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By Jay Bergman

[BergmanJay](#)

## JAYWALKING

When horseplayers look at the past performances they discern a horse's condition by the effort in the most recent outing. Often missing from a winning equation is the time elapsed between the last race and the current one. On November 26 trainer Noel Daley revealed only after the Valley Victory final that the race winner Volume Eight did not provide him with similar confidence to those who had backed the Chapter Seven-sired colt to 3-5 favoritism.

"He had a bad week," said Daley, describing what he and Volume Eight went through before getting to the Meadowlands on November 26.

Even driver Andy McCarthy was more than concerned with the actions before the start of the Valley Victory.

"He can get a little pacey," said Daley, who spoke with McCarthy after the race about some anxious moments behind the gate and after the start.

Still, following another breathtaking performance in capturing the Valley Victory, it is Volume Eight that stands as the probable pre-2023 Hambletonian favorite. This time horseplayers and Daley will have to wait months, not weeks, to find out the results. In between that time Daley doesn't expect Volume Eight to return to training until February, though there may be some activity in advance of that.

"We had an offer for him before the Valley Victory," Daley said on Monday. "He had been vetted out."



BARBARA LIVINGSTON

**Volume Eight was not at his best according to trainer Noel Daley but he persevered to win the Valley Victory final.**

That deal fell apart, but the trainer and part-owner suggested there may be others who will take its place. "There's someone else interested and it that deal goes through we'll probably sell half the horse. You never know what's going to happen from 2 to 3," said Daley, implying that it was worth taking some money at the end of Volume Eight's freshman season just in case the horse or the competition changes in 2023.

Daley suggested that the Empire Breeders Classic, the premier event for sophomore trotters in New York, would be a likely first stop during Volume Eight's 3-year-old season.

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That Daley was able to find Volume Eight at any horse auction is a mystery to some, including this writer. Though he is a son of now super-sire Chapter Seven, the maternal bloodline wouldn't cause most pedigree pundits to take notice.

"I have to give Martti all of the credit for finding him," Daley said, referring to Martti Ala-Seppala, a friend from Finland who has been giving Daley advice for more than 10 years. "He does all the work looking at all the videos."

In those videos Ala-Seppala absolutely loved what he saw in Volume Eight. "We usually don't like to go much past \$75,000 on any yearling but he told me I should go to \$150,000 to buy him."

Daley paid just \$70,000 for Volume Eight at the 2021 Harrisburg sale.

"I guess the pedigree snobs weren't interested in him," said Daley. "If you look at his pedigree the dam was a good racehorse sired by Encore Encore. You look at the second dam and she's sired by American Mike, not even American Winner."

The maternal family has many names from the late Bob Key's rather large collection of breeding stock. Still, despite what might be considered weakness in the maternal side, Ala-Seppala saw something special in Volume Eight and now Daley and his partners have what appears to be a truly gifted horse.

"I could tell he had ability from the start," said Daley. "But I couldn't say I saw the kind of mile he trotted in the Kindergarten at the time."

The 1:52 scorcher on November 11 was eye-catching in that Volume Eight made two moves before gaining control in what looked like a quick opening half of 55 4/5 and then relaxed in the third quarter before a 27 flat final sprint.

"Andy [McCarthy] got off the bike and told me he thought he could have trotted in 1:50 and change," said Daley. "And Andy rarely says something like that."

Regardless of the final time, what's apparent about Volume Eight is that he's just another in the long line of potential champions by Chapter Seven, a stallion that some could argue has not gotten the cream of the broodmare crop afforded many others in the business. As a stallion, Chapter Seven had indeed elevated many a horse from humble maternal lines.

While Daley can look forward to next year's major trotting stakes for Volume Eight, he's more than happy for the owners of Pebble Beach, who will move on to stallion duty based in Kentucky for the 2023 season.

"Earlier in the year I really didn't know if that was going to happen for sure," said Daley of Pebble Beach. "We hit some bumps in the road with him in Kentucky and I wasn't sure he was going to be a stallion. That all changed with his performances in the Breeders Crown elimination and final. I'd say they were better than his North America Cup win."

Pebble Beach followed up the Breeders Crown victory with a solid effort in capturing the Matron Stakes.

The deal with Diamond Creek in Kentucky is a win-win according to Daley. "The program down there is just unbelievable. Right now, foals from mares that reside in Kentucky for 180 days race for a lot of money," Daley said. "There's an additional 50 percent bonus for those foals when the mares are bred to a Kentucky stallion."

In other words, breeding to Pebble Beach, a grandson of Somebeach-somewhere by way of his sire Downbytheseaside, could make those yearlings extremely popular in 2025.

Daley gives credit for much of his yearling success to Ala-Sepalla, who pushed him to purchase Anoka Hanover for just \$35,000 in 2019.

"The year before that her dam sold a yearling for \$100,000 that didn't make it," said Daley. "Martti told me that one was no good and this was the one you have to buy." Anoka Hanover would go on to win the 2020 Goldsmith Maid and earned nearly \$800,000 during her career.

