great was almost penalized by the refs - an inquiry after the race absolved him of any serious offence after he appeared to bear in on Ready to Repeat in the stretch drive.

This was Kimura's first Grade I victory and he gave the horse his props.

"He is such an amazing horse," said Kimura. "When I came to the final turn, then come through the final stretch, he had a tremendous explosion. He sometimes was a little bit lugging in, but he's just still a baby."

This was Gretzky the Great's third straight win. His only loss came in his first effort in maiden company when he finished second.

The victory means it's very likely that Gretzky The Great is going to Keeneland to run in the \$1 million Breeders' Cup Juvenile Turf on November 6. He is owned by Gary Barber and Eclipse Thoroughbred Partners and trained by Mark Casse.

It would be cool to say he paid \$9.90 to win, but the bettors had to be happy with \$6.80 (as reported on the all-news radio station).

Then the two year-old fillies got to go a mile on the turf, also for a quarter million, in the Natalma Stakes. And if you wanted to produce the ideal horse to run fast on the turf, you'd match up Speightstown with Lady Shakespeare, and that would get you Lady Speightspeare. That's exactly what Charles Fipke did and, under Emma-Jayne Wilson, Lady Speightspeare parlayed a second-place trip into victory by sweeping to the lead in mid-stretch and prevailing by three



Lady Speightstown is going to Keeneland

Michael Burns photo

quarters of a length in 1:34.61.

The win did not come without a little grief. Wilson had to dismount after Lady Speightspeare was unruly when she was being loaded.

"In the starting gate, she acted up a little bit, but a little bit was a testament to her intent," said Wilson. "She broke through the pack early and went to the lead with such intent, I think it was the same thing today in the gate. She knew it was coming; they yelled 'last one,'; she was anticipating

the doors to open, so she popped up a little. But kudos to the gate crew here at Woodbine. They kept her straight and steady so, despite her rearing, she didn't manage to get herself hung up or hurt in anyway, which meant she was able to compete and win today."

Roger Attfield trains Lady Speightspeare for Fipke and the filly delivered a third Natalma trophy for the Hall of Fame trainer. When he was asked if the all expense paid trip to the Breeders' Cup would be accepted, Attfield didn't equivocate.

"Well, that would be up to Mr. Fipke, and I would say knowing Mr. Fipke, we probably are," he said.

Lady Speightspeare paid \$7 to win.

September 26



Every Painting tells a winning story

Michael Burns photo

The fillies were running for cash at two distances. The Grade III Ontario Fashion Stakes offered \$125,000 at 6 furlongs. The bettors made Painting the even-money favourite and jockey Patrick Husbands timed it perfectly. He took the four year-old filly back to sixth early as Victory Kingdom (Steve Bahen) and Sister Peacock (Emma-Jayne Wilson) fought for the lead through brisk early fractions of :22.17 and :44.77. With the front runners softened up, Painting began a bold brushstroke with a four-wide move on the turn that had her a length off the lead coming down the lane. In the final eighth, Painting had to work hard to repel Victory Kingdom, finding the finish line first by a neck in 1:09.46. Painting is now 3 for 10 in her career. She is owned by Hill 'N' Dale Holdings, Glenn Sikura, and Windsor Boys Racing, trained by Josie Carroll, and she paid just \$4.30.

The Belle Mahone Stakes, also for fillies and mares three years-old and up, attracted 7 ladies to go a mile and a sixteenth. The 2-5 choice was Souper Escape ridden by Luis Contreras, but she weakened late to finish third. Rafael Hernandez took Summer Sunday right to the lead and cut out benign splits of :47.34, 1:11.39, and 1:37.19 for the mile. The five year-old mare had enough left for the final sixteenth of a mile, lasting by half a length over Art of Almost (Emma-Jayne Wilson) in 1:44.08.

By winning on an autumn Saturday, Summer Sunday improved to a smart looking 9 for 16 in her career. She is trained by Stuart Simon for Anne and William Scott and those who bet her cashed \$11.90 on the win ticket.

September 27



Nothing unlucky with Il Malocchio

Michael Burns photo

The Victorian Queen Stakes had a purse of \$100,000 for two year-old fillies and a field of 8 went 7½ furlongs on the inner turf to decide who would get the biggest share. That

glory went to Il Malocchio, ridden brightly by Sahin Civaci. Off at more than 11-1, Il Malocchio raced patiently, fifth at the half, second at the top of the stretch and, with an impressive surge down the lane, she pulled away for an authoritative victory by 2¾ lengths in 1:30.87. Using a Stakes race to break her maiden on her third try, Il Malocchio paid \$25 to win. She is trained by Martin Drexler and owned by Meli Franco. By the way, Il Malocchio in Italian, means 'the evil eye'. Your punch line goes here.

The two year-old boys got some action in the \$100,000 Bull Page Stakes, also at 7½ on the inner turf. Dragon's Brew under Daisuke Fukumoto was the 7-5 betting choice,



Hey Man - who won the Bull Page Stakes?

Michael Burns photo

but trailed early and didn't have much a kick late, finishing third, about 2 lengths shy of the winner, Avoman, ridden by the track's leading rider, Justin Stein. Avoman was sixth in the early going, but picked up his gallop into the far turn and had the lead with a sixteenth to go. At the wire, Avoman was clear by 1½ lengths in 1:31.78. That was just the second start for Avoman and he returned \$15.10. He is trained by Donald McRae who shares ownership with La Huerta Inc.

October 3

Going to the lead in horse races is a proven strategy, a strategy that worked in the \$100,000 Toronto Cup Stakes for three year-olds when Proven Strategies, under Justin Stein,



Proven Strategies and Justin Stein won the Toronto Cup Stakes

Michael Burns photo

led from start to finish in the one mile turf race.

Proven Strategies battled along the inside down the backstretch and had company as Bexar (Sheena Ryan), Lookin-at-miracle (David Moran), and the 4-5 favourite Shirl's Speight (Rafael Hernandez) all fought for contention through early splits of :45.15 and 1:09.00. As the field turned for home, Proven Strategies was strong, pulling away from his rivals and romping home alone by 2½ lengths in 1:33.78.

"When we put them away early, he put his ears straight up in the air like he was just galloping on the grass and having a good time, and we were still half a mile out," said winning rider, Stein.

Proven Strategies is trained by Mark Casse, who has won the Toronto Cup 6 of the last 10 runnings.

"We had the one-hole, so our plan was to go hard out of the gate and then maybe back them up," added Stein. "He settled early and was relaxed around the turn and that saved a lot of horse for the stretch run."

Proven Strategies improved to 4 from 8 on the season. He failed to win in five tries as a two year-old. He is owned by D. J. Stable, Jonathan Green, and Empire Racing Club and, as the second choice, returned \$8.60 to win.

A Boardroom decision



Three year-old Boardroom, trained by Josie Carroll, went off as the 2-1 favourite in the \$100,000 Duchess Stakes over 7 furlongs on the main track and jockey Luis Contreras made sure the chalk bettors weren't disappointed. Boardroom rated patiently in mid-pack early, accelerated four-wide into the stretch, and triumphed over a closing Our Secret Agent (Steve Bahen), winning in 1:21.51.

"I knew there was speed in the race, but I didn't want to be too far back - I didn't want to give her too much to do at the end," said Contreras. "I got a nice wide trip in the backstretch and I had to use her a little bit to get good position on the turn, but she's so talented. She's a wonderful filly."

Just another nice win for Josie Carroll in the midst of her seasonal year.

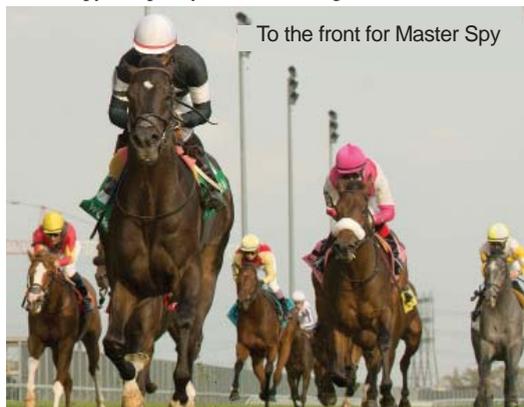
"This has been a great season," said Carroll. "I have an unbelievable team of people working for me and just some really good horses this year."

Owned by LNJ Foxwoods, Boardroom was worth \$6 on the win ticket.

Master jockey scores with Master Spy

Patrick Husbands had a clear strategy aboard Master Spy in the 84th running of the \$250,000 Cup and Saucer Stakes on October 10. Despite the fact that two previous grass races that day had produced come-from-behind winners, Husbands shot Master Spy right to the lead over the E. P. Taylor Turf Course in the 1-1/16-mile feature showcasing Canadian-bred two-year-olds.

With fractions of :24, :48.11, and 1:12.71 on firm turf, Master Spy had plenty left for the long run down the stretch



and was much the best, winning by 3/4 lengths in 1:42.67.

Husbands predicted correctly that rival jockeys would hold back, assuming the winner would rally from off-the-pace.

"I hoped the other riders would stick with that plan and I can get an easy lead," said Husbands. "He was relaxed. He was never rank at all. It showed me that if anybody won't leave today, I didn't mind."

Master Spy broke his maiden in his third try and this gave him two wins in a row.

Patrick Husbands has won six Cup and Saucers and this is a fifth for Master Spy's trainer, Mark Casse. Owned by Tracy Farmer, Master Spy paid \$7.30.

Casse, Husbands again in the Durham Cup

It's simply the most potent combination in Canadian horse racing - Mark Casse and Patrick Husbands. Casse was the trainer of record for three of the eight horses that went postward in the \$125,000 Grade III Durham Cup at a mile and a sixteenth on the Tapeta. He sent out Skywire (Rafael Hernandez), Pioneer Man (Emma-Jayne Wilson), and Sa-



lute With Honor. By assigning the latter to Husbands, Casse probably tipped his hand as to which of the three he believed would win. Husbands acted accordingly, putting Salute With Honor on the lead from the beginning and daring the others to go with him. None could; and after 6 furlongs in a professional 1:11.78, Salute With Honor had lots for the stretch run, hitting the wire 3 1/2 lengths better than Skywire, giving Casse the exactor. And the time - 1:42.35 - was just .19 of a second off the course record set back in 2016 by Freitag. Salute With Honor, owned by Live Oak Plantation, won for the second time in four starts this year and for the seventh time in 19 tries for his career. He paid \$6 to win.

