

# DOWN THE STRETCH

CANADA'S MOST INFORMATIVE AND ENTERTAINING HORSE RACING NEWSPAPER



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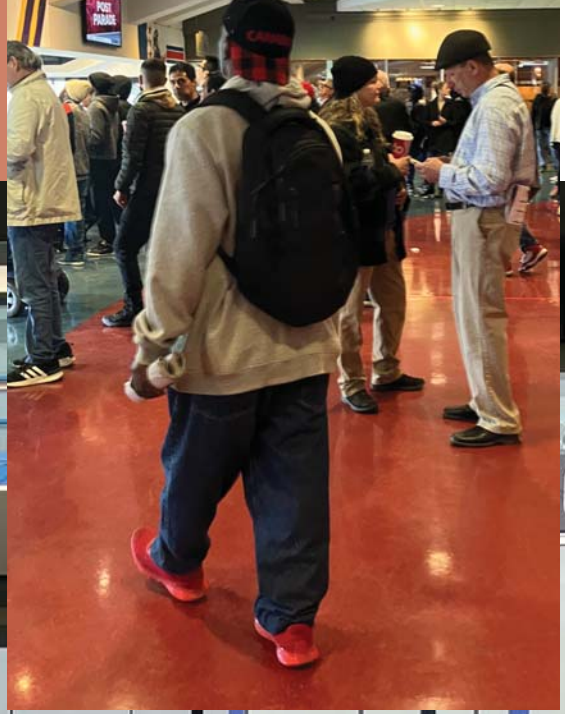
Jason Chrisjohn



The Woodbine travelling mug



# Woodbine Opening Day



Race 3?  
I have no idea!



Jeff Bratt interviewed Jason Hoyte, the season's first winning jockey.



# CHICKS DIG THE HORSE RACING WRITERS



Our editor flanked by Emma-Jayne Wilson and Laura Trotter

The opening of the thoroughbred season at Woodbine got me wandering inside my afflicted brain, bringing back memories of extraordinary and unforgettable racetrack moments. When I was a reporter at Citytv, I made great friends with a man named Clint Nickerson, who loved betting the ponies. It was June 27, 1981, and Clint and I were at Woodbine on the day of the Queen's Plate Trial. I had come to bet on Duns Scotus, but by the featured race, I was tapped and had to beg Clint to lend me \$10. I put the ten on Duns Scotus who won, and I cashed exactly \$30. I'm not a triactor player, but I decided to pour all my winnings into the last race tri. I loved a horse called Royal Centurian who had post 12 in a grass race that started at the far west corner of the course out towards the airport. The jockey was Hugo Dittfach. Clint pitched in for a quarter share of my wagers and, though I cannot recall what I did last Wednesday, I do remember it finished Royal Centurian (30-1) Millgate Manor (11-1) and Bugs Buddy (7-2). The tri paid \$6,990. I gave Clint \$2000, tipped the cashier \$100 (and subsequently dated her for a year).

Clint died in 2017. Jim McKenny and I flew to Victoria for the celebration of Clint's life. Clint loved Saratoga's Grand Slam bet, where you pick to show in 3 races, then

select the winner in the 4<sup>th</sup> leg. So as a tribute to him (well actually, just as a function of my gambling addiction), I placed a few bets on the Saratoga Grand Slam that afternoon. While many friends and associates sat around his golf club dining room, I was parked outside, watching races on my phone. When my 4 horses all came in, my Grand Slam redeemed me for about \$400. I've always wondered if there had been a guiding hand from above.

Not to be excessively morbid here, but the death of another friend also has a horse racing narrative to it. For reasons I would rather not divulge, I ended up driving taxi in Brampton in the early 90s, after a long stint on TV. One day, parked at the train station waiting for my next \$2 fare, I saw that the guy in the cab beside me was reading a racing form. I became close friends with Jim Heggie. In fact, for a few months, we shared a rented home. Jim might have been the only horse player on the planet less competent than me. He bet only favourites and rarely cashed. He was often unable to cough up his share of the rent and eventually moved back to his parents' home. One night, his other friend, Mark, called me in hysterics,

"Jim is dead!" he wailed. Jim had attended a field party, got drunk, passed out and was run over by a car. When Mark calmed down, I proposed a certain posthumous

tribute. We drove to Greenwood, bought \$2 to win on every horse in the 3<sup>rd</sup> race and kept the one winning ticket. Before the visitation, we gave the ticket to the funeral director who slipped it into a pocket of Jim's jacket. Jim Heggie, who rarely bet anything but favourites, was buried with a live ticket on a 7-1 winner.

Saratoga has always been a place for great horse racing stories. On August 1, 2013, in the company of Clint and Jim McKenny, I was, typically, losing badly and it was making me feel miserable. In the 7<sup>th</sup> race, I saw two horses that screamed out to me – Gamblin Fever and Torment. It was just a 5-horse race at a mile on the grass and neither of those two were favoured. I ignored any of my handicapping intuition and pounded those two in exactors, daily doubles and pick-3s. Incredibly, Gamblin Fever (Abel Lezcano) and Torment (José Ortiz) hit the finish line together and, after several minutes, a dead heat for the win was declared between the two. My exactors were worth about \$70, my doubles got me back over \$150, and I had a pair of pick-3s worth more than \$300.

Then there was McKenny's huge score at Saratoga. This was back in 2007. It was July 28 and McKenny had bet an insane pick-3 using mostly impossible longshots. His historic triumph started in the 4<sup>th</sup> race when Cornelio Velasquez delivered the 3-year-old Fresh Episode in a 6-furlong dash. Fresh Episode was 47-1 and paid \$97 to win. Jim hit the exactor twice and because it paid \$635, he had to attend the IRS window causing him to be shut out for the next race. Again, it was Cornelio Velasquez winning and this time, his horse, Blackfoot Trail paid \$63. I distinctly remember McKenny screaming, "Go Corny!" all the way down the stretch as his longshot rallied from the middle of the field to win the 6-furlong race by a length. McKenny was alive with 3 tickets to the final leg. As we watched this race unfold and the horses were in mid-stretch, we could see that Monster Drive, ridden by John Velazquez was grinding slowly, but inevitably made it to the lead. Even though it was the 7-5 favorite, Monster Drive completed Jim's monster pick-3 to the tune of \$10,994.

That night in our hotel room, he tossed his winnings on the bed and declared, "Help yourselves boys!"

And there is a horse racing story about me told by a much more famous person. Keith Pelley was recently named CEO and President of Maple Leafs Sports and Entertainment. Before that he was President of the European Golf Tour and before that, CEO of Rogers Media. As per the latter, when he arrived at the Rogers building on his first day, he made a point of coming to my office at 680 News, standing at the door and smirking at me like the cat that ate the canary. Sometime in the early 1980s, after graduating from Ryerson, a teenaged Pelley was invited to intern at Citytv. He was assigned to the sports department, of which I was in charge.

"I remember the very first day I met you," he said. "We all got into a CityPulse car and went straight to Greenwood!"

I think that proves that an occasional trip to the racetrack can help shape your future career and be a fundamental building block in the running of major corporations.

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# Sofia Vives Dominates Woodbine Opening Day 2024

“V” is for Vives, and it also symbolizes “5” – the number of winners Sofia Vives delivered on the first day of the 129 scheduled race dates at Woodbine in 2024. There is much more about her in this story, but let’s start chronologically.

Before the first race, Woodbine CEO Mike Copeland stood on the tarmac looking at Woodbine’s expensive new infield video screen. This will be Copeland’s first full year running the track, and let’s just say he was buoyant.



Michael Copeland  
WEG CEO

“I am unbelievably optimistic,” he said. “Woodbine is such a special place. We do such a great job with racing and everything around racing. This year, we have an incredible opportunity. There will be millions more people on the site with the new casino that’s opening. We have a new way to reach people with horse racing being part of single event sports betting. We’ve got new spaces within the grandstand – our Stella Terrace and our new Turf Lounge. There is nothing like being at the track in the summer.”

As for the new video screen – “That’s an indication of where we’re going, being best in class,” said Copeland. “It’s emblematic – a brand new state-of-the art video board that will bring images and information to people in a great way. It’s a beacon for us here. We always strive to do better.”

It was a good crowd at Woodbine for the opener and they set a wagering record. Many were tempted by the offer of a free Woodbine travel mug.

Jason Chrisjohn proudly showed his freebie to the camera.

“I’m very excited about this. My wife is going to love it,” he said. “I love Opening Day. I used to come here with my father when I was a kid.”



Jason Chrisjohn



Gary Turpin

It’s likely Gary Turpin would have attended without the mug incentive.

“I’ve come to Opening Day for the last 40 years,” he said. “I do like the mug. It’s really solid. It’s going to last a long time.”

At Woodbine, not just for the hot beverage container, was Ontario Premier Doug Ford.



Doug Ford

“I love Woodbine. I love the people here. It’s the #1 employer in Etobicoke,” said Ford, hitting all the right notes. “I still represent this riding as MPP. My brother represented here. My father represented and my nephew represented. This is going to be a great Opening Day for the thoroughbreds, not just the racetrack, but the billion-dollar expansion. It’s a destination now. Everyone in the world when they come to Toronto, they’re going to visit Woodbine.”

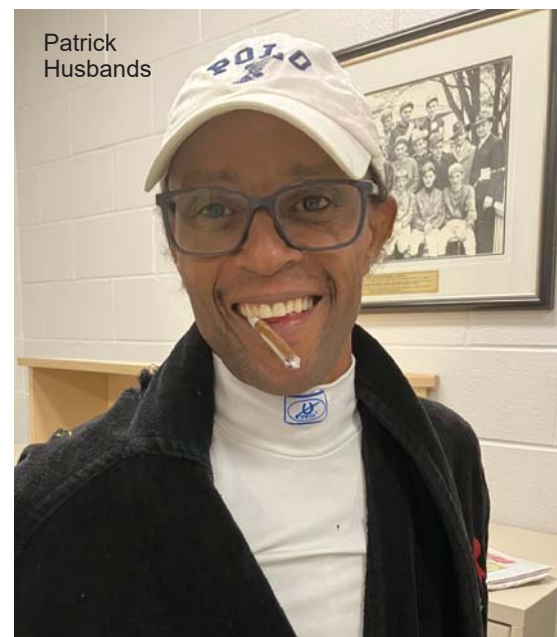
In the jocks’ room, *Down The Stretch* hooked up with Patrick Husbands, who, only days before was told he would be inducted into the Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame.

“I found out last Thursday,” he said. “It’s a great honour. You work hard and you always get rewards in the end. It’s a great feeling. To my followers, owners, trainers, grooms, all my supporters, I want to say thanks again.”

Husbands, now in his 35<sup>th</sup> year of professional race riding, warmed up for the Woodbine meet with a dozen mounts at Gulfstream, winning twice, both times aboard horses trained by Mark Casse.

“This is the second year I’ve done this,” says Husbands,

“because Woodbine started back late. To come up here in the cold with all the steel in my body, it didn’t make any sense. I went to Barbados for the winter to give my body a chance to



Patrick Husbands

recover from all the broken bones. Then I headed to Miami, and I’m going to do this every year.”

In recent years, to preserve his body, Husbands has become very selective and rarely rides every race on a card. That will not compromise his competitive spirit.

“Every time I come to Woodbine, I always have my game plan on,” he says. “I always ride every race the same and I look forward to the end of the meet to be in one piece while making everybody happy.”

It’s a tradition for *Down The Stretch* to chat with Emma-Jayne Wilson on Opening Day. This is Wilson’s 20<sup>th</sup> year in the saddle and there is at least one important statistic she is barreling down on. The legendary Julie Korne rode horses that earned \$90,126,584. Wilson started 2024 with \$89,180,276.



Emma-Jayne Wilson

"I don't know if I'm chasing Julie. I'm just doing my thing," says Wilson. "I love the game. I ride hard and I just want to keep riding hard. I guess, happily, I'm closing in."

It will be a special moment for Wilson, who recalls getting a call from Krone.