Anoka Hanover was bred early this year to Kentucky-based stallion Gimpanzee, another son of Chapter Seven. Daley remains a part-owner in Anoka Hanover and should reap the benefits when the mare's first foal is born in the Bluegrass State in 2023.

Looking to build on a very strong 2022 from his stable, Daley went to this year's auctions and veered away from his past, at least when it came to spending.

"We spent a little more this year at the sales," Daley said. "But we had a very good year."

Volume Eight could become the third son or daughter of Chapter Seven to capture the Hambletonian in the last six events, perhaps following in the hoof steps of this year's winner Cool Papa Bell and the now-retired 2018 champion Atlanta.



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## EDITOR'S EYE

By Derick Giwner [@harnessveguy](#)

### INDUSTRY NOTEBOOK

#### *Stakes schedules, top horses & more*

The news and discussions were flowing at The Meadowlands during a November 26 visit for TVG and Fall Final Four night. Some of the below has already been officially released and we'll try to add some additional commentary. Other notes are just tidbits picked up along the way.

#### Stakes Schedule Changes

The pair of major stakes for 2-year-old trotters which have had a home on or about Hambletonian Day since the mid-1980s won't be contested at The Meadowlands in 2023. Both the Peter Haughton and Jim Doherty Memorials will be replaced on the Hambletonian Day card by New Jersey Sire Stakes finals for 2-year-old trotters. The rookie pacers are expected to compete the night before.

The final destination for the two historic races will be Hoosier Park, with the date moving from the first Saturday in August to September 15. That date could provide a conflict with the Kentucky Sire Stakes finals if it maintains its usual spot on the calendar, but it does avoid other important races.

"Our first priority was to avoid the Mohawk Million and Grand Circuit meet at The Red Mile," said Hoosier Director of Racing Scott Peine, who admitted that he's heard rumors that the Kentucky finals could move but nothing concrete. Much will be decided in the coming days as many of the Standardbred racing secretaries meet in Florida to discuss the stakes schedule for 2023.

It will be interesting to see if the Doherty and Haughton lure more horses with the later date since each included just 11 entrants this year. Certainly that Greenstoe yearlings will be eligible with the race leaving The Meadowlands and the Stallion Restriction Rule – which prohibits the sons and daughters of stallions who retire after their 3-year-old season from competing in Meadowlands stakes – could make an impact.

Another change could be the format for the Doherty and Haughton. With the schedule very tight and Sire Stakes finals likely to occur in early September, the possibility exists that the stakes races could switch from an elimination/final setup to races that include the highest money-earners leading up to the events in 2023. Stay tuned for that information in the coming weeks.

#### No more graduation?

According to Jeff Gural, the Graduate series for 4-year-olds is expected to shed the newly-created mares divisions in 2023 due to lack of participation. It is hard to fault the decision considering the mare trotting division saw just eight horses compete throughout the year and just three show up for every leg. Attendance was so poor that the second leg at Woodbine Mohawk Park was cancelled when only four dropped in the box. A much better 19 mare pacers went behind the gate at some point during the 2022 series, which ran from May 14 to July 9, but the large majority showed up for leg one and never returned. Six mares raced in leg two and seven in the third leg.

#### Bella Bellini

The Graduate talk brings us to the fate of Bella Bellini. Owner David McDuffee would like to see the series remain and be expanded to include 5-year-olds, thus allowing his top contender for Trotter of the Year in 2022 to have a place to race against her peers before going on to swim in deeper waters as the season progresses.

"I've been suggesting that they should make the Graduate series for 4- and 5-year-olds. That would make for some very good racing. [Jeff Gural] had indicated previously that he agreed with me on that. He said he would get back to me in the next week or so. We'll see what happens," said McDuffee, who intimated that if he brings Bella Bellini back as a 5-year-old she'll likely take on male competition.

"She's probably going to have to race the boys almost every race," said McDuffee. "Even in the TVG, we debated putting her against them



BARBARA LIVINGSTON

**Bella Bellini, the likely favorite to be Trotter of the Year, could return to the races in 2023.**

because first of all, she's as good as any of them and the purse is \$350,000 and we are racing for \$140,000. Ake's horse [Ecurie D] raced very good, but he didn't look great the week before, so it was tempting to skip the mare race to face the boys."

While Bella Bellini went out on top in 2022 with a 1:51 4/5 TVG Mare Trot win, she won't be aiming for the international stage to start the New Year. "I would love to race in the Prix d'Amerique but I don't think the timing would be right for this year. She's raced close to 20 times and it is time to give her a break," said McDuffee, who didn't rule it out for the future. "She's obviously a talented filly and I think she could handle it. She loves those big tracks. She likes to follow, get on the helmet and charge home."

#### Other news and notes

Co-owner Marko Kreivi was also non-committal when asked about whether Ecurie D would return in 2023, though he seemed to be leaning towards yes. It seems there may be some interest in seeing whether the soon-to-be 7-year-old can eclipse his 1:49 1/5 mark and unseat Homicide Hunter as the fastest trotter in North American history.