Six days before the drama of a potential TripleCrown sweep, Woodbine presented three big money Stakes races on October 18. In the Grade I \$600,000 E. P. Taylor Stakes at 1 1/4 miles on the grass, the favourite, Etoile, got up by neck for Rafael Hernandez.



Etoile, a four year-old filly, was galloping comfortably in third for the first half mile, went three-wide around the far turn while gaining momentum, and led the field into the stretch. Longshot Court Return (Daisuke Fukumoto) made a late charge, but the wire arrived just in time for Etoile. Hernandez followed instructions that he got over the phone from trainer Chad Brown in New York.

"It was a good trip," said Hernandez, who was riding his meet-leading twelfth Stakes winner. "I called Chad this morning and he told me, 'Raffi, try to get a good trip like last time. Just make sure you clear down the stretch'. He told me he'd been working the horse a few times and he put her outside of other horses, and she'd be finishing great."

As for Court Return's aggressive rally, Hernandez wanted to make sure Etoile knew someone was coming.

"I heard that other horse coming late, but I wish she was coming closer," said Hernandez. "It was too far out so my horse couldn't see. That's why I switched the whip to the left, to try to get her out and get her attention. But we did it."

Time for the 10 furlongs was 2:03.12.

The E. P. Taylor also was the final leg of Woodbine's "Ladies of the Lawn," a four-race turf Stakes series for fillies and mares consisting of the Nassau, Dance Smartly, Canadian, and E. P. Taylor Stakes.

Elizabeth Way ended up winning the top bonus prize of \$50,000, even though she finished seventh in the E. P. Taylor. Winning the Nassau Stakes and scoring a third and fourth in previous legs gave her the most points. Second money of \$15,000 went to Etoile.

Etoile, a French-bred four-year-old owned by Peter Brant, Mrs. M. V. Magnier, and Mrs. Paul Shanahan, was recording her first Grade I win and first victory anywhere on this side of the Atlantic. She paid \$7.

Two races earlier, it was the Grade I \$300,000 Northern Dancer Stakes at 1 1/2 miles on the grass and Emma-Jayne Wilson timed it nicely aboard Say The Word. Wilson and Say The Word were last in the eight horse field after a mile and a quarter, but a

confident Wilson took the five year-old Ontario bred four-wide into the stretch, and once he had clear sailing, Say The Word flew



past rivals to win by a length in 2:29.87.

"It was perfect actually," said Wilson of her trip. "Last time (in the Grade III Singpiel Stakes), we got the one-hole going a mile and a quarter, and I just got shuffled back. So today, I was more confident with him, more grounded, and he settled for me beautifully; I literally just held the mane for pretty much the first mile and a quarter. Then, as I gathered him up, I just knew when he straightened, he was already in flight and it was going to be tough to beat him."

Winning trainer Gail Cox was thrilled with the outcome.

"He loves this turf course and he loved the distance," she said, "Last year, we ran him on the Tapeta, and it was not to his liking."

Say The Word won for the fifth time in 25 races. He was bred by his owner, Sam Son Farm, and he returned \$13.60.

The third Stakes race this day was the Grade II \$290,000 Nearctic Stakes at 6 furlongs on the grass and it had a very emotional finish as Silent Poet (Justin Stein) won for trainer Nick Gonzalez.

Gonzalez watched the race thinking of his wife, assistant trainer Martha Gonzalez, who passed away recently.

Stein hustled Silent Poet to the front early and got a relatively easy first quarter in :23.65. Hounded by City Boy (David Moran), the pair passed the half mile in :46.16 and started to pull away from the others. At the wire, Silent Poet was a half length the best



in 1:08.57.

In the last strides, announcer Robert Geller exclaimed, "This one's for you, Martha."

"It has a lot of meaning," said Stein, who is battling Rafael Hernandez for the Woodbine riding title. "People watching on the outside might not understand, but the family here, the community at Woodbine, I'm sure they were cheering big for this horse for reasons that we all know."

Stein didn't want to compromise the natural instincts of Silent Poet.

"He just leaves the gate so quick," he said. "He hits his stride right away. With a horse like that, you get position and just slow him down, save as much horse as you can, and he does the rest. He loves his job, and when you ask him to run, he just gives you everything. He tows you down the lane."

Silent Poet is owned by Stronach Stables and he recorded his fourth win in 5 starts and now has 10 wins in 18 lifetime races.

Silent Poet paid \$5.40.

Amalfi Coasted home



A perfectly timed and efficient ride by leading jockey Justin Stein helped the four year-old filly Amalfi Coast win the \$100,000 Sweet Briar Too Stakes on October 23.

Stein had Amalfi Coast tucked in along the rail as O'Keeffe (Jerome Lermyte), Summer Sunday (Rafael Hernandez), and Victory Kingdom (Steve Bahen) battled three-wide though difficult fractions of :22.04 and :44.45 over the Tapeta in this 6½ furlong sprint for fillies and mares three years old and up.

At the top of the stretch, Stein fired Amalfi Coast up the inside and she was the strongest to the wire, winning by 2

lengths in 1:15.35.

"There was a ton of speed in the race and I just got to sit off of them and wait for my chance to find an opening and pull the trigger," said Stein.

Amalfi Coast is trained by Kevin Attard and owned by Terra Racing Stable. Terra Racing is owned by the Romeo family, whose Pineview Auto Group ads have been on the cover of this paper for the past 7 years.

It was Amalfi Coast's first win of 2020 and improved her record to 5 for 13. She paid \$22.20 to win.

This was posted in England by skysportsracing to celebrate the very good accomplishment of rider Hollie Doyle. Problem is, it's completely wrong. 117 wins in a calendar year is NOT more than any female jockey EVER.

Emma-Jayne Wilson won 180 races in 2005, 146 in 2006, 154 in 2007, 143 in 2011 and 130 in 2012.

Rosie Napravnik won 300 times in 2006, 176 in 2008, 184 in 2009, 209 in 2010, 198 in 2011, 193 in 2012, 269 in 2013 and 189 in 2014. Then she had a baby...but just one.

Could someone inform skysportsracing that horses and jockeys are very busy on this side of the Atlantic?

DOWN THE STRETCH PODCAST

Episode 36, September 21

Like a 14 horse field for the Queen's Plate, this podcast is filled with great racing outcomes, stories, and interviews. Host **Peter Gross** hits the Queen's Plate superfecta by interviewing winning trainer **Josie Carroll**, her groom, her exercise rider, and the owner of Mighty Heart, **Larry Cordes**. The sensational mare, **Starship Jubilee**, won the \$1.2 million Ricoh Woodbine Mile and maybe the most unusual thing about this is how much she paid. This podcast has four Stakes races from Mohawk, including another impressive win by Hambletonian champion, **Ramona Hill**. Ajax Downs conducted 6 elimination heats for upcoming Stakes races, and not only does this podcast play all 6, but we also have more rapping from **Tony Phillips**. The six day racing meet at Kentucky Downs is unique and it got a little more so when the stewards screwed up and placed the wrong horse first. And just for a giggle, another Corona virus race call. All this in the **Down The Stretch Podcast**.

Episode 37, September 28

The first Mohawk Million provided more proof that owner **Brad Grant** knows his trotters. He dealt his slot to get Venerate into the race and that was the winner from post 10. Host **Peter Gross** talks with Grant, whose horses won the Hambletonian and Maple Leaf Trot as well. This **Down The Stretch Podcast** has the call of all the big money Stakes races at Mohawk and the added money events from Woodbine. Quarter horse jockey **Cory Spataro** made this podcast by winning five straight races at Ajax Downs. Jockey **Jeffrey Alderson** doesn't bring in too many winners, but the one he had last week at Woodbine generated a huge payoff. Fort Erie Race caller **Frank Salive** is along to discuss the Prince of Wales Stakes and some of Peter's twisted betting strategies. And what were the officials in New Zealand thinking when they approved the name **Colin Oscopy** for a race horse? This...and more in the **Down The Stretch Podcast**.

Episode 38, October 5

How great is Mighty Heart? This podcast has him winning the Prince of Wales, putting him one step away from an elusive Triple Crown sweep. We've got interviews with Mighty Heart's owner **Larry Cordes** and groom **Siobhan Brown**. Woodbine CEO **Jim Lawson** updates us on happenings at Woodbine and Mohawk and how September may have been the most exciting month ever in Canadian horse racing. How about mic'd up times two – the listener will have decide who did it better – **Bob McClure** or **Peter Gross** who got behind a standardbred at **Carmen Auciello's** farm. A filly won the Preakness and ran very fast doing it. Also, we have Stakes races from Woodbine and Ajax Downs and one of the worst beats for a certain horseplayer – his horse took the lead...then made an abrupt right hand turn. It's another packed **Down The Stretch Podcast**.

Episode 39, October 12

Woodbine and TSN have agreed to extend **Racing Night Live** through to December. **Christina Litz** is the woman who struck the deal and she tells us just how good this is for horse racing. True to our promise to cover thoroughbred, standardbred, and quarter horse racing in Ontario, this podcast has two Stakes races from Woodbine, both won by **Patrick Husbands** and **Mark Casse**, all kinds of Stakes races from the harness side, and the Alex Picov Memorial Futurity from Ajax Downs. Driver **Bob McClure** pulled off a rare triple, winning big money races at Flamboro, Mohawk, and Western Fair in a span of maybe 27 hours. Trainer **Bob Broadstock** sent out a winner at Ajax Downs last week and he did so for the First Line Syndicate. Then he told us how much fun the 18 shareholders in the syndicate are having. This Podcast also includes music from **The Reklaws** and a cat who thought he could outrun some horses in France.