"I had ridden maybe a year or so and my phone rang. It was Julie Krone on the other end and I was speechless. She discussed my riding style, asked about my frame of mind and could I come to California? When I realized I had Julie on the other end, I found a pen and started writing. I filled out a scrap of paper. I filled in the margins and the sides – any word from a rider of her caliber, let alone a trail blazer in her own right. It was an amazing conversation."

So, on to the racing. The first heat was at 5 furlongs for maiden fillies and mares who could be claimed for \$10,000. Jason Hoyte took the 3-year-old Hobby Class right to the front and was never challenged, winning by an easy 2 lengths in :59.59. Tedston Holder is the trainer, and he shares ownership with David Benjamin Bloom.

"My horse had some speed," said Hoyte, "and the race didn't look that tough. She used her speed, and we were laughing all the way."

It was pointed out that Hoyte was now the leading rider at Woodbine.



Jason Hoyte

"It's a good feeling...for 25 minutes," he quipped. "I do think I will do very good this year."

Hoyte's 25-minute observation was bang on. Now it was time for the Sofia Vives show. Vives rode the 2<sup>nd</sup> race winner, Summer Snow (\$3.60) for trainer Tony Gattellaro, then scored in the 3<sup>rd</sup> with the Josie Carroll-trained Birthday Munnings (\$4.20) and

completed her natural hat trick by guiding Rock to Fame to the 4<sup>th</sup> race winner's circle. This 3-year-old colt is trained by Mark Casse and paid \$4.80. The all Vives pick-3 was just \$9.35 for a \$1 wager.

Vives won for the 4<sup>th</sup> time in the 6<sup>th</sup> race, delivering Lady Onyx (\$7.30) for Casse, and if the bettors were aware that the Sovereign Award-winning apprentice was having a sensational day, they didn't execute that information in the day's feature, the \$125,000 Star Shoot Stakes for 3-year-old fillies at 6 furlongs. Vives was aboard Sabatini, a maiden against winners, and the odds at post-time were 13-1. Good thing horses don't know their odds – Vives had Sabatini stalking the two front runners until the stretch, took



Sofia Vives' 5th win came with the Josie Carroll-trained Sabatini

her to the middle of the track and easily surged to the lead, winning by over 2 lengths in 1:10.02."

"I could feel at the 3/8<sup>th</sup> pole I had a lot in the tank," said Vives. "It was a perfect trip. She has a lot of heart."

Vives' 5 wins tie a record for Opening Day, set in 2018 by Rafael Hernandez which means, right from the start, her plan is on time.

"We worked hard all winter," she says. "I got on horses every day. When we came back, we wanted to rock it and, God willing, we did it. It's a very good day."

It was also a very good day for the suits that look at the betting. The fans poured more than \$4.5 million through the windows or through their phones. That is the most ever bet on an Opening Day at Woodbine.

## Garnet's Best Angle



For years, Garnet Barnsdale has been reminding us of what he considers the greatest angle in horse racing – 2<sup>nd</sup> time out. Barnsdale argues that players should not be discouraged if a horse's first race is not impressive. There is a distinct likelihood the animal learned something and will perform better the next time. On Opening Day at Woodbine, Barnsdale's angle could have made us all rich. It certainly helped his bankroll.

The first race was a 5-furlong dash for fillies and mares with a \$10,000 claim price. Barnsdale didn't spend an eternity determining his choice. "I opened the first race. I looked at the program," said Barnsdale. "Number 5, Hobbie Class was the only 2<sup>nd</sup> time starter in the race."

In her only previous race, Hobbie Class had finished an unimpressive 9<sup>th</sup> some 21 lengths from the winner against much more expensive company. Second time out, under Jason Hoyte, the filly went right to the front, galloped through easy fractions of :23.24 and :46.87 and won easily by 2 lengths in :59.59. Hobbie Class paid \$12.70. Barnsdale cashed a win ticket and his \$6 on the double starting with the 2<sup>nd</sup> time starter redeemed him for \$90. It got better. Barnsdale bet the late pick-4 for 60 cents. He hit the first winner, Miss Vyvyanne and because Sabatini in the 8<sup>th</sup> race, the Star Shoot Stakes, was a 2<sup>nd</sup> time starter, he included her on his ticket. That was Sofia Vives' 5<sup>th</sup> win of the afternoon and Sabatini paid a lusty \$28.70. After Star Candy (Patrick Husbands), his key in the 9<sup>th</sup> won easily, Barnsdale was live with 4 in the final leg. Very late in the stretch, it was Clarayouthebest (Sahin Civaci) surging past rivals to win by 1 1/4 lengths. Clarayouthebest, trained by Darwin Banach was 8-1, but Barnsdale put the 3-year-old on the ticket because it was a 2<sup>nd</sup> time starter. The 20-cent pick-4 was worth \$237.31 and Barnsdale had it 3 times. He emphasizes that all 3 of his 2<sup>nd</sup> time starters on Opening Day were the *only* horses in each race performing for the 2<sup>nd</sup> time.



# 2024 Kentucky Derby: Amazing Finish



he is pulling the reins dramatically to his right as Forever Young is bearing out against Sierra Leone. For those who were angered that Sierra Leone was not demoted, the proof is that neither the jockey, Ryusei Sakai on Forever Young nor the trainer, Yoshito Yahagi lodged a claim of foul. They must have been under the impression that Gaffalione was just doing the best he could to save himself and his horse from danger.

## On Oaks Friday, Woodbine-based trainer Marty Drexler pulled off the biggest win of



his career when the 6-year-old mare, Fast as Flight surprised at 20-1 in the \$400,000 Modesty Stakes. Fast as Flight was ridden perfectly by José Ortiz in the 9-furlong grass race. Ortiz kept the mare along the inside for most of the trip, came into the stretch a clear 2<sup>nd</sup> to Heavenly Sunday (Florent Geroux) and was strong to the wire, finishing a length ahead of the late-closing Sparkle Blue (Jorge Ruiz). This was Fast as Flight's 5<sup>th</sup> win from 19 races, and she paid \$43.90.

Fast as Flight ran 17 times for her initial Canadian owners, Jim and Susan Hill. But Elliott Logan, whose TEC Racing owns her now, had eyeballed the filly for awhile,

"We were going to claim her," says Logan. "She was in a claimer back on Pegasus Day at Gulfstream, but she was a vet scratch that day, so we saw her a bit later in the Fasig sale and I bought her at that sale last February for \$105,000."

Was it a surprise to see his newly acquired filly win such a big race?

"I knew she could run with quality horses," says Logan. "This was a definitive step-up from her last race at Gulfstream. When you look at the roster of horses and who you're running against, it's all little intimidating. Marty had confidence that she was training phenomenally going into it. It was an awesome day."

Jockey Ortiz has a well-deserved reputation as a rider who can bring in horses on two-turn grass races. That's certainly what Logan witnessed in the Modesty.

"He did exactly what Marty asked him to do," says Logan. "He said to put her in a pocket to save ground. You could not ask for a better ride."

Drexler's 2023 was his best year as a trainer – he produced 104 winners and over \$3.5 million in earnings, and he's on pace for a much better 2024. Fast as Flight was his 27<sup>th</sup> winner of the year and when Queen Macha won the 7<sup>th</sup> race at Woodbine on May 4, Drexler improved to 28 for 129 starters, and his horses have already banked \$1,181,994.

In 2021, there were 17,998 thoroughbred foals born. Twenty of them made it to Churchill Downs on Saturday May 4 for the \$5,000,000 Kentucky Derby, and 3 of them produced the closest finish of our generation.

Mystik Dan went off at 18-1 under Brian Hernandez, saved ground entering the stretch and opened up by as many as 4 lengths. But Sierra Leone (Tyler Gaffalione) and Forever Young (Ryusei Sakai) were closing relentlessly in on the middle of the track. The wire came just in time for Mystic Dan, though it took the judges several minutes to determine his nose was in front of Sierra Leone, with Forever Young another snout back in third. The race, on a track rated as fast was timed in 2:03.34, significantly slower than the 2:01.57 of last year's winner, Mage and about 15 lengths behind the all-time mark of 1:59.5 set in 1973 by Secretariat.

The Japanese horse, T O Password, ridden by Kazushi Kimura rallied from 18<sup>th</sup> down the backstretch to finish 5<sup>th</sup>.

Mystik Dan is trained by Ken McPeek, who was a first time Derby winner. The winning jockey, Hernandez had an unforgettable 24 hours – the day before he had won the \$1,500,000 Kentucky Oaks aboard Thorpedo Anna (\$10.98). Hernandez had Mystic Dan buried along the inside, with several horses ahead as the field started to turn for home, and he saw his fortune rise dramatically when the leader, Track Phantom (Joel Rosario) drifted outward.

"When he shot through that spot, he was able to cut the corner and I asked him to go for it," Hernandez said. "He shot off and I'm like, 'Oh man, I've got a big chance to win the Kentucky Derby.'"

How tight was the opening through which Mystic Dan made what turned out to be the winning move? Hernandez admitted his boot struck the rail.

"But I think we can buy another pair of boots," he said.

"Just a brilliant, brilliant, brilliant jockey and ride," McPeek said. "Brian is one of the most underrated jockeys, but not anymore, right?"

According to statistics, this was the 10<sup>th</sup> time a Kentucky Derby has been decided by a nose. The last time it happened, Grindstone nipped Cavonnier in 1996, and the least fun Hernandez had was the excruciating wait for the stewards to

declare the winner.

"The longest few minutes of my life," Hernandez said, after he and Mystic Dan walked in circles while the stunning result was settled. "To see your number flash up to win the Derby, I don't think it will sink in for a while."

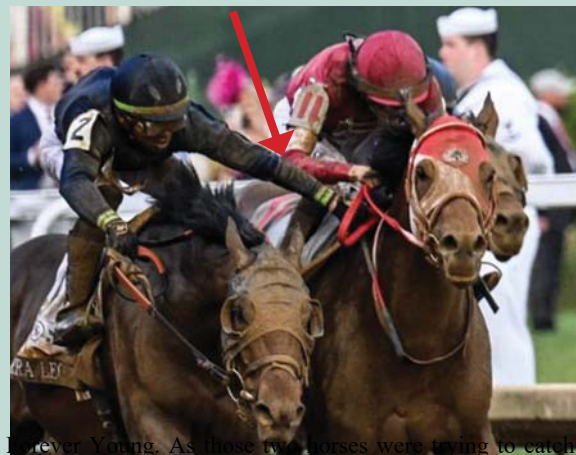
McPeek also trained Thorpedo Anna and is the first conditioner to send out the Oaks and Derby winners on the same weekend since the legendary Ben Jones did it in 1952.

Mystik Dan is owned by cousins Lance and Brent Gasaway and Daniel Hamby III, all from Arkansas. They also bred the horse.

Mystik Dan paid \$39.22 to win and the Mystic Dan-Sierra Leone exactor was a healthy \$258.56.

### Should Sierra Leone have been DQ'd?

One strange aspect of this 150<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Derby is what happened in the stretch between the eventual 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place horses, Sierra Leone and the Japanese-bred



Forever Young. As those two horses were trying to catch Mystic Dan, they came close together and exchanged bumps. The video seems to indicate that Tyler Gaffalione, the jockey on Sierra Leone, thrust out his left hand and made contact with Forever Young. If a jockey purposely grabs another jockey or pulls on any equipment of another horse, that would be grounds for disqualification. However, if you look closely at this image, you can see that Gaffalione is simply trying to protect himself and his horse. Note how

# PERFECT

## TIMBER

PERFECT SOUL (IRE) – TIMBER ICE, BY WOODMAN



### SIRE OF 23% STAKES HORSES FROM STARTERS IN 2023

First Crop: 4YO **TALK TO YA LATER**, Woodbine \$100,000 SW and placed in FIVE 2023 STAKES including the Hendrie S. [G3].

Second Crop: 3YO **Fortyfiveventy** was 3rd in the \$500,000 Woodbine Oaks!

Third Crop: 2YO **Fourfiftyfour** was 3rd in the \$100,000 Victorian Queen S. and \$100,000 South Ocean S.