Trainer Marcus Melander started three horses on November 26 at The Meadowlands and reported those will be the last horses he sends out until April. "I think we all need time to rest," said Melander, who exclusively races 2- and 3-year-olds.

Trainer Tony Alagna mentioned that 2023 will be the last year his fleet of horses will split time between New Jersey and Florida. Instead, with the budding industry in Kentucky and his mother's desire to retire there, they will have a small farm in the Lexington area to compliment the New Jersey home base. With the exception of a few owners who reside in Florida, the trainer said the New Jersey location is more convenient for many of his owners who live locally or come in from Canada to see the horses train.

After watching Bulldog Hanover set a stakes record in the TVG Open Pace in his final career start, the focus shifted to whether the leading money-winner in the sport this year, who also set a new time record at 1:45 4/5, would be voted the unanimous Horse of the Year. As perhaps the final Hambletonian Society/Breeders Crown Top-10 poll showed, when one rogue voter elected for Bella Bellini over Bulldog Hanover, there is always someone in the crowd who will be contrarian.

Scott Peine also mentioned that Hoosier may hold Breeders Crown eliminations on Thursday, Friday and Saturday rather than just the customary Friday and Saturday. While it is far from set in stone, it would provide an additional reason to watch Hoosier on a Thursday night, which isn't a bad idea from a promotional standpoint. For most 2-year-olds, who likely wouldn't have raced for 12-14 days if they competed in Grand Circuit action at The Red Mile, the Thursday date with the extra day of rest the following week might be a better setup. Again, stay tuned.

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# Harris bringing newcomers and veterans to Big M weekend wars

By Jay Bergman

Trainer Andrew Harris is expecting big things from a few recent arrivals that will see action this weekend (Dec. 2-3) at The Meadowlands. Harris has a fine mix of veteran racing performers that recently got a boost with a few potential stars from Down Under joining the ranks.

Harris' weekend will commence at The Meadowlands on Friday night where unfortunately for him a pair of pacing mares were put into the same race.

"I really didn't want them to race against each other. They have different ownership," Harris said of Cousin Mary and Sunday Afternoon, his pair in Friday's \$12,500 multi-conditional event carded as race four.

"I've had Cousin Mary off and on for six years," said Harris of the 9-year-old daughter of Camluck. "She's just a nice hard-hitting mare. We made \$200,000 with her as a 4-year-old."

While those days may be in the rearview mirror, Cousin Mary (post 4) has been more than durable and will be making her 198th start of a career that has seen her visit the winner's circle 42 times.

Of Sunday Afternoon (post 8), Harris has had her racing at Harrah's Philadelphia and Dover Downs this fall before moving her to The Meadowlands for a November 26 engagement against better company. "She runs in on the turns, so she needs a big track," said Harris. "If we can't get her raced separately here, I'll have to send her up to Woodbine."

Harris will send out a pair of six-figure purchases in race three on Saturday night, a conditioned event for non-winners of \$10,500 in last five starts. The Ideal Dancer A (post 6) and Arden Messi N (post 7) both qualified on November 26 for Harris in advance of their North American debut.

"Enviro Stable has come into my barn for the first time with Arden Messi N," said Harris, who said that the veteran son of Bettor's Delight had been campaigned in Australia by Enviro before arriving in the States. "He qualified solidly with the earplugs in."

Arden Messi N paced home in 27 flat for a 1:53 3/5 victory.

The Ideal Dancer A wasn't far behind his stablemate, finishing second in the same qualifier while coming from eighth at the half to do so. "I'm really high on this horse," said Harris bluntly.

While both will be making their first starts on North American soil on Saturday night at The Meadowlands, Harris is hoping to see them in action at Yonkers, perhaps sometime next spring. "I think they could both be Levy [Borgata Series] horses," said Harris.

Shadow Phantasy N makes his Meadowlands debut for Harris in race four, a TrackMaster rating of 74 conditioned event with an \$8,000 purse.

"He actually qualified for me the other day and was pretty good," said Harris of Shadow Phantasy N, who added Lasix in his November 26 qualifier at The Meadowlands and was timed in 1:55 3/5 after cutting the pace. "He got sore racing on some hard tracks up in Canada, but he's been good since he got here and I'm looking forward to racing him."

The 5-year-old Jay Bracken A was most impressive in his November 26 Meadowlands qualifier, sprinting home in 26 2/5 to win in a field that included this year's Borgata champion Funatthebeach N.



CURTIS SALONICK

Cousin Mary has been in and out of trainer Andrew Harris' barn since winning the Weiss final at Pocono in 2017.

"He's a horse that could race in this class and do well," said Harris of the 5-year-old son of He's Watching that has but \$38,508 in career earnings and debuts in a \$17,500 event for winners of 2 but not more than 4 races and a higher earnings ceiling (Race 6). "Right now, I like the horse and I don't know where his ceiling is."

Reagan Blue Chip returns from Yonkers for Harris in the TrackMaster rating 86 condition carded as race seven at The Meadowlands on Saturday.