Episode 40, October 19

This podcast aired a few days before **Mighty Heart's** loss in the Breeders' Stakes and host **Peter Gross** talks with trainer **Josie Carroll** and Mighty Heart's jockey **Daisuke Fukumoto**. Peter reminisces about being at Monmouth Park 40 years ago when **Glorious Song** raced against **Spectacular Bid**. Last Saturday at Mohawk they had 8 OSS Super Finals, each worth \$250,000, and we have the stretch call of every one of them. **Country Boy 123** is the greatest quarter horse in Canadian history, but his attempt at a fourth straight win in the Alex Picov Maturity was foiled. With **Racing Night Live** back on TSN, Woodbine has rewarded bettors with a unique and tempting wager. And how does **Bonnie Tyler**, Japanese music, and scorpion racing in Mumbai figure in this podcast?

Episode 41, October 26

It is very hard to sweep the Triple Crown. Even though **Mighty Heart**, trained by **Josie Carroll**, was unable to take the Breeders' Stakes, Carroll gets credit for sending out the winning horse in all three legs. Find out why. The third leg of the fillies' Triple Tiara produced the third of three winners in the series. Owner **Marvin Katz** of Toronto had two winners at Hoosier Park in the eliminations for the upcoming Breeders Crown. **Chantal Sutherland** is still winning at Keeneland. We have an amazing call of an 18 horse Stakes race in Australia – amazing because the race caller is 10 years old. And we meet **Eric Lloyd** who not only plays **Elwood Blues** at Orlando's Universal Theme Park, but he's also written a great book about eleven Triple Crown winners meeting in Heaven for a race.



WOODBINE

presented by WEG

One of the first things Josie Carroll told us after Mighty Heart won the Queen's Plate was how satisfying it was for a small owner/breeder to take down Canada's most important race. Of course, she was referring to her client, Larry Cordes, who runs a modest stable, but clearly understands the process of creating a terrific racehorse. In 2011, he owned a filly named Emma's Bullseye.

"The mare won her only start by 5½ lengths," says Cordes. "She never gave up the lead from start to finish in an extremely fast time – 57.84 for 5 furlongs. She was a medium sized horse, so when I looked to breed her, I was looking to get some stamina for long distance races, to match up speed for distance."

Emma's Bullseye was bred to a stallion named Midas Touch and that resulted in a filly named Touch of Emma. That one was claimed from Cordes in June of 2019 after producing three wins from eleven starts. The second foal of Emma's Bullseye was a son of Istan named In Memory of Floyd. He won one of seven races for Cordes. After that one developed a chip in his ankle and some arthritis, Cordes retired him from the races and now Memory of Floyd is his riding horse.

It's said the third time is the charm. But in Cordes' case, it was a little bit of charm and a great deal of research.

"I looked at maybe 30 stallions," he says.

After considering dozens of potential studs, Cordes got a tip from a gentleman in Kentucky. Gerry Ashinger had trained a horse that he thought suited Cordes' mare.

"He said, 'You might want to take a look at the pedigree of Dramedy,'" says Cordes. "He's by Distorted Humor and his female line is the best in North America. So I looked into that. He was pretty well put together. He was a very athletic looking, medium sized horse."

Dramedy raced eighteen times, found the winners circle four times, and earned \$271,000. He might have had a much more prosperous career if not for a back injury sustained as a yearling.

"He had a trailer accident and yet he still won a Stakes race on grass going a mile and half," says Cordes. "He won three other allowance races and then the back started bothering him. If this horse didn't hurt his back, what kind of a horse would he have been? I thought, 'This is what I want. I'm going to take a chance on this horse.' That's how it came about that I bred to him. Can I get lucky and bring the Distorted Humor and the female line through him to this mare? Well, it worked out."

It worked out because Dramedy's date with Emma's



Bullseye produced Mighty Heart. When the colt was barely a few weeks old, he lost his left eye in a barn accident. Despite that, all the early evidence indicated Larry Cordes did have a special horse.

"Right from when he was being broken in Florida and his early training, we knew," says Cordes. "The people down there told me, 'Hey, this is a pretty nice horse.' So then when we brought him up here, after about two weeks, Josie said to me, 'That's a nice horse.'"

But great workouts don't always translate to great races. Mighty Heart had a serious problem that showed up as soon as he was racing for real. In his first race, he bore out dramatically – his chart line reads *lugged out badly*. Mighty Heart had to rally for fourth after losing about sixteen lengths on the turn. In his next race, a similar dilemma; in a one-mile grass race at The Fairgrounds, the horse bore out on the first turn under James Graham and lost all chance, finishing eleventh. The first prognosis was simply that because of his missing left eye, Mighty Heart wanted to move away from what he was unable to see. But that wasn't what was wrong.

"We brought the horse up to Woodbine," says Cordes. "And one day Josie said to me, 'I have to get a chiropractor to give him a rub down because he's a little bit tight in the back.' And the chiropractor told Josie that the horse had a problem with his jaw. It's called a wolf tooth. It was impacted or it was just under the skin. So, what was happening was when he broke out of the gate and the jock would ask him because he's got tactical speed and the bit would come down on that and he was trying to pull his head away from the pain. The same thing happened when the jockey took the bit to steer him around the turns."

Once that bad tooth was removed, Mighty Heart was able to achieve his full potential. He ran in a field of eleven maidens on July 11 going a mile and a sixteenth. With Justin Stein aboard, there was no lugging, no bearing out – Mighty Heart stalked in third, moved to the lead coming into the stretch, and won impressively by 4½ lengths. He was almost 14-1. The bettors knew nothing about a wolf tooth.

Three weeks later, Mighty Heart finished third in allowance company after taking the lead at the top of the stretch. He was 1½ lengths behind the winner who posted a very fast time of 1:49.97 for the mile and a sixteenth.

Cordes felt his colt was running strongly and his first instinct was to take the conventional route to the Queen's

Plate

"I wanted to run in the Plate Trial Stakes," he admits.

And then came a great example of a smart owner listening to his trainer.

"Josie said to me, 'Let's not do that. Let me take that horse and develop him into the Queen's Plate.'

That's all Cordes needed to hear.

"So, he would just train for 6 weeks," he says. "And he unveiled in the Queen's Plate. I said to her, 'I don't need to run in the Trial. If you feel you know you can get this horse up to a mile and a quarter by training in the next six weeks, let's go for it.'"

Cordes and his group were on the Woodbine track apron, so they had a most excellent view of the Queen's Plate.

"He broke out of the 13-hole to take the lead by a length and a half and, as you know, he carried right through in the turn for home," says Cordes. "So why was I worried? Because, of course, looking at fractions that were extremely fast, was he going to run out of steam? I didn't need to worry. After the race, Daisuke said to me, 'When that 14-horse came up beside him, he cocked his head a little bit, looked the other horse in the eye, and just said, *bye bye*'"

Mighty Heart also won the Prince of Wales Stakes (page 5) and then faded after a grueling battle in the Breeders' Stakes. Those two wins in the first legs of the Triple Crown gave Cordes 30 in his career as an owner. He is definitely not the Ramsays or Godolphin or Gary Barber. But what Mighty Heart did was an enormous accomplishment and Cordes was especially thrilled to share the great moments with the people close to him.

"It's an honour, first of all, to have a horse that is capable of being in the Queen's Plate," he says. "And being such a classic that has been going on for 161 years. It's a moment of sheer joy to have a horse like him, with a major handicap all his life, and to come out as the underdog to win the Queen's Plate. It's just a dream come true. One of the things that is incredible - the hype up to the Queens Plate, we never got any recognition at all - and rightfully enough – he was a real underdog. That didn't bother me at all. What got my heart going *pitter patter* was all the phone calls wishing me good luck; they were so numerous. My daughter taking her daughter to shop for Queen's Plate dresses and Queen's Plate hats and how happy they were. The excitement of everyone was just as satisfying as the Queen's Plate itself."



Brad Grant's amazing triactor



There is not just one singular way to become a Down The Stretch Owner of the Month. Larry Cordes (see page 18) is our Thoroughbred Owner because his horse, Mighty Heart won the Queen's Plate and the Prince of Wales Stakes. Sometimes we just like a good story; that's how Frank Cirillo and his charismatic daughter Lori got into the December 2019 issue. We made Jordan Lay Owner of the Month recently just because he's a friend. And if you just happen to win the Hambletonian, the Maple Leaf Trot, and the first Mohawk Million – as Brad Grant did – that's your *Win and You're In* ticket to **Down The Stretch**.

"It's been exciting since we got back racing," says Grant. "I've had a lot of good luck, so it's been a good year."

Good year? That just might be a mild understatement considering what three trotters did for Grant within the span of just 50 days. It was on August 8 at the Meadowlands that his three-year-old filly, Ramona Hill, schooled the boys in the \$1 million Hambletonian at the Meadowlands. Driven by Aussie Andrew McCarthy, Ramona Hill flew first-over to get the lead at the half and cruised home a length the best in 1:50.1 (the world record for a trotting mile is 1:48.4).

"We bought her at the yearling sale in Lexington for \$70,000," says Grant. "She was consigned by Crawford Farms. We really liked her from the start."

Thanks to COVID-19, Grant and wife Bonnie were unable to attend the Hambletonian in person.

"We were sitting at home and my wife and I watched it on the computer," he says. "You really don't want to see the video of my happy dance, but we were really excited just to be in that race and to win it; we were just over the moon."

It was just four weeks after the Hambo that Grant was able to be at Mohawk to watch the \$560,000 Maple Leaf Trot. He shares ownership of the five-year-old mare, Atlanta. His partners are Crawford Farms and Howard Taylor, her trainer is Ron Burke, and once again, it was girl beating the boys night, as Atlanta crushed by 4 lengths in 1:50.4.

"Atlanta is just an amazing mare," says Grant. "The week before, she made a break in the Armbró Flight. I talked with Ronnie (Burke) and he said, 'Brad, I know what the problem is.' He changed the shoeing on her and he was confident going into it that she would be the Atlanta that we know. It was exciting to see her come off the turn and just fly home the way she did and win in the

way she did."

