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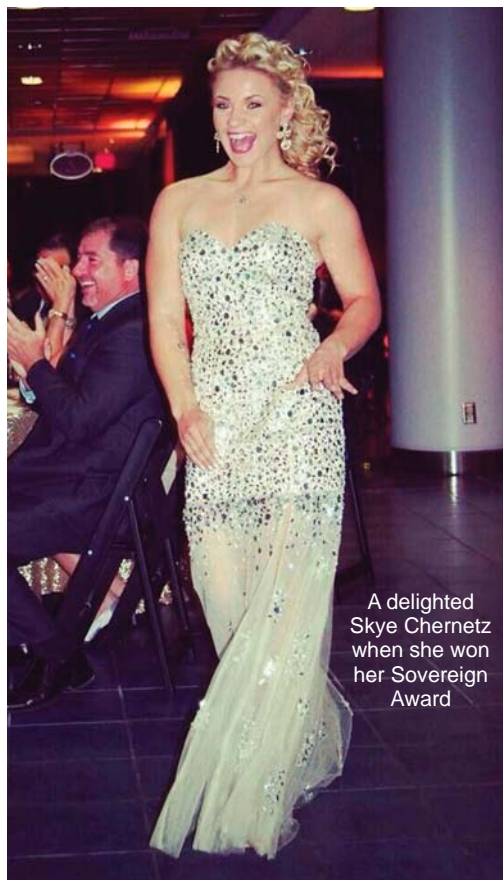
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THE EDITOR FOLLOWS HIS HEART



A delighted Skye Chernetz when she won her Sovereign Award

I've been thinking about lady jockeys lately. I'm aware this could be a problem. In my day (think Diefenbaker, Beatles, Rowan and Martin), it was acceptable to compliment a woman on her hair and outfit while holding the door open for her.

I really like lady jockeys. To me, the participation and success of women in horse racing is a fundamentally attractive aspect of the game. Horse racing is the only professional sport in which women regularly, on a level playing field, beat the men.

Every single lady rider is blessed with incredible courage, strength, and determination. It doesn't really need to be said, but I will say it.

They all look great in silks.

To be fair, when Sandy Hawley wreaked havoc in the jockeys' standings, with his long flowing locks, I guess he was somewhat photogenic. Robert King, long-time Executive Director of the Jockeys Benefit Association of Canada, had a Brad Pitt-esque appearance on a race horse, and veteran jock, Gary Stevens, had swoon worthy close-ups when he expertly played jockey George Woolf in the movie 'Seabiscuit'.

I have often reported on the value of women in horse racing. About 20 years ago, while employed by CITY-TV, I did a story on how Fort Erie was a very receptive racetrack

for lady riders. At the end of the piece, I surrounded myself with the competitors, who included (to the best of my memory) Helen Vanek, Regina Sealock, Melanie Pinto, Marie Richards, and Kelly MacKay. Always the smartass, I signed off by saying the reason I was filing the report was not only to show how gender-fair the racetrack was, but to get close to small, fit women in pretty coloured outfits.

To be honest, I did attempt to mix pleasure with work. While interviewing Kelly MacKay, I found her attractive. I asked her about her injuries.

"Broken clavicle, crushed spine, dislocated elbow, ruptured spleen," she informed casually.

That only made her more fascinating to me. I asked her out. She declined.

I did, however, once have a date with a jockey. Her name was Dianne Zippi, a great name for a jockey if ever there was one. It was the late 70s or early 80s when women riders were not fully encouraged. Zippi rode briefly at Woodbine; mostly, I believe, for Frank Merrill Jr. I asked her out and took her to a Blue Jays game at the old Exhibition Stadium. The game was in May, in fact, on the same day as the Preakness. As the game dragged on, Zippi was looking at her watch. She actually made us leave before the ninth inning, so she could watch the race.

There have been many times in my life when I blew off a date to bet a horse, but this was the only time I had been dumped so my date could see a race.

I realize I'm veering into dangerous territory if I describe a jockey as 'pretty'. Example # 1: Skye Chernetz. Look at this wonderful Norm Files image of her. Did you



see her at the 2013 Sovereign Awards? How long did it take to get her hair that way?

Thoroughbred owner/trainer Jordan Lay thinks Chernetz is an under-appreciated rider.

"It's amazing how many times she makes the right decision in a race," he says.

Chernetz is the daughter of Bonnie Eshelman, who was one of the first lady jockeys in Canada, winning races in the early 70s when the chauvinistic attitudes resisted the

female component.

A second example: Chantal Sutherland. She's won more than 1,000 races, including the 2012 Grade I Hollywood



Gold Cup with Game On Dude. We know she's beautiful. She knows she's beautiful. She famously posed naked on a horse (some air-brushing required) for photographer Bo Derek and Vanity Fair magazine. In July 2017, I was at Del Mar Racetrack with Jim McKenny. We stayed at a motel by the ocean about 8 miles north of the track. Early one Saturday morning, I rollerbladed from the motel to Del Mar. Sutherland was involved in Donut Day, appearing at trackside with trainer Richard Mandella, while a few hundred fans munched the free goodies and asked questions. When the show was over, I approached her.

She was wearing a t-shirt that proclaimed TORONTO OR NOWHERE! She didn't have any makeup on. She looked great. As soon as I reached her, she threw her arms around me in a warm hug. I never forgot that.

I have often filled these pages with my profound admiration for Emma-Jayne Wilson. Apparently, it's been determined that I'm not her type.

("In so many ways," thinks Wilson, rolling her eyes as she reads this)

Wilson is the greatest woman rider in Canadian history. But it's way more. She's a great interview, and understands and expresses the sport with passion and intellect. When her racing career ends, surely Emma-Jayne will rise to a prominent executive position in the industry.

Anyways, all this meandering may have been instigated by a recent story in the Ray Paulick Report about jockey Ferrin Peterson. Peterson, a woman, is also a veterinarian. I thought that was a good story and interviewed her (page 10). She could not have been nicer on the phone. The name Ferrin, she told me, came from ferric, which on the periodic table means iron. The day after I talked with her, she had two rides at Laurel. She came seventh in the fifth, but in the ninth, displaying her *iron* will, delivered Spanish d'Oro at odds of 9-1.

I didn't bet her, but I will say this:

There is nothing sexier than a lady jockey winning a horse race.

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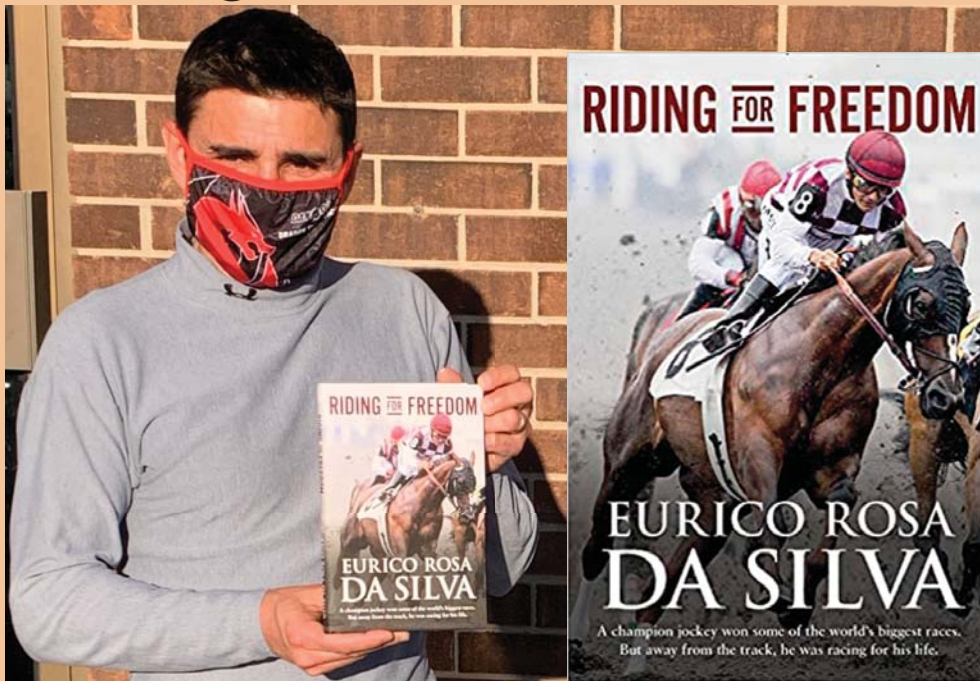
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Riding for Freedom - Eurico Rosa da Silva



The new book about Eurico Rosa da Silva, much like the man himself, is different from all other sports biographies. For sure, writer Bruce McDougall does an excellent job chronicling da Silva's incredible journey from a small farming village in Brazil to the top of the mountain as the winningest Woodbine jockey of the third millennium. But this efficient 176 page effort may be the bravest essay every written about an athlete.

Da Silva's brilliance in the saddle is all there - his 2,268 wins, two Queen's Plates, six jockey titles at Woodbine, seven Sovereign Awards - but McDougall fills us in on the frightening inner turmoil that afflicted da Silva for so many years.

As a child, he was neglected, belittled, and insulted by a mean-spirited father. His appreciation of women was tainted by his father's tasteless habit of taking his son along and leaving him in the car while he cheated on his wife.

The courageous aspect of this book has to do with da Silva's insistence to McDougall that the unsavoury aspects of his life get post position one.

"I was chronically sex addicted," he admits. "I was also a chronic gambler. I am not afraid to say that."

Da Silva left home when he was just 14 to pursue the dream of becoming a professional jockey. Filled with self contempt, he did not believe any woman would consider him as a boyfriend. He found comfort in the arms of prostitutes.

As soon as a girl showed interest in him, he questioned her judgement. "Why is she going out with a piece of shit like me?" he wondered. "I never felt I had anything to offer."

This is the main theme in the da Silva book. The total disconnect between what he was able to do on the back of a thoroughbred and how he felt about himself. He became a sensational rider,

able to convey his message to the horse, a master of timing, with the strength and courage to make the right move at the right time. He earned tons of money and projected a cheerful, welcoming personality. Everyone loved Eurico...except Eurico.

The unfathomable emptiness continued to swallow his happiness, suffocate his humanity, and arouse his demons. Only after they threatened his marriage and nearly drove him to suicide did he discover that the black hole hadn't followed him to Canada, he'd brought it within himself. Eurico was the black hole.

His first wife was Claudia. For a variety of reasons, that marriage failed. Da Silva was unable to curtail his urge to find prostitutes for the empty pleasure they provided. A few moments of gratification that always left him with hours and days of self disdain. His nightmares terrified him. He considered suicide, even after Claudia gave birth to his son, William.

As the voice became stronger and more irresistible, it told Eurico to kill himself. Seeing a cliff ahead of him, Eurico pressed the accelerator to the floor until it reached 180 kilometres per hour. An image of his son, William, appeared in his mind. With seconds to spare, he took his foot off the accelerator, turned the wheel, and steered the car back into the northbound lane.

Here's the real truth about Eurico Rosa da Silva and no spoiler alert is necessary to say that McDougall has presented a man who is hardworking, dedicated, thoughtful, and generous. He delivered his mother and siblings out of poverty to live in a comfortable home in Sao Paulo. He contacted his baby sitter, a woman who had been raped as a child by his father, and paid for years of counselling for her. He made many generous

offers to his father, hoping for a reconciliation, until he determined it was best to completely break off the relationship. There was the sadly poignant friendship he forged with the beautiful Alexandra Tersigni whom he saw as someone who had much greater obstacles than he.

Born prematurely and afflicted with cerebral palsy, seizures, learning difficulties, circulatory problems, Tourette's syndrome, lupus, and anxiety, she approached him one afternoon at Woodbine, gave him a quick hug and then ran away.

Eurico bonded with Alexandra and it was like a shot of confidence for the unfortunate young lady. When she died at 21 in January of 2015, da Silva vowed that he would dedicate the next season to Alexandra, become the leading jockey, and present the Sovereign Award to Alexandra's parents, Enzo and Rose. And that is exactly what happened.

But maybe the best thing he ever did was to save the life of a horse named Hawk's a Blur, who had broken a leg.

"This horse, he was always full of life," says Eurico. "It touched my heart."

With the owners' blessing and the permission of the trainer, Ralph Biamonte, Eurico contacted Vicki Pappas, the founder of LongRun Thoroughbred Retirement Society and arranged for surgery on Hawk's a Blur.

"Do what you need to do," he said. "I'll send a cheque."

And this is where karma drops in. The vet who did the successful surgery on Hawk's a Blur was Dr. Orlaith Cleary. Sometime later, at the Sovereign Awards at Woodbine, Dr. Cleary introduced herself to da Silva.

"I never met a jockey who'd paid a charitable bill for surgery," Cleary said.

Admiration soon became attraction and, in October, 2016, da Silva and Cleary were married. Now they have two daughters, Amelia and Isabella. After years of therapy, da Silva has conquered the darkness within. He now funnels what he has learned into his new role as a life coach for athletes who may have wandered down similar painful roads.

I know Eurico Rosa da Silva and I like him a lot, and my inclination would have been to say nice things about this book. But all smoke blowing aside, this is a remarkable piece of non-fiction. Important for us because, surely, we all have little secrets, knowledge about ourselves that fuels bad behaviour. 'Riding for Freedom' gives us a spiritual road map, showing how even the greatest, most famous performers can overcome the most oppressive inner fiends. Congratulations to Bruce McDougall for taking a difficult playbook and nailing it. And thank you Eurico Rosa da Silva for demonstrating what a fascinating and positive human being you are.

How Eurico Rosa da Silva's wife, Dr. Orlaith Cleary, saved a horse

By Matt Stahl



(This was originally published on Horseracingnation.com)

Things looked grim for Mousquetaire. The off-track thoroughbred had reared up in the paddock while he was supposed to be on strict rest, and the prevailing thought was that he had reinjured his foot.