"I needed to get him back to the big track," said Harris. "He's had too many outside draws at Yonkers." Reagan Blue Chip once again drew outside with post eight on Saturday but may be dropping in class just a bit.

Major Fernco N had missed over a month before returning to action this past Saturday (November 26) and the 6-year-old by Art Major may be ready for big things.

"I think he's one of the best horses in my barn," Harris said of Major Fernco N, already a 1:50 3/5 winner at Harrah's Philadelphia this year. Major Fernco N drew post eight but returns to the non-winners of \$14,000 level (Race 8) where he was victorious at The Meadowlands in September.

Harris currently has a stable of around 35 horses predominantly of the overnight variety, but he's added three yearlings that have all been broken and begun their lessons to hopefully race at a high level in 2023. "That was all William Pollack," said Harris when questioned about the three yearlings he purchased this fall for a total of \$1 million. "There's one pacer and two trotters and they are all good right now. Let's hope they are next July."

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# TVG Night provides clarity and confusion for year-end voting



## AT THE TRACK

By Darin Zoccali [@AtTheTrack7](#)

The TVG Free For All Championships are in the books and with it, the races that decide year-end honors are a wrap as well.

The TVG series of races have become the last big night of racing of the year and while the Breeders Crown certainly stands alone being the night where many championships and divisional honors are decided, the TVG races provide a unique opportunity with how the races are structured.

It is seemingly the only time where the best 3-year-olds consider tackling the best older horses. In the inaugural edition of the TVG Free For All Pace, the sophomore superstar Captaintreacherous competed against an all-star cast of older horses. The race was won by the great Foiled Again, but the week leading up to showdown included a great deal of buzz around the race. The young superstar against the old warhorse.

While a 3-year-old has never won the TVG Free For All Pace, a pair of them have won the TVG Free For All Trot in What The Hill and Tactical Landing.

The Breeders Crown may be what it all comes down to, but the TVG Free For All Championship night provides an added element of excitement that we don't see on Crown night. One of these years, there will be another superstar 3-year-old like Somebeachsomewhere or Muscle Hill who will race in the TVG Free For All Pace or Trot and it will be a huge event for harness racing.

This year, TVG night was more about putting a final exclamation point on championship seasons and saying goodbye to a couple of all-time great horses.

In stakes-record time, Bulldog Hanover asserted his dominance as the Horse of the Year for the final time in his brilliant career. A resume that includes 28 victories from 37 races, earnings over \$2.4 million and being known as the fastest standardbred ever, Bulldog Hanover gave us one last show, pulling away through the stretch at The Meadowlands. A Horse of the Year performance for what should be a unanimous choice as Horse of the Year.

There may have been no 3-year-olds to challenge Bulldog this year, but

the TVG Mares Pace included a pair of sophomore fillies as Treacherous Dragon and Niki Hill stepped up to face Test of Faith, Grace Hill and six other older mares. Niki Hill was valiant finishing second, but the 4-year-old Grace Hill stood tall this time, winning in 1:48 3/5.

The win by Grace Hill brings about an interesting conversation. For the entire season leading up to the Breeders Crown, Test of Faith was the standout of her division. Clearly the best of the older pacing mares, while she has won 11 of 19 starts and over \$800,000 in earnings this year, she was defeated by Grace Hill in both the Breeders Crown and the TVG Free For All Mares Pace. There is no question that overall Test of Faith had the better year, but there is an argument to be made that Grace Hill won when it mattered most and I am curious to see what the voters decide.

Going into the Breeders Crown, the mare trotting division had three legitimate contenders for the number one spot. Major wins to close out the season for Bella Bellini, Atlanta or When Dovescry would mean divisional honors and in the end, it was Bella Bellini who rose to the top, winning the Breeders Crown and the TVG Mares Trot, making her the obvious choice for those divisional honors. She won convincingly in both races to wrap up the season. The brilliant mare Atlanta didn't have her best on TVG night in what would be the final start of her career, but that doesn't take any shine off a sensational career. The 2018 Hambletonian Champion finished her career with 37 victories from 78 starts and over \$3.5 million in earnings. Simply put, one of the greatest trotting mares of all time, Atlanta left her mark on the harness racing industry and we were all blessed to have her on the track for as long as she competed.

It was an odd year for the older trotters in 2022. The best older trotter that we saw was Alrajah One IT, who won his first three starts, including the John Cashman Memorial. But, he was injured prior to the Maple Leaf Trot and did not race again. Ecurie D DK only won three races this year, but two of those races were two of the most important events of the year, where he was dominant in both the Breeders Crown and the TVG Free For All Trot. The talented Jujubee didn't see his season start until late summer and he only had one win from six starts. Amigo Volo won as many races as Alrajah One IT, Ecurie D DK and Jujubee combined, but none came in a "marquis" event. We'll see what the voters decide.

This year, the TVG Championship night certainly stamped some horses as the rightful leaders of their divisions, but it also made some divisions a bit less clear, opening up some debate as to who should be the top of their class. It has become one of the most important nights of the year in harness racing and hopefully that continues in the years to come.