There's another nifty filly in the Grant barn. This one is Warrawee Vicky.

"She's a very good Ontario-sired filly," says Grant. "I don't think she matches up with the top grand circuit fillies. She was bought for the Ontario sired program. Scott McEneny has done a tremendous job with her so she races where she fits in the Ontario sired program."

In most barns, the three-year-old Warrawee Vicky would be the star player. She has won 9 of 18 races, earned over \$375,000 and when last seen by **Down the Stretch**, was romping for Doug McNair in a \$104,800 OSS Gold at Flamboro.

But Grant's coup de grace, his master stroke, his proof of genius came in the first Mohawk Million. This was Woodbine's very good idea, sampled somewhat from Frank Stronach's Pegasus, wherein the owners buy a slot in the race and their horses compete for the anted-up cash. Before he knew if he had a decent two year-old trotter, Grant bought a starting space for \$110,000. As the race neared, he realized that his best young trotter, Maverick, might not be competitive, but the rules allow for starting berths to be bargained for. Grant reached out to trainer Julie Miller, the Pinsky and Andy Miller Stables, and enticed them to enter their colt, Venerate.

"We bought a position because, at the time, I believed that we had a colt that would probably get there," says Grant. "Unfortunately, he didn't, and we were able to work out an arrangement with Julie Miller and her ownership group to take our position in the race. So, it worked out."

Yes, it did. Venerate was given post 10, which meant he had to start in the second tier, but he got a perfect trip from driver Andrew McCarthy, who moved the colt into the race by degrees and simply out-trotted the favourite, Donna Soprano, to the wire.

"It makes me look pretty smart, I guess," joked Grant, moments after the race. "We really believed in this race when we bought our slot. What Woodbine and Mohawk has done is something new. I think it's creative. I think it had a buzz all year round. Everyone was watching how their colts and fillies were doing all year long. I talked with Julie Miller and after one quick conversation the deal was done. I'm happy for them – they're wonderful people to work with – and I'm happy it worked out for us."

A cheque for \$660,000 was earned by Venerate's win. We're not sure what percentage of that went to Brad Grant, but he got enough to assure he'll buy a slot next year.

"I've now got some seed money so I can take a run at it," he said.

We could easily fill several pages with the successes of many other horses in Grant's stable, but it's always a much better story when it turns out the guy raking in the chips is the nicest man at the table. Turn the clock back to January 4, 2016. A fire erupted at the Classy Lane Stables in Puslinch. Forty three animals were lost. One of them, Apprentice Hanover, owned by Grant had already earned over \$1 million. Trainer Ben Wallace lost everything. So, Grant went down to New Jersey and brought home some nice standardbreds for Wallace to work with.

Then there was the awful bus crash in April 2018 that killed 16 members of the Humboldt Bronco hockey team. Grant has owned junior hockey clubs and he wanted to help.

"Being a hockey person that I was at the time," he says, "I said to my wife, 'I'd really like to do something,' but we didn't know what to do and I was looking through the program, and I went, 'Oh, my God, I actually forgot I owned a horse called Humboldt.'"

After discovering that remarkable coincidence, Grant not only pledged all of Humboldt's winnings for a month, but another owner and trainer pledged winnings as well.

"Other people donated their winnings and trainers' earnings and we raised a little bit of money for the survivors to help them. We just felt for everybody and we had to do something."

The bottom line for Brad Grant is that there is just so much in the sport of harness racing that he loves.

"It's exciting. I mean, you're racing for big money," he says. "But also, the people you meet are just tremendous people with a passion for the industry and a passion for horses – not just the owners, I'm talking about the trainers and the caretakers and the fans, people that are hard workers. Some may be tremendously successful, but they're all just down to earth people. Of course, you want to win and you want to beat them, but most times they are the first to come up and congratulate you when you win and vice versa. I mean, you want to win the race, but the people in this business have taught me through their own actions to win and lose with grace. The race is a short adrenaline rush, but the whole event is a memory; that's the enjoyment we get out of it. My wife and I love it."

Quarter Horse
Owner of
the Month:
First Line Racing
Syndicate



When Eye Am The Eagle, ridden by Ramiro Castillo, won the ninth race at Ajax Downs on October 5, there were at least 18 happy people. That's how many investors are involved in the First Line Racing Syndicate. Bob Broadstock is not only the head of the syndicate, he's also the President of the Quarter Racing Owners of Ontario and he's also the trainer for the syndicate's horses.

"We took a different approach to most racing syndicates," says Broadstock. "We have a one-time fee that gets you into First Line Racing. Your one share gets you in for two years, all expenses paid. There's no other cost to you personally. So that \$2,500 gets you two years, and most of the time, the owners are getting half to three quarters of that back this year. We're hoping with two horses in the syndicate that we're getting closer and closer to breaking even or maybe even making a profit."

As President of the Quarter Racing Owners, Broadstock felt an obligation to market the sport aggressively.

"I've been to a lot of different industry meetings all over North America, where horse ownership is one of the biggest problems that the industry faces," he says. "Getting new people involved breaking down those barriers because it is essentially thought of as the sport of kings and it's not necessarily that way. Quarter horses are easy to get into and less expensive. We put some money into ownership seminars and that didn't reap significant benefits, so we thought we'd give the syndicate a shot. And it's worked out really, really well."

Eye Am The Eagle propelled himself into 'star' status with his win. The five year-old gelding has had a very consistent season, bringing in a cheque for the syndicate in five of his six starts – he has two seconds and two thirds to go with the win.

"Eye Am The Eagle is the first horse to return to the syndicate for a second go around," says Broadstock. "He has now won six races for First Line Racing and his newest little brother, The Kingsmann, has been showing some promise, especially going a little longer. And he actually competed in the Picov Derby just two weeks ago."

The Kingsmann finished seventh in the Derby, but it was a typical Ajax Downs outcome. According to the charts, the winner, Ec Greys Anatomy, won by a head and then it was neck, neck, head, head, head back to The Kingsmann.

The Kingsmann is a three year-old who broke his maiden last June. On October 12, he sizzled home against four rivals at 350 yards, winning by a length in 17.948.

First Line Racing Syndicate



Bob Broadstock runs the First Line Racing Syndicate

That poured another \$5,060 into the First Line Syndicate's account.

Eye Am The Eagle was a \$6,700 purchase at the winter sale at Heritage Place in Oklahoma City. The Kingsmann cost the syndicate more than that.

"The Kingsmann was \$12,500 U.S.," says Broadstock. "He was a bigger purchase and part of the Horse Purchase Program that QROOI (Quarter Racing Owners of Ontario Inc.) did last year. That allows people to get involved in racing because it supplements the purchase price."

Under the program, the QROOI offers an interest-free loan up to \$5,000 for the purchase of a quarter horse.

When Eye Am The Eagle won recently, the winner's cheque from the purse was \$4,370. An investor might want to know how that cash is distributed.

"The trainer and the jockey get their percentage off of the top," says Broadstock. "And then the last of the money goes into the account, and it's used to cover the cost of operating the two horses for the two years. At the end of two years, we value and or sell the horses and then provide that revenue back out to the owners in the syndicate."

So right now, none of the members of First Line are pricing their next yacht, but the prospects for the future look pretty bright. First Line was born in 2016 and, in that year, the racing produced under \$4,000. The next year, the group cashed \$8,000; and in 2018, their horses won over \$10,000. In 2019, purses provided \$17,000 and so far in 2020, that total is closing in on \$20,000. That's a rising trend that gives First Line some wiggle room.

"What that's allowed us to do is to continue to buy better quality horses," says Broadstock. "This year, we have two instead of just one horse. So, it's double the fun, and it's still the same cost to get involved."

It would seem the syndicate is in good hands with the 47 year-old Broadstock, who has been with the sport since he was a teenager.

"It's getting to be 30 years since I started," he says. "It's been most of my life. It started with Joe Tavares. I had

a riding horse and we went to pick up shavings at Joe's farm and he was offering a job. And once you get involved in racing, you see those race horses, and you get hooked real quick. And, uh, it's just kind of stuck and I have been buying, breeding, and training ever since."

Quarter horse racing in Ontario has, unfortunately, bounced from one crisis to another. When the Provincial Liberals cancelled the Slots at Racetracks Program, the once luxurious cash flow was stopped. Just before the last election, the Liberals proposed closing down the slots at Ajax Downs, which would have doomed the racing. Doug Ford solved that problem pretty well the day he was elected, saying that both Ajax Downs and the new casino in Pickering could co-exist.

Then, of course, there's this virus thing that has prevented lively crowds from jamming the stands once a week at Ajax Downs.

"It doesn't feel right without fans in the stands," concedes Broadstock. "It's been difficult as a horseman. You get excited, you get out there, and there's nobody to watch or very, very few people. And it just doesn't have that same exhilaration that you get when you have that big fan base behind you yelling and screaming."

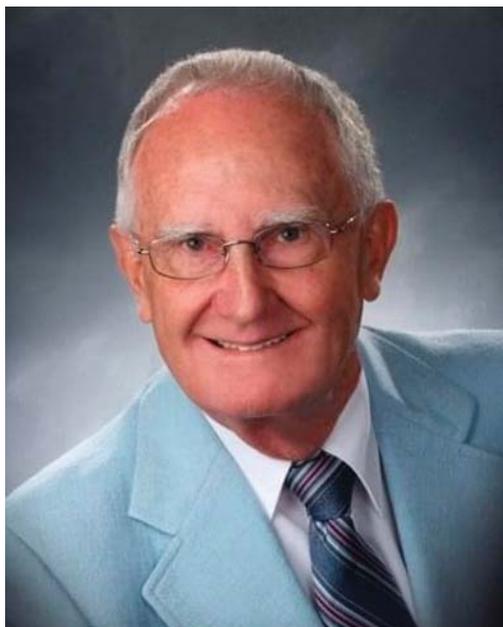
Still, quarter horse racing is surviving and very possibly getting stronger each year.