His owner, Julia Ferreira, was devastated as she began the preparations to euthanize "Mousey," as most knew him.

"She was thinking about she might have to say goodbye to him," said Dr. Orlaith Cleary, who recently had performed surgery on Mousey.

Ferreira cut off half of the gelding's tail and had told her friends to come to the barn the next day to pay their final respects to Mousey.

Mousey was born in April 2014, a son of Muskietier out of My Angel Grace, by Compadre. Ferreira met him for the first time the next year at a Queen's Plate party on the farm of Roger Attfield, who had purchased Mousey for \$7,514 at the Canadian Thoroughbred Horse Society September sale.

"I fell in love straight away," Ferreira said. "I spent all my time in Roger's barn with this unraced two year-old colt that they already knew was kind of going to be a dud."

As was expected, Mousey did not have an all-star racing career. During his career, he took one trip to the winners' circle, in a July 2017 maiden claiming race at Fort Erie.

From 2016 to 2018, Mousey raced 19 times, accumulating two seconds and a third to go with his lone victory.

Ferreira followed the fortunes of Mousey for his entire career, even when he was claimed off of Attfield after a race in March 2017 at Tampa Bay Downs early in his racing days, a moment she said left her "terrified" that she would never get to spend time with him again.

But Mousey did find his way back to Ferreira.

"He came back to Canada," Ferreira said. "He ran at Fort Erie and I just connected with his new trainer and owner, and then I retired him once his racing career was over."

All was well for the now-retired gelding, the first horse that Ferreira owned, and she described him as "quirky," and "one of the laziest off-track thoroughbreds."

Then came the call.

Ferreira was on her way to the barn on January 6 when she answered her phone to hear Mousey's barn manager say the horse had suffered what was thought to be an abscess. The foot was X-rayed after a week and a half of no improvement and no drainage from the injury site when farrier Brody Marshall tried the usual abscess treatment.

Instead of an abscess, the X-ray showed Mousey's right rear coffin bone split down the middle.

"It was a freak paddock accident that did it," Ferreira said.

Two options for recovery were presented to Ferreira. The first, which she dismissed immediately, was for him to spend a long period stuck in stall rest.

The second option was surgery. Mousey needed a screw put through the bone.

Despite knowing Mousey likely would not make it through the long stall rest period, this option was also uncertain, as the needed surgery would be difficult to find in Canada. Indeed, two Canadian hospitals turned away Ferreira and Mousey, recommending she seek options in the United States.

"Out of the question," Ferreira said. "Both because the travel time alone and just the

expense of sending him to Pennsylvania would have been atrocious. Then I had to get creative because it was either putting him down or finding someone that will do it."

Enter Dr. Cleary, who just happens to be married to retired champion jockey Eurico Rosa da Silva.

Cleary is a surgeon at the Ontario Equine Hospital in Mississauga, where Mousey was first seen on January 27. She thought she could help, despite not having the equipment that traditionally was needed to perform the surgery.

"Technically, this surgery should be done with CT," Cleary said. "We didn't have that."

CT refers to computed tomography, essentially a real-time three-dimensional X-ray. Since she had no access to that technology, Cleary would have to be extra judicious with the use of regular X-rays, stopping the surgery often to take the photographs and make sure she was on the right track.

With the cost more reasonable, and aided by barn manager Natalie Moran taking up a collection to help raise the money, Ferreira opted for the surgery.

It was the first time Cleary had performed such an operation. To prepare, she dove deep into the available medical literature, making sure she knew exactly what was going to happen ahead of time.

"I don't really get nervous," Cleary said. "I just make sure that I prepare as much as possible."

Cleary even deviated from the literature's recommendations, opting to put the screw in from the back of the foot instead of the front because of her lower visibility without the CT. After putting the screw in perpendicular to the fracture line, the wound was cleaned and wrapped and the recovery process began.

Unfortunately for Mousey, recovery was not as smooth as it could have been. Several days after surgery, the gelding rebelled, rearing up in the paddock and going lame again.

"He began getting really bad about taking his meds, so we had to tie him," Ferreira said. "That was one of the worst things for him. He thrashed up the one day and he was very, very sore and he just seemed super, super depressed."

After an X-ray, the barn doctor told Ferreira that there had been a second fracture, and she prepared to say goodbye to Mousey. But in the nick of time, Cleary, who had been sent the X-rays, called to say there was no second fracture.

"I said, 'you have to just wait, let him get over it,'" Cleary said. "He must have torqued his coffin bone, there was no new fracture, everything looked fine on the radiograph, so I told her to wait. He became much more comfortable within the next couple of days."

After that, Ferreira switched barns, sending him back to Moran's, where the staff was more familiar with him.

After the move, Mousey continued to improve, staying on stall rest through May 25, then moving into a round pen until mid-August, where he lost the rest of his tail when it got caught in fencing.

Undeterred, Mousey continued to recover on schedule, moving into a small field, then a large one and was back under saddle in late September.

Ferreira had a team behind her in the recovery process, including her friend Cameron Scheffler, who helped her when Mousey was troublesome to walk in hand, and Kevin Alcock, the farrier who helped with the difficult process of keeping Mousey in shoes post-surgery.

For Cleary, the procedure was not the last she would do. She said she performed a very similar operation on another horse after Mousey, with the same level of success.

"It's a great feeling to take a chance, and when you follow them along, it's thrilling," Cleary said of watching their recovery processes. "It's wonderful. It's wonderful knowing the horse is not suffering and is living a high-quality life and is bringing great joy to his owner."

Ferreira was indeed feeling joy after the surgery.

"It's great that he can be ridden again, but that was never the reason why," Ferreira said. "It was just so he could be a horse again and live a normal horse life."

Outstanding Grooms



Brady Jackson and Village Champ

John Watkins photo

(This article originally appeared on the Standardbred Canada website)

On January 13, Standardbred Canada announced the finalists for the O'Brien Award as 2020 Outstanding Groom. Brady Jackson of Sunderland, Ontario, and Tanya Mitchell of Rockwood, Ontario are the two who will hope to get called to the virtual podium.

Submissions were received and considered for grooms from across the country, and SC would like to extend a thank you to everyone who took the time to send in their nominations.

The Outstanding Groom Award was introduced in 2015 and recognizes grooms who put their horses first, treat them with kindness and outstanding care, regardless of the horse or its ability, in addition to having a strong work ethic and being a good sportsman.

Brady Jackson works for the Murray Brethour Stable where he has been employed for more than six years. He and his family have been friends with the Brethour family for years and Brady was introduced to standardbreds when he worked at their farm for a high school co-op term. He hasn't looked back since, and stayed on as a full-time employee.

Jackson, who is praised for his work ethic and horsemanship, is currently taking care of six horses. His favourite is an unraced Betterthancheddar three-year-old pacing filly, Skip Across, who he has high hopes for. Some of the horses under his care the past few years include American Sara, Bronson Delight, Village Champ, Remembering Shorty, Gonnahaveonemore, and Age Is A Number. He is particularly proud of a horse called Sharp Acton Money which paced to victory in the OSS Gold Final at Mohawk in June, 2018.

"It's awesome," he says about seeing a horse he groomed win a big race. "It feels good, as if your

hard work paid off."

According to one of Jackson's colleagues, "it didn't take me long to realize why he arrives at 7 a.m. with a lunch pail the size of a Yogi Bear picnic basket. He would have a smile on his face and never know how long his day would be; always seemed like they ran to 4:30 or 5:00 pm. He is very



Tanya Mitchell and the retired Lennon

Standardbred Canada photo

dedicated; when you leave the paddock at Mohawk at midnight, drive an hour and 20 minutes home, and still get back to work for 7:00 am, it's very short nights. If anything, he is a little over competitive, loves to win, but not the kind to brag about it, he just grins at you. That's what baffles me the most

about him, how anyone could love to win so much and be a die-hard Leafs fan!"

In addition to caring for the horses on a daily basis, Jackson is also very involved in track maintenance and farm work, including plowing snow and haying.

Tanya Mitchell, a native of Montreal, lives and breathes horses. She's been involved in the standardbred industry for more than 25 years. She found her home at the racetrack, and moved from Quebec to Ontario at the age of 17.

"In high school, I would take two buses and a subway after school to go to the racetrack and paddock a horse for \$25," said Mitchell. "Horses were definitely a passion."

She has worked for Eddie Howard, Casie Coleman, Milton Equine Hospital, the University of Guelph, and is now employed by trainer Ben Baillargeon.

Tanya was featured in a story titled 'A Lover and a Fighter' in the December issue of Trot Magazine. Written by Keith McCalmont, the story recounts her journey as a horseperson and her personal journey with cancer.

HP Mama B, one of Mitchell's favourites in the Baillargeon Stable, won four of eight races and more than \$76,000 last season including a victory in the \$75,000 Ontario Sires Stakes Grassroots Championship at Woodbine Mohawk Park on October 10.

When she was contacted about her nomination, Mitchell was quick to credit the horses she takes care of for being responsible for her nomination.

"HP Mama B, HP Royal Theo, Voelz Delight, Rhythm In Motion, Zig Zag, and Traceur Hanover all contributed to the huge year I had, and they should get some of the recognition for making me look good!"

"The horses count on her every day," stated Mitchell's nominator. "I have seen her dedication many times over. It is not about how good the horse is or how much money it's made. It is about looking after and caring for that racehorse the best she can, no matter its ability. Tanya is a quiet person and spends her time on her horses. Even when she dealt with her own health issues, she was there as much as she could be. Sometimes the silent ones are the true heroes."

The winner of the 2020 Outstanding Groom Award will be announced on the Virtual O'Brien Awards Gala Broadcast on Sunday, January 31. The video stream starts at 7 p.m. (EST) and can be viewed on standardbredcanada.ca.

Previous winners include:

Rachel Dupuis (2019)
Scott Lecain and Trevor Forgie (2018)
Chantal Gillis (2017)
Teesha Symes (2016)
Cindy Acton (2015)

Management changes at the Fort



On January 14, Fort Erie Live Racing Consortium announced that after five years as chief operating officer/ chief financial officer of the Fort Erie Live Racing Consortium, Tom Valiquette has decided to take a step back from some of his COO duties, but will continue to maintain an important executive leadership role with FELRC as chief financial officer.

Valiquette was the first employee hired by the FELRC in 2009 as the CFO, and was responsible for helping to build the team that would operate Fort Erie Race Track. Valiquette took on the role of chief operating officer in July of 2015, when

former COO Rick Cowan retired.

With more than 40 years of experience in the racing industry, Fort Erie Race Track has seen considerable growth and improvements under Valiquette's leadership.

Andrew Cady, FELRC's manager of property services, will take on a newly created role as the general manager, which will include overseeing all racing and mutuel operations at Fort Erie Race Track.

Cady first joined the racing industry in 1977, working in the backstretch at Fort Erie for his dad, who was a trainer at the time. He started working for Fort Erie Race Track in 1987 on the starting gate and eventually became the gate starter. Over the years he has worked in a number of different positions at Fort Erie, developing his knowledge and experience in the racing industry. In 1993 Cady began working with Nick Gonzalez at his Fort Erie barn during the summers, and at Tampa Bay Downs and Gulfstream Park in the winters.

In 2015 Cady took on the role of track superintendent and assistant maintenance

manager, and in 2016 became manager of property services. His passion for Fort Erie racing combined with his extensive experience and deep understanding of the industry makes Cady a perfect candidate for the newly created role of general manager for FELRC.

"It would be hard to over-estimate the critical role Tom has played at FELRC since 2009. Along with our Board of Directors, throughout the past 11 years, we have been through many serious challenges and many ups and downs. Now that Tom is reducing his workload, he remains a strong and essential member of my senior management team," said Jim Thibert, chief executive officer of FELRC. "We have secured a long-term funding agreement through Ontario Racing Inc and we move into a new chapter for the future of the Fort Erie Race Track. We want to congratulate Drew Cady on his new leadership role. We are confident that his knowledge and experience in the industry will allow him to successfully lead our racing operations at Fort Erie."

Ontario Racing



In response to the Ontario government provincial lockdown measures due to COVID-19, Ontario Racing, its board of directors, and the Ontario Racing-formed Standardbred Task Force, are addressing the possibility of horseperson support payments (subject to regulatory approvals).

The payments currently being discussed are specifically related to horses who had a charted line in November and December but were subsequently impacted by the shutdown

that was originally announced by the provincial government on December 26, 2020. Ontario Racing, its board members, and the Standardbred Task Force are also evaluating additional financial support for the month of January.

"Throughout the lockdown, Ontario Racing has worked diligently to ensure the best interests of the many Ontario Racing Standardbred horsepeople whose livelihood has been impacted by the provincial lockdown," said

John Hayes, Chair, Ontario Racing. "We are carefully considering all options available to us, including the possibility of financial support. We remain committed to our mandate of acting as the voice of the Ontario Racing horse racing industry, and will provide further updates as more information is made available."

For the latest news on the lockdown in relation to racing in Ontario, please visit: Ontario Racing Updates.



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The OS Reward of Excellence Program awards do not count towards the \$200,000 cap on Breeders Awards.



RACETRACK HUMOUR



Perry & Mooch



You're attention please! The stewards have called for an inquiry on 2020,



Also, there are claims of foul – interference, herding, intimidation and multiple offences of blocking



After a long delay...



Ladies and Gentleman, by order of the stewards, 2020 has been disqualified and placed behind all the other years for intentional restriction, failing to yield, compromising the safety of others and being a mean-spirited participant. The year 2021 has been placed first.

Ferrin Peterson: She's a jockey. She's a veterinarian



Bill Denver/EQUI-PHOT



When I first saw the name Ferrin Peterson aboard a horse in a race I was wagering on, I made an erroneous assumption.

"That's probably an Irish guy," I thought.

Wrong on both counts.

Born in Sacramento, California, Ferrin Peterson is a woman. But still, that is an unusual name.