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**BY DERICK GIWNER**

Owner Michael Cote Gagnon has his first experience with harness racing when he was 10 years old and it sparked an obvious lifelong passion. The Quebec native owned his first horse at 16 and he now owns some top horses including recent Three Diamonds winner Zanatta.

The affable owner took time out from his schedule to discuss his journey in harness racing, how he ended up in the Bongiorno barn and much more. Enjoy!



## OWNER MICHAEL COTE GAGNON

### How did you get involved in harness racing?

I was 10 years old when my mother claimed a horse at the Quebec City racetrack. It was a friend of hers who introduced her into the business. My mother used to ride horses when she was young and she always loved horses. Harness racing was new for our family but we had that horse in the 90's. I stuck with it because I love the game. I was betting on horses before I was allowed and became a fan of the sport early. I bought my first horse when I was 16.

### That first purchase was in 1998 and you've kept a small stable most years since. What changed in recent years that you've bought high-level horses?

I love the animal more than anything and have always been impressed with the importance of the horse throughout history. In life we start walking before running. I grew up with the ups and downs. We were really unlucky with the racing industry in Quebec. When the industry collapsed in 2008 due to a lot of mistakes, most of the people had to leave for Ontario or the U.S.A. I started out to try to find my sweet spot in the game because we only had one small racetrack in Quebec – Trois-Rivieres. That wasn't the game I was looking for after spending time with Dan Dube in New York in the late 1990s and 2000s and seeing the American harness dream. I started to look at horses in the USA and I picked up Nicholas Beach at the Harrisburg sale in 2017. That was my first big move in the United States. For me he was a turning point in moving to the next level in enjoying the Grand Circuit races. After spending two years in the Bongiorno's stable, I decide to invest more in babies. I also went with the Millers and we've been lucky to have French Wine with my partner Daniel Plouffe.

### Do you still live in Canada?

I share my time between Canada and Florida. We have a 10-acre equestrian property in Palm Beach County. It is not for harness horses but for dressage and jumpers. I bought it in 2017 and we've made some improvements. It is a lovely property with 16 stall barns.

### You now race under the name One Legend Stable. Why did you choose that?

It was named after my mother who passed away two years ago. Most of my friends called her "The Legend." She was really special and an impressive character.



DERICK GIWNER

Owner Michael Cote Gagnon started slowly in the sport but has upped his game in recent years with some top horses.

### What do you do for a living?

At age 40 I'm semi-retired. I sold many of my companies. I was in human resources, a staffing company. I used to employ over a thousand employees in Canada over the last 20 years. I sold part of the company a month before COVID started and sold the other part late in April this year. I still do business now with real estate and focus on the horse business.

### What kind of car do you drive?

Porsche 911.

### Favorite dinner meal? Snack?

Lobster. Poutine – It is a Quebec dish with French fries, cheese and brown gravy.

### What is your favorite track to visit? Why?

The Meadowlands because to go to the track and see the Empire State building in the background . . . there is something about that huge track sitting just outside "The Big Apple."

### What is your favorite big event in racing?

The Hambletonian.

### How often are horses or racing on your mind?

Many times a day. I'm always looking at entries or replays, though it depends on the time of the year. Sometimes we are busier with staking.

### What is your favorite thing to do outside of the sport?

Traveling.

### What is your favorite sport to watch? Team?

Hockey – Montreal Canadians.

### What is one thing about you most fans/bettors don't know?

I was a blonde-haired baby.

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## What is one word that describes harness racing for you?

Dream.

## What was your best moment in harness racing?

Winning the Three Diamonds final on Saturday [Nov. 26] with Zanatta.

## Speaking of Zanatta. After watching her win the Three Diamonds impressively, how excited are you for next year?

We knew that she was good. The way she raced on Saturday, with the toughest mile a horse can have, pulling out first-over versus that category of top fillies, she was vicious. She showed us that she is greater than I thought. I'm really excited and looking forward to her as a 3-year-old.

## You decided to use Dan Dube to drive with Joe Bongiorno sidelined. Was that because of your past connections to him?

It is about many things. It is about friendship. It is about admiration. It is a game of emotions and connections. He was my top choice and I was glad that he was available and not racing at Yonkers that night. In my mind, while Danny is no longer driving on the Grand Circuit for many reasons – he's older now and not someone that sells himself well – he is still one of the best drivers. He has guts. He has instincts. He's a fighter.

## How did you end up with Joe and Jenn Bongiorno?

The honest answer is that Nicholas Beach was trained by Rene Allard. Brian Sears had a share in Nicholas Beach at the time and Rene proposed to me moving the horse to the Bongornos. I didn't know them but they seemed to be doing good. We didn't know the gravity of what was going to happen with Allard. I thought it was just going to be for a short time not knowing what I know now. A few years later we are still with them.

## You also mentioned owning Kentucky Sire Stakes champion French Wine. How did you end up with trainer Julie Miller on that trotting colt?