"We have seen some growth in quarter horse racing," says Broadstock. "Our members have purchased new horses and we've seen about a 15% growth in our horse population. We're hoping not only to sustain that, but to expand that next year, as long as COVID allows people to go and conduct business and buy horses."

And this is the part of the column where we invite Bob Broadstock to make his best sales pitch for anyone thinking of buying into First Line Racing.

"It's not just about racing. It is about the group of people that you will meet. You will have a lot of fun. We have get together and you learn about racing and the love for horses. It's a better experience than anybody can imagine."

William 'Bill' Galvin



William Galvin died on September 26 at the age of 89. Bill was the total package when it came to promoting the sport of harness racing. Galvin was the director of special promotions (harness and thoroughbred) for the Ontario Jockey Club and publicity chairman for the Greenwood Centennial Program. As a writer, he created the **History of Grand Circuit Racing in Canada** and the **Golden Horseshoe Circuit Press Book**. He was one of the very few to come up with ideas that attracted youngsters to the sport. Galvin conducted equine poetry and art competitions for grade school children and he also organized both trotting under saddle races at Greenwood and intercollegiate harness driving championships.

He published *Ballads of the Turf* in 2006, was the first publicity chairman of the Sovereign Awards, and put together a 100-year history of racing at Greenwood and Woodbine. Galvin, the former president of the North American Harness Publicists Association, was a regular weekly contributor to Canadian and U.S. harness trade magazines, and wrote a regular nightly review of the races for the dailies and other media.

In recent years, Galvin initiated **The Stable that God Loves** as a fundraiser for the Standardbred Racetrack Chaplaincy of Canada. With regards to that, he served as the Vice-President of the Race Track Chaplaincy of Canada. And, of course, he was also a standardbred participant, sharing ownership of the two year-old Shes A Sassy Beach with Mohawk race caller Ken Middleton. Right after his passing, the tributes flowed and **Down The Stretch** is grateful for the following kind comments on Bill Galvin:

Chaplain Shawn Kennedy: Heaven Gains a Saint as Racing Loses One

I received a call on Saturday September 26 that Bill Galvin had died. I have to admit I was broadsided by the news. Thirteen days earlier I, along with my assistant Candace, had spent the day with Bill. He took us on a tour of standardbred training centers near Milton, which concluded with a visit to see his mare and foals at Ken Middleton's farm. After that concluded, it was lunch at a lakeside restaurant. Nothing suggested he was in ill health

- quite the opposite. He shared how much exercise he was getting from his doctor's plan and ate with a relish.

Bill loved horses, racing and the people involved. He was Vice-president of our Race Track Chaplaincy of Canada and was always present at whatever ministry event we were conducting. Bill especially loved our BBQ's. He always had an envelope with three fifty dollar bills in it to provide as a free raffle prize for backstretch workers. Given the number of raffles, times the amount of money Bill supplied, I think he laundered more cash than the Gotti family!

Bill's enthusiasm for racing and the Chaplaincy was unbridled. His main concern was for the workers, for those who "toil in the darkness". He was a good fit for the RTCC- our vision is "whatever you do to the least of these, you do to Me", from Matthew 25. Bill loved the Lord and always sought to improve the lives of racing's workers. He never met a cup of coffee he didn't like and loved to drop in unannounced for lunch. He always paid.

I will miss Bill. The Bill Galvins are becoming rarer and rarer in our industry. He started at the bottom, grooming and traveled across North America with his horses. He later settled into working for the Ontario Jockey Club at Woodbine. Bill was inducted into the Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame, an honour he richly deserved. Even in retirement, Bill always had something on the go. Raising money for the Chaplaincies of the thoroughbred and standardbred industry was a mission to Bill and he was tenacious as a Terrier on a hunt. While heaven gains a saint, we in racing will lose one.

Ken Middleton, Mohawk Harness Racing Announcer

I lost one of my best friends today. Thanks to everyone for the calls, the texts, the emails and the messages. They are greatly appreciated. It's been a tough day, especially since I just saw him a few days ago and spoke on the phone with him yesterday. Anyone that had the pleasure of meeting Bill Galvin during their travels generally had the same thing to say about him. He was funny, charming, polite, hard working, sincere, respectful, dedicated, intelligent, generous, and he had an incredible passion for harness racing.

Bill was one of my dad's best friends and, over the course of the last decade or so, Bill and I forged an incredible friendship as well. I'll be forever grateful for all the great advice he shared with me, and I'm just as grateful for the ways he never hesitated to help me.

One sage piece of advice he offered me – and I'll share it with you in case you want to take it to heart – was to never keep score when it comes to what you do for your friends. Help them whenever you can and be happy to do it. Enjoy the great satisfaction that is the bi-product of helping someone in need. Bill made it his duty to help whoever he could whenever he could. I lost a great friend and racing has lost a great friend in Bill Galvin, too. Until we meet again my friend. RIP Bill.

Darryl Kaplan, President Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame

To those of you in the harness racing industry who never had the privilege of meeting Bill Galvin, you should know this: There has never been a greater champion of this sport.

For most of my adult life, people in harness racing have said 'we need more young people to bring youthful ideas and promote the sport'. I didn't always disagree. But at the same time, it was a man in his 80s who would sit across from me in my office discussing the most youthful ideas, with more energy than almost anyone I knew. He would come in, tell me what he was planning to do, and Bill would do it.

It was Bill going to Ottawa to bring harness racing back to the ice on the Rideau Canal. It was Bill getting thousands of kids and teens to visit standardbred farms and write poetry about harness racing. It was Bill who wanted to bring horse racing back to the Canadian National Exhibition to expose it to 1.5 million people. It was Bill who fought tirelessly to revive and support the sport's valuable charities - even when others were too busy to care. And it was Bill who always had a plan.

He didn't ever seek credit. He didn't want money. He didn't engage in taking sides or argue about the business of the sport. He spent every day as a tireless advocate, to the final moments of his life. He wanted everyone to know about the pure goodness of standardbred racing, the joy of the game, and the amazing wonder of the horse.

I lost a wonderful mentor in my life, and a truly special friend. Harness racing has lost one of its greatest advocates. But rest assured, Bill's legacy will endure long after his passing. And every one of us involved in this sport is better off because of him.

Melissa Keith, Past President of the Canadian Chapter of USHWA

Bill Galvin never stopped. Brimming with ideas and energy, he was the most influential contributor to the US Harness Writers Association (USHWA) Youth Membership Committee, which I founded and chair. How could a man in his 80s represent what was new and magnetic about harness racing, particularly to an audience decades younger than himself? Bill once told me about starting his mornings with a walk or a swim, but really, it was the timelessness of his vision for the sport that kept him young. This is no exaggeration: With promotional ideas that usually had educational and/or charitable overtones, he created headlines and stories familiar to even those who may not have known Bill Galvin, the man. The Race Against MS. The Youth Literary Derby. Winterlude harness racing on Ottawa's Rideau Canal, and an ice-sculpture commemoration of the ice races when the races themselves were no longer permitted. The Stable That God Loves, supporting the Racetrack Chaplaincy of Canada. Fundraising for Equine Guelph with the premiere screening of a Somebeachsomewhere documentary at the Mohawk Inn. Intercollegiate harness driving leagues. The list is seemingly endless, and Bill was still calling and e-mailing with fresh ideas until very recently.

Anything that helped advance the sport and animals he loved was fair game for Bill, who said in an e-mail a couple of weeks back how happy he was to see Nathan Bain and Nick Barnsdale competing in a public handicapping contest at Leamington Raceway. He also praised the #MiamiMadness promotion that saw Manitoba fair track announcer Trey Colbeck and friends get pari-mutuel support rolling for a record-breaking closing day 2020 handle. Bill was proud of his filly, Shes a Sassy Beach,

but he found winners everywhere. And why not? He set the bar high, for the rest of us.

Garnet Barnsdale, President USHWA Canada Chapter

I only knew Bill for a few years, but first and foremost what I will always remember best about him - and I said openly and often when he was alive - was that Bill was the nicest man I ever met inside or outside the harness racing industry. He always had a smile and quip ready whenever we met and always wanted to know how my family was doing.

He was a genuine Hall of Famer, not only in accomplishments and achievements in harness racing, but also in life. Bill will be greatly missed by many.

Perry Lefko, Author

Last year I asked Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Famer Bill Galvin to help me promote the Eddie O book. Bill was a standardbred racing publicist, a wonderfully-talented writer/author, and generally someone who cared about the horse racing industry, in particular the people on the backstretch. He also encouraged young people to write about the sport.

When they talk about old-school horse racing writers

with a flair for writing about the characters of the sport, Bill was certainly one of these special kinds of people. I would say collectively the horse racing industry, and not just the standardbred side, have lost someone with a big heart.

Kathy Wade Vlaar, Manager of Member and Stakeholder Relations, Standardbred Canada

Bill's enthusiasm, youthful spirit, and passion for horses and horse racing were things I always admired about him. He was an exceptional Ambassador for horse racing and a real mover and shaker. Bill knew how to mobilize people and get things done.

For decades he promoted racing in creative ways that would engage different audiences. He accomplished so many amazing things for racing and never wanted credit or acknowledgement. No sooner had Bill finished one project and he was on to the next. I'm guessing he had already hatched the next project in his mind well before he ended whatever he was working on!

I had the pleasure of working with Bill on the Youth Literary Derby in 2018. This project was promoted in conjunction with Standardbred Canada's Mother's Day Open House events at Ontario breeding farms. Bill

successfully quarterbacked this project and introduced hundreds of elementary aged school children, their families, and their teachers (In Ontario) to the wonderful world of standardbred racing and breeding.