"It actually means iron, because ferric on the periodic table is iron," she says. "My parents gave me that because they wanted a unique name. Now it matches me, so they say, because of my iron will."

Even more interesting than that name is that Ferrin Peterson is a licensed veterinarian. We were unable to find any other jockey who was also a vet.

"I always had a desire to be a jockey when I was very young," she says. "I didn't know how to become a jockey, so I decided to become a racetrack veterinarian. And through that, I started going to the track. I took out my exercise rider's licence and people told me I should become a jockey. So, in a round about way, vet school led

me to become a jockey."

Peterson started riding in parimutuel races in 2018. Her first win came at Golden Gate Fields in March of 2018 on a horse called Lovely Lioness. That was a seven year-old mare who went off at almost 7-1. Peterson took her right to the front and was best at the wire by 1½ lengths. She may have been iron, but she was no longer a maiden, and there was, typically, a messy celebration for the young lady after she won for the first time.

"They were all waiting for me with buckets of ice water and shaving cream," she laughs. "And they took a lot of pictures."

Even with the thrill of the win, Peterson was a little concerned about her other occupation.

"People asked me how I was going to celebrate," she says. "I told them I had to run home because I was still in vet school and I had a surgery test the next day."

Peterson is presently riding at Laurel. For the last six weeks of 2020, she was riding at Aqueduct. Tough enough

to do under normal circumstances, but she found herself thwarted by COVID protocol.

"Jockeys aren't allowed on the backside there," she says. "So, I was coming in to start my business without barn behind me. Not being able to meet up with the trainers made it much more than an uphill battle than I predicted, so I decided to move to Laurel."

Peterson's stats at Aqueduct won't get her in the Eclipse conversation. She had 39 mounts, no wins, one second, one third; even so, she got a lot out of the frustrating experience.

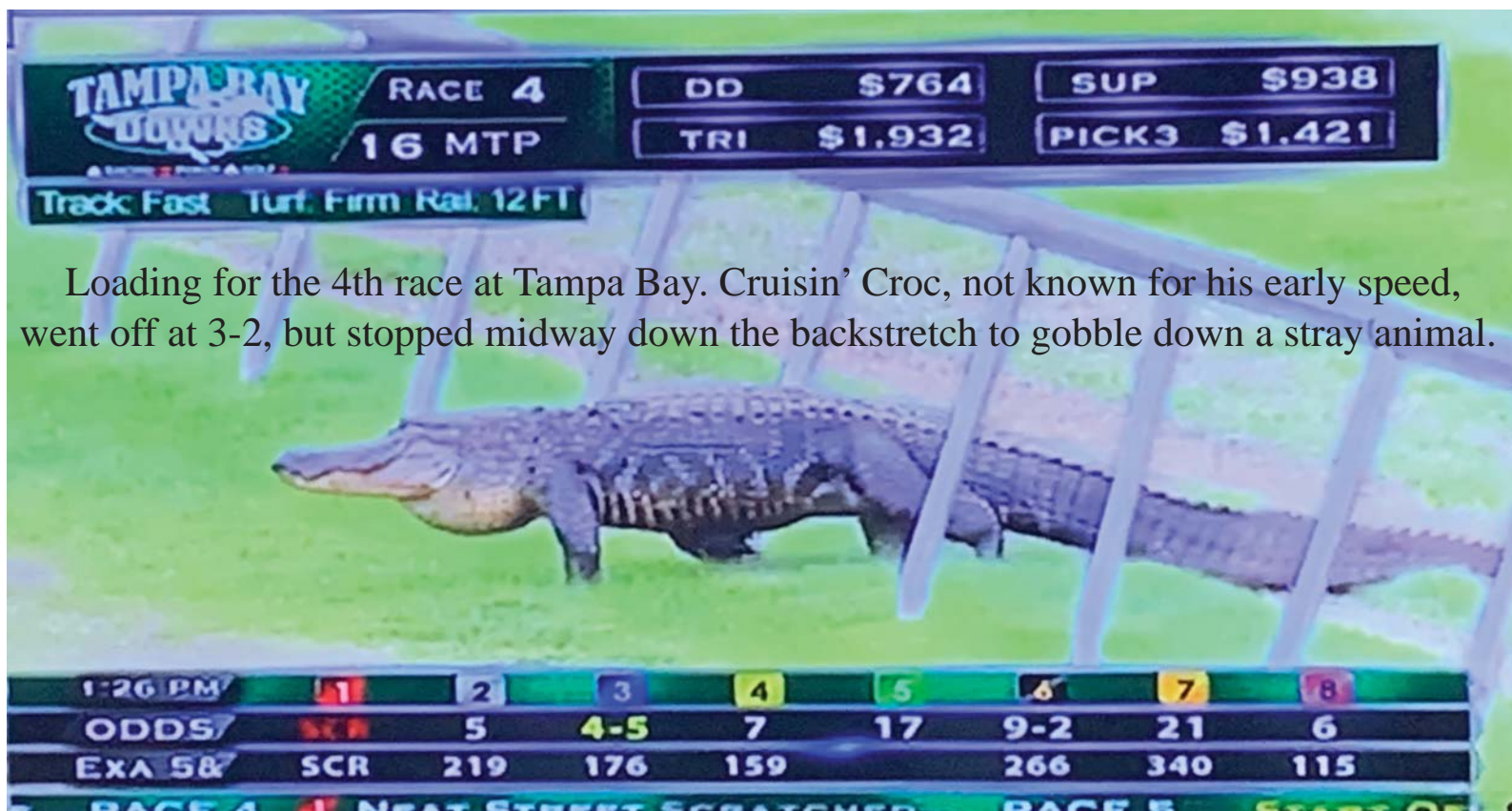
"Just being around all those talented jockeys," she says brightly. "Joel Rosario, John Velazquez, the Ortiz brothers. It was an honour warming up beside those guys."

Laurel looks like a good match for Peterson.

"I heard a lot of good things about Maryland for a while and always really admired their turf racing," she says. "When I was at Aqueduct, Ramon Dominguez had become a mentor of mine and so he told me if I ever considered moving to another track, he would really recommend Laurel. Ideally, when COVID is over, I hope to be able to ride six, seven days a week."

Peterson had two mounts at Laurel on Friday, January 15. She finished a non-threatening seventh in the fifth race, but gave Spanish D'Oro an excellent ride in the ninth. Out of post 11, she was patient down the backstretch, easing the three year-old gelding into the mix and, as the field turned for home, Spanish D'Oro had wrested the lead from Goldie's Boy. At the finish line, Peterson had won with Spanish D'Oro by 1¼ lengths, rewarding backers with a \$20.30 win ticket.

The win is just Peterson's second race ever at Laurel and it was kind of a case of iron and gold at the wire together. That was win number 66 in her career, from a total of 577 career assignments. Ferrin Peterson has a strike rate of 11.4%.



Loading for the 4th race at Tampa Bay. Cruisin' Croc, not known for his early speed, went off at 3-2, but stopped midway down the backstretch to gobble down a stray animal.

Driving lessons from Jody Jamieson



Driving a standardbred horse requires some very specific skills – knowing when to move, when to sit chilly, when to ask your horse for everything it's got.

Down The Stretch asked ten questions about driving to veteran teamster, Jody Jamieson.

DTS: Under what circumstances do you feel that you have to take a horse to the lead from the beginning?

Jamieson: Any time you want to win, I think you want to be on the lead from start to finish. There's lots of ways to win, but aggression is probably the first answer.

DTS: We've seen, historically, that the horse that gets covered down the backstretch has an advantage. Can you explain why this is beneficial?

Jamieson: We train our horses to teach them how to race. They're not just getting trained down to be fit. They're also learning how to race. So, they're taught that if they're behind another horse, they will follow that horse as far as that horse will go, and then we teach them to pop off that horse's back, and then hopefully sprint by them in the stretch.

DTS: Does it save energy? Is it like NASCAR drivers drafting?

Jamieson: Not to the degree, but definitely there's a degree of drafting, but not to the same degree. It's more of a mental challenge for the horse to keep him covered up, knowing that he's not working full speed if he's on another horse's back.

DTS: Conversely, how disadvantageous is it for a horse to go first-over?

Jamieson: It can be very disadvantageous because a horse is cutting his own mile out there, and sometimes they don't like it when they see

other horses in front of them and beside them and behind them, and they don't try as hard. But it just depends on the horse.

DTS: So, everyone's got a spot on the rail after the first quarter. Someone has to go first-over. At what point do you make that decision?



Jamieson: Lots of times, the race is won or lost in the first eighth of the mile. It all depends on where you get away or where you presumably could get away.

DTS: People have observed that the horse that pulls first does so much later at Mohawk than horses racing on a half mile track. Why is that?

Jamieson: At Mohawk, it's almost a quarter of a mile to the first turn, it's a straightaway. When horses have gone fast for that long of a trip, almost a quarter of a mile, they're not going to be inclined to come back out to move again. I think the drivers have tested that theory time and time again and know that if they move too early, their horses aren't

going to have the same pop finishing, so they try to move as late as possible.

DTS: These days, post 10 at Mohawk is the trailer on the inside. What's the best strategy there?

Jamieson: When I come up with one, I'll give you one. I hate the 10-hole. I'd much rather be on the gate. I know we've had our arguments about the 10-hole on the rail as opposed to being on the gate as the #10 horse, but I really don't like the 10-hole trailing. You're basically spotting 2 lengths. It's not fair to me. The 10 horses do win races, but they've done herculean efforts to do it.

DTS: Intuitively speaking, horses leaving from the rail, post 1, should have an advantage as, theoretically, they will cover the least amount of ground. But statistically, the win record for #1 horses is very poor. Can you explain that?

Jamieson: The only thing I can explain about that is that it's because of the starts. At Mohawk, when we come off the turn into the straight away, we have to pick up speed so rapidly. But the inside horse has trouble getting up to speed as easily as the horses that have, you know, 4, 5, 6, or 7.

DTS: During the call of a race, we often hear Kenny Middleton tell us that a driver has pulled the earplugs. Does that help a horse if you pull the plugs at a critical point in the race?

Jamieson: Yeah. Earplugs are designed to take the edge off a horse a little bit, let them relax a little bit during the race. And then they're also designed that, when you pull them, your horse is supposed to give you an extra little spurt of energy. Lots of times it does work. It's a very good tool.

DTS: Now that we've got the gift of Mic'd Up, we can hear how the drivers chirp and yell at the horses. Does a horse really pick up the gait when the driver starts making noises?

Jamieson: Absolutely. Any type of little noise in the post parade can get a horse wound up. So, we try to be as quiet as possible and not get them too riled up. But, in the race, any sudden noise that your driver can make is going to make your horse go better. They have to be sharp sounds and you have to use them strategically. When the horse is tired, it doesn't matter what you do. But if you can keep your horse going, making a noise is going to help it.

DTS: Who would you say is the loudest driver in the stretch?

Jamieson: Rick Zeron.

DTS: I've heard he's rude. Are horses offended by extreme language?

Jamieson: I don't think he's rude and I don't think horses are offended by extreme language either.

DTS: You've never heard him yell, "Get going you MOTHER F....R!"

Jamieson: Wow. I actually have heard that. I just didn't think you would say it!

DTS: Have you got a favourite noise or phrase that you use?

Jamieson: Sometimes I just yell, "Git! Git!"

TOP 50 stories of 2020

50



COVID-19 Yes, it affected horse racing dramatically. It shortened the thoroughbred season at Woodbine at both ends. It prevented crowds from attending any races –thoroughbred, standardbred, or quarter horses – for the entire season. But we didn't like it, so we're giving it the lowest ranking.

49

The **Down The Stretch Podcast** debuted on January 20. For the next 50 weeks, it rocked multiple platforms as the only podcast in Canada specializing in the three breeds of horse racing.

48



When racetracks in Canada and the U.S. closed down to repel the highly contagious virus, little Fonner Park in Grand Island Nebraska got creative. They remained open and signed on with the major horse racing broadcasters. With just a handful of tracks available to the hardcore bettors, Fonner Park prospered, seeing its average handle explode from \$200,000 a card to over \$2 million.

47

Imagine betting a horse, seeing it come seventh, and then cashing on it. That is what happened on November 15 at the Fontwell Racetrack in England. It was a jump race and after a horse fell, the grounds crew attempted to alert the rest of the field by putting up pylons in the general area of the third last barrier. But to the speeding jockeys, their instructions were not clear. Six of the horses ran around the jump, but a trailer named Dharma Rain went over it. Jockey Jack Tudor figured he had nothing to lose and it turned out to be a brilliant decision. The first six horses were all disqualified for missing the jump and Dharma Rain was confirmed as the official winner.

46

On the same day, November 28, two racetracks in the United States left the pari-mutuel landscape. It was the final card of racing at Gulfstream Park West, more commonly known as



Calder, which opened in May of 1971. Up north in Maine, citing poor attendance, meagre handle, and aggressive competition from a nearby casino, the Scarborough Downs Harness track conducted its final afternoon of competition after 70 years in existence

45

Scilly Bay, ridden by Jose Lezcano, won the \$100,000 Rego Park Stakes at Aqueduct on January 12, giving trainer Linda Rice her 2,000th career win. Rice, Kim Hammond (2,321+), and Kathleen O'Connell (2,197+) are the only three women with more than 2,000 wins.

44



On April 7, five people were elected to the Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame, Class of 2020. They were HBPA President Sue Leslie, jockey Gary Boulanger, trainer Mike Keogh, harness driver Paul MacDonell, and veteran standardbred trainer, Ben Wallace.

43



On March 9, Geoffrey Berman, a U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York, handed down criminal charges against 27 horse racing individuals in a massive doping scheme. Included in the round-up were trainers Jorge Navarro and Jason Servis. Servis, at the time, had Maximum Security in his barn. Maximum Security finished first in the \$20 million Saudi Cup, but his owners, Gary and Mary West, never received the first place cheque and they subsequently moved Maximum Security into the hands of Bob Baffert.