Because Daniel Plouffe is a great friend of mine. For many years we wanted to have horses together but we are both opinionated about horse pedigree and conformation. We had to pick one we both liked. French Wine, who was HIP 45 at Lexington, was one of our top choices. Danny said that he is with the Millers for trotters. I knew them but I had never had the opportunity to do business with them. We bid on French Wine and they wanted a percentage, so they own 10% and we have the rest.

## How many horses do you own?

Probably close to 15.

## You bought a number of babies at the sale. Is that you taking a big plunge into ownership?

This year I bought five. I have already a Bettor's Wish colt [Royal Desire] out of the great Call Me Queen Be with Let It Ride Stables. I have two more trotting colts, two trotting fillies and one beautiful Captaintreach-erous filly.

## Are you considering breeding horses?

I'm looking to start back up with that in the future. I've bought some fillies in the last couple of years. I have Bella Ciao, who is in the family of Bella Bellini. Eventually we will breed her. I hope she is good at 3



BARBARA LIVINGSTON

**Zanatta came first-over and blew away her competition in the \$428,400 Three Diamonds final at The Meadowlands.**

years old. She's good but she has some attitude trouble. She showed some talent winning her first start winning in 1:55 at The Meadowlands this year. We decided to turn her out because she is complicated.

## I noticed you own a perfect record as a trainer with one win in as many starts and have driven a dozen times in your life. Why didn't you pursue either of those avenues?

Because I have no talent as a driver [laughing]. The training win is funny because I had a broodmare that was almost done with racing and in the winter I decided to put the harness and sleigh on her during Christmas time. The ranch manager told me I should race her one time for fun because she is sharp and would race well. So I said ok, let's do that. I trained her for like two weeks on a snow track and she raced incredible. I think she had the pocket trip and she passed like a super rocket. Everyone said I should race her again, but she wasn't even supposed to race that time and I wanted her to finish her career on a win. Plus I have a 1000 UTRS because it is the only start I have in my career.

## If you could change one thing about harness racing, what would it be?

Personally I would make it so there is no racing on Sundays. We all need to rest. People are working crazy all week long. They should be able to race Saturday night and start back on Monday afternoon. It would be good for grooms, for drivers, for families. We don't need to bet on horse races every day.

## How do you view the future of harness racing?

There is a challenge to bring a new generation into the game. I'm probably one of the youngest people involved at my level, but every level is important because we need overnight races to make it work. To be honest I'm a bit worried. It is more expensive than ever to own a horse and purses don't always meet the cost of training horses. The horses are more expensive than ever, too. In the stakes races, we are racing for the same money as five to seven years ago when the horses were 40 to 50% cheaper than today.

## Time for the stretch drive...

**Best Horse you ever saw?** In my mind there is no doubt that as a racehorse, sire and broodmare sire, Artsplace is the best ever.

**Best Driver Ever?** I think John Campbell is still the best.

**Lasix – Yes or No?** Yes.

**Favorite TV Show?** House Of Cards.

**Trotters or Pacers?** Trotters.

# Meadowlands handle continues to be strong in November

November continues to bring good returns to both Meadowlands' regulars and management, as for a fourth consecutive year, business has shown gains during the 11th month on the calendar.

All-source handle averaged a not-too-shabby \$2,110,835 during November of 2018, but business has improved every year since, as 2019 saw an average of \$2,390,320, \$2,510,807 in '20, \$2,534,332 in '21, before this year's \$2,757,205.

The last live racing night of the month was the best in terms of handle, when \$3,398,962 was put in play on the brilliant 14-race program that made up "Fall Final Four/TVG Championships Night" on Saturday (Nov. 26).

"The industry has seen enormous progress since the horse racing bill was passed in 2019," said track Chief Operating Officer and General Manager Jason Settlemyer. "Everyone in the industry owes a resounding thank you to Gov. Phil Murphy and the members of the New Jersey State Legislature."

"At The Meadowlands, we have the biggest pools and low take outs. Combine that with competitive racing featuring 10-horse fields, that leads to bigger payouts, which is what our fan base craves. Last weekend, just 10 favorites scored from 28 races. The price of many things are going up these days, but a win bet still costs just \$2, the same as when we opened the doors at The Big M in 1976."

**LIVE RACING THURSDAY:** The final Thursday card of the year at The Big M takes place tonight (Dec. 1). Post time is 6:20 p.m.

Moving forward, racing at The Meadowlands will be conducted on a Friday-Saturday basis through the end of the year, with a first-race post time of 6:20 p.m. There are two exceptions on the schedule, as there will be no live racing on Dec. 23-24.

-edited release (Meadowlands)

## GRAND CIRCUIT FRESHMAN TROTS ON THE MOVE TO INDIANA IN 2023

Two of the richest and most prominent 2-year-old Grand Circuit events -- the Peter Haughton Memorial Trot for colts and geldings and the Jim Doherty Memorial (formerly the Merrie Annabelle) for trotting fillies will have a new home in 2023.