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Photo by Dave Landry



# Woodbine Stakes

## April 28, \$150,000 Woodstock Stakes:

In 2023, Mark Casse won 24 Stakes races with 21 different horses. Get used to a lot of this. Casse sent out Midnight



Mascot with his favourite jockey, Patrick Husbands in this 6-furlong test for 3-year-olds. Husbands relaxed Midnight Mascot in 4<sup>th</sup> down the backstretch, but had a lot of horse in the stretch, getting the lead with about 70 meters to go and winning by 3/4 of a length in 1:20.71. Midnight Mascot won for the 2<sup>nd</sup> time in 6 tries for his owners Conrad and Penny Manfred and the win price was \$4.10.

## May 4, \$150,000 Whimsical Stakes:

For a 6-furlong race, it was unusual to see 14 fillies and mares in the gate. What was not unusual was that trainer Mark Casse and rider Patrick Husbands combined to

win this. Husbands was teamed with the 4-year-old, Play the Music, and though 8<sup>th</sup> down the backstretch, Play the Music had a ton of gallop in the turn for home,



accelerating with a 4-wide move and burying all her rivals with a powerful stretch run that gave her the victory by an expanding 4 1/4 lengths in 1:10.59. Play the Music is owned by Glassman Racing. She has won 5 times from 12 races and each win has been at a different track. She has also won at Kentucky Downs, Aqueduct, Gulfstream and Tampa Bay. The versatile mare paid \$8.70.

## May 5, \$120,000 Thorncliffe Stakes:

This was the 3<sup>rd</sup> straight Stakes race at Woodbine going to the Casse-Husbands pair. Candy Overload was

the 2<sup>nd</sup> choice in the 8-horse field required to go 5 1/2 furlongs. Husbands was content to have the 6-year-old gelding in 5<sup>th</sup> down the backstretch, about 5 lengths from Jazz Hands (Shane Ellis), who faltered before the field came down the stretch. At that point, Candy Overload had already surged to the lead, and despite a persistent effort from the 2-1 favourite, Flag of Honour



(Emma-Jayne Wilson), Candy Overload prevailed by a half-length in 1:03.54. That \$7 win price looks like a bargain, considering that Candy Overload was shipped in from Turfway Park after winning the \$125,000 Big Daddy Stakes there in March. The horse is now 7 for 23 for his owners Gary Barber, Wachtel Stable, and Pantofel Stable.

# The 2024 King's Plate at Woodbine, Saturday August 17





# RACETRACK HUMOUR

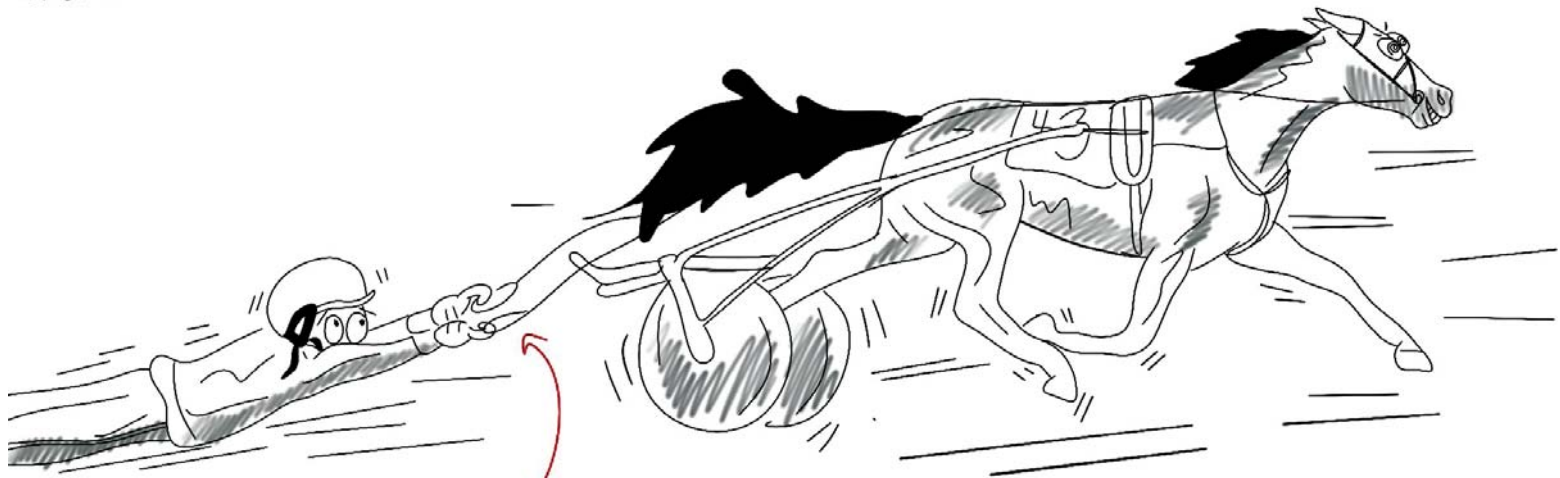


## Perry & Mooch

HARNESS RACING CHRONICLES



later...



**"JUST TWO FINGERS TO DRIVE"**

Cartoon by  
Jessica Hallett

# Sovereign Awards 2024

The 49<sup>th</sup> Sovereign Awards was pretty well a Mark Casse sandwich. He won the first 4 horse-related trophies, then added several more, punctuating his amazing night with a sweep of the 3 finalists for Horse of the Year.

We'll get back to Casse shortly. The evening at the Paramount Event Space in Woodbridge began with perhaps the most heart-warming award of the night – the Special Sovereign given to Robert “Red” McKenzie, who last summer sent out Entitled Star at 25-1 to Century Downs, making him, at 96, the oldest person in Canadian horse racing history to train a thoroughbred winner.



Robert 'Red' McKenzie

“It’s been a long time,” laughed McKenzie. “I’ve been at the racetrack since I was 5 years old. We were at the Southside racetrack in Edmonton.”

If you’re doing the math, that tells us that McKenzie’s interest in racehorses started in the 1930s, and, apparently, he’s not done. Since he set the record in 2023 for being the oldest winning trainer, does he plan to break his own mark when he’s 97 in 2024?

“Oh, I think so,” he said.

Many of us in the crowd that night were pleased when Jennifer Morrison won for Outstanding Writing. Her sto-



Jennifer Morrison



Apprentice Jockey of the Year, Sofia Vives with mom, Maria and dad, Lazaro

ry, *Cat’s Long Way Home* was about a group of horse lovers who tracked down Cool Catomine and probably saved him from a dreadful fate. Cool Catomine won the 2017 Prince of Wales Stakes, but his career took him to low claim races at U.S. tracks.

For the first time, a Sovereign was awarded to an off-track worker and Jennifer Buck from the Highlands Stock Farm in Okotoks, Alberta was the deserving recipient.

Michelle Armata was recognized as the Groom of the Year.

“It’s amazing – I am absolutely shocked, happy, so proud. I’m excited,” said Armata.

In 2016, Armata groomed the filly, Caren, who ended up Horse of the Year.

“She was such a nasty horse,” said Armata. “But we loved her. She wanted to run. She wanted to race. She wanted to fight.”

Then it was time for the Mark Casse tsunami as he swept the first 4 awards for horses. Witwatersrand was the Champion 2-Year-Old Female. My Boy Prince scored as Champion 2-Year-Old Male. Elysian Field got the Sovereign as best 3-Year-Old Female, and King’s Plate Champion, Paramount Prince is the 2023 3-Year-Old

Male. All 4 of those are trained by Casse and all 4 are owned by Gary Barber.

The Casse domination was interrupted when Sean and Dorothy Fitzhenry’s Mendocino Beano was named the Outstanding Broodmare.

About that name –



Sean Fitzhenry

“It’s from a Frank Zappa Song,” informed Sean. “The song is Camarillo Brillo.”

We looked it up. The lyrics are:

“She had the Camarillo Brillo  
Flamin’ out along her head  
I mean her Mendocino bean-o  
By where some bugs had made it red.”

The Fitzhenrys had a second thrilling moment that night as Millie Girl, a mare they bred was named Champion Older Main Track Female. Millie Girl is trained by Catherine Day Phillips.

It was a bittersweet moment for Frank Stronach when his Adena Springs was named Outstanding Breeder. Stronach’s wife, Elfrieda had passed away on March 25.

The first of 2 awards for trainer Josie Carroll occurred when Loyalty won as Champion Female Sprinter. Carroll is also the trainer of the grey, Tyson, who prevailed in the Older Main Track Male category.



Kazushi Kimura

Patches O’Houlihan is the Champion Male Sprinter and the only concern here is that the vote was not unanimous. Patches earned 137 votes to the 61 for Lucky Score and the 31 for Dream Shake. Considering that Patches O’Houlihan won 6 of 7 races, including 4 Stakes, while the other 2 contenders compiled just 3 wins between them, well...never mind. The winning trainer is Bob Tiller, who is good with sprinters. He trained the incomparable Pink Lloyd, a 5-time winner in this category.

Sofia Vives was the obvious winner of the award as Outstanding Apprentice Jockey.

“I am thankful for the opportunities. I am looking to carry on this year and do more great things,” said Vives, who won 100 races at Woodbine in 2023. Vives has a good chance to repeat in this category. She will ride as an apprentice until the end of August.

The Jockey of the Year was also not in doubt as the meet-leading 161 wins by Kazushi Kimura was parlayed into his 3<sup>rd</sup> straight win in this division. He’s also a 2-time Apprentice Sovereign Award winner.

“I really appreciate the support from trainers and owners. I hope I can continue to win and be successful,” said Kimura.

And now some more Casse product.

Fev Rover was named the Champion Female Turf Horse, and Lucky Score galloped off with the Male Turf Horse title. In that category, all 3 nominated horses were trained by Casse. At that point in the evening, Casse had been responsible for 6 trophies. That quickly became 7 when he was named the Outstanding Trainer. Casse attracted 160 votes to the 80 for Kevin Attard and the 21 considerations for Marty Drexler. This is Casse’s 13<sup>th</sup> straight Sovereign as Canada’s best trainer and the 16<sup>th</sup> time he has won this award. And Casse was quite satisfied when Gary Barber was named Owner of the Year.

“He’s given so much to racing, especially in Canada. I would have been shocked if he didn’t win,” said Casse.

If the arithmetic is correct, by this point in the proceedings Mark Casse was instrumental in 8 Sovereign Awards. However, the announcement of Horse of the Year simply impressed upon the gathering Casse’s immense impact on Canadian horse racing. The 3 finalists, as announced by the Jockey Club of

Canada’s Chief Steward Glenn Sikura were Elysian Field, Paramount Prince and Fev Rover. Each one of those is trained by Casse.

It was almost anticlimactic when Fev Rover was named Horse of the Year.

#### All the winners with their vote totals:

2-Year-Old Female:

**Witwatersrand (132)** Tripolina (41) Living Magic (32)

2-Year-Old Male:

**My Boy Prince (156)** Babbo (59) Two Ghosts (39)

3-Year-Old Female:

**Elysian Field (149)** Solo Album (60) Fashionably Fab (45)

3-Year-Old Male:

**Paramount Prince (144)** Patches O’Houlihan (70) Touch’n Ride (47)

Broodmare:

**Mendocino Beano (74)** Sunday Affair (54) Game (31)

Breeder:

**Adena Springs (85)** Anderson Farms (68) Chiefswood Stable (32) Sean

Fitzhenry (32) Sam-Son Farm (32)

Female Sprinter:

**Loyalty (160)** Our Flash Drive (61) Fashionably Fab (39)

Male Sprinter:

**Patches O’Houlihan (137)** Lucky Score (61) Dream Shake (31)

Apprentice Jockey:

**Sofia Vives (162)** Fraser Ably (83) Amanda Vandermeersch (35)

Jockey:

**Kazushi Kimura (162)** Sahin Civaci (75) Rafael Hernandez (28)

Female Turf:

**Fev Rover (148)** Moira (95) Our flash Drive (17)

Male Turf:

**Lucky Score (96)** My Boy Prince (88) Palazzi (30)

Older Main Track Female:

**Millie Girl (152)** Infinite Patience (60) Il Malocchio (39)

Older Main Track Male:

**Tyson (113)** Wolfie’s Dynaghost (100) Treason (29)

Owner:

**Gary Barber (126)** Bruno Schickedanz (71) Chiefswood Stables (27)

Horse of the Year:

**Fev Tover (90)** Paramount Prince (44) Elysian Field (32)

## At the Run for the Roses events, Kazushi Kimura was known as the Kentucky Babe Magnet



# Hall of Fame Class of 2024

In late April, the Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame announced 11 new members who had been voted in by the Hall's Board of Directors.