42

They ran the \$20 million Saudi Cup on February 29 and Maximum Security looked really good, winning it impressively with a determined stretch run. Maybe Maximum Security was *too* good. Trainer Jason Servis was heard on wiretap boasting about using an illegal concoction known as SGF-1000 and making it clear he used the drug on Maximum

Security. Shortly after, Servis and others were served with criminal charges and the Jockey Club of Saudi Arabia withheld the \$10 million first place prize. The tragedy here is that maximum security was absent around the Servis barn.

41



Starship Jubilee, the greatest claim in Canadian horse racing history, was too good for seven others in the \$150,000 Sunshine Millions Filly and Mare Turf Stakes at Gulfstream on January 18. In her first race of 2020, Starship Jubilee carried Javier Castellano to a very routine romp by 3¼ lengths, paying just \$2.80.

40



Bill Galvin passed away on September 26 at the age of 89 and left behind a massive legacy of love for the sport of horse racing. In recent years, Galvin created The Stable that God Loves, which raised funds for the Standardbred Chaplaincy of Canada.

He was the first publicity chairman of the Sovereign Awards, put together a 100-year history of racing at Greenwood and Woodbine, and organized trotting races on ice during the 70s on the Rideau canal. His written works include the History of Grand Circuit Racing in Canada, the Golden Horseshoe Circuit Press Book, and Ballads of the Turf, a 2006 book filled with delightful poems. He and Mohawk track announcer Ken Middleton shared ownership of a two year-old filly named She's A Sassy Beach and that one posted the most elegant eulogy by winning three straight legs of the Harvest Series shortly after Galvin died.

39



In early spring, dozens of harness racing trailers around Ontario sported new wraps. It was the brainchild of COSA President Bill O'Donnell who decided to cover the trailers with huge harness racing images and, as the vehicles criss-cross Ontario from track to track, it was like so many moving billboards promoting the sport.

38

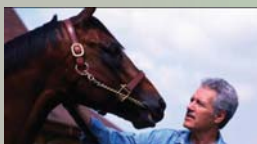
Harness racing owner and promoter Adriano Sorella acted swiftly when Rollaroundtheworld,



a pacer he once owned, ended up in a kill pen. Sorella flashed his credit card to get the now eight year-old gelding to a safe place, in the care of the Standardbred Retirement Foundation in the States. And more props to Sorella. Thanks to an almost obsessive walking routine, he shed 140 pounds in less than 8 months. Slim is sexy; so is compassion.

37

The passing on November 4 of game show host Alex Trebek saddened millions of his fans, but few realized that for a certain period in his life, Trebek owned thoroughbred race horses. His best horse



was named Reba's Gold, who won 8 of 17 races and earned \$717,422.

36

On December 16, Awesome Again died at the Old Friends Retirement Farm in Georgetown, New York. Awesome Again won the 1997 Queen's Plate in just his third start and followed that up with a perfect 6 for 6 performance as a four year-old in 1998. His last 5 wins were all Stakes and he ended his superb career with a stunning, come-from-behind victory in the Breeders' Cup Classic at Churchill Downs.

35



On June 19, Have A Souper Day carried jockey Rafael Hernandez to an expected victory as the heavy favourite in a 7 furlong race at Woodbine. This would be Bob Tiller's 2,000th career training win.

34



Bob McClure had an exhausting and fully gratifying 26 hours of harness driving in October. On the 8th, he steered the two year-old trotter, Macho Martini, to victory in a \$157,200 division of the OSS Gold Series at Flamboro Downs. Then McClure jumped in his truck for the 28 kilometre hop to Mohawk where he won the \$104,800 OSS Gold for three year-old trotters with Threefiftytwo. The next night, Friday, October 9, McClure showed up at the Raceway at Western Fair in London where he drove Tattoo Artist to victory in a \$155,600 Gold Series for three year-old pacers. Tattoo Artist won all five of his OSS Gold Series races and that helped McClure lock up his first Lampman Cup as the top driver in the OSS program in 2020.

33



He retired a few months before, but on May 19th, jockey Eurico Rosa da Silva learned (in a virtual presentation) that he had won the Sovereign Award for the seventh time as Canada's outstanding jockey. Mark Casse made it twelve times as the country's top trainer, and it was the wonderful turf-loving mare, Starship Jubilee, who took home the grand prize as Horse of the Year.

32

Nature abhors a vacuum and when pretty well all the major sports were unable to function, the Woodbine product got added value by teaming up with TSN to produce Racing Night Live. It premiered on June 11, got excellent ratings, and seemed to inspire bettors across the country, swelling the betting handles on the night it played.

31

Jockey Cory Spataro pulled off a rare feat at Ajax Downs on September 21, winning five straight races aboard quarter horses. His winners paid \$3.80, \$3.30, \$6.30, \$10.10, and \$4.70. Three of Spataro's wins came for trainer Craig Spada.



30

The biggest race of the year at Ajax Downs is the Alex Picov Memorial Championship at 440 yards. This year's edition took place on Thanksgiving Monday, October 12, and it was the eight year-old Feisty Icon pulling off the 16-1 upset over heavily favoured Country Boy 123. Ridden by Tony Phillips, Feisty Icon prevailed by a head for his 20th win in 49 tries.



29

Early in the morning of April 29, a horse named Good For You won the final leg of the Six Up bet at Happy Valley in Hong Kong. Good For You was 15-1 and it was very good for horseplayer Tommy Massis who had the only winning ticket in the Six Up. A few minutes later, Massis' Horseplayer account issued a transaction in his favour in the amount of \$1,176,978.30. Massis ended 2020 with some spare change – he invested \$1,200 in the Six Up and hit it for a paltry \$102,716.35.



28



Trevor Henry manoeuvred the pacing mare, Gias Surreal, to victory in the eleventh race at Mohawk on November 6. It was the third win of the night for Henry and got him to 7,000 for his long and excellent career. Gias Surreal rewarded her backers with a 12-1 win ticket.

27

Justin Stein battled Rafael Hernandez all season long for the Woodbine jockey title. On November 1, Stein gave a riding clinic with 5 winners, including Stephen (\$6.30) in the Coronation Futurity for trainer Kevin Attard. When the thoroughbred season ended early, Stein was denied the opportunity to make up a 3 win deficit to Hernandez who earned his first Woodbine riders crown.



26

Rafael Hernandez was always able to respond when Justin Stein got aggressive. On July 4, Hernandez provided all the fireworks at Woodbine, winning 5 races, including the \$125,000 Queenston Stakes with Halo Again and the \$175,000 Eclipse Stakes aboard Skywire.

25

The best day a jockey had in Canada in 2020 belonged to Justin Stein who, on August 21, won 6 of 9 races at Woodbine. He won the second on San Nicola Brew (\$14.60), the third with Bala Falls (\$6.30), the fourth aboard Interesting Times (\$10.50), the fifth with Make No Mistake (\$5.90), the seventh with Power House (\$11.10) and the eighth on Picadilly Beau (\$6.90.)

24



On July 25, Starship Jubilee overcame a 10-length deficit to win the Grade II \$200,000 Ballston Spa Stakes at a mile and a 16th at Saratoga. Ridden by Javier Castellano, Starship Jubilee gave trainer Kevin Attard his first win at the Spa.

23

Pink Lloyd, now an eight year-old, continued to prove he's still the fastest sprinter in the land. On June 25, he captured the \$125,000 Jacques Cartier Stakes for his fourth straight win and his 20th Stakes victory. A month later, the beat went on, as Pink Lloyd won the \$100,000 Shepperton Stakes at Woodbine.

22



Jockey Ed Walton won four races on the Canada Day Card at Ajax Downs. Walton, 56 and almost 6 feet tall, had his greatest season ever, leading the jockeys race from day one to closing day. Also on Canada Day, Had to Be Ivory and jockey Tony Phillips survived two claims of foul to take down the \$31,000 Picov Maturity at 350 yards.

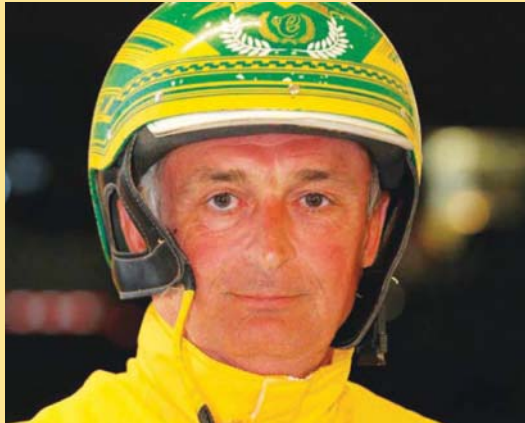
21



Lisa Photo

The \$535,650 Meadowlands Pace was run on July 18 and it was Tall Dark Stranger with Yannick Gringras who prevailed by a brave neck in 1:47.2.

20



Steve Condren is retired, but in 40 years of harness driving, he drove 6,859 winners. That excellence was recognized in mid-July when he was named to the Milton Sports Hall of Fame.

19

On at least two counts, a win by She's a Sassy Beach in a leg of the Ontario Harvest Stakes for two year-old fillies in October was intriguing and inspiring. She's a Sassy Beach is owned by race caller Ken Middleton and the estate of Bill Galvin, who passed away in the last week of September. Middleton had to play it professionally cool as his horse finished first, but the Mohawk announcer was certainly filled with emotion, wishing his dear friend could have witnessed the filly's fine work. Strangely, She's A Sassy Beach won three straight races after Galvin departed; she was just 1 for 9 before his death.

18



It was the story horse racing really needed, but didn't happen. Mighty Heart was seeking to become the first Canadian Triple Crown winner since Wando in 2003. It was the Breeders' Stakes at Woodbine, a mile and a half on the grass, and jockey Daisuke Fukumoto put Mighty Heart on the lead early and was criticized later for going too fast - :23.69 and :47.45 on soft turf. Luis Contreras gave Belichick a much more relaxed journey and Belichick swarmed past tiring horses at the head of the stretch to win by 4 lengths over 55-1 longshot Meyer. Although disappointed in Mighty Heart's race, trainer Josie Carroll actually swept the Triple Crown as she also trains Belichick, who broke his maiden in the Breeders' Stakes.

17

Authentic, the Kentucky Derby winner in September, was impressive in the \$6 million Breeders' Cup Classic at Keeneland on November 7. With John Velazquez along for the ride, Authentic led at every call, won by 2¼ lengths, and the time of 1:59.60 was the fastest mile and a quarter ever at Keeneland. This made Authentic 6 for 8 in his career and gave trainer Bob Baffert his 17th Breeders' Cup win.

16



The first Mohawk Million was contested at Mohawk on October 9; a million dollar purse created by nine owners who had thrown in \$110,000 each. Brad Grant and Marvin Katz were among the first to ante, but weeks before the race, Grant believed he did not own a two year-old pacer capable of competing. So, Grant struck a deal with trainer Julie Miller and the owners of Venerate. That's how Venerate got into the race and, despite being stung with post 10 in the second tier, Venerate, driven perfectly by Andrew McCarthy, parlayed a covered trip into good position, then outdueled the 4-5 favourite, Donna Soprano to win by three quarters of a length in 1:53.2. Venerate paid \$6.80 to win and Grant said, "It makes us look pretty smart, I guess."

15

It was the \$560,000 Canadian Trotting Classic at Mohawk on September 8 and Chestnut Hill provided the thrill, winning by a half length in 1:53.2. Chestnut Hill was driven by Andrew McCarthy and he paid \$122.00 prompting the question – how does a horse go off at 60-1 with a record of hitting the board in 16 of 22 races?

14



That same night at Mohawk, the wonderful trotting filly Ramona Hill rallied from fifth for Andrew McCarthy to win the \$350,000 Elegant Image Stakes in a Stakes tying time of 1:51.4. It was Ramona Hill's seventh straight win and she finished the season with 12 wins from 17 starts for owner Brad Grant, Crawford Farms, Robert LeBlanc, and In The Gym Partners.

13



How did Starship Jubilee go off at almost 6-1 in the Woodbine Mile? That was the question after the sensational seven year-old mare carried Justin Stein to a one-length victory in 1:32.06, just missing the course record of 1:32.75. To be fair, it was a very strong field, including the 2019 Preakness champion War of Will (third), five times Stakes winner, March to the Arch (second), and rising star, Shirl's Speight (seventh). The victory was Starship Jubilee's 19th in 38 starts. She is trained by Kevin Attard for Blue Heaven Farm and those who bet her got a very attractive \$13.50 win ticket.

12

The \$535,000 William Wellwood Memorial for two year-old trotters was contested at Mohawk on September 12 and it was a breakthrough win for driver Scott Young with On A Streak. Off at 15-1, On A Streak surged to the lead in the first quarter and repelled all challenges to give Young his first Grand Circuit victory. The colt is trained by Luc Blais for Determination.

11



Sometimes the girls beat the boys and it seemed in 2020, it happened more often than not. In the 145th Preakness, run on October 3, it was the filly, Swiss Skydiver under Robbie Albarado who came inside the 3-2 favourite, Authentic, to win a terrific stretch battle by a neck in 1:53.28. Swiss Skydiver is trained by Ken McPeck and owned by Peter Callaghan and she paid \$25.40 to win.

10



The five year old mare, Atlanta, added to her great résumé with a 4 length win in the Maple Leaf Trot at Mohawk on September 5. With Yannick Gingras steering, Atlanta pulled off cover at the head of the stretch and powered home in 1:50.4, matching the Stakes record set in 2012 by Mister Herbie. Atlanta, partly owned by Canadian Bradley Grant, won 3 of her next 5 starts and finished 2020 with 5 victories from 12 races. In her career, Atlanta is 25 for 51 with earnings of \$2,859,610.