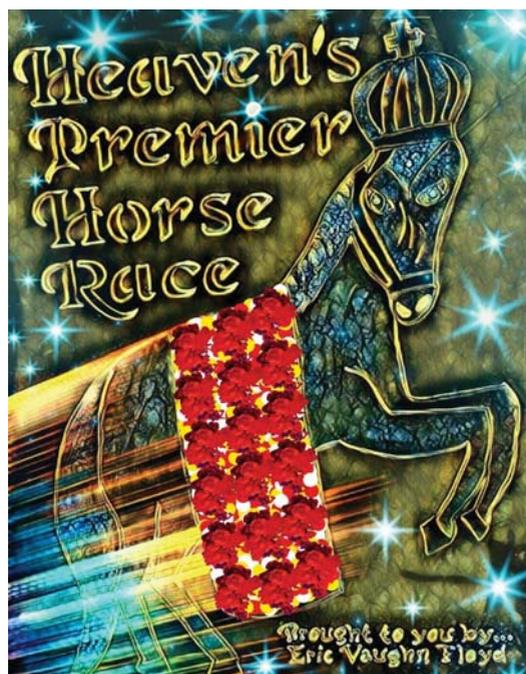
Bill was loved, appreciated, and valued by many people in our industry, and those of us who worked alongside him or had him as a friend are better off for having known him.

Linda Rainey, Managing Director Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame

Inducted to the Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame in 2014, Bill's passion and enthusiasm for horse racing were boundless. He loved to share his knowledge and ideas for the betterment of the sport and was never too busy to discuss ways to promote racing. He was extremely supportive of the work done by the CHRHF and valued the role of the organization within the industry. Spending time with Bill always left one feeling energized and believing that with hard work and commitment anything was possible.

He was a gentleman of the best kind, always the most dapper man in the room, and the most giving person you would ever meet.

Thank you, Bill, for everything you did for our sport. You are already missed.



Last May, when NBC ran their inventive video called the Triple Crown Challenge that had all thirteen Triple Crown winners going the classic distance, author Eric Floyd was thrilled.

"I was so excited when I saw that race," says Floyd. "Because I said to myself, 'Oh, my goodness, it's my book come to life!'"

Floyd's book is 'Heaven's Premier Horse Race' and since he started on it in 2008, no one can accuse him of co-opting NBC's idea.

Floyd does a number of interesting things career-wise, but insists that thoroughbred racing is his love and obsessive.

"The book was something I wanted to do because I'm fascinated and pretty much obsessed with the Triple Crown," he says. "The plot of the book centers around a mile and a quarter race that features horse racing's first eleven Triple Crown champion."

Only eleven?

"My book includes only the first eleven Triple Crown champions because it took me eleven years to write this book due to research and a lot of other things. In 2015, American Pharoah won the Triple Crown and I was about maybe three quarters of the way through the book. I basically would have had to start the book all over again. And instead of doing that, I said to myself, 'Man, I could run into the same problem

Heaven's Premier Race

again if another horse wins the Triple Crown."

And, of course, Justify swept the series in 2018, so Floyd made a prudent decision. The history of horse racing in the U.S., particularly the Belmont Stakes, plays a big part in Floyd's book.

"The race takes place at Jerome Park Race Track," he says. "Jerome Park stood in what is now the Bronx, New York from 1866 to 1894 and I chose it as the backdrop for the race because the Belmont Stakes, which is the oldest leg of thoroughbred horse racing's Triple Crown series, was first run over this oval in 1867. Therefore, I personally considered Jerome Park to be the birth place of horse racing's Triple Crown Series."

At 265 pages, 'Heaven's Premier Horse Race' gives the reader the historic scoop on some of the greatest race horses to perform on American soil.

"I write these pieces called interludes where I give some background on the horses," says Floyd. "I introduce them and talk about them a little bit. For instance - your 1941 Triple Crown champion, Whirlaway. He was nicknamed Mister Long Tail and, at the beginning of his career, when the gates would open, he would bolt to the outer rail and run the whole race along the outer rail and often still win. His trainer, Ben Jones, fitted him with a special right eye blinker so he could see the inside rail, but not the outside rail. And that kind of provoked him to not bolt anymore."

Floyd's narrative funnels through two fundamentally important individuals who play the roles of Masters of Ceremonies.

"The primary mastermind behind Jerome Park Race Track was a gentleman named Leonard Walter Jerome," says Floyd. "Jerome is a really fascinating character. He's the maternal grandfather of Winston Churchill, and he was a really flamboyant financier, often called the King of Wall Street, who won and lost multiple fortunes on the New York Stock Exchange. Leonard built Jerome Park with the help of his good friend August Belmont Sr. Belmont was also a financier and a politician. He was the President of the National Jockey Club from 1866 to 1887. Leonard Jerome was so thankful that August had helped him establish his race track, he named the track's marquee race after his good friend. So that's where the name the Belmont Stakes came from. In the book, they mastermind the race, get in contact with everybody, and they pull the race off."

The NBC video had Secretariat winning the battle of all the

Triple Crown winners. There was pretty well no choice, since Secretariat's time of 1:59 and 2/5ths still stands as the Kentucky Derby record. We wondered who wins in Floyd's book.

"I can't really say," demurs Floyd. "Then I would kind of give away the ending of the book."

Perhaps just as important as the action and drama of this novel, is the purpose that the book serves in a charitable sense. Floyd will not make any money off this.

"All profits from my book are being donated to Second Chance Farm at Lowell Correctional Institution in Lowell Florida. This is the largest women's prison in the United States. They have a farm that houses around 50 ex-thoroughbred racehorses and the inmates who qualify for Lowell's equine program help rehabilitate the horses and, in turn, they learn new life skills that can help them when they are released from prison. The farm is sponsored by the Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' and Owners' Association. I have a contact up there. When I receive money from the book sales, I give the money to my friend Jane Murray, who is the Assistant VP of Administration and Operations of the Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' and Owners' Association. She gives the money to the farm."

But why would you spend so many years writing this book only to give away the profits?

"The horses are what draws me to the sport," he says warmly. "I love the pari-mutuels and the jockeys and the connections and the trainer and some tracks, but it's all about the horses. The horses are the stars of the show, and there's a big problem. These retired horses come off the track, and it's our responsibility as fans and horsemen to re-home them so they can live out the rest of their life and dignity and health."

Clearly Eric Floyd is an interesting and compassionate guy. If you've ever been to Universal's Blue Brothers' show, you may have seen him. Floyd has worked for Universal for 25 years and plays the Dan Aykroyd character, Elwood Blues, in the musical performances. He also writes thoroughbred content for Southern Gaming, a magazine out of Louisville, Kentucky.

After I interviewed the guy, he sent me a copy of the book. Seems to me it's the perfect gift for the horse player who still can't go to the track.

"The book is available at amazon.com," he advises. "All you have to do is go to amazon.com and type in 'Heaven's Premier Horse Race'. And the book is available in paperback, but it's also available in Kindle downloads for just a few dollars because a lot of people like to read on their tablets."

Spataro hits for 5 straight, as does Country Boy 123

By Jennifer Morrison

Cory Spataro won 5 straight races



It was a day of unprecedented achievements at Ajax Downs on Monday, September 21, the sixteenth day of the 2020 quarter horse racing meeting.

Jockey Cory Spataro, 36, of Innisfil rode five straight winners on the nine-race card, a feat that no one could remember occurring since the new track opened in 2009. Three of his winners were for trainer Craig Spada, and the other two for owner Rick Crispi and trainer Tom Dunlap.

Spataro's wonderful winning streak began in race 2 aboard Jess a Sweet Surprise (Spada) which paid \$3.80; followed by Bellacious (race 3, Dunlap) a \$3.30 winner; Spitfire Stoli (race 4, Spada, owner Erin Chrisman) for \$6.30; You Zee Me Now (race 5, owned by Spada and daughter Lauren) \$10.30 payoff; and Wavin Bac Atya (race 6, Dunlap) at \$4.70.

"I think all the stars just aligned for me today," said Spataro. "Maybe it was my energy today. All the horses are just running for me today and leaving the gate well.

I'm grateful."

Spataro's big day was getting him closer to leading rider Ed Walton on the jockey standings but then Walton won races 7, 8, and 9. After that card, Walton had 30 wins to Spataro's 23 with five racing days left in the season.

Walton's victory in the seventh race was aboard Canada's richest quarter horse, Country Boy 123, who captured the day's featured event, a \$13,000 allowance race for his fifth straight win of 2020 and his 27th win in 41 career starts.

The three-time Horse of the Year was honoured following his handy half-length win by the track for surpassing \$500,000 in career earnings, making him the all-time leading Canadian-based quarter horse by money won. He is owned and trained by Ruth Barbour of Hillsburgh, who bought the big bay seven year-old for \$7,200 (US) at an Oklahoma yearling sale six years ago.

The girl beat the boys in the Alex Picov Memorial Futurity

By Jennifer Morrison



The brilliantly quick two year-old filly Streakinlilwagon sped away from eight rivals to win the \$115,600 Alex Picov Memorial Futurity on October 5 at Ajax Downs. It was the richest race of the 2020 season.

Owned and bred by Jason Pascoe and Bryanne Langford's GFR Equine Services, Streakinlilwagon under jockey 'Hurricane' Helen Vanek, broke sharply at the start of the 400-yard Futurity and powered to the finish to win by 1¼ lengths in a rapid clocking of :19.911 for an impressive 98 speed index.

Ontario-bred Had to Be Relentless overcame an awkward start from the gate and charged to be second for Carol and Jaime Robertson, and Richard Wincikaby's Ah Candyland finished third.

Streakinlilwagon has never been defeated in four

starts at Ajax Downs. She was third in her career debut at Remington Park in April. The filly, whose older half brother Streakinshagginwagon was a Horse of the Year for Pascoe in 2014, has now earned \$63,744.

"She showed a lot of promise at Remington in her first race," said Pascoe, who leads all Ajax trainers with 22 wins. "She just keeps getting better with each race, we were just hoping it would all come together today."

It was a good day for trainer Scott Reid and rider Josh Scott who combined to win three races on the nine-race card. Their winners were Pegasos Two Underpar for John McCracken of Roseneath; Elenorr, owned and bred by Reid; and George Coleman's Firing Red Jess.