### Class of 2024 Standardbred Inductees

- Dr. Moira Gunn, DVM - Builder
- Sylvain Filion - Driver
- Bee A Magician - Female Horse
- Dr. Ian Moore, DVM - Trainer
- Ross "Cowboy" Curran - Veteran
- Ed Tracey -Driver

### Class of 2024 Thoroughbred Inductees

- Glen Todd - Builder
- Starship Jubilee - Female Horse
- Patrick Husbands - Jockey

Harness driver, Sylvain Filion, 56, has won over 10,000 races. Filion has won four O'Brien Awards as Canada's top driver (2012, 2013, 2015, 2016) and has won approximately \$140 million in purses. He joins his father Yves and his uncle Herve in the Hall of Fames.

Bee A Magician, the 2013 Horse of the Year in Canada compiled a race record of 45-14-3 in 72 starts that included wins in the Peaceful Way Stakes and the Ontario Sires Stakes Super Final, the Breeders Crown, Hambletonian

per year racing mostly in Ontario, including a personal record of \$3.1 million in 2023. Among the stable stars are Astronomical, Malicious, State Treasurer, Arthur Blue Chip, Rockin In Heaven, Percy Bluechip, Century Farroh,

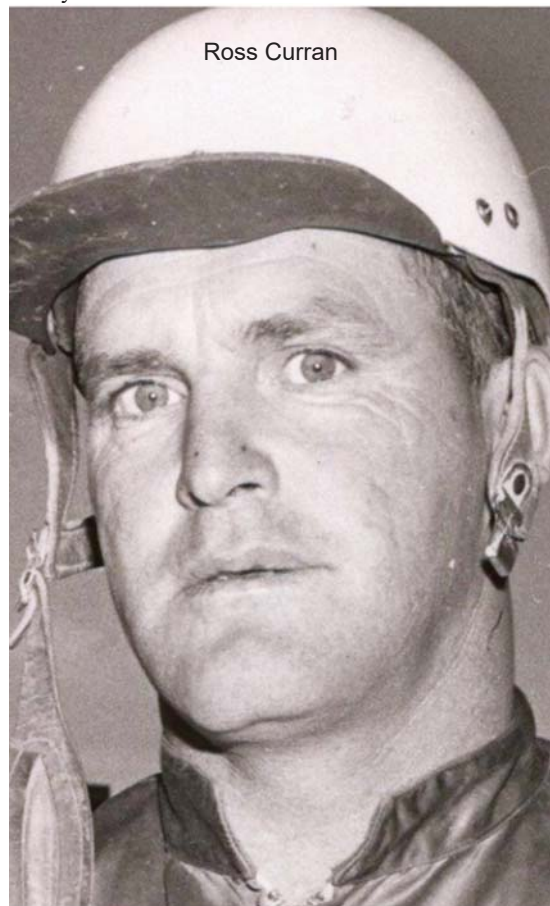
Ed Tracey



Lawless Shadow, Stockade Seelster, Tattoo Artist, and CHRHF 2022 Inductee Shadow Play.

The late Ed Tracey obtained his driving license at age 15. After getting his start in three-heats-a-day race meets in his home province, his passion for harness racing took him to six Canadian provinces and numerous states in the US. Over a span of 55 years, Tracey had 3,168 driving victories and more than \$7.5 million in purse earnings. Tracey was named Alberta Horseman of the Year in 1978,

Ross Curran



and in 1998, he was awarded the Dr. Clara Christie Award for his contribution to Alberta's harness racing industry. A race named in Ed Tracey's honour is held annually at Century Downs in Alberta.

Glenn Todd was an owner, trainer, breeder, builder, innovator, communicator, betting shop owner, employer,

Bee A Magician



Oaks, Elegantimage, Delvin Miller Memorial, Moni Maker, and Simcoe Stakes. She was also crowned Dan Patch Horse of the Year in 2013 and with a perfect 17 for

Dr. Moira Gunn



- Channel Maker - Male Horse
- Danny Vella - Trainer
- Richard Grubb - Veteran

Induction ceremonies for the Class of 2024 will be held August 7, 2024. Additional information will be announced in May.

Dr. Moira Gunn was President of Canada's preeminent

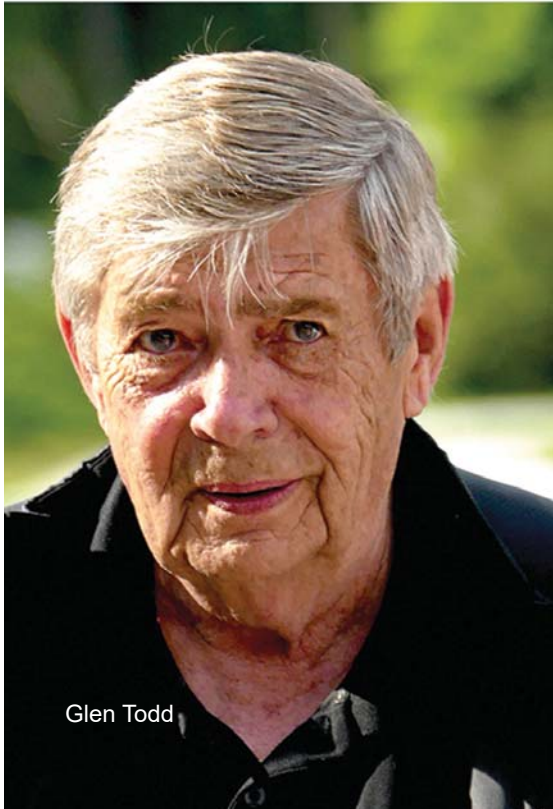
Sylvain Filion



Dave Landry

Dr. Ian Moore





Glen Todd

mentor, and friend. In 2011, he was awarded a Sovereign Award as Canada's Outstanding Owner. Todd promoted and improved the B.C. racing industry. In fact, in 2021, he provided an interest-free \$1-million loan to fund purse money and keep races going at east Vancouver's Hastings Racecourse.

The late Ross Curran began driving horses when he was just 16 and at the age of 20, he won his first driving title at Connaught Park, before going on to win many driving titles, and becoming a leading driver at Mohawk, Greenwood, Garden City, Blue Bonnets, Richelieu



Starship Jubilee

Park, and Rideau Carleton. In his 8,686 career starts, he produced 1,711 recorded winners and had over \$2.7 million in recorded lifetime earnings.

Starship Jubilee was a \$6,500 yearling purchase who went on to earn over \$2 million. Named the 2019 Canadian Horse of the Year and the 2017, 2018 and 2019 Champion



Patrick Husbands

Female Turf Horse in Canada, she is the only horse ever to win the G1 E.P. Taylor and the G1 Woodbine Mile, the latter of which saw her defeat male horses. Starship Jubilee also won the G2 Ballston Spa at Saratoga, the G2 Hillsborough at Tampa Bay Downs, and is the only 3-time winner of the Sunshine Millions Filly and Mare Turf at Gulfstream Park.

Patrick Husbands is into his 31<sup>st</sup> year of riding at Woodbine. He has received 8 Sovereign Awards as Canada's Champion jockey from 1999-2014. He can boast a Triple Crown sweep in 2003 aboard Wando for the late Gustav Schickedanz and trainer Mike Keogh. Proving he is not slowing down, Husbands won the 2023 Plate Trial and King's Plate with Paramount Prince. Throughout



Channel Maker

his spectacular career, Husbands has won 3,630 times, earning \$178,477,012 USD (and counting).

Channel Maker was bred in Ontario by Ivan Dalos. He raced during 8 seasons from 2016-2023 in a career that started under trainer Danny Vella. Channel Maker is the 3<sup>rd</sup> richest Canadian-bred racehorse of all time with earnings of over \$3.9 million. He set the record for the

most Breeders' Cup starts by any single horse – a record 6 times. He won the 2017 Sovereign Award as Canada's champion 3-year-old colt and the 2020 Eclipse Award as North America's top turf male. In 2020, Channel Maker swept 2 prestigious Grade 1 races – the Sword Dancer Stakes and the Joe Hirsch Turf Classic, to become an Eclipse Award winner as Turf Male Horse.

Danny Vella is a two-time Sovereign Award winning trainer with 135 career Stakes wins. He won the Queen's Plate in 1994 with Basqueian and in 2012 with Strait of Dover. In 1994, Vella captured 19 Woodbine Stakes and



Danny Vella

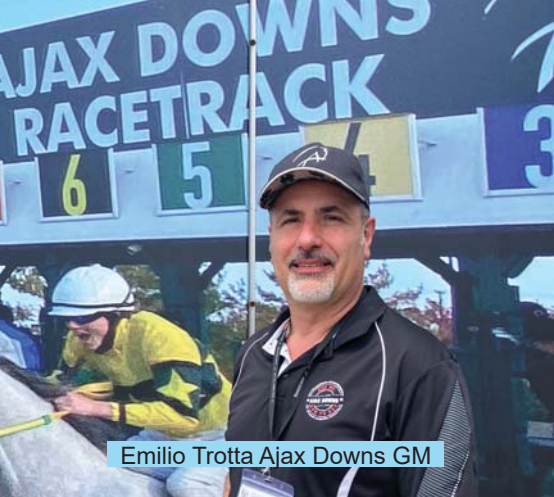
in 1996, added 15 more Stakes wins. During a 3-year span, he took down 58 added money events. Vella's training career concluded in 2022 with 5,740 starts, 869 wins, and earnings of \$39,438,727.

Richard Grubb began his riding career in 1966. At the age of 16, he won the first race he ever rode and finished his career with 1,607 trips to the winner's circle. In 1967, his 230 wins made him Canada's leading jockey. That same year, he won seven straight races on an eight-race card, a feat never duplicated.



Richard Grubb

Grubb won over 100 major races and was presented the Avelino Gomez Memorial Award in 1997. Following his retirement from racing in 1989, he became a senior Steward with the Ontario Racing Commission, a position in which he served for 24 years.



Emilio Trotta Ajax Downs GM

# Ajax Opening Day



Chantelle Bourgeois



Ralph Pearson

Wednesday May 8 was the first of 25 cards of quarter horse racing at Ajax Downs. With only 5 races carded, the elephant in the room was that there weren't enough horses in the room, an issue GM Emilio Trotta addressed.

"I am hoping it's going to be a good year," he said. "The industry has been hit hard with the horse population thing, and we're in a steady state. We're hoping for the growth to come in next year. We actually had a winter storm at the end of March and that set some people back on the quarter horse side."

Trotta is excited about some cross pollination that will occur at his track.

"There will be more battle of the breeds racing," he says. "Last year we had a battle of the breeds race. It was a hook race. They went about 4 furlongs, and we had quarter horses and thoroughbreds in that race, and a quarter horse actually won that race. It gives the racing fan something different and new."

Trotta tipped us on a horse named Hot to Trotta in the

"It's very satisfying for me," says Ramiro. "When Alexis started last year, at the beginning I was a little nervous. Now he shows me he's a fine rider."

"It makes me feel really happy. It's satisfying to be able to enjoy this beautiful moment with my dad," says Alexis. "Every single time that we get the chance to compete against each other, we both give everything we have."

In that 3<sup>rd</sup> race, Dad rode # 1 Miss Orient Express, and son was aboard # 2



Da Zoom. Halfway through the 300 yarder, the two horses were side by side, but Miss Orient Express tired while Da Zoom pressed on to win. Castillo's disappointment was tempered by his son's success.

"I feel proud. It's my son," says Dad. "I did my best, but sometimes he's

amazing, better than me."

Da Zoom is a 4-year-old gelding, trained by Lauren Spada and owned by her father Craig and partner Rick Crispi. Da Zoom paid \$4.20.

*Down The Stretch* picked up a conversation with 92-year-old Ralph Pearson who has pretty well experienced the entire history of quarter horse racing in this province.