9



Imagine the stupendous moment of grief for trainer Kevin Attard when the gates opened for the \$2 million Filly and Mare Turf on Breeders' Cup Saturday, November 7. Attard's Starship Jubilee had post one and the great mare took one step – a bad one – as jockey Florent went flying off the horse. *Stumbled, lost jockey, DNF* says the Racing Form. About 1:52 later, it was the French horse, Audarya, and jockey Pierre-Charles Boudot winning at 17-1. This was the last race of a marvellous career for Starship Jubilee who won 19 of 39 races and earned \$2,093,069.

8



The Canadian Pacing Derby went at Mohawk on September 5 and it was 40-1 bomb, Dorsoduro Hanover, who shocked in 1:48.4 for driver James MacDonald. It was just the first win of the year for Dorsoduro Hanover, which explains the \$88 win price. Dorsoduro Hanover, trained by Ron Burke, finished 2020 with only 2 wins from 15 starts, but a nice bankroll of \$368,251.

7



Thanks to COVID-19, the Kentucky Derby was run on the first Saturday...in September, and the way Authentic

ran created an argument that three year-olds might prefer running their first mile and a quarter race much later than May. Authentic, under John Velazquez, fought for the lead from the outside post and, in doing so, cut out exhausting fractions of :22.92, :46.41, 1:10.23, and 1:35.02. Despite that, Authentic was able to repel the 3-5 race favourite, Tiz The Law, and win by 1¼ lengths in 2:00.61, the seventh fastest Kentucky Derby, and the fastest since Monarchos went 1:59.97 in 2001. Authentic not only knocked over Tiz The Law, but he also wiped out his trainer Bob Baffert in the winners circle. The winning owners are from the Sackatoga Stable, notorious for running Funnycide to Derby and Preakness victories in 2003.

6

Canadians did well at the Breeders Crown at Hoosier Park on October 30-31. Bob McClure drove On A Streak (\$20.80) to a win in the \$600,000 two year-old colts and geldings final. On A Streak, owned by Determination of Montreal, is trained by Luc Blais. When Kissin In The Sand (\$2.80) won the \$300,000 Open Mares Pace, it was another Breeders Crown triumph for owner Marvin Katz of Toronto. Century Farroh (\$17.40), trained by Dr. Ian Moore, was best in the \$500,000 Open Pace in 1:49, winning for the Ratchford Stable of North Sydney, Nova Scotia.

5



It was the smallest crowd ever for the Belmont Stakes and, on June 20, Tiz The Law ran the fastest Belmont ever, though this does require an asterisk. This year’s Belmont, the first leg of the Triple Crown, was run at a mile and an eighth, the only time it’s gone just 9 furlongs. The time of 1:46.53 for the two-length win by Tiz The Law was still pretty good, just a second off the track record. Manny Franco was the winning jockey for trainer Barclay Tagg and the owners from Sackatoga Stable. Tiz The Law paid \$3.60.

4



The best harness race of 2020 was the \$500,000 Breeders Crown Final for three year-old colts and geldings. Tall Dark Stranger went off at 1-2 and raced brilliantly, leading the field through vicious fractions of :52.3 to the half and 1:19.3 to three-quarters. Even with those gasping splits, when several in the field started to swarm him, one by one, Tall Dark Stranger repelled them. But way out in the middle of the track came Scott Zeron and Sandbetweenmytoes, and they swooped up right at the wire to nail Tall Dark Stranger by a head. The outrageous part of this is that Sandbetweenmytoes was 203-1, creating a \$409.80 win ticket, the highest payoff in Breeders Crown history.

3



Though Mighty Heart took his best shot at sweeping the Canadian Triple Crown, there was no chance of a sweep in the Triple Tiara for the fillies. The third leg of this series was the Wonder Where Stakes after different horses had taken down the Canadian Oaks and the Bison City Stakes. Oaks winner, Curlin’s Voyage went off as the 2-1 favourite. Somewhat unnoticed at almost 6-1 was Merveilleux, but Rafael Hernandez gave her a well-timed ride, and Merveilleux was powerful in the last eighth of a mile, pulling away to win by 3 lengths in 2:05.34 for the 1¼ miles. Merveilleux is owned by Al and Bill Ulwelling and trained by Kevin Attard, and a win bet on her was worth \$13.80.

2



Tall Dark Stranger, owned in part by Marvin Katz, made harness racing history with an emphatic win in the seventeenth \$1,000,000 North America Cup, at Mohawk on August 29. Driven by Yannick Gingras, Tall Dark Stranger led at the half in a brisk :53.3, got to the quarter in 1:21, and repelled Tattoo Artist by 2 lengths at the wire in 1:48.2. Tall Dark Stranger is the only pacer to win the North America Cup after also winning the Metro Pace, the Meadowlands Pace, the Cane Pace, and the Breeders Crown. To no one’s surprise, on January 16, Tall Dark Stranger won Dan Patch Awards as the Outstanding Three Year-Old Pacer and also as the Horse of the Year..

and the #1 story of the year

It was an easy pick for the top story of 2020. Mighty Heart may have flown under the radar until the Queen’s Plate, but his sensational win in Canada’s most important race on September 12 was an inspiration. Mighty Heart lost an eye just a few weeks after being born and, to be truthful, after the first quarter of the Plate, didn’t see much of his opponents. Jockey Daisuke Fukumoto took Might Heart to the lead from post 13 and cut out all the fractions – and they were sharp splits - :47.62, 1:12.70, and after a mile in 1:37.50, Mighty Heart started to pull away. He won the Queen’s Plate in 2:01.98, the fastest time every recorded since the race was run on a synthetic track and the second fastest Queen’s Plate ever; Isvestia in 1998 went 2:10.8. Mighty Heart was part of trainer Josie Carroll’s excellent year; she also trained the Plate runner-up, Belichick. Mighty Heart won the Prince of Wales 17 days later at Fort Erie, but struggled to a seventh place finish in the Breeders’ Stakes which was won by Belichick.





On August 20, 2020, the two year-old Dragon's Brew, in just his second lifetime start, ran away from nine opponents to win the \$250,000 Simcoe Stakes at Woodbine. Under jockey Daisuke Fukumoto, Dragon's Brew was 2½ lengths the best at the end of 6½ furlongs in 1:17.90. Goldmart Farms has been racing thoroughbreds for nearly 30 years, but this was the operation's biggest win. David Sapir, who is from the Republic of Georgia, came to Canada many years ago, but did not have any special attraction to horse racing at the time.

"I just went to the track and I liked it, and I ended up claiming a horse," he says. "And I did well, and then I just kept going."

He bought a farm south of Barrie with three other friends as an investment. They were looking to buy riding horses to keep on it and he ran into Tommy Bowden, a trainer who told him he should buy a horse that can make money. They exchanged information and Tommy ended up claiming Georgia Dancer. She was a daughter of 1981 Queen's Plate champion, Fiddle Dancer Boy. Under the owner's name of David Sepiashvili, she was claimed for \$8,000 at Woodbine. Georgia Dancer would win twice and cash a few smaller cheques in his next 16 races for what would become Goldmart Farms.

The win last summer by Dragon's Brew was especially satisfying because Sapir had so much faith in his broodmare, Miss Dragonfly.

"We paid a lot of money for the mare," admits Sapir. "I think we paid around \$200,000. We bought her as a two year-old to race, and she never ended up racing. We won another Stakes with his brother from that mare. That was Dragon's Cry. We knew the mare could produce a nice horse."

Dragon's Cry won the \$125,000 Bull Page Stakes at 6 furlongs in the fall of 2016, With Sheena Ryan calling the shots, Dragon's Cry, a son of Victor's Cry won by three quarters of a length in 1:10.35.

Sapir also has a fondness for the sire of Dragon's Brew. "We have another horse by Milwaukee Brew," he points out. "His name is Kingsport. He won over a million dollars."

Kingsport is the kind of horse that would make you go back to the Milwaukee Brew dispensary. He raced through six years (2014-2019) winning at least once each year and, in the process, capturing the Kingarvie Stakes (2014), the Deputy Minister Stakes (2015), the Sir Barton Stakes three times (2015, 2017, 2018), the Bunty Lawless (2018),

Goldmart Farms won the Elgin Stakes in 2018 with Kingsport. That's trainer Sid Attard (left) jockey Patrick Husbands, Liz Pathak and David Sapir



the Steady Growth (2019), and the Elgin Stakes (2019). Goldmart Farms retired Kingsport after his last victory.

Sapir is married to Liz Pathak, who is now also the other half of Goldmart Farms.

"I was a veterinarian at the track in 2005," she says. "I was working for one of his trainers and that's where we met."

It's no accident that Pathak has made horses her career. "I've loved horses all of my whole life. When I was little, I wanted to be one," she laughs. "Sometime around junior kindergarten, I realized I couldn't be a horse, so I wanted to be a vet. I'm living my dream for sure."

It's obviously a successful and loving marriage, but it sure is convenient to have a veterinarian in the family.

"Yeah, it is helpful," she says. "We joke that he married me to save on the bills."

Thanks to the very strange year that was 2020, Pathak and Sapir actually attended races on just one day at Woodbine – the day that Dragon's Brew won the Simcoe.

"We had another one in the Muskoka, so we went that day, and I think that's pretty much the only day we went," she says.

Dragon's Brew went off at 3-1. At the quarter, Fukumoto had him eighth, but within 4 lengths of a lead that was being hotly disputing by four others. Around the far turn, Dragon's Brew was accelerating and passing rivals. A four-wide move did not inconvenience him and, by the eighth pole, he had the lead as he opened up down to the wire.

"It was really awesome," says Pathak. "We've been supporting the CTHS sale for many, many years. We send our horses there, and often we buy them back - like him - because we think that they're worth more than other people do. We've won Stakes before with horses that we've bought out of it, but not any that we've bred out of it. So that was really exciting. He had won that nice maiden 3-4 weeks beforehand. So, we were excited going into it, and then he just came on so powerfully."

"It was very exciting," adds Sapir. "Like every race we run."

Several years ago, Sapir and Pathak had a very good horse named Gangster. Trained by Sid Attard, he broke his maiden on his first try under Todd Kabel, winning by

almost 3 lengths at 6 furlongs in May, 2004. He would win 7 of his next 31 races, including the 2007 Bold Venture Stakes. Gangster earned \$515,297.

Goldmart Farms had another terrific horse named Primeric Prince, who from 2007-2009 won 6 of 18 races, hitting the board 14 times and earning \$234,222. Primeric Prince won 3 of his last 4 races; his career stopped with a victory at 7 furlongs in a \$32,000 claim race. The reason for that is not pleasant.

"He actually passed away," says Pathak. "We lost him. I'm suspicious it was Potomac horse fever. And it was a shame, because he did that all with very sore foot. We had brought him home for an extended rest, and we were working on his feet, and he was just going amazing and he picked something up. He had bad colitis and passed away so quickly."

There are many reasons for Goldmart Farms to be optimistic for 2021. Right now, they have about 40-45 horses on the farm, of which 25 are racehorses, broodmares, yearling and foals. There's at least one giving Sapir a good feeling.

"I have some very good two year-olds," he says. "I have a full-brother to Dragon's Brew. We think he is the nicest Miss Dragonfly has ever produced. We don't have a name yet."

It's a standard question for all of the **Down The Stretch** Owners of the Month - what is it that you love so much about this sport? Sapir's answer is pretty succinct.

"I love the horses," says Sapir. "I love the animals. I love the whole thing."

Pathak is more expansive.

"It's great that we're involved as a family," she says. "My kids love it. I love it. We watched them being born. We raised them here. They're in our backyard. We break them here. We keep them here 24/7 from the time they're born. We don't really generally ship out of the country to breed or anything. We support the Ontario Sires program a lot. That's exclusively what we have been breeding to for the past 10 or 11 years. It's really satisfying to see them when they win. We have a box at the finish line and it's such a thrill you get when your heart is pounding and you're screaming."



Horse owner Bob Young got our attention last month with what should be a contender for sweetest move of the year. Twelve years ago, he bought a yearling named Piece Of The Rock, which did some very good things before he was ultimately claimed and ended up racing at American tracks. Young's daughter, Heather, had formed a special and lasting bond with Piece Of The Rock and often called the trainers at the various tracks where the son of Rocknroll Hanover was competing. When the latest owners of the now 14 year-old gelding contacted Young suggesting Piece Of The Rock's racing career appeared to be at its end, Young arranged to have the horse shipped back home. It was a surprise for Heather and, in a short video posted on Facebook, you can see how thrilled she was to have her dear friend back.

"He was a great horse for us when we had him," says Young. "In this business, you have to race horses where they could make you money and, unfortunately, at one time, we had to put him in a claim and he was claimed. My daughter has always been in touch with whoever's owned him from that time on, and she's even signed up with the USDA and Canada to be the person that would get him if he was ever retired."

Getting Piece Of The Rock back turned out to be a pretty easy task.

"The people that claimed him have been good friends of mine," says Young. "I've known Josh Green for years. Josh had phoned me to say, 'You know, his left ankle bites him a little bit and it's time to retire him. I don't want to break him down. He's a good horse.' We drew up the papers and I got hold of Dale Devine who got the horse on a trailer. Heather didn't know anything about this."

If any horse deserved a safe and warm place after a racing career, it's Piece Of The Rock. This one started 300 times and won 55 races, earning \$939,542. There was one lovely cheque of \$180,000 for his third place finish in the 2010 North America Cup, but he was most comfortable in condition, preferred, and open company. Incredibly, Piece Of The Rock picked up a cheque 220 times.

Young and his wife, Gail, summoned Heather to the barn on the 'premise' that she should see some of the babies that had just been broken. The trailer driver, Devine, offered Heather some Rice Krispie squares, a favourite treat for Piece Of The Rock.

"And he said, 'Here, feed these to your horse,'" continues Young. "She wasn't paying attention, so I just turned to the right and I looked at the stall, and she looked



again, and that's when she started crying and everything."