Alex Picov Memorial Championship: Fiesty Icon Upsets Country Boy 123

By Jennifer Morrison



New Image Media photo

Rick Kennedy's Fiesty Icon defeated Country Boy 123, the reigning king of Ajax Downs, in a thrilling renewal of the prestigious Alex Picov Memorial Championship on Thanksgiving Monday. The Ontario-bred eight year-old under jockey Tony Phillips stuck his head out at the finish of the 440 yard race to defeat Country Boy 123, who had won the race the past three seasons.

As a 16 to 1 longshot, Fiesty Icon broke well from

post eight and led a wave of horses that charged down the outside of the track. Country Boy 123 and jockey Ed Walton had a step-slow start from the gate, but quickly joined the filly Shes Sizzling in mid-stretch to get into contention before Fiesty Icon roared past him just before the finish. Country Boy 123 was second by a head over Countrys Comin Bac who finished third but was later disqualified and placed fourth for late interference to Spy for the Senate.

The time for the 440 yards was a sharp 21.745 for a 104 speed index. Fiesty Icon paid \$35.60 to win.



Fittingly, Fiesty Icon was bred by the Picov Cattle Company and he is a son of Ontario sire Sugarman Perry.

"I decided to enter him after his last race, the Ontario Bred Maturity," said Kennedy, who raises and trains horses with wife Karen on his farm in Mount Albert. "He was second that day, but I liked the way he came out of that race. He usually tells me when he is ready to run; I guess he was right."

Kennedy purchased Fiesty Icon as a yearling from the Picov family and the gelding has had an illustrious career. In fact, Fiesty Icon was the Ajax Downs' Horse of the Year as a three year-old in 2015 and in recent years had been ruling the Ontario Bred older horse ranks.

"He's a fabulous horse; he always goes out and gives us his all when he runs," said Kennedy. "After the race another owner, James Bogar, said to me, 'You must be on cloud nine'. I said it was 10."

The Championship was the 20th career win in 49 races for Fiesty Icon, who boosted his career earnings to over \$355,000.

Close finishes at Ajax Downs on penultimate card

by Jennifer Morrison

With a quick turn of foot, 9-1 longshot Hanover Hill Theresa got up in the last stride of the \$64,700 Ontario Sired Stakes Futurity on October 19 to win by a nose over the 1-2 favourite, Bogie Wheels. This was

Hanover Hill Theresa and jockey Cory Spataro at 9 to 1



the second to last card of racing at Ajax Downs this year. The two year-old bay filly, owned and bred by the Picov Cattle Company and trained by Joe Tavares, was outsprinted early in the 330-yard race for two year-olds by stallions standing in Ontario, but rushed into contention under jockey Cory Spataro while Bogie Wheels grabbed a clear lead. Just before the finish,

Hanover Hill Theresa surged past the favourite to collect her first career win.

Bogie Wheels finished second but was disqualified and placed eighth and last for interfering with All Outta Sugar out of the gate. Raven Racing Syndicate's Jess Raven was placed second, and Hanover Hill Lynda, also from the Picov Cattle Company, was moved up to third.

"I didn't know much about her," said Spataro, who was riding Hanover Hill Theresa for the first time. "She was very quiet during the pre-race proceedings and we were lucky enough to have an outside post as there was a bit of kerfuffle with others in the middle. She sailed on by and got up to win. It was a surprise to me, but a welcomed one."

The \$21,950 QROOI Sprint Series #3 dash also had a longshot winner. Night Fishn, at 25-1, nosed out 9-1 shot Jess a Sweet Surprise to win the 250-yard third leg of the series for owner and breeder Mary Schrama and her partner/trainer Dan Giles. The six year-old sorrel mare by Sugarman Perry was ridden to victory by Ramiro Castillo and it was the first win for the mare since October 2018.

In the day's second race, ten year-old One Famous Glass won the final start of his career for owners Carol and Jaime Robertson and trainer Bryn Robertson. The 2013 Horse of the Year retires to a life of leisure with a career record of 20 wins in 48 races and earnings of over \$340,000.



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Just call him Bob McBusy

On October 8, Flamboro Downs was the site of the \$157,200 division of the OSS Gold Series for two year-old trotters. Driver Bob McClure was steering Macho Martini but coming from post one didn't exactly thrill him.

"I was actually a little bit concerned. I've never gone with him over a half," said McClure. "I just didn't know. Two year-old trotters are a little tough to get around those tracks and then you throw in the rail, that's one of the last spots I would have wanted with him."

Despite those concerns, Macho Martini settled nicely



Macho Martini for Bob McClure
New Image Media Photo

into second, came out smoothly just before the field headed home, and got to the wire first by 1¼ lengths in 1:58.1.

McClure gave all the credit to Luc Blais for maintaining Macho Martini's resolve through the summer and into the fall.

"He's as fresh as he was when he started the year, which is typical of Luc Blais horses," said McClure. "They're as good at the end as they are at the start. He's very good at managing them that way."

Owned by Determination, Macho Martini won for the fourth time in OSS Gold and the eighth time in 10 starts. He has accumulated 200 points, the most of all two year-old trotters with the \$250,000 season finale October 17 next on his agenda. His backers got \$3.10 for their win tickets.

That race at Flamboro went off just before 7 pm. So McClure hopped in his truck and drove the 28 kilometres



Threefiftytwo came in at 8:45
New Image Media Photo

to Mohawk in order to steer the three year-old trotter Threefiftytwo in the \$104,800 OSS Gold. It was the sixth race at Mohawk and went off at about 8:45, giving McClure lots of time. Apparently, the talented son of Royalty For Life was grateful to have his regular driver as the pair sat second for most of the mile, came out in the stretch, and won by an expanding 3½ lengths in 1:54.

Threefiftytwo is trained by Luc Blais and it hasn't necessarily been a joy for Blais.

"Threefiftytwo has been a bit of a problem horse all

year for Luc. He never seemed to be able to put it together when it counted, so it's nice that tonight he finally showed his ability in a Gold event," said McClure. "He's sharp right now and hopefully he'll be really good next week."

The win was Threefiftytwo's first in four Gold Series after a third and two fifths. His 72 points assured him of a spot in the Super Final on October 17. He is owned by Determination of Montreal and he was worth \$3.40 on the win ticket.

In the second division, heavy favourite Pemberton pulled Trevor Henry to a dominant front-end victory by 4 lengths in 1:53.2. That's three wins in four Gold Series races for Pemberton and his point total of 162 leads the three year-old class.



Pemberton goes to the final
New Image Media Photo

"If I can just keep him like that for another week, we'll be in good shape," said trainer Paul Walker. "He's been a great little horse this year and he doesn't seem to be letting up yet."

Walker trains Pemberton for his wife Brenda Walker of Owen Sound and daughter Christine Walker of Tara, Ontario. Mother and daughter also bred the trotter, who boosted his earnings to \$238,684 and his record to seven wins and one third in nine starts with Thursday's victory. He returned just \$2.20.

And McClure's winning touch wasn't over. The following night (Friday), he was in London at Western Fair, driving Tattoo Artist in the \$155,600 three year-old



Tattoo Artist spilled some winning ink
AG Photography

pacing colt Gold Series division.

At the half, McClure had Tattoo Artist in the pocket behind the leader Rhythm In Motion (Sylvain Filion) and that post was reached in :54.4. Off the final turn, Tattoo Artist was given his cue and he overhauled the leader and pulled away for the easy win by 2 lengths in 1:53.2. McClure might have been the least optimistic among the Tattoo Artist camp. Simply put, he didn't like having post one.

"You don't want the rail when you're the favourite," said McClure. "You can get caught very flat footed leaving the gate from the rail, which all the drivers know, so I knew

there would be a couple blasting from the outside. I got to tuck into the two-hole for a little while and braved up and take another run and my horse showed a lot of grit and class. He raced an awesome trip today and I was very proud of him."

Tattoo Artist won all five of his OSS Gold Series races this year and has earned the most points as the top 10 horses would meet in the \$250,000 Super Final at Woodbine Mohawk Park on October 17.

Owned by Frank Cannon and Let It Ride Stables, and trained by Dr. Ian Moore, Tattoo Artist is 8 for 11 as a three year-old and has earned over \$850,000, including victories in the Meadowlands Pace and the North America Cup. He paid just \$2.30 at Western Fair, not nearly enough to cover McClure's gas bill, but he's probably not complaining.



Bob McClure
New Image Media photo

In fact, with the stunning three track, three wins accomplishment, McClure checked off a huge item on his bucket list – he locked up his first Lampman Cup by being the leading driver in the Ontario Sire Stakes Program in 2020. Before the Super Finals, McClure had driven 199 starters in OSS events, producing 44 wins, 26 seconds and 30 thirds, earning \$1,860,669 while accumulating 513 points, which put him 34 points ahead of Sylvain Filion.

"It's pretty tough to win," said McClure about the Lampman Cup. "Sylvain Filion is very dedicated to the OSS program and he's a great driver, and you look at Trevor Henry with the accounts he drives for – they have a lot of Stakes horses. Then with Doug McNair and his dad having a stable of OSS horses, it's kind of tough to compete with them. I think you need a year where everything just falls into place for you and that's exactly what happened this year. When I found out that I sealed it up, I was pretty proud of that because I have so much respect for Sylvain Filion as a driver."

A big reason for McClure's success in this program has been the Determination Stable and trainer Luc Blais. They've got some great trotters, including the two year-old filly, Dicentra, Macho Martini and Threefiftytwo.

Despite it all, the border track had a great year

By Antonietta Culic



Fort Erie Race Track may have been closed to fans this year, but the 123rd racing season was still one for the record books. Despite the massive impact of COVID-19 and the many obstacles it presented, Fort Erie Race Track was able to safely operate 39 race days while remaining COVID-free.

“This season we had a backstretch community with close to 500 essential horse people, and more than 100 active staff members, and we were able to complete our meet safely and without any positive COVID-19 cases,” said Tom Valiquette, chief operating and financial officer of the Fort Erie Live Racing Consortium. “It was crucial that we were able to operate this season, and I want to thank all of our community members for working together safely and following our COVID-19 protocols. Through the efforts of every one of our team members, we were able to put on another successful season during one of the most challenging years in our history.”