"1968," he answers when asked how long he's been in this game. "It was just tremendous. A whole bunch of great people who loved quarter horses. They didn't have the money to buy thoroughbreds, so they bought quarter horses. We raced at Albert Greco's farm up on highway 27 on a Sunday night long before this place opened. Then Picov gave us a piece of land."

Quarter horse racing at Picov Downs began in 1969, and in 2006, the sport leaped into more comfortable digs when Ajax Downs opened.

"The old place was a wonderful place to run horses," says Pearson. "I had some great horses throughout my life. I guess I have had 5 Stakes horses. Some people never get even one. I have enjoyed every minute."

The 5<sup>th</sup> race on opening day turned out to be a tribute to perhaps the most significant pioneer of the sport. The 4-horse in the 220-yard dash was Stormin Norman, named for Norm Picov, considered the "Father of Quarter Horse Racing." Stormin Norman went off at 17-1, but under Rachel Isaacs stormed to the lead in mid stretch and won handily. Trained by Joe Tavares for the Picov Cattle Company, Stormin Norman produced the biggest payoff of the afternoon – \$36.60.

Ajax Downs presents live racing every Wednesday until October 23, except when racing on Sundays, June 16, July 21, August 25, and September 1. There will also be racing on Monday, October 14.



Alexis Sanchez & Ramiro Castillo



A Rushn Lily



Cassandra Jeschke

first race, but that 3-year-old finished 3<sup>rd</sup> to the winner, A Rushn Lily, giving rider Cassandra Jeschke the early lead in the jockeys' race.

"I have been riding here since 2013. This is my 11<sup>th</sup> year," says Jeschke. "Chantelle is the reason I keep coming back. Chantelle and I have been together since I started riding and she's always got new babies, and if I think of retiring, she says, 'No we've got more.' It's so much fun. It's hard to say no."

A Rushn Lily paid \$6 to win, but her trainer, Chantelle Bourgeois harbours no illusion about being the leading trainer at Ajax Downs.

"Leading trainer is a numbers game, and I don't have the numbers," she said. "So that won't happen, but winning the first race of the year is a perfect start."

Bourgeois might have watched the race with reserved optimism, considering the mental makeup of her 4-year-old mare.

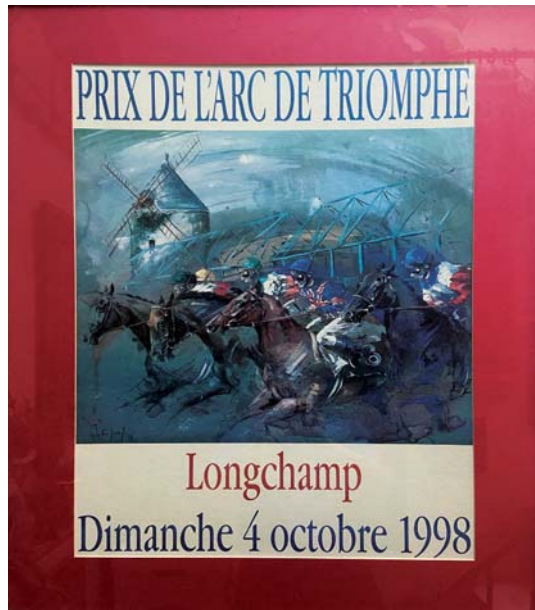
"It went exactly as planned. She breezed very well for us," said Bourgeois. "I figured if she could keep her brain, because she's a hot-headed red head, we'd be good to go, and she ran amazing. And Cassandra is the best."

One unique aspect at Ajax Downs is the father and son racing together – 49-year-old Ramiro Castillo and his 23-year-old son Alexis Sanchez, both from Mexico were in the 3<sup>rd</sup> race side by side in the starting gate. This is an experience both men love.



With saddle cloths of all participants

# John Stapleton's Memorabilia



the table that had us gasping in admiration. He showed us near-pristine programs from both Northern Dancer's 1964 Kentucky Derby win and the Dancer's victory that same year in the Queen's Plate. Stapleton, just 13 at the time, admits he didn't actually attend either race.

"I watched the '64 Derby on TV," he says. "And I couldn't get my dad to take me out to the races for the '64 Plate. So, I didn't attend either but watched them avidly on the TV."

So how did he get those programs?  
 "I got one from Lou Cauz," he says. "He had an extra of the Plate, and we made some sort of financial arrangement, but I bought the Derby one at auction, I think for \$25."

The Northern Dancer programs are just the tip of Stapleton's horse racing memorabilia.

"I have a Rolling Rocks advertising poster from the 1960s," he says. "Rolling Rocks Premium Beer. It's got Northern Dancer Kentucky Derby winner 1974 with saddle #7 and then a picture of Rolling Rocks beer and a picture of Churchill Downs in the background."

Even though Northern Dancer is unrivalled as the greatest sire in the world, Stapleton has discovered that one pays less for Dancer souvenirs than other star horses.

"Ironically, the American auctions are actually cheaper for Canadian stuff," he points out "In the U.S., people tend to pay more for Secretariat or Kelso and leave the Canadian horse memorabilia at a lower price."

Stapleton identifies more horse racing products from his collection.

"I also bought a case of Derby glasses," he says, "and 4 of them are still un-opened. If you looked at the back of the program, you can see that Viceroy Cigarettes sponsored the Derby that year."

(Back in those days, it was common for a jockey to steady his nerves with a good smoke just before post.)

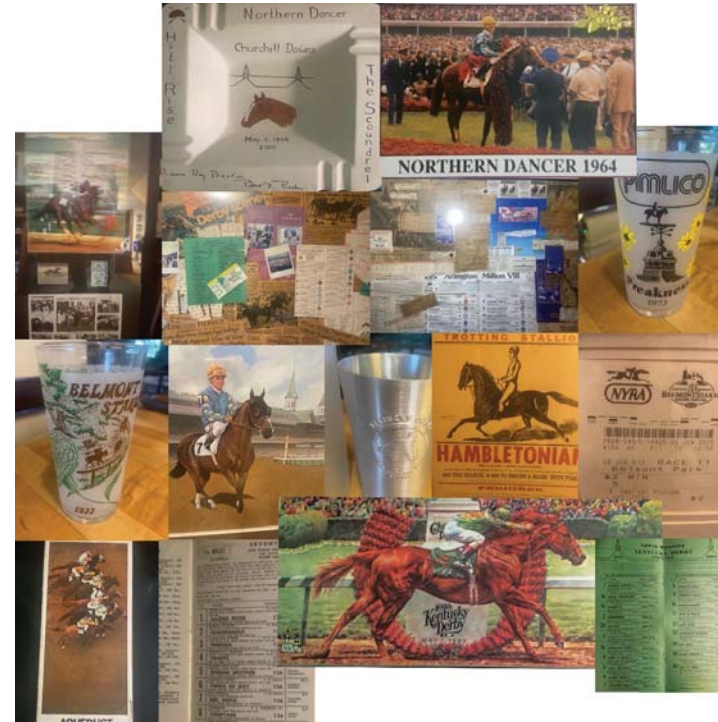
"In 2007, Woodbine brought Bill Hartack up," continues Stapleton. "I got him to sign all these things. I got a Wood Memorial program where he rode Quadrangle and he signed that for me. He said that Quadrangle was going to be his Derby horse but when Shoemaker didn't want Northern Dancer, Hartack was picked for Northern Dancer and rode him to wins in the Derby and the Preakness. But then, of course, he lost the Belmont

when Quadrangle won."

"I got a framed scarf of the 1984 original Breeders' Cup," he says, "with all the silks of all the horses on it. I got a lot of stuff from the Prix de l'Arc De Triomphe from various years that I went to. I just put it on the wall. One of the really interesting things that I got is when Twenty Grand won the 1931 Derby from post 20 and they released these double edged blades with a painting of Twenty Grand on the blade and it says, 'Your lucky stripe razor blades - they're leather stopped.'"

Stapleton points out a poster that illuminates just how sensational Northern Dancer was as a producer of outstanding racehorses.

"The poster I have of Northern Dancer from 2000 shows that every horse in the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe that year could trace its lineage back to



Northern Dancer. That was the first time that happened."

Stapleton needed to be asked, "why does he pursue all this stuff?"

"I've always been a horse racing fan," he says. "I have always been on the periphery of the industry as an owner and with the Hall of Fame. But mostly this is from me as a fan and a bettor."

Could there be such a thing as too much when it comes to collecting this kind of memorabilia?

"I still have to find a box with Northern Dancer's Preakness program," he says. "I know I have it. It's somewhere here."



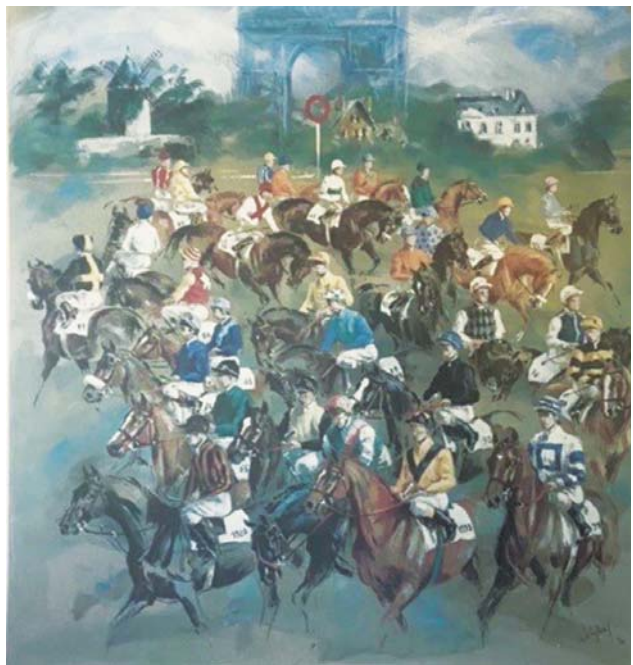
At the recent Sovereign Awards, I was seated at table 26 with my "date" Garnet Barnsdale. Also at this table was John Stapleton, whom I had previously never met.

Stapleton, 73, has a long history in horse racing. From 2004 – 2012, he was Chairman of the Planning Committee for the Hall of Fame, and from 2012 - 2018, he was the Hall's President. Stapleton owned several harness horses between 1983 and 2011, but the politics of the time made the game tough on him.

"I got out when the Slots at Racetracks Program came in," he says. "because all my horses couldn't make any money at the B track."

Stapleton tossed a few coins into thoroughbred racing syndicates and still owns a piece of Dun Drum, now a 6-year-old, who won the Kingarvie Stakes in his rookie year, took down the Vice Regent Stakes as a 3-year-old, and captured the Overskate Stakes while 4 years old.

As cool as that might be, it was what Stapleton unwrapped at



# Borth Best In 2024 Ontario Regional Driving Championship

by Jeff Porchak



Tyler Borth and I Am-What I Am

Claus Anderson Photo

In his first Regional Driving Championship appearance, Tyler Borth showed he's a main event player with a victory in the 2024 Ontario Regional Driving Championship (ORDC) on Tuesday, April 23 at The Raceway at the Western Fair District in London, Ontario. Borth's 71 points topped the standings, with James MacDonald (59) finishing second.

Those two drivers advance to the 2024 National Driving Championship at Hippodrome 3R in Trois-Rivieres, Quebec on Friday, July 5. In his eight driving assignments on Tuesday, Borth won two, and finished in the top pair five times. MacDonald (2) was the only other driver with multiple ORDC leg wins. Borth's victories came in the third leg, courtesy of 10-year-old veteran pacer Devils Peak (1:59.1; \$8.70) and in the fifth leg aboard 9-year-old trotter I Am What I Am (1:59.2; \$12.20).

Despite leading the competition from the second ORDC leg onward, Borth did not drive a pari-mutuel favourite during the competition. "Going into the last race, I didn't really know where the standings were at," Borth noted after his ORDC victory.