Harrah's Hoosier Park, which has one of the wealthiest open stake programs in North America, will host the juvenile trots on Friday, September 15, 2023 at the seven-eighth mile track in Anderson, Indiana.

[READ MORE](#)

## TEMPORAL HANOVER TO STAND STUD IN INDIANA

The Hoosier State will welcome Temporal Hanover, the second-richest son of World Champion trotting stallion Walner, to stand his debut stud season in Indiana in 2023.

There was huge interest shown from studs across the country for the Marcus Melander-trained Grand Circuit performer. With options aplenty the owner of Kountry Lane Standardbreds is thrilled to confirm the near millionaire-earning colt will assume the next chapter of his promising career at Premier Acres in Middlebury, Indiana.

[READ MORE](#)

## KING OF THE NORTH HEADS TO TARA HILLS STUD

True to his name, 2021 Dan Patch 2-Year-Old Trotting Colt of the Year and Breeders Crown champion, King Of The North (3,1:50 3/5 | \$1,166,854), will head north of the border as the heir apparent to the trotting stallion throne.

After much deliberation, Kountry Lane Standardbreds are announcing that the richest son of siring sensation Walner will stand at Tara Hills Stud in Port Perry, Ontario, for stud duties in 2023.

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### THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1

#### RACE 6

(4) CIEL BLEU prevailed handily at this level on 11-3, and I'm expecting he'll be closer to the action here as he starts from a better post than he had in his most recent effort.

-Greg Reinhart



### FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2

#### RACE 5

(8) SUMATRA owns just a single win so far this year, but the veteran worked his way up into higher classes than this over at Yonkers and might appreciate getting to stretch out on the mile track tonight.

-Reinhart



#### RACE 5

(5) KARMA SEELSTER paced a 54 1/5 middle 1/2 last week which doomed her late but should have her nicely tightened up for a big mile in this third start back; top call.

-Garnet Barnsdale



### SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3

#### RACE 13

(3) LEON DAVID is getting better with each start since returning from a few months on the bench. Saunders trainee faces a dull field and should prove tough.

-Derick Giwner



### FULL CARD ANALYSIS / PAST PERFORMANCES

Mohawk Park Analysis [Thursday](#) [Friday](#) [Saturday](#)

Meadowlands Analysis [Thursday](#) [Friday](#) [Saturday](#)

Yonkers Analysis [Thursday](#) [Friday](#)

**DHP PPS** **HARNESS EYE PPS** **TRACKMASTER PPS** **FREE PPS**

[INSTANT RACING UPDATES VIA TWITTER: @DRFHARNES](#)

# NEWS FROM AROUND THE HARNESS INDUSTRY

## CAESARS ENTERTAINMENT TO BE TITLE SPONSOR OF DAN PATCH AWARDS

Caesars Entertainment will once again be the title sponsor for the 2023 Dan Patch Award Banquet, it is jointly announced by Caesars and the United States Harness Writers Association (USHWA). This marks the second year in a row for Caesars as the title sponsor. Caesars operates three harness racing establishments in the United States: Hoosier Park in Anderson, Indiana; Scioto Downs in Columbus, Ohio; and Harrah's Philadelphia.

"We are simply delighted to have Caesars back again this year," said Barry Lefkowitz, President of the U.S. Harness Writers Association. "They operate terrific venues and realize the importance of the Dan Patch Awards to the harness racing industry."

"Caesars is proud to be the title sponsor of the Dan Patch Awards for the second year in a row. We are committed to supporting harness racing and honoring the sport's year-end champions," said Joe Morris, Caesars Senior Vice President, Racing.

The 2023 Dan Patch Awards Banquet, presented by Caesars Entertainment, will honor the best of the best of harness racing, both human and equine, culminating with the announcement of the E. Roland Harriman Harness Horse of the Year and will take place on Sunday, February 19 at the Rosen Shingle Creek Resort in Orlando, Florida.

Room reservations for the star-studded weekend can be made at the U. S. Harness Writers website, or through this link: [Hotel Reservations](#).

Sponsorship opportunities for the event can be procured from Sponsorship chairman Shawn Wiles at [swiles@rwcatskills.com](mailto:swiles@rwcatskills.com). Information regarding tickets to the event and advertisements in the souvenir journal will be available shortly.

-edited release (USHWA)

## BULLDOG HANOVER TO BE HONORED AT MOHAWK SATURDAY

Woodbine Entertainment and Ontario Racing announced a retirement ceremony for Bulldog Hanover, the World's Fastest Standardbred, will be held this Saturday (December 3) at Woodbine Mohawk Park.

As part of Saturday's festivities, racing fans will have the great opportunity to take a photo with Bulldog Hanover starting at 6 p.m. Fans will also receive their photo with a magnetic frame as a give

Later in the evening, Bulldog Hanover will take to the Woodbine Mohawk Park racing surface one last time, parading for the fans then returning to the winner's circle for a special retirement ceremony.

The retirement ceremony will include a special winner's circle presentation and interviews with Team Bulldog Hanover. Woodbine has also prepared a highlight video of Bulldog Hanover's accomplishments that will be shown during the ceremony.