Young is 66 and has owned horses for more than 50 years.

"I owned my first horse when I was about 14," he says. "My grandfather, Jack, had a mare named Lady Dean, and when he passed away, I was the oldest grandchild, so I ended up with the horse. We used to race it at Morrow Park in Peterborough, right beside the hockey arena. A big purse back then was \$400. She was never good enough to go to Woodbine or anything. And we had foals from her, and we just kind of went from there."

Young remembers another horse that did very well for him and his partners Brian Barton and Paul Mazzola.

"I had a mare that I bred called Oven Mitt. She made us \$400,000."

Oven Mitt raced 62 times and won 11 races. In September, 2002, she captured the Simcoe Stakes which enriched her owners by \$56,414.

"We bred her to Art Major," says Young. "That was Art Major's first crop and that gave us Artimitateslife and she went on to make 997,000."

Artimitateslife won 21 of 108 starts. A second place finish in the 2008 Fan Hanover Final was worth \$183,237 and, later that year, she won a \$175,000 Stakes race at Yonkers. Artimitateslife spread her thrills all over the map, winning at Saratoga, Georgian Downs, Goshen, Yonkers, Tioga Downs, Monticello, Mohawk, Northfield Park, Freehold, and the Meadowlands.

Young dabbled in harness driving, but insists his stats in that endeavour won't scare away the Dexter Dunns and Doug McNairs. His numbers on Trackit are quite modest – 52 wins from 429 drives. He hasn't been in a sulky competitively since 2008 and the most races he won was 11 back in 1982. His son, Scott, however, has a successful career as a teamster. He has already gone past the 1,000 win barrier since beginning in 2010.

"Scott started at all the 'B' tracks and then, just over a year ago, started driving at Mohawk," says Young. "I had a couple of horses and we started racing there, and they're doing well. And Scott was driving for other people that were coming from the B tracks, and it just took off from there."

Last November Scott steered the pacing mare, Town Delinquent, to an impressive win at over 7-1 in a \$20,000 mile at Mohawk. The night before, he sat behind the two year-old pacer, Number One Hit, in a nifty maiden breaking score in that gelding's second career start. Both those horses trained by dad, Bob.

"That's doubly exciting," says Young about watching



his son bring his horses to victory. "You're proud that you gave him a horse that's capable of winning. And you're proud that he's capable of driving the horse to a win."

Young points out that Scott drove Piece Of The Rock several times, including 6 of that horse's wins.

Number One Hit is a youngster Young expects great things from. First, is there a story behind the name of this Somebeachsomewhere son?

"We paid \$100,000 U.S. for him," says Young. "His mother's name is Music Row. We sent him to Kentucky for a six-week break, and we're looking for him next year to come out and have a good year."

"I own a yearling by Trixton," adds Young. "He's not named yet, but he will be known as Delgado." (A shoutout to former Blue Jay Carlos Delgado who stroked 473 career home runs?).

Young responds immediately when asked to recall his most exciting moment in harness racing.

"We won one of the Breeders Crown races in 1995 with a horse called That'll Be Me in Cleveland."

Driven by Roger Mayotte after Young himself warmed him up, That'll Be Me went off at 9.70-1 and got up by a head in 1:52.1 for the first-place cheque of \$150,000.

He's been in the sport for more than 50 years and Bob Young won't be leaving it any time soon.

"I just love the competition," he says. "Just to get a horse that you bought at a sale and get it to the races. At that point it's up to the horse, but bringing a horse from scratch and getting into the races, it's just great."



Piece Of The Rock, winning at the Meadowlands (Lisa Photo)

A Strange Year in the Sport of Kings Reflected

This article by Jonathan Stettin originally appeared on his website, PASTTHEWIRE (Horse Racing Uncensored)



As 2020 comes to an end, I find myself looking back at what has been a strange year in horse racing, the Sport of Kings. It was a strange year all around. Between the pandemic, the obvious malfunction of our democracy on so any levels, and the transformation of “the news” to opinions and agendas and blatant spins and falsehoods, you can’t help but see the world is changing. Personally, I don’t believe it is for the better, or the better, at least not in the immediate future.

Sam machines, ADW’s, and even the new small Gulfstream Park all showed glimpses into what the future of racing is likely to become. I think the pandemic accelerated it. We are far from the number one spectator sport we once were not so long ago. We hang by a thread, our own worst enemy while all the Neros fiddle. Handle is not going up. That’s a spin I won’t bother explaining here. You either get it or you don’t. The decrease in operating costs by not having bettors on the grounds is welcomed by most racetrack managers. Earlier in the year I wrote about the days we may no longer see cash betting at the track. It is not as far fetched today as it sounded when I originally touched on the possibility. It is what it is. Certain things happen that change things for the long term.

2020 started normally enough. Bob Baffert sent Mucho Gusto to win the Pegasus World Cup, and the Gulfstream Park post time drag was in full play. Maximum Security ventured into the desert to win the world’s richest race, The Saudi Cup. It wasn’t long after that the volcano started erupting. Jason Servis and Jorge Navarro were both long suspected of cheating

or juicing horses by bettors openly on social media. Often, they were outright accused. Racing media for the most part ignored these rumblings. Once Servis and Navarro et al were indicted in Federal Court for charges including using misbranded drugs and PED’s, the accusers felt validated, and the media in racing had to pay attention. Rumours and innuendos of additional pending investigations and additional indictments were abound. To date there have been none to speak of, and the cases against Servis and Navarro are still pending. The wheels of justice can turn very slow in normal times; during a pandemic, even slower.

The Saudi Cup saved a few million by holding back the purse in their world’s richest race pending the outcome of the case against Jason Servis. To date they have not released those funds. They have also not announced any pertinent results of their own independent investigation.

What will come of the Servis and Navarro indictments remains to be seen. The prospect for a long-term positive impact on our game are iffy at best. Some of the owners transferred the horses to some trainers with similar reputations. To be fair, reputations are not always factual, nor are rumours or innuendos. Further, the pressure is to win and win now and in today’s world of social media cops, anyone who wins at a high percentage clip is labeled a cheater. The game is different today, and percentages are paid more attention to, and are generally higher than they used to be. Social media cops ignore those facts; they don’t fit the narrative. None of this means the game has not become a cesspool of drugs, legal and illegal, off-label and on. It has and it needs to be cleaned up far beyond what is going on, and not by social media.

We let the Federal Government make the first move with the indictments. The industry did nothing. Don’t tell me they need proof. It is just not a fact. Anyone of us for any reason can be denied access to the grounds at the track or denied stalls or have entries refused. They can label you an undesirable, or find you are not in the best interests of racing. It has happened. It can happen. I have to question the true commitment by the industry as a whole to the welfare of the horse, and to cleaning up the sport. There are plenty of good people in this game who love the horses and put them first. We are only as strong as our weakest link, however, and there are many who just don’t operate in the best interest of the horse or the integrity of the sport.

We failed as an industry to self police. That ship has sailed. Now the Horse Racing Integrity Act has been signed into law. There will be government regulation and oversight. That is scary. Our game is based on past performances, and the pp’s of government intervention and high-level oversight is not good. As bad as it may be, I at this point don’t see it being worse that what we have. I may stand corrected but we blew it ourselves and now someone else gets a shot. We can’t survive with higher takeout. How it is funded will be interesting to watch.

If things weren’t in enough of a tailspin, we got hit along with the rest of the world with COVID-19, a

corona virus which sure seems politicized. That said, even with a 1% fatality rate, it can kill you, and if you are in that unfortunate 1%, the low rate doesn’t really matter does it?

Churchill Downs jumped on it and moved the Kentucky Derby to September without any coordination with the other two tracks, Belmont Park and Pimlico that run the Belmont and Preakness, the other Jewels of the Triple Crown. This was no surprise. Churchill Downs did what they felt was best for them and their shareholders. They answer to shareholders, not other tracks, bettors, or fans. We are an industry that has trouble staggering post times, we can’t be expected to re-organize the biggest series in our sport. Obviously, Churchill Downs hoped by September fans would be back in the grandstands. They ran for the Roses in September, but we are still waiting the return of fans New Year’s week.

Before the Derby, Bob Baffert looked loaded with Nadal and Charlatan. They both got hurt. Charlatan came up positive for lidocaine after trouncing the field in the Arkansas Derby. His three year-old star filly, Gamine, who won on that undercard, did as well. Bob attributed the positives to contamination by a patch worn around the barn. Bob wins a lot and wears a bull’s eye on his back. By his own admission he has to, and is committed to being more careful about contamination in his barn, and for the record he supports all the medication reform being discussed.

Now most trainers who lose two Kentucky Derby prospects, top prospects at that, would be knocked out. Not Bob. He won the Roses the first Saturday in September with yet another talented three-year old in Authentic. Authentic took partial ownership to a whole new level in racehorse partnerships. My Racehorse offered shares in the prospect and sold about 5,000 of them. They took public criticism from a lot of people on social media about the structure of their operation. Interestingly enough, nobody who bought in complained and they all have a Kentucky Derby win picture of Authentic with their name listed as an owner. Priceless. Don’t think so? Ask Godolphin. This was a big positive for the game in a year we needed what we could get. Contrary to what we all have come to believe, it is not always about the money.

One of the best races of the year was the Preakness. We saw the filly Swiss Skydiver receive a masterful ride by Robbie Albarado who many had already counted out, and beat Authentic on the square. The Belmont was won by Tiz the Law, who got beat by Authentic in the Derby. A new order for the races, and three different winners. Charlatan made his way back in the last Grade I of the year, The Malibu, opening day at Santa Anita right after Christmas. He blitzed the field which included the latest fastest horse ever, Nashville, and one can only wonder what would have happened had he run in the Derby. Imagine if the pandemic had not altered the schedule. Dare we say Bob Baffert may have won another, a third Triple Crown. So much can happen in racing, but that possibility exists to this trained eye.

Authentic proved his mettle with a dominating front-

running win in the Breeders' Cup Classic. The marquee event was run with select fans allowed which was the worst kept secret of the year. They did what they had to do. They wanted some fans at a safe level and they pulled it off for the most part.

The Eclipse Award for the top jockey typically goes to whoever wins the most money. Not much thought goes into that voting process. How about Umberto Rispoli coming to the US and making a major impact on California racing and establishing himself as a force to be reckoned with in the saddle. All this despite a pandemic and agent Ron Anderson who was instrumental in bringing Umberto here abandoning him in favour of an opportunity to represent John Velazquez. Velazquez fired his long-time agent and mentor Angel Cordero Jr. somewhat suddenly. The racetrack rumour mill said it was in part because Johnny wanted to ride Tiz the Law leading into the Derby before COVID-19 knocked everything out of whack. Angel, they said, wanted to keep his other rider Manny Franco on the top prospect. Is it true? Who knows, but Johnny not only beat Tiz the Law with Authentic in both the Kentucky Derby and Breeders' Cup Classic, but now has the call on Tiz the Law for the Pegasus. That left another Johnny mount, Code of Honor, open. Tyler Gaffalione picked him up for the Pegasus. Can we see more irony if Code of Honor beats Tiz the Law in the Pegasus? Horses will humble everyone eventually.

As great as Umberto Rispoli is, he had a rough introduction to the Breeders' Cup. Rough trips robbed his chances as did a lost stirrup and hard bump. His was great compared to Christophe Soumillon. He flew in from France for the event but tested positive for COVID-19 when he got here. He lost all his Breeders' Cup rides and most of them won. I lost track of how

many (maybe three, two, who knows) but he spent his time quarantined while other jockeys rode his winners. Tough game this horse racing.

Gamine, the other horse with the Oaklawn lidocaine positive, showed everyone she doesn't need anything but dirt and one turn to run a hole in the wind in the Breeders' Cup Filly and Mare Sprint.

Once again, we saw how even at the so-called expert level, so many people in this game get it wrong. There was no speed bias at Keeneland for the Breeders' Cup. It was a lightning super fast track, but you didn't have to be on the front to win.

Saratoga ran without fans. Calder ran their last race.

I was alive in the Kentucky Derby to Honor A. P. for about half a million dollars. I was alive to Sole Volante for a cool million. All this off about an \$1,100 wager. I couldn't close the deal in 2020. Here's to closing it in 2021. I've done it before and will do it again. And yes, Honor A. P. ran the farthest and came home the fastest. Ouch!

The NTWAB told me I couldn't have an Eclipse vote this year because I don't write about horse racing enough. Oh well, I'd never want to belong to a group that would have someone like me as a member anyway, as it was once said. I guess they overlooked that some of their members write far less, even nothing whatsoever about horse racing. Thank you to the half dozen members who sent letters of recommendation and acknowledged my writing. I do appreciate that.

A lot of us suspected, some knew, but now it is official. We cannot trust the official timing of the races. They are often not accurate and nobody who has any pull seems to care enough to do something about it.

Everyone in racing hated PETA before the pandemic. They still hate PETA. PETA pressed for whip rule changes in California and they got them. It was a dog

and pony show, excuse the pun. The new crops are like nerf balls and don't hurt or break skin. Stewards have always had the authority to call in and fine any rider for improperly or excessively using the whip. It doesn't happen often. Stewards, do your job, don't implement rules and fine riders for doing theirs. Riders claim they need to use the crops, not only to encourage, school, and train horses, but for safety. I believe them.

Racing thinks it is cleaning up the sport by phasing out Lasix. They are so out of touch. I am anti all race day medications, Lasix included. Lasix, however, is not the problem. You want to phase it out, go ahead, I am all for it. I grew up on New York Racing and we had no Lasix. Things went fine. Better than they are now. If you are going to phase out Lasix without seriously addressing the other problems with drugs in racing, then I think it is just an appeasement for people who have no real interest in our sport. Let me know how that works out.

Besides me, and my brother John John, (yes, we have the same name) Tommy Hammer Massis is the deadliest bettor I know.