"A couple of people told me I had it all wrapped

up, but I thought I had a good shot. I thought the race would set up the way it set up, and I

figured if I got away in the two hole that I would finish second and then that would wrap it up." Western Fair's Driver of the Year the past two seasons, Tyler Borth came into 2024 off his best year in the business with 414 victories and more than \$4.3 million in earnings in 2023. The Ingersoll, Ontario resident, a winner of the Future Star Award at the 2014 O'Brien Awards, has also made a dent in the driver standings at Woodbine Mohawk Park, where he currently sits fifth overall. Heading into the 2024 ORDC, Borth ranked second in the nation in driving wins, just how he finished 2023 – with 114, while his \$1.25 million in purses place him third among Canadian drivers.

"I've gone so far in my career very fast lately, and it just seems to be going up and up for me," said the modest horseman after his victory. "It's surprising, you know? I never thought it would go as fast as it has." James MacDonald, voted the Keith Waples Driver of the Year as Canada's top teamster for the past three seasons, is no stranger to these competitions, having successfully represented Canada as the 2017 World Driving Champion. "Everyone drives so hard, and it's always great to come out and be one of the ones to advance," added MacDonald. "It's a lot of luck and a lot of [having] the horses showing up to play for you that night. I've won these. I finished last in these, so just to move on, I'm really happy, and really happy for Tyler. He did a great job."

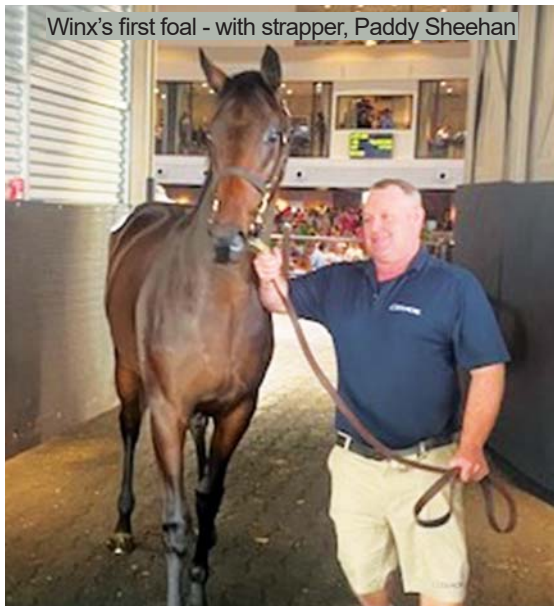


Claus Anderson Photo

James MacDonald and Tyler Borth advance to the Canadian Finals



# Winx and Her Very Expensive Foal by Ric Chapman



Winx (Street Cry/Vegas Showgirl) for her entire racing career which resulted in 37 wins, 25 at Grade 1 level, and 33 in a row for stakes money of \$26 million (Canadian).

All were world records.

"I loved her from the moment she was born, and I named her Winny," said Kepitis of the foal.

"My whole family loved her, and she grew on us. But it was only two weeks before the sale that I actually decided I must have her for my family."

A genuine sense of national pride and a strong love for this yearling galvanised Kepitis.

Many thought the man on the phone, believed to be American agent John Stewart, would railroad the purple-haired middle-aged mother of her own clan, but nope.

Kepitis, with her unconventional bidding style of reacting immediately when a counteroffer came, won the battle and the very moment auctioneer Jonathan D'Arcy knocked it down to her, she burst into tears.

Her head bowed and she openly sobbed, not looking up when both family and well-wishers rushed to her table.

For two minutes she wept, lost in her own tears and thoughts. When she eventually did look up, tears marking her makeup, she stood and faced the press which was 10-deep.

Racing in Australia is a huge sport. With 360 racetracks, it is a gigantic entertainment industry and is the biggest employer of people.

It has a dedicated mainstream free-to-air TV channel and several cable TV channels.

It is to Australians what hockey is to Canadians and even making that comparison, it garners more mainstream publicity in newspapers than the NHL does.

That's the scope of this sport in Australia. In Sydney, The Everest, a 6-furlong dash is worth \$15 million Canadian, and of course the world-famous Melbourne Cup is worth \$8 million.

There are 32 races in Australia worth \$1 million or more each year. Even to race an ordinary horse, you can make good money in this sport.

"So, I just had to buy her," explained Kepitis to the gathered media throng. "She will stay in Australia and that's the way it should be. I'll race her, and Chris Waller will train her and naturally my family hopes she does another Winx. But even if she doesn't, we will breed her here and she will make a wonderful mother."

That's what the Aussie public, who all adore Winx, really wanted to hear.

Waller trained Winx, and he sat at the table behind Kepitis during the auction. He didn't say a word. He just watched as millions did, too, and he was the first non-family member to embrace and congratulate her.

Tom Magnier, who runs Coolmore Stud where the yearling filly was raised, and who sold her as agent on behalf of her owners, was bouncing around like a kid in a candy store following the result.

"This is like winning a major Grade 1 race. I am so happy for Debbie, for her family and for the Australian public."

The shingle that adorned the stall in which the filly, who was Hip 391, lived for three days leading up to the sale, was signed by Magnier.

This filly is the highest priced yearling in Australian history, and the highest priced filly to sell anywhere in the world.

Now for racetrack success...hopefully!

Is any yearling worth \$10 million? On April 8 in Australia, plenty of people thought so as they battled to secure the first live foal from the world's greatest racehorse, Winx.

When this filly, a leggy bay cast in the image of her mum entered the ring in front of several thousand onlookers and a massive live TV audience estimated at 2.3 million, bidding opened at \$2 million.

Right away, that was a record, so everyone knew fireworks would follow, and they did.

Three minutes later, with bidders both in attendance at the Inglis Auditorium and on the phone from the United States, bidding feverishly and hastily, desire overflowed.

In the end, the final bid went to a woman named Debbie Kepitis, who had the good fortune to own a large chunk of



## HBPA of Ontario

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- Race day preparation
- Physically demanding



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# Ready for Shirl's Amazing Debut



Every thoroughbred in the world gets to race for the first time, but you would have great difficulty finding a debut as sensational as the one Ready for Shirl executed at Keeneland on April 13. It was a \$100,000 Maiden Special Weight at a mile and a 16<sup>th</sup>, and under jockey Florent Geroux, Ready for Shirl left the starting gate hesitant and confused. She was 11<sup>th</sup> as the field was negotiating the backstretch, perhaps a dozen lengths from the early leader, Tempting Lady (Joel Rosario). But as the field started to veer into the far turn, Ready for Shirl was galloping strongly and passing rivals. In the stretch, she may have been 6-wide, but she was powerful, swooping to the lead, expanding her advantage with every stride and hitting the finish line 3 ½ lengths the best at odds of almost 8-1.

Roger Atfield is the trainer for owner Charles Fipke, and Ready for Shirl is a daughter of Perfect Shirl, the 2011 Breeders' Cup Filly and Mare Turf Champion. Perfect Shirl is also the dam of Shirls Speight, who won the Grade 1 Makers Mile in 2022 and finished 4<sup>th</sup> in that same race the day before Ready for Shirl's eye-popping win. Trainer Atfield was not as surprised as others with the filly's great race.

"Well, I anticipated it," says Atfield. "I thought she was very special, and she worked exceptionally well all winter here."

However, Atfield did not expect Ready for Shirl to be so far back.

"She's always been very quick, and nobody's ever headed her away from the gate," he said. "I told the jockey not to worry about it if she breaks on top. When I saw her 20 lengths out of it, I wondered what the heck had gone wrong. She just got lost apparently when she broke. She was puzzled about what was going on and, and then she suddenly realized what was going on and she just galloped, didn't she? It was very encouraging to see her run that way."

Atfield had given the filly 8 workouts leading up to her first race, but according to Equibase, none of the workouts was at more than 5 furlongs, not that we would question how a great trainer might prepare a filly for a longer race.

"She's not bred to be a sprinter," says Atfield. "I wanted her fit enough to run two turns and the 5/8<sup>th</sup> work might have been 7/8<sup>th</sup>. We always gallop them out, and she probably galloped out in 24, 25, so she was very fit going

into the race. I wasn't worried. I picked that race out a long time ago when the book first came out."

Was Atfield disappointed with the 4<sup>th</sup> place finish of Shirls Speight the day before in the Makers Mile?

"It was an ok race," he says. "I was disappointed I wasn't third. I didn't think I could beat either one of those choices from Ireland on that deep going. I really hate being 4<sup>th</sup> in a grade one, but he ran well enough. He's not quite the same horse he was, but none of us are as we get older."

Ready for Shirl is by More than Ready, who died in 2020 at the age of 23. Ready for Shirl was one of his last offspring.

"I think there may be one after that," says Atfield. "He was a fantastic sire, wasn't he? The family that I've trained, you know, they've gone between Speightstown and More than Ready and I hadn't been getting as lucky with More than Ready as I was with the Speightstown, but she certainly changed that."

Anyone who saw that premiere by Ready for Shirl is certainly ready to see what she can do next, and Atfield is weighing his options.

"I'm toying with what I should do," he says. "I was considering a Stakes race on Kentucky Derby Day, but it was quicker back than I would like. And in Canada there probably won't be anything for goodness knows how long. We'll just get her back home and have a look and see what we think. She was the talk of the town after that race. She looked like a seasoned professional, She's got a life ahead of her, so it's ok."



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# Frankie Dettori - 6 in a row at Santa Anita



Dettori's 5th win came with Nothing Like You in the Santa Anita Oaks

Benoit Photo

It was Santa Anita Derby day at the huge California track, and a gutsy win by Stronghold (\$6) in the \$750,000 Derby was overshadowed by the 6 straight wins engineered earlier in the card by 53-year-old Frankie Dettori.

Dettori finished 6<sup>th</sup> in the first race, then went nuts. He rode the 3-year-old colt, Ball Don't Lie to a 1 ½ length win in the 2<sup>nd</sup> for trainer Mark Glatt. That produced a \$6.60 win ticket. In the 3<sup>rd</sup>, Dettori scored aboard Recinto Rompere, a 4-year-old filly trained by Leonard Powell. Recinto Rompere paid \$18.20. In race 4, the winner was Roberta's Love, a 3-year-old filly trained by Hector Palma. Dettori's 3<sup>rd</sup> straight winner paid \$21.60 and the first all-Dettori pick-3 was worth \$461.90 for a \$1 bet.

The 5<sup>th</sup> race went to Dettori aboard Kathrynmarissa, a 3-year-old filly who paid \$15 to win. The trainer is Richard Dutrow and this Dettori pick-3 was worth \$746.90.

Dettori notched his 5<sup>th</sup> straight win in the 6<sup>th</sup> when, despite the 7-1 odds, he urged Nothing Like You to an impressive 7-length win in the \$300,000 Santa Anita Oaks. Nothing Like You is a 3-year-old filly trained by Bob Baffert. The win price was \$16.40, and this pick-3 returned \$703.50.

You would think by now that the bettors would have clued in to the fact that Dettori was in the zone, but not so much. Royal Charter went off at over 4-1 in the 7<sup>th</sup>, a mile on the turf for allowance level fillies and mares. Sure

enough, Royal Charter came flying through the stretch to pass the leaders to win by 2 expanding lengths. Royal Charter is a 4-year-old filly trained by Leonard Powell. The win price was \$10.80 and the 4<sup>th</sup> straight Dettori pick-3 paid \$489.70.

"I don't know how to put it into words," said Dettori. "Is it real? Am I dreaming? Is this really happening? It's incredible! I adore this place and to be able to say that I won six races on Derby day is beyond my wildest dreams."

"He's just a phenomenon," Nothing Like You trainer, Bob Baffert said of Dettori. "He is world-class and has brought his talent to every stage."

Not that anyone would have done it, but a \$2 parlay on all 6 of Dettori's winners would have paid off at well over \$200,000.

A major part of Dettori's 35-year career came riding horses in England, where he compiled over 3,000 winners. He contemplated retirement last year, but decided to keep riding in the U.S.

Dettori is most famous for an amazing sweep of all 7 races at Ascot on September 28, 1996. Known as the "Magnificent Seven," Dettori's feat helped a brave gambler named Darren Yates win over £550,000. Yates bet his last £62 that day on Dettori winning every race.

The 6 wins by Dettori on April 6 lifted him to 32 from 158 rides at Santa Anita this year – that's a strike rate of over 20%.