A special program featuring Bulldog Hanover will also be available on Saturday, along with Bulldog Hanover merchandise.

-edited release (Woodbine)

## WINBAK SEEKING ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE ASSISTANT, FOALING MANAGER

Winbak Farm of Maryland seeks a Foaling Manager. The farm is located in Chesapeake City, Maryland about an hour south of Philadelphia and north of Baltimore.

Winbak Farm's Foaling Manager will assist and/or help manage the foaling of close to 300 mares from January-July. It is required for the manager to have foaling experience. The position will require the prospective candidate to coordinate with the broodmare manager and farm veterinarian in determining when to move horses to and from the foaling barn, assessing health of broodmares and foals, administering treatments in coordination with the farm vet, keeping accurate foaling, health, and movement records, and assisting when needed in problem deliveries. Ability to speak Spanish is a plus.

The Manager should be available to live on the farm so to be able to easily assist if an emergency arises. Farm housing and vehicle are provided.

Winbak Farm has a trained and experienced foaling staff to assist the Manager. For most of the foaling season, there will be a team of 8 employees to help in the day-to-day operation of the barns and paddocks, as well as 2-3 foaling employees to watch the barn during the evenings and overnight.

Salary will be based on experience. Winbak Farm offers benefits,

including health and dental insurance, 401k, vacation and more.

Winbak Farm is looking to hire someone for this position as soon as possible. Please contact Jack Burke, Winbak Farm General Manager, at 410.885.3059 or email [jack.burke@winbakfarm.com](mailto:jack.burke@winbakfarm.com) for more information.

Additionally, Winbak is seeking an accounts receivable assistant to be responsible for billing outside clients, collecting payments from clients and entering detailed information pertaining to the billing of clients. The position would also include assisting the financial administrator with keying and filing payables.

Additional duties would be horse related such as applying for foal registrations, submitting registrations to the various sales companies and possibly some outdoor farm responsibilities. Basic horse knowledge and some experience with accounting a plus.

Salary will be based on experience. Winbak Farm offers benefits including health and dental insurance after 90 days, Vacation time after 90 days and 401K after 6 months of employment.

Please send resumes to Patricia Bailey at 410.885.9005 or [patricia.bailey@winbakfarm.com](mailto:patricia.bailey@winbakfarm.com).

-edited release (Winbak)

## MEADOWLANDS OFFERS DECEMBER PROMOTIONS SCHEDULE

The Meadowlands Racetrack hosts racing every Friday and Saturday plus Thursday, December 1 with a 6:20pm post time.

Those looking for a special dinner to kick off the holiday season will enjoy the 6-course French Wine Dinner. The dinner takes place in Pink, the track's tiered dining room that overlooks the live race action. The dinner is \$79.95 per person (excluding tax & gratuity). For reservations call 201-The-BigM.

For the wine dinner menu click [here](#).

Guests on December 3rd can also snag a 2023 calendar featuring the best horses of 2022. Calendars will be available at the players club desk beginning at 6pm.

The track is proud to once again work with the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve and former NY Jets wide receiver Quincy Enunwa and serve as an official Toys for Tots donation site.

New, unwrapped toys will be collected at the track through December 9th. On Friday, December 9th Enunwa will be onsite collecting toys and taking selfies with fans 6:30-8:30 pm in the track Clubhouse Lobby. WPIX-11 sportscaster Justin Walters will emcee this special event. Those that donate also have a chance to win autographed NY Jets collectables – including mini footballs and Christmas ornaments.

On Saturday, December 10 the buffet theme, served in Pink and Trotters, is "holidays around the world" featuring delicious holiday foods from around the globe. The \$54.95 (plus tax and gratuity) is loaded with celebration favorites including hand-carved prime rib with herb sauce, roasted leg of lamb, potato latkes and sweet potato pie. For reservations call 201-The-BigM.

The Meadowlands closes out 2022 with fan appreciation night. Guests can enjoy \$1 hot dogs, popcorn, pretzels and soda and \$2 Bud and Bud Light. A free fireworks show follows the night's race card.

Those looking for a more upscale dining experience will enjoy the \$64.95 (plus tax and gratuity) Pink buffet with a complimentary champagne toast. The menu includes carved rib steak, lobster bisque, garlic-herb salmon and tiramisu. Reservations can be made by calling 201-The-BigM.

-edited release (Meadowlands)

## MONTICELLO SEEKING 14-YEAR-OLDS

Monticello Raceway is in search of 14-year-old horses to mark their final performance on the racetrack during its Au Revoir Race, slated for Thursday, December 22.

"The last few years we didn't have enough older horses to hold the race, but there seems to be an abundance of 14-year-olds this year, and hopefully we can get enough of them to hold our Au Revoir Race," said Eric Warner, Monticello Raceway Race Secretary.

The race will have a purse payout of \$5,000.

Anyone interested in entering a horse should contact Eric Warner at 845-794-4100, ext. 557.

-release (Monticello)