Our Gate to Wire podcast shed some real accurate light on the betting syndicates and how they actually operate. We were the only ones who got it right.

We as an industry are an easy target and take a lot of heat. It goes with the territory. We never got any real recognition for keeping things going pretty darn good throughout a year of unprecedented challenges. The show went on.

Life is funny. When you think things can't possibly get worse, they do. Plans, what plans? Nobody knows what is around the corner. Here's to hoping 2021 is a lot better than 2020 in every way possible. Happy New Year to all of you and yours. God Bless and be with you all.

Vella: Don't Let Public Perception Guide Lasix Policy

(republished with permission from the Paulick Report)

I would like the people who are against the use of Lasix to understand what is really going on in the horse racing industry in North America and throughout the world.

Let's start with the fact that horses in high performance sports suffer from ELPH – exercise-induced pulmonary hemorrhage. That includes all performance sports, in all parts of the world – make no mistake about it.

The question is how do you deal with the problem and what is best for the horses and what is best for the sport in question?

Before I go any further, I want to make a statement that I can't get past. It helps me personally clarify the situation: Lasix is a veterinarian-prescribed medication to treat ELPH in horses. It works well and has minimal side effects. There is no proof that Lasix makes a horse run faster. Horses on Lasix perform more consistently

than those not on Lasix. That is true because they are not bleeding internally.

Think of it this way: People suffer from high blood pressure and live longer when they take their doctor-prescribed medication. It is the same for horses who require medication to remain healthy and stop bleeding.

I'm going to do a little rant here.

As a thoroughbred trainer in North America, I'm getting tired of hearing people tell me that if they race in other parts of the world without Lasix, why can't you? Well, here is the question you should be asking: If horses everywhere bleed, how is the rest of the world treating these horses? Are they giving them medication the day before? Are they depriving them of food and water for days in advance?

I personally do not know, as I do not race there, but, believe me, they are doing something to solve the problem and it is not prescribed by a veterinarian. So why are

people looking down on trainers who are doing what the doctor has prescribed?

The real truth here is that people want to stop the use of Lasix because it would look good for the industry, but not because it is the best thing for the horse. Just ask our veterinarians!

Let me clarify a few things.

I am against the use of other medications on race horses and I believe that everyone in the industry has to be held more responsible for the health and welfare of these animals that we love and respect. Working in this industry is not a job; it is a way of life. Animal care is seven days a week, 52 weeks a year.

I am against stopping the use of a prescribed medication that solves a serious health problem in horses, just because it looks better for public perception.

Daniel Vella is a two-time Sovereign Award-winning trainer based in Ontario, Canada.

What's in a name?



It was the first race at Aqueduct on January 8, a mile on the dirt for maiden three year-olds eligible to be claimed for \$25,000. A horse with the cute name of Grape Soda, racing for the first time, was ridden by Jorge Vargas Jr. and they went straight to the front, burying seven opponents, winning by almost 7 lengths and paying \$11.20. At first this had a storybook feel to it, as it was the last horse sent out by Eric Guillot, who has trained thoroughbreds for 39 years.

That's where it gets interesting. Turns out Guillot has a major dislike for an African American television horse racing analyst named Ken Rudolph. Rudolph had an amazing moment working for TVG which covered the 2005 Kentucky Derby. Several times before the race, he insisted that Giacomo would be the winner and, when Mike Smith rallied Giacomo from eighteenth down the backstretch to win by a half length at odds of 50-1, Rudolph's \$25 wager to win turned into more than \$1,250.

We don't know the entire history between Rudolph and Guillot, but the name Grape Soda, in this case, clearly meant much more than just a sugary bottle of pop. Apparently grape soda is an offensive pair of words, used to provoke black people by suggesting it's something they love to drink. Strangely, the horse's original name was Kerstetter, the last name of a friend of owner, Kevin Moody. Guillot persuaded Moody to change the name.

After Kerstetter became Grape Soda, Guillot sent out a mocking tweet, "This colt will run next week and has a unique name in honor of a TVG analyst." Accompanying the tweet was an emoji of a black fist. Pretty hard not to see Guillot's intent.

Guillot's dislike of Rudolph, whom he has known for 20 years, stems from comments made by Rudolph on social media during the summer of 2020, when the Black Lives Matter issue was being hotly debated. Guillot verbally attacked Rudolph, claiming the television host has a privileged background.

"He plays both sides of the fence; he's a hypocrite," Guillot said. "I hate hypocrites."

The submission of the name Grape Soda originally passed the scrutiny of the Jockey Club, even though there is a clear rule that states, "No names that are suggestive or have a vulgar or obscene meaning; names considered in poor taste; or names that may be offensive to religious, political, or ethnic groups."

Shortly after that win by Grape Soda, Rudolph tweeted his dismay.

"The winner in race #1 from Aqueduct is the perfect example of my issue with horse racing. The winning trainer is a disgusting and racist man. But, if you want to make money in this game, you have to be able to ignore that stuff. I can't do it. But y'all carry on with your \$11."

Rudolph's employer, TVG, issued the following statement, condemning Guillot.

"There is simply no place in society for racism and we condemn his behavior, a deliberate attempt to slur one of our employees, in the strongest terms,"

And the Jockey Club was paying attention. They responded by declaring the name Grape Soda to be 'potentially offensive.'

The next domino to fall was the New York Racing Association.

"Racism is completely unacceptable in all forms," NYRA president Dave O'Rourke said. "NYRA rejects Eric Guillot's toxic words and divisive behavior in the strongest terms. At this time, he will no longer be permitted to enter horses at any NYRA track, nor will he be allocated stalls on NYRA grounds. In addition, we will review what further steps may be available to us. Our racing community is diverse, and we stand for inclusion."

Good thing Guillot has already decided not to train anymore. Not only is he now banned from New York tracks, but the Stronach Group has also barred him from having stalls or racing at any of their tracks - Santa Anita, Gulfstream Park, and Laurel Park in Maryland.

The race in question was on a Thursday. By Sunday, the three year-old gelded thoroughbred was no longer saddled with the controversial name. As it turned out, he had been claimed out of the race by trainer Rob Atras for owner Lawrence Roman. In a matter of hours, Atras was able to change the name of the horse to Respect for All, which got the blessing of the Jockey Club. Pushing the politically correct envelope even further, the owner, Roman, says he will donate 10 percent of Respect for All's earnings

to New York's Backstretch Employee Service Team (BEST), a non-profit organization devoted to providing health and wellness services to the backstretch workers at thoroughbred tracks in New York.

.....

So that's pretty well a happy ending to a distasteful horse racing story. However, Respect for All is certainly not the only horse named for a consumer product favoured by a specific ethnic group. For example, there have been 5 horses named Watermelon, but no one has ever protested that. Fried Chicken raced in the mid 60s with very little success and not a single suggestion that his name was derogatory. Not a peep from the FDA. Where was the Mexican outrage when a quarter horse born in 1990 was named Rice N Beans?

We've heard of the Pizza Man. He won 17 of 36 starts and over \$2 million. He won the 2016 Northern Dancer Stakes race at Woodbine, but no one in Toronto's huge Italian constituency even raised an eyebrow.

When Kimchi, a three year-old filly, won the Labatt Woodbine Oaks in 2006, not one Korean refused to cash a win ticket worth \$19.70.

Black Lives Matter and apparently so do horses named The Black. Equibase tells us that at least 8 horses have carried that name to the racetrack. Crickets.

The phrase The Black Stallion conjures up stereotypical racist cliches, but the 1979 movie starring Mickey Rooney never attracted protesters outside movie theatres.

Matzoh Ball Magic was a quarter horse that ran until 2016, but we have no record of any Jewish people plotting over the name. Likewise, Fish on Friday ran at Northlands and Hastings from 2010-2012 and local Catholics weren't upset.

Fried Rice was a son of Artie Schiller who won just once in 17 tries. Maybe his lack of success explains the lack of outrage by the Chinese.

There are at least 8 horses called Igloo; the most recent one opened her career with a smart looking win as a two year-old at Turfway last December, but how do we explain the lack of Indigenous people in the far north tweeting protests?

Ratatouille, a four year-old filly, won a 5½ furlong dash at Louisiana Downs in 2019 and not a single individual of French extraction vowed never to attend a horse race again.

Enchilada was a somewhat less than spicy mare who won 2 of 29 starts. To our knowledge not a single Mexican screamed, "Estoy ofendido!"

Tempura is a four year-old Candy Ride filly who has raced just once, coming a deep-fried last; the Japanese, ever honourable, have elected to ignore that.

And Canadian Paul Reddam, obviously indifferent to the sensitivities of Greek-Canadians, has a two year-old filly called Shish Kabob.

Maybe it's like Shakespeare once said through his iconic character, Hamlet,

"There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so."

English literature majors never complained about the great thoroughbred, Shakespeare, who won 7 of his 8 starts, including the \$1 million Woodbine Mile in 2007.



Awesome Again dead at 26

He raced only twelve times, but his competitive career was sensational, and Awesome Again's record as a stallion was even better. Awesome Again passed away on December 15 at Old Friends Thoroughbred Retirement farm in Georgetown, Kentucky. He was 26. A full veterinary report is expected to determine the cause of his death.

Bred by Frank Stronach in a mating between the great Canadian stallion Deputy Minister and the broodmare, Primal Force, Awesome Again raced 6 times as a three year-old, recording 3 wins, including the 1997 Queen's Plate under Mike Smith in just his third career race. Five weeks later, Smith was back aboard when Awesome Again took down the Grade II Jim Dandy Stakes at Saratoga. As he was in the Queen's Plate, Awesome Again was 3-1. In late August that year, he tired in the last eighth of a mile in the Travers, finishing third, 7 lengths behind the winner, Deputy Commander.

Awsome Again's four year-old season was stunning –

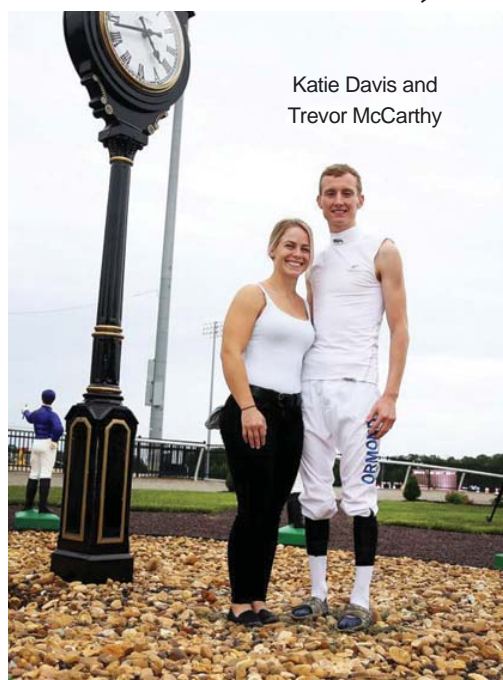
6 starts, 6 wins - 5 of which were graded Stakes. He won the Stephen Foster Handicap at Churchill, the Whitney at Saratoga, the Saratoga Breeders' Cup Handicap, and the Hawthorne Gold Cup Handicap in which he spotted 7 rivals 8 pounds and still prevailed by 1¼ lengths. Awesome Again finished his career with his most impressive win, coming from fifth in mid-stretch under Pat Day to win the million dollar Breeders' Cup Classic at Churchill Downs. Behind him that day were Silver Charm (1997 Kentucky Derby and Preakness), Victory Gallop (1998 Belmont), Swain (four -time Grade I winner), Coronado's Quest (1998 Wood Memorial, Haskell, and Travers), Skip Away (defending Classic champion), and Touch Gold (1997 Belmont). This race is considered the most talented field ever in the Breeders' Cup Classic.

When Awesome Again retired from racing in 1998 he had recorded 9 wins from 12 starts and earnings of \$4,374,590.

His offspring took the cue. Among his progeny are Ghostzapper, 2004 Horse of the Year and Champion Older Horse; Ginger Punch, 2007 Champion Older Mare; Game On Dude, three-time winner of the Grade I Santa Anita Handicap; Grade I Breeders' Cup Juvenile winner Wilko; and 2019 Grade I Belmont Stakes winner Sir Winston. Thirteen of Awesome Again's sons and daughters became millionaires and when Ghostzapper won the Breeders' Cup Classic in 2004, it was first time a son of a Classic winner had matched his father's feat.

"Anyone who ever saw Awesome Again on the racetrack or at Adena Springs knew he was aptly named," said Michael Blowen, founder and President of Old Friends. "I'm just sorry his time at Old Friends was so short because I know he would have made a searing, lasting impression on his many fans, and I'm so sorry that circumstances prevented him from displaying his greatness for a lot longer. Awesome, indeed."

To love, honour...and beat at the wire



Katie Davis and Trevor McCarthy

There are strange rules in the universe and it's not surprising that some of them exist in the world of horse racing, but newlyweds Trevor McCarthy and Katie Davis find themselves the victims of a rule that breaks from the starting gate of the absurd and gallops down the backstretch of stupidity.

McCarthy and Davis are both jockeys, riding primarily on the Maryland circuit, and they were married in December. McCarthy has a history of success during the winter meet at Aqueduct, so his loving wife chose to follow him to New York. Both were stunned to find out that a rule on the books dictates that:

Two people in the same household who reside together, their horses must be coupled if they're competing against each other in a pari-mutuel race.

The genesis of this rule goes back many decades and sprouted under the paranoia that a man and a wife would behave in a nefarious manner to assure the other a win. Davis' agent is Gary Contessa who, as a trainer, has been sending out winners for over 35 years. He's planning to return to conditioning horses in the spring, but for now, he's appalled about this rule.

"Let me tell you, if you read through the New York Gaming Commission rule book, many of these rules were set by people who don't know a damn thing about horse racing," he says, leaving little doubt about his opinion in

an opening shot.