## 2024 AJAX DOWNS RACETRACK

### 4 LIVE QUARTER HORSE RACING

Race days: ■ First Race: Summer Wednesdays at 1:30pm  
Sundays & Fall Wednesdays at 12:55pm

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### Events For The Whole Family!

**WEDNESDAY RACE DATES 2024**

Wednesday  
May 8, 15, 22, 29  
1:30pm First Race

Wednesday  
June 5, 12, 26  
1:30pm First Race

Wednesday  
July 3, 10, 17, 31  
1:30pm First Race

Wednesday  
August 7, 14, 21  
1:30pm First Race

Wednesday  
September 11, 18, 25  
12:55pm First Race

Wednesday  
October 2, 9, 23  
12:55pm First Race

Special events!

**SUNDAY RACE DATES 2024**

Sunday June 16  
**Father's Day**  
12:55pm First Race

Sunday July 21  
**Craft Brewery Day**  
12:55pm First Race

Sunday August 25  
**Family Fun Day**  
12:55pm First Race

Sunday September 1  
**Labour Day Weekend**  
12:55pm First Race

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12:55pm First Race

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Thoroughbred  
Owners of  
the Month:  
Dorothy & Sean  
Fitzhenry



It was a wonderful night at the recent Sovereign Awards for Sean and Dorothy Fitzhenry. Their 7-year-old Mendocino Beano was named the Outstanding Broodmare, and Millie Girl, a daughter of Mendocino Beano by Smart Strike grabbed the trophy as Canada's best Main Track Female of 2023.

Sean could not be persuaded to characterize one of the awards ahead of the other.

"They go hand in hand," he points out. "Millie was Beano's daughter. "Beano threw nothing but good looking foals, and she was a good looking foal herself."

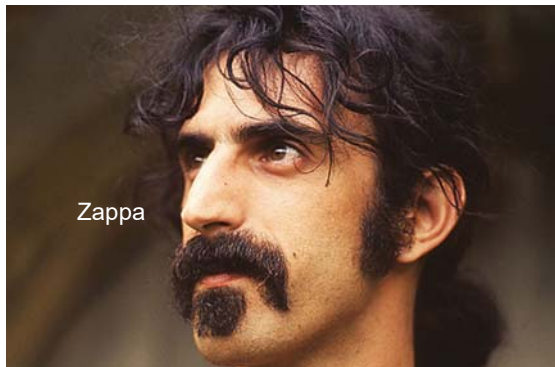
Mendocino Beano raced only 4 times herself. She did win a maiden special weight on Canada Day, 2011 and finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in that year's Ontario Colleen Stakes. Physical problems dictated the end of her competitive career.

"She had a problem with one of her legs," says Fitzhenry.

Daughter Millie Girl is much more fit. As a 4-year-old, she carried Rafael Hernandez to victory in the Grade 3 \$181,000 Ontario Matron Stakes last October and just a month later took down the Grade 3 \$182,000 Maple Leaf Stakes, romping home by 2 lengths and running the mile and a quarter in 2:03.53.

*Down The Stretch* wondered about the broodmare's name. Fitzhenry shrugs and tells us it's from a Frank Zappa song called Camarillo Brillo:

"I mean her Mendocino bean-o by where some bugs



Zappa

had made it red."

We looked it up, but we still don't know what it means. We can see that Fitzhenry enjoys a shoutout to his favourite entertainers when he names a horse. There's abundant evidence he's a fan of Second City. Take Sammy Maudlin for example. Maudlin, played by the late Joe Flaherty was the



Sammy Maudlin

hilariously untalented Second City Talk show host. The horse named after him ran mostly in claims and won twice from 28 starts, hitting the board 15 times.

Guy Caballero, also a Flaherty creation, was the absurdly wheelchair-bound president of SCTV. The horse, Guy Caballero recorded his 2<sup>nd</sup> career win in the Plate Trial Stakes but did not win any of his subsequent 18 races, though he cashed lots of cheques, producing 3 seconds and 8 thirds.



Guy Caballero

Bill Needle was another horse bred by the Fitzhenrys. Dave Thomas' Bill Needle was the angry cigarette smoking editorialist for the fictional TV station. The horse raced 18 times from 2021-2023, with only 1 win, probably prompting an irate commentary from his namesake.



Bill Needle

Who could not love Andrea Martin and her unforgettable Edith Prickley, the snorting, leopard skin wearing station manager? The horse, Edith Prickley raced 10 times for the Fitzhenrys, recording just a single win.

The Fitzhenrys also bred a horse called Count Floyd, though there wasn't much counting to be done. Count Floyd race 28 times without a single win, which might account for a terrorizing episode of Flaherty's Monster Chiller Horror Theatre.



Count Floyd



Edith Prickley

Fitzhenry confirms that, almost from the beginning, he and Dorothy have preferred fillies to colts, always with a thought to breeding.

"The first horse I bought was an Affirmed filly named Minnie's Meadow, out of a Storm Bird mare," says

Fitzhenry. "I bought her as a weanling, and she's been our foundation mare. I still have her, but she's retired. Of course, when I buy a yearling filly, that's the idea to put her in our broodmare barn. She had Dixie Chicken, and the Chicken was a pretty good horse. And the Chicken had Dixie Moon who won the Oaks. And Dixie Moon is having some nice foals. There's 4 generations there."

Dixie Chicken had a decent racing career. She won 4 of 22 and banked over \$200,000. Dixie Moon, a daughter of Curlin, was a 5-time winner from 17 starts. She added the Carotene Stakes to her Oaks victory.

According to Equibase, 2017 was the best year for the Fitzhenrys as owners. They sent out 24 starters, won 10 times and finished 2<sup>nd</sup> five times. That was the year that Guy Caballero won the Trial, Dixie Moon the Oaks and the Carotene, and a horse called Mr Havercamp produced 4 wins, including the Vice Regent and the Bunty Lawless Stakes. Mr Havercamp was the name of an aging golfer in the comedy Caddy Shack.

"We could do no wrong," laughs Fitzhenry. "It was just a confluence of things. Our trainer, Catherine Day Phillips does a great job. She spots them well and she knows where we want to go. I remember being in an elevator with Reade Baker, and he said to me, 'Man, are you ever on a run!' And I said, 'Reade, I'm enjoying it because I know it's not going last forever.'"

Mr. Havercamp won 8 of his 14 races and Fitzhenry identifies one of those wins as the most exciting moment in his horse owning life.

"We won a graded Stakes race at Saratoga, with Mr Havercamp," he says. "That was pretty cool, since we've been going to Saratoga for 20 years, and to win a graded Stakes at Saratoga is a lot of fun."

That would be the \$150,000 Grade 3 Forbidden Apple Stakes, run at the Spa on July 12, 2019. Mr Havercamp, then a 5-year-old, was ridden by Junior Alvarado and the pair went off at almost 14-1. It was a mile on the grass, and Alvarado had Mr Havercamp stalking from 3<sup>rd</sup> most of the way, took the lead as the field came for home, and lasted by a ½ length in 1:37.50. Like pretty well all the Fitzhenry horses, this one was trained by Catherine Day Phillips.

"She's great. She's organized," says Fitzhenry. "She doesn't miss a thing. She's honest. We get along with her. She's our trainer and she's a friend as well."

Equibase shows that Sean and Dorothy Fitzhenry have been in thoroughbred racing for over 20 years. And Sean has a simple answer when asked what it is that keeps them in the game.

"It's just the horses," he says. "If you don't love horses, there's something wrong with you."



presented by WEG

This got our attention. On April 26, the winner of the 8<sup>th</sup> race at Mohawk was Zebs Breaking Dawn, a 5-year-old mare driven by Austin Sorrie and trained by Chris Rogers. Zebs Breaking Dawn paid \$129.20 to win, but we were also interested to see that the owner is Doug Hie. *Down The Stretch* was certainly aware of Hie's long and extraordinary career as a driver and trainer, but we weren't that informed about him as an owner.

"Right now, I own all of 8 horses," says Hie, who turned 73 in April. "And I have a share of 4 others. I've always owned horses. My dad, Cliff, gave me my first horse – a yearling, when I was in high school, and then by the time I was 17, I bought one on my own."

Hie's first horse was Ace Hal.

"He started out good," says Hie. "He raced as a 3-year-old. I actually won the Fallis Memorial here at Morrow Park before they built Kawartha Downs. I was just 17, and all four of us drove in that race – Dad and Carman and Roger and I, and we all drove in the final. There were two heats, and I wound up winning the final with that horse. It was a big deal for me, but I think total purse money that night – I might have gotten \$400. And then I took him to Greenwood, and he won his first start. That same year, I sent him with Carman to Garden City in St. Catharines, and Carman won a race with him. When we brought him back at 4, he had trouble with his stifles, and we had to retire him."

As for Zebs Breaking Dawn...

"Larry Zebedee raised Zebs Breaking Dawn," says Hie. "He had two 2-year-olds, and I said to Larry, 'I'll break them for you and get them going.' Nobody ever bought Zebs Breaking Dawn, so Larry wound up signing the papers over to me. We haven't raced her a lot yet, but she's a very nice mare."

It's surprising that Zebs Breaking Dawn went off at more than 63-1. The win in April was her 6<sup>th</sup> in 32 tries, and her 3 previous victories had come against better company.

"It didn't surprise me that she won," adds Hie. "Everybody moved off the rail. She was sitting 9th at the half and every horse in front of her, she got to them. She can do that. She won last fall in 1:52 and she was on the outside for  $\frac{7}{8}$  of the race. She paced her back half in 53.3 when she won two weeks ago, which is amazing. That's a crazy half, but they all got out of her way."



Doug Hie and SOS Mach Xtreme

(Todd Gimblett Photo)

We like to ask horse owners about the best ones they have ever had.

"The best horse that I have owned was Elegant Supreme," says Hie. "That was a trotter we had bought from John Bax."

According to Standardbred Canada, Hie owned Elegant Supreme for about 124 of his 238 races. The horse was good at picking up cheques. On February 10, 2002, Hie drove Elegant Supreme to a win in a \$37,000 trot at Woodbine, earning a cheque for \$18,500. Five weeks later, Elegant Supreme prevailed in the Preferred Trot at Woodbine, which enhanced his purse earnings by \$20,000.

Hie also shared ownership with his brother Roger, who passed away 10 years ago.

"Roger and I raised one called Highway Earl and he was a very nice horse," says Hie. "He made over \$200,000."

Highway Earl, a trotter, was in 163 races with 29 wins and \$235,344 in the bank.

There's a 4-year-old mare called Wildcat Lisa that Hie shares with Carolyn Jarrell. In 2023, Hie drove her himself 11 times, producing 2 wins. The second of those was historic. It was a \$6,500 pace at Kawartha Downs on September 1, 2023, and at the wire, it was Doug Hie and Wildcat Lisa by a very slim nose over Pop the Bubbly, driven by brother Carman. Making this even more extraordinary, the two brothers were steering two sisters – the first and second horses were out of the dam, Armbr Champagne.

"Both those horses were raised by Carolyn Jarrell, and I trained both of them," says Hie. "We were racing the two of them at Kawartha Downs for the summer and then took them up to Mohawk in the fall, and Pop the Bubbly was claimed. Wildcat Lisa is still racing up there."

Hie got his driving licence in 1968. That was 56 years ago. And though he's a little more selective about getting into the sulky, he still considers steering standardbreds an important part of his life.

"I drive horses at Kawartha Downs most of the time," he says. "We don't have many drivers here and it might be worse this year on Friday nights. Most of the ones I drive are younger horses. I try to teach them to be racehorses. But when I go to Mohawk, I don't drive up there. I let those guys up there drive. They're driving against each other all the time, and I'm too damn fat anymore. I'm a big boy now, and it's hard for a horse to pull me unless we're going downhill. At home here, it's not so bad. I try to keep the tires full of air."

Hie admits he weighs about 235 pounds these days. Even with the most aerodynamic sulkies, you can see the advantage lighter drivers like Louis-Philippe Roy (140 lbs.), Sylvain Filion (160) or Doug McNair (160) might have.

"When I was 170, I felt comfortable," he says. "I don't feel comfortable in a race bike anymore, not like I used to. If I could get rid of 50 pounds, I would feel a hell of a lot better and so would the horse."