Despite being closed to fans, Fort Erie saw a record year with \$40.2 million wagered this season on 39 days, up from \$29.9 million last year with 40 days. This includes 15 days this season where more than \$1

Leading jockey Juan Crawford won the Puss n Boots



Auntie Katherine's nieces and nephews were proud

million was wagered.

Closing day featured the Tour de Fort at two miles and seventy yards on the main track. Auntie Katherine took the lead early on with jockey Emile Ramsammy, and she held on to that position for both laps around the track until she crossed the finish line. Trained by Jennifer Davis for owner Big Boy Racing, Auntie Katherine also won the Puss n Boots Cup and the Molson Cup earlier this season. With four wins from five starts, Auntie Katherine was this year’s meet-leading horse.

It was a very successful season for jockey Juan Crawford, who claimed the title of leading rider this year with 48 wins. Among his many victories, highlights included the Puss n Boots Cup and the Molson Cup, both with Auntie Katherine.

“I try to make use of every shot that I get, whether

it’s a long shot or a favourite. I just want to give every horse a fair chance and do my best for the people that I’m riding for,” said Crawford.

Jockey Melanie Pinto was second this year with 37 wins, followed by Kirk Johnson. Julie Mathes finished the season as leading trainer with 29 wins at Fort Erie, and her husband David Mathes took home the title of leading owner.

Fort Erie recently hosted the 85th Prince of Wales Stakes on September 29. The event is the second jewel in the OLG Canadian Triple Crown and was won by Mighty Heart.

Looking towards 2021, Fort Erie has applied for 40 race days again next year, operating primarily on Mondays and Tuesdays, beginning June 1 through to October 19. At this time, Fort Erie’s racebook will continue to remain closed due to COVID-19.

Home field worked for Bain By Garnet Barnsdale

Nathan Bain withstood a late surge from Nicholas “Ace” Barnsdale on October 25, the final day of



Nathan Bain (left) elbowed out Nicholas Barnsdale in the Leamington Handicapping Challenge

the Leamington Raceway meet, to come out on top in the \$500 Leamington Handicapping Challenge. By reaching the wire with the highest point total, Bain, the track’s announcer among other duties, took home the lion’s share of the \$500 purse, leaving the raceway with \$300 to Barnsdale’s \$200.

Bain entered the final card with a commanding 42-point lead, but by race four, Barnsdale had narrowed the gap to 28, mostly on the strength of gaining 10 points in race four where he selected \$11.50 winner Mach Shark on top while Bain’s top choice finished off the board. But by day’s end, Barnsdale closed only slightly more and Bain came away with a 20-point victory, winning by scoring 882 points to

his rival’s 862.

The two young handicappers fared extremely well in the scoring, which was based on a 10-5-3 system for each top pick finishing first, second, or third with an extra five points available for each Best Bet. Considering there were 1,375 points available for a perfect score of picking every winner of the meet, the 882 and 862 point scores were excellent.

All of the prize money for the Handicapping Challenge was provided by two co-sponsors: the Canadian chapter of the United States Harness Writers Association (USHWA) and online standardbred marketplace Hoof-Bid. The two teenagers made selections every week during the 2020 Leamington Raceway meet.

Champion Jockey Refuses To Bow To The Rules by Ric Chapman

Then champion Australian jockey Glen Boss rose in his irons aboard Sir Dragonet 10 yards from the finish line in the \$5million Gr 1 Cox Plate in Australia in late October, he displayed a pure joy and jubilation that we all long to experience. It may have only been



Glen Boss celebrating a tad early on Sir Dragonet

for five seconds, or five minutes, but seeing him artfully, skillfully stand tall as he crossed the finishing line, beaming his smile on the winner Sir Dragonet, made sense of the mess we call Covid-19.

Yet, he was fined for his joy. The Stewards said the show of emotion would cost him A\$,1000 (Cda\$990).

It was the 100th running of the Cox Plate. Remember that. A landmark, milestone running of the great race. It was an outstanding ride. It was a moment of theatre, safe theatre at that, which was the icing on a frosty cake made so by the pandemic, and no crowd.

Yet, the Stewards chose to fine him, smack his wrists in an attempt to thwart any more such displays of happiness. When the dust settled, it was their mirthless display that’s being remembered.

Well, the excitable Bossy is having none of it.

by Ric Chapman

“I refuse to stop being happy when I win, just because someone doesn’t like it. I had all this built up energy in me. I still don’t know how to describe how I felt. It was just weird. There was no one there, no one to hug, and this is a huge race. But the fine they handed me...I think it’s a joke, to put it bluntly.”

Bossy went on to explain that right now, because life is like it is, he feels obligated to show people how much it means to jockeys to ride winners of these big races.

“I don’t care if some people think I’m an idiot, because we are in a time when we are getting our sport in front of new people. And if I get an opportunity to capture the moment of something that is huge, and show them what it means for owners, trainers, and jockeys to win races like this, then I will. I refuse to miss these moments, because they are huge. I refuse to push these feelings down just because someone doesn’t like it.”

But not all agree with him. Many sided with the Stewards.

Former international cricket great, now co-horse trainer along with his wife Kim, Mark Waugh, was critical.

“As much as I respect people’s opinion, I think it should be a bigger fine..” he said. “For two reasons: One - the horse may pull up and get beat if the jock celebrates too early, and two, more importantly, the horse may get injured as the jock is shifting his weight abruptly.”

So, what are your thoughts, racing fans?

Bossy breached the rules by celebrating BEFORE the line, and as such was fined. If he had waited two more strides, all would have been good but the joy would have been diminished.

This looks like a contentious issue and people are divided. It blew up twitter for days after the race with most giving his display the thumbs up...but not all.

Should jockeys anywhere in the world be allowed to stand tall and celebrate?

ODDITIES & ENTITIES

His form required deep examination

There was a race at the Matamata Race Course in New Zealand on September 23. It was for maidens going 1400 metres for a purse of \$9,200 and the horse that finished fourth was named Colin Oscopy. The four year-old is trained by Samantha Logan and was ridden by Sam Spratt, but, of course, the question appears to be – how did the Registration Office approve a name that describes a procedure wherein a tube is inserted up one’s anus?

Needless to say, shortly after Colin Oscopy made his racing debut, social media erupted as many wished to take a much more intimate view of this horse’s details.

Apparently, it’s easier to get a cheeky name past New Zealand officials than in other jurisdictions. Kiwis recall with some glee a retired greyhound who was named Puma Pants (keep saying it...it will come to you!).

Meanwhile, as Colin Oscopy trains for his next race, many offended race fans are calling for a probe into his name.

Uh...never mind!

The third race at Kentucky Downs on September 16 was a 6½ furlong test on the grass for maidens and there was a very close finish. Track announcer Michael Wrona, not quite certain, said “Maybe Sir Roberto?”

Sir Roberto, ridden by Gabriel Saez, did appear to get his nose in front of Tiz Splendid News (Irak Ortiz) right at the wire but, shortly after, Wrona told the crowd,

“Tiz Splendid News was first. Number 1, Sir Roberto, was second.”

However, six minutes later, Wrona had to make an embarrassing announcement.

“Ladies and gentlemen, please note that the order of finish that was posted earlier is incorrect. The photo was won by number 1, Sir Roberto; number 8, Tiz Splendid News, was second; number 5 was third; and number 2 was fourth. Again, the photo information posted before was incorrect. Numbers 1-8-5-2 is the correct order of finish. “

Fortunately, the track had not yet declared the race official, so no wrong payouts occurred. And the correct outcome was important to the bettors. The winning horse, Sir Roberto, was 14-1, while the official runner-up, Tiz Splendid News, was 2-1.

King Charles was a thoroughbred, foaled in 1937, a grandson of Man O’ War. King Charles played the horse The Pie in National Velvet. Trained as a hunter and owned by a wealthy socialite, he was offered for use in the film. At the end of filming, the horse was a birthday gift to Elizabeth Taylor, who fell in love with him prior to production and was an accomplished rider. The horse remained with her the rest of his life.



Some pictures just can’t be ignored - this is Tony Phillips after winning the Alex Picov Championship at Ajax Downs aboard Fiesty Icon on

October 12



**IN THE Paddock HE KICKED & STRUCK,
THE PUBLIC THOUGHT HE SUCKED & OUTTA LUCK
PONY GIRL NIKKI SAID “LET HIM BUCK”!
DOWN THE LANE HE BATTLED TUFF
RICK & KAREN KENNEDY HAD THE REMEDY,
SO WE STRUCK THE WINNING PUCK,
NOW I DRINK FROM “OUR” STANLEY CUP ,
WITH A THANKS GIVING TURKEY CLUCK**



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DESERT ISLE
HIP 187

- Stakes winner by red hot broodmare sire **Bernardini**, selling in foal to **American Pharoah**
- From a great Sam-Son family: out of Champion **Eye of the Sphynx**. Half-sister to Champion colt **Eye of the Leopard** and **Fun in the Desert** who produced Champion **Desert Ride**.

SHARED ACCOUNT
HIP 207

- A **Breeders' Cup (G1)** winner who has produced **Breeders' Cup (G1)** winner
- Carrying a full sibling to **Sharing** (by Speightstown), winner of the 2019 Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies Turf (**G1**), the 2020 Edgewood S. (**G2**), and runner-up in the Coronation S. (**G1**) at Royal Ascot

DESERT RIDE
HIP 264

- **Champion 3YO Filly**, selling as a racing/broodmare prospect **Breeders' Cup (G1)** winner
- By **Candy Ride (Arg)**, perennial leading general sire and sire of 6 champions
- Second dam is Champion **Eye of the Sphynx**, dam of 4 stakes winners, including Champion **Eye of the Leopard**

RIDEFORTHECAUSE
HIP 282

- 4-length winner of the 2020 **Canadian S. (G2)** by leading sire **CANDY RIDE (ARG)**
- Half-sister to 2020 Northern Dancer S. (**G1**) winner **SAY THE WORD**
- From the immediate family of Horse of the Year **DANCE SMARTLY** and Champion sire **SMART STRIKE**

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