"There are many owners and many entities in our game who want to bet," Contessa continues. "And if they if they're going to bet their money, the presence of Trevor McCarthy and Katie Davis is now going to create a coupled entry and they're not going to get the same price they may have gotten with a stand-alone horse."

Actually, as Contessa points out, there's a bigger problem, one the NYRA would prefer not to have. Simply put, coupled entries means less money wagered.

"Here's a perfect example," says Contessa. "On January 3, a rider got hurt in the fourth or fifth race and that rider was scheduled to ride a horse in the ninth race. So, the only rider available to ride that horse in the ninth race was Trevor McCarthy and the horse was one of the favourites. But I had Katie Davis on a horse in the same race, so they removed the horse from the race as a betting interest, but they let him run for purse money only."

The NYRA lost thousands in the mutuel pool because of that rule.

"Every horse represents hundreds of thousands of dollars in betting money," reasons Contessa. "An eight-horse field is hundreds of thousands more handle than a seven, and a seven-horse field is more than a six, and a nine is more than eight."

And of course, it adds up. Contessa was able to identify 12 circumstances just in the first week of January where McCarthy and Davis as man and wife raced in the same race and each time, they had to be coupled as an entry and each time, the NYRA lost a betting interest.

Contessa emphasizes that the rule is not the making of the NYRA, but of the Gaming Commission.

"Let's face it - Gaming Commissions pretty much all over the country are run by political appointees, so none of them have any horse sense," he says. "The New York Gaming Commission is no different. I've been to their meetings, I've been on panels for them, and for the most part, they don't understand horses or horse training or anything about it. Yet they're the governing body of horse racing."

So, there's a dumb rule on the books. And it's costing the industry thousands, even millions. Why can't it be changed?

"If you want to change something, the rule states that you have to put it out there for six months of public discussion time," says Contessa, the frustration evident in his voice. "For somebody to change this rule, they would have to take the time to put this rule up for a change. And the Gaming Commission would put it out to public opinion for six months, and at the end of six months there would have to be a major vote or a major uprising against the rule to take it off the books. Nobody wants the

headache of fighting, of doing this stuff."

It would be pointless for either McCarthy or Davis to start a Facebook or Twitter movement because, in six months, they'll both be back in Maryland where the sanctity of marriage is not compromised by the rules of racing. But Contessa is finding, as an agent, it's restricting his trade.

"I guarantee you this is affecting Katie's business," he claims. "I could have her on five, six, seven races a day, and I'm getting only two or three and being told, 'I don't want my horse coupled.' Trainers don't want what they don't want, especially if they like to bet. I've even gotten phone calls from trainers who are thinking of riding Trevor, who ask if I have a mount in there for Katie, and if I say yes, they're not going to ride Trevor. There's a certain pressure on me not to get a ride for Katie if Trevor already has one in a race. I'm going to say 50% of the trainers on the backstretch do not want to deal with being coupled with a horse for a trainer they don't know, and a horse that they don't know."

There's a lot of money for jockeys in New York races these days. The idea that one or the other would 'stiff' a horse to benefit a spouse is pure delusion.

"These are archaic, antiquated rules that were in place in 1950 and 1960 in order to make sure that two brothers couldn't fix a race," says Contessa. "Or a husband and wife couldn't fix a race back when you didn't have the technology that we have today with multiple video replays from all angles."

And Contessa is the guy to probe about the integrity of the two lovebirds.

"I know Trevor and I know Katie and they are fierce, fierce competitors. The other day, Trevor beat Katie by a head and she called me that night and she was cussing him. She even felt that he came out on her a little bit and she was mad. She says, 'I'm not even going to talk to him tonight.' So, there's no chance whatsoever they would cheat in a race."

Making this rule about married jockeys even sillier is that brothers compete against each other all the time. If the NYRA had to couple horses ridden by Irad and José Ortiz, it would diminish almost every race on the card. It would be theatre of the absurd. It's also worth noting that such a rule does not appear to be a factor in Canada. For example, Nikki and Jeffrey Alderson are also wife and husband and they have raced against each other several times at Fort Erie and Woodbine and, each time, their horses were separate betting interests.

Perhaps our concern should be with the matrimonial accord of Trevor and Katie. Is this bizarre rule threatening to erode their passion for each other?

"No way!" laughs Contessa. "They're rock solid. It's not going to affect their marriage."



WOODBINE



SAVE THE DATE!

162ND QUEEN'S PLATE
SUNDAY, AUGUST 22, 2021

The date is set!

Woodbine Entertainment announced that the 162nd running of the \$1 million Queen's Plate, the first jewel of the Canadian Triple Crown of Thoroughbred Racing, will be held on Sunday, August 22, 2021 at Woodbine Racetrack in Toronto.

Annually contested to showcase Canada's finest three-year-old Thoroughbreds, The Queen's Plate is one of the country's premier sporting events and North America's oldest continuously run stakes horse race.

Details regarding attendance and ticket sales will be announced in the coming months, along with Woodbine's full Thoroughbred stakes schedule for the 2021 meet, which is expected to begin on Saturday, April 17.

LEARN MORE

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Tall Dark Stranger was the best

Tall Dark Stranger, a three year-old male pacer and the only harness horse in 2020 to exceed \$1 million, was named 2020 Horse of the Year at the annual Dan Patch Awards on January 16.

Tall Dark Stranger won 11 of 13 starts for trainer Nancy Takter and his driver Yannick Gingras. Before he was acknowledged as Horse of the Year, he was also named the Pacer of the Year. In Horse of the Year voting,



Tall Dark Stranger should have been unanimous, but he attracted just 89 votes, with Party Girl Hill getting 29, and Gimpazee 6. The four year-old Gimpazee, who won 8 of 11 races went home as the Trotter of the Year for driver Brian Sears and trainer Marcus Melander.

Dexter Dunn was named the Driver of the Year. Takter took home the bling as Trainer of the Year and was pleased to share honours with her great pacer.

"He's just the toughest horses ever," Takter said. "I'm going to have to add smart to that, too, because he figured out what this is all about. He knew that he was supposed

to be first, and he made sure that he was first. Where 'heart of a champion' is in the dictionary, you will find a picture of Tall Dark Stranger."

Tall Dark Stranger is owned by Toronto's Marvin Katz, Crawford Farms Racing, Caviart Farms, and Howard Taylor. Katz also co-owns Kissin In The Sand, which won as Older Female Pacer.

The following is a look at the 2020 Dan Patch Award division winners. Listed drivers were either the horse's regular driver or won at least one Grand Circuit final with the horse.



TWO-YEAR-OLD MALE PACER PERFECT STING, colt

Races: 10-10-0-0 Purses: \$534,300 Mark: 1:49.2 at Red Mile

TWO-YEAR-OLD FEMALE PACER

FIRE START HANOVER

Races: 13-8-2-0 Purses: \$592,562 Mark: 1:50.3 at Red Mile

HORSE OF YEAR, PACER OF YEAR, THREE-YEAR-OLD MALE PACER

TALL DARK STRANGER, colt

Races: 13-11-1-0 Purses: \$1.30 million Mark: 1:47.1 at Meadowlands

THREE-YEAR-OLD FEMALE PACER PARTY GIRL HILL

Races: 16-15-0-1 Purses: \$880,345 Mark: 1:47.2 at Red Mile

OLDER MALE PACER

BETTOR'S WISH, 4-year-old stallion

Races: 13-6-3-2 Purses: \$685,432 Mark: 1:47.3 at Meadowlands

OLDER FEMALE PACER

KISSIN IN THE SAND, 5-year-old

Races: 12-8-1-0 Purses: \$491,984 Mark: 1:47.4 at Meadowlands

TWO-YEAR-OLD MALE TROTTER VENERATE, colt

Races: 10-5-0-3 Purses: \$772,914 Mark: 1:51.4 at Red Mile

TWO-YEAR-OLD FEMALE TROTTER

ANOKA HANOVER

Races: 14-10-1-1 Purses: \$587,758 Mark: 1:52.3 at Meadowlands

THREE-YEAR-OLD MALE TROTTER

AMIGO VOLO, gelding

Races: 15-9-1-2 Purses: \$939,498 Mark: 1:50.2 at Dover Downs (world record)

THREE-YEAR-OLD FEMALE TROTTER RAMONA HILL

Races: 10-6-1-1 Purses: \$915,615 Mark: 1:50.1 at Meadowlands

TROTTER OF YEAR, OLDER MALE TROTTER GIMPANZEE, 4-year-old stallion

Races: 11-8-1-1 Purses: \$980,964 Mark: 1:50 at Meadowlands

OLDER FEMALE TROTTER

MANCHEGO, 5-year-old

Races: 13-6-2-2 Purses: \$599,451 Mark: 1:49.3 at Plainridge Park (world record)

DOWN THE STRETCH PODCAST

On Apple, Google, Spotify, Stitcher, iHeartRADIO and wherever you get your podcasts

December 14: #48

This podcast presents a wide range of horse racing stories. There was a huge Pick-5 payoff at Mohawk as well as two legs of the Valedictory Series and two more of the Niagara series. Ever wonder what a track announcer does when he can't see any of the horses? We've got a minimalist race call from the Meadowlands. **Shannon Henry** tells us how her husband Trevor and seven other thoughtful drivers will be donating all their winnings so that children can get gifts for Christmas. Get ready to sing along to songs with walking themes as we hear how **Adriano Sorella** lost 140 pounds in less than 8 months. Ever heard of a recall in a thoroughbred race? Neither have we...well until this week at a track in England. And if your ears can handle it, this **Down The Stretch** podcast gives you a twisted version of the 12 Days of Christmas.

December 21: #49

Besides races from Mohawk, Woodbine, Churchill Downs, Mahoning Valley, and Tampa Bay Downs, this **Down The Stretch** podcast has 5 fascinating features:

- 1) The Passing of the great **Awesome Again**
- 2) Horsewoman **Heather Young** re-united with a wonderful horse named Pieceoftherock after 8 years
- 3) **Jody Jamieson** gives harness driving tips
- 4) A chat with **Eurico Rosa da Silva** about his gut-wrenching book
- 5) ...and how do you cheer for your horse?

December 28: #50

This is the 50th and last **Down The Stretch** podcast of 2020. Woodbine CEO **Jim Lawson** defends his controversial tweet that challenged the government's stoppage of horse racing. Sam-Son Farm is selling off many of its broodmares, all of them in foal, and **David Whitford** identifies some great ones. **Sylvain Filion** won the final race at Mohawk...and many others during the season. Looking back on the year in racing, several industry players picked out their favourite races. And there's one race at Los Alamitos that caller **Michael Wrona** won't be putting on his résumé. Find out why in this **Down The Stretch** Podcast.

January 11: #51

In the first podcast of 2021, Peter Gross has a wide-ranging series of stories. There's **Jon Stettin**, whose podcast is called After the Wire and not only does he comment on some of the best racing stories of 2020, he tells **Down The Stretch** how he hit a Pick-6 that paid over half a million dollars. Thanks to **Joe Tilley Sports**, we have clips from **Eurico Rosa da Silva** and writer **Bruce McDougall**; the latter talking about Riding For Freedom, the wonderful book he wrote with da Silva, who walks us through some of his greatest victories. Contributor **Garnet Barnsdale** is up for an O'Brien Award for a story he wrote and he handicaps his chances against **Chris Lomon**. We've got a head-scratching story about newlywed jockeys **Katie Davis** and **Trevor McCarthy** who decided to ride in New York for the winter only to find that there's this ridiculous rule that if two jockeys who are married to each other are in the same race, their horse must be coupled in the betting. And last week at Turfway Park, jockey **Akifumi Kato** won a race. This got our attention because Kato is...69.

January 18: # 52

This podcast has six storylines. **Danny Vella** explains why Lasix is not a bad thing. **Ray Paulick** tells us about the Ray Paulick Report and why the Ontario government made a mistake with the horse racing file. Harness horse owner, **Mike Tanev** has a unique point of view on the stoppage of racing. We meet **Ferrin Peterson** who is both a jockey and a veterinarian. The groom is the foundation of the entire industry and two of them – **Tanya Mitchell** and **Brady Jackson** tell us what it feels like to be nominated for an O'Brien. And we also have the very weird story of a horse with a nasty name.

ODDITIES & ENTITIES



This is a shot of the stunning two year-old filly, Sodashi, who won the 72nd running of the Hanshin Juvenile Fillies Stakes in Japan on December 13. She is the first white horse to win a Japanese Grade 1 race and this win kept her undefeated through her first 4 starts



Horsewoman Sydney Weaver got a nice surprise at Christmas!



The 5th race at Turf Paradise on January 7 was at a mile for 7 maiden fillies and mares. The 7-5 favourite was She's a Lady Griz and she was ridden to victory by Akifumi Kato. Kato did this on his 69th birthday and in doing so, recorded a pari-mutuel victory in each of the last 50 years. She's a Lady Griz is trained by his daughter, Kaylyn Kato and paid \$4.90 to win. This was Akifumi Kato's 2,033 racing victory.

The buzz from Zia Park

It's always nice to get a little buzz on at Christmas, but not the type at Zia Park in New Mexico. Before the races got underway on December 22, assistant starter Jamie Aldavez was found in possession of an electrical device and he was immediately suspended and barred from the grounds.

The electrical device was discovered during a search by the Lea County Drug Enforcement Agency. These things are known as buzzers. They can deliver a shock to the neck or belly of a horse, causing it to run faster. The suspicion is that Aldavez was holding the stinger for the purpose of handing it off to a rider.

Zia Park, a racetrack and casino in Hobbs owned by Penn National Gaming, runs a mixed meet of thoroughbreds and quarter horses.

DANISH DYNIFORMER

DYNIFORMER –
DANISH WILDCAT, BY DANEHILL

.....
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2021 Fee: \$2,500 (Canadian Funds)



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Watch for his first runners, racing at 2 in 2021.

2021 Fee: \$2,500 (Canadian Funds)



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