Though this story is more about Doug Hie as an owner, he has no plans, even in his 8<sup>th</sup> decade to retire from the other aspects of standardbred racing.

"I would never quit training horses," he insists. "I've always liked what I'm doing, and I'm going to keep doing it as long as I can, and if I can get the weight off, hopefully I can drive more at Kawartha. I hope to be able to be standing beside a horse when I die. I want to keep going til I'm done."

# Christoforou Hits a Big Number

Christoforou gets a Finite figure



**H**arness driver Chris Christoforou went into the May 2, Thursday night card at Mohawk about \$6,000 short of the \$120 million mark in career purse earnings and wasted no time cracking that impressive barrier. Christoforou was steering Finite in the first race, a \$17,000 conditioned trot and, as the bettors predicted, Finite won the race, adding \$8,500 to Christoforou's impressive numbers. Finite enjoyed a pocket trip after leaving from post 4, and as the field tipped for home, Christoforou brought him to the outside, wore down the early leader and won by a length in 1:54.4. Finite won for the 1<sup>st</sup> time on his 10<sup>th</sup> try and paid \$3.60. He

is owned by Coyote Wynd Farms and trained by Clark Beelby.

Christoforou is now in his 35<sup>th</sup> year of driving horses, and Finite's win was the 6,796<sup>th</sup> time he visited the winner's circle. The golden years for Christoforou were from 1996 through 2007 when he piled up 4,976 wins, or about 449 a year. In 1999, he drove 643 winners, the next year he scored 577, then had 622 wins in 2001 and over 500 in each of the next 2 years. A winner of four O'Brien Awards as Canada's top harness driver, Christoforou was inducted into the Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame in 2023.

## WELCOME STEVE LYM TO THE HBPA

The Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association of Ontario (HBPA) is pleased to share that Steve Lym is ready to begin his new role at the HBPA.

Steve will begin working this week with President Sue Leslie and HBPA staff, Lesley, Bill, Corinne and Lorrie, to familiarize himself with the many services, challenges and horse people issues that the HBPA is currently working on.

We know HBPA members, industry organizations and many old friends are very anxious to speak with Steve, but we ask that you give him a few days grace to get settled in.

Steve will be able to be reached directly by email at [slym@hbpa.on.ca](mailto:slym@hbpa.on.ca) or by calling the HBPA head office at 416-747-5252 ext. 25

Steve will also soon be seen visiting at both the Woodbine and Fort Erie backstretch.

Welcome back home Steve.

## HBPA PRESENTS: SHEDROW OF THE MONTH

The board of the HBPA has approved the return of Shedrow of the Month. Shedrow of the Month is to recognize those outfits who have taken the time to show pride of presentation for their barn shedrow and surroundings.

At the start of each month, from June to October, one outfit will be chosen as Shedrow of the Month. The HBPA will provide the trainer with a cheque for \$250, breakfast for all their employees, and a sign to be displayed for that month indicating they are the shedrow winner.

Trainers are reminded that lawn mowers, weed whackers and paint etc. are available to borrow from Woodbine Maintenance Garage.

## HBPA PRESENTS: MONTHLY TACK SHOP DRAW FOR TRAINERS

The board of the HBPA has once again approved a monthly draw from June to October, for trainers to win a gift card in the amount of \$500.00 dollars at Greenhawk, Merrill's and/or Serge's tack shop. However, this year we will be drawing two names each month doubling your chances of winning!

Trainers are encouraged to enter by contacting their HBPA track office to provide their name, phone number and AGCO license.

The HBPA will draw a winner around the 15<sup>th</sup> of every month. Trainers only need to enter once to be eligible to win one of the monthly draws.



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Saturday, August 31

**Mohawk Million, Canadian  
Trotting Classic & Metro Pace**  
Saturday, September 21

**Ontario Sires Stakes  
Grassroots Finals**  
Saturday, September 28

**Ontario Sires Stakes  
Super Finals**  
Saturday, October 12



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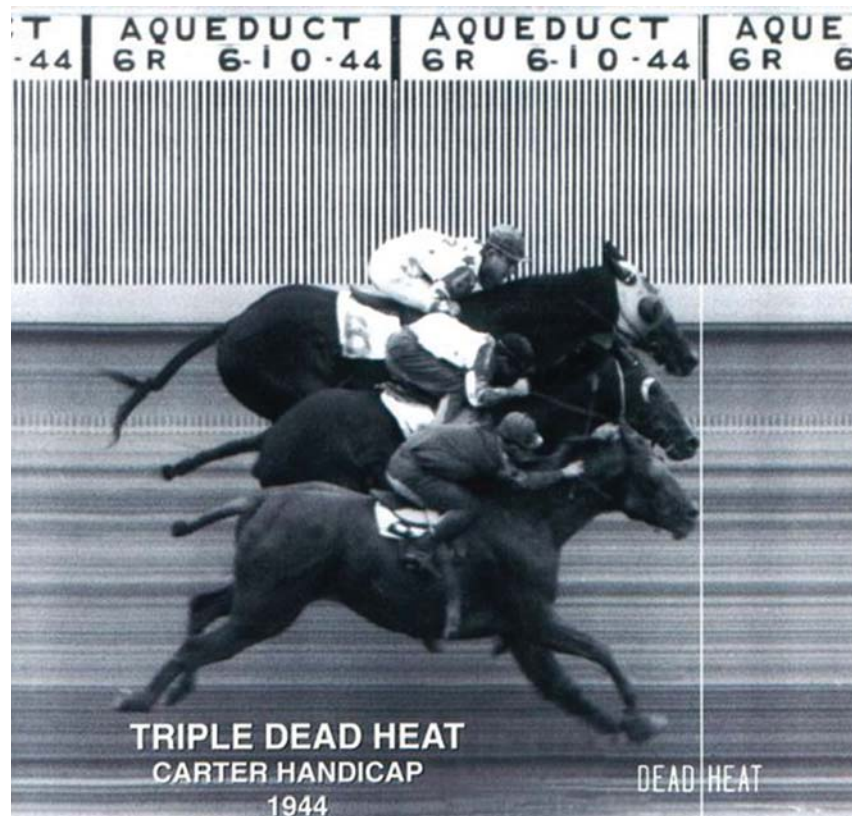


# ODDITIES & ENTITIES

Now even the average guy can ride a winner...more than once a day!



Winner Times Three! In one of racing's most enduring images, Brownie (on the rail), Bossuet (center), and Wait A Bit (on the outside) hit the line at the same time in the 1944 Carter Handicap. It remains the only triple dead heat in a major stakes race in the United States.



Some horses and some trainers just hang around a little too long  
or

Bill was serious when he described his stable as a 'bare bones' outfit  
or

That race took a lot out of her, but after a few good meals, she'll be ready for her next one!

The smile of victory:



Clive Cohen caught this picture of driver, Dale Spence who won the 12th race at Mohawk April 27. Spence was driving American History (\$9.40) for trainer Mackenzie Spence and the charismatic smile on his face might be because the win broke a 24-race losing streak for Spence as a driver. His last win at Mohawk came on March 30, when he also steered American History to victory.

# DOWN THE STRETCH PODCAST

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## **April 2, Episode 218:**

This one has 3 Kentucky Derby Preps that take us from Meydan in the UAR to Gulfstream to Oaklawn Park. Another week and another win for Marty Drexler. Lou Tucci talks about the chances of Babbo for a Sovereign in the 2-Year-Old Male category. Melissa Keith tells us how she got the job at Rideau Carleton as Canada's first full-time lady race caller. Jody Jamieson explains why he named a trotter Paquet after its owner Brian Paquet died. How does a daily double pay more than \$3,700 and join us at the table to feast on bagels, a small cooked fowl and donuts for dessert.

## **April 9, Episode 219:**

With less than a month until the 150th Kentucky Derby, we have 3 prep races – The Wood Memorial from Aqueduct, the Blue Grass at Keeneland and the Santa Anita Derby. Multiple stories from Santa Anita – 53-year-old **Frankie Dettori** won 6 in a row on Derby day and we chat with **Kazushi Kimura** who spent his winter winning races in California before coming north for his 3rd Sovereign Award as Outstanding Jockey. And we have a strange race from Santa Anita that was declared no contest with the field going down the backstretch. Trainer **Bob Tiller** knows which of 3 categories his sprinter, **Patches O'Houlihan** is a Sovereign cinch. Aussie racing journalist, **Rik Chapman** reports on the impending sale of the first off-spring of the super horse, Minx, and harness driver **Phil Hudon** tells us how he's recovering since a race incident literally knocked him on his ass.

## **April 16, Episode 220:**

We start with the last Kentucky Derby Prep – the Lexington Stakes, then go to Santa Anita for a win by **Kazushi Kimura** and an interview with the multi-skilled **Ismael Mosqueira**. The Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame has revealed the finalists for the next wave of induction. Harness horse owner **Brad Grant** discusses his chances and **Carolyn Filice** tells **Down The Stretch** how thrilled her family is that her father, **Sam Lima** is a finalist. With the Woodbine Thoroughbred season beginning on April 27, we've got **Patrick Husbands** warming up with a win at Gulfstream. Two stories this week from **Ric Chapman** in Australia – the 8-figure sale price of the first foal from super horse **Winx** and an amazing win by a 6-year-old mare in a \$5million race at Randwick. And, when an 83-year-old driver wins a race, you can bet it gets featured in this podcast.

## **April 23, Episode 221:**

This podcast features the 49th Sovereign Awards and we have interview clips from **Jennifer Morrison, Michelle Armata, Robert McKenzie, Mark Casse, Sean Fitzhenry, Kazushi Kimura** and **Sofia Vives**. We talked with **Bruno Schickedanz** about a horse he owns that keeps finding the winners circle at Gulfstream. **Roger Attfield** joined us to talk about the mind-blowing debut race by **Ready for Shirl**, who was the talk of the town after a remarkable win at Keeneland **Martin Lachance** drove home a winner at Mohawk and we're playing that race because it was Lachance's first driving win at the Campbellville track and we also have a horse named Zeb's Breaking Dawn that won at over 63-1. And the Meadowlands is bragging about their huge handles recently and the owners of the 13-year-old trotter, JL Cruze are also bragging after he notched his 66th career win at the Big M.

## **April 30, Episode 222:**

Our top story, of course, is the opening of the Thoroughbred racing season at Woodbine and we've got track CEO **Mike Copeland**, Premier **Doug Ford**, jockeys **Patrick Husbands, Emma-Jayne Wilson** and **Jason Hoyte**, racing fans **Gary Turpin** and **Jason Chrisjohn**, and how about a 5-win opener for **Sofia Vives**? The Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame has 12 more worthy inductees. **Sylvain Filion** tells us what it means to him and **Chris Vella** is the very proud son of new Hall of Famer **Danny Vella**. We go to Western Fair for the Provincial Driving Championship, won by **Tyler Borth**. **Sean Fitzhenry** tells us how the entire cast of Second City is crucial to his operation. **John Stapleton** fills us with awe, talking about his historic and sometimes rare racing memorabilia. And was that really a :25.1 final quarter by **Coco-Jojo** at Mohawk Friday night?

## **May 6, Episode 223:**

*Product in this podcast not originating from Garnet Barnsdale:*

- + Sensational finish to **Kentucky Derby #150**
- + Post race comments from winning jockey, **Brian Hernandez**
- + **Patrick Husbands** and **Mark Casse** winning another Stakes race at Woodbine
- + **Jennifer Morrison** setting up Opening Day at Ajax Downs
- + **Mark MacDonell** and the horse that has provided all his driving wins.

*Product in this podcast delivered by Garnet Barnsdale:*

- + **Marty Drexler** sending out a 20-1 winner in a \$400,000 Stakes race at Churchill Downs
- + Winning owner, **Elliott Logan** talking about that winner
- + A pair of fillies looking sharp in season opening wins at Mohawk
- + Snake venom apprehended in Kentucky
- + The most amazing sports bet cash of the century
- + Garnet's Oaks wager
- + Kicking off the racing season in Sarnia
- + Garnet's choice between **Jennifer Marlow** and **Bailey Quarters**

ON AIR

# DOWN THE STRETCH



A Podcast with Peter Gross