

THURSDAY, JANUARY 12, 2023

Purse windfall in store for Monticello Raceway

By Derick Gwerner

With Resorts World opening a new gaming facility featuring 1,200 slot machines and electronic table games in the Newburgh, New York area, one of the beneficiaries will be those racing at Monticello Raceway. For the embattled track that has faced horse shortages during the summer months while offering purses well below the nationwide average, the sun could finally be starting to rise over the Catskill mountains that surround the historic facility.

According to Joe Faraldo, general counsel for the Monticello Harness Horseman's Association, the track should see purses rise by 150% within a month. That estimated increase comes after seeing initial revenue figures from the Resorts World casino as well as payments from the Newburgh OTB parlor that is due to the Monticello purse account.

"If all goes the way we expect it to go and they don't try to pull something legally, we expect the increase very shortly – within a month," said Faraldo.

For the week of January 9, which includes four racing days of 11 races each, the purse account paid out \$254,700 for an average of \$63,675 per card or \$5,788 per race. The projected increase would push the per-card total to \$159,187 and the average per race to \$14,470 based off the current

week. By comparison, Yonkers Raceway, which offers some of the highest purses in the country and by far the highest in the state, had an average purse distribution of \$174,180 during its last full week (Dec. 12 to 16) of racing and a per-race average of \$17,773.

While Faraldo admitted there is no guarantee that the casino revenue stream will remain as strong in the future as the "newness" wears off and the downstate casinos closer to the New York City limits get approval to proceed with full-blown operations, he will closely monitor the situation. One certainty is that Monticello, which often out-handles the other tracks in New York despite small fields and often fewer races, seems likely to attract plenty of horses and perhaps increase its presence as a product worth following.



DERICK GWERNER

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Trainer Per Engblom switched gears to perfection in 2022



JAYWALKING

By Jay Bergman [@BergmanJay](#)

After an impressive 2022 campaign trainer Per Engblom can now be labeled an “overnight success.” Having spent much of his training career in the U.S. as the top assistant to Hall of Fame conditioner Jimmy Takter, Engblom set out on his own a couple of years back following Takter’s retirement. Initially the stable concentrated on 2 and 3-year-olds with a lean towards trotters.

Last year the stable drifted dramatically away from its inception and Engblom and his staff took the challenge and ran with it.

“My owners were looking for more racehorses,” said Engblom.

The shift to a stable with minimal starts for just 2- and 3-year olds and an occasional older open performer was dramatic, and the impact it made on the sport in 2022 was most impressive. When Engblom took over part of the Takter stable upon his retirement he sent just 631 horses to post in the years 2019-20. Just two years later the numbers had changed drastically, with Engblom sending out 906 starters and 180 finding the winner’s circle.

At Harrah’s Philadelphia where the meet recently concluded, Engblom did what would have been unthinkable just a few years ago, he captured the training title with 75 wins, and that was 11 more than the sport’s winningest trainer Ron Burke had during the same time frame. Burke even sent out 21 more starters.

“I’ve got a great staff,” Engblom said in describing how he’s met the challenge of overnight racing. “It’s what the owners wanted and that’s the most important part.”

Engblom’s stable also had a strong showing at Yonkers in 2022, winning 55 times over the half-mile oval and ranking him 12th against many horsemen that rely heavily on claimers. Earnings for Engblom’s horses at Yonkers were more than \$977K alone, about a third of the stable’s \$2.928 million record-setting campaign.

“We’ve got 60 horses now,” said Engblom, who operates out of Magical Acres. “I’ve got just nine babies.”

The shift in power may make Engblom a little less noticeable on the Grand Circuit but it is a testament to his ability to start over and prove himself not just against trainers but more importantly among his owners.

“It’s been great,” Engblom said. “I started out where people were giving me just one horse to train and that was fine. Now those same people are buying multiple horses and sending them to me.”

A recent acquisition in the stable, Mind Hunter, made a powerful statement in his 2023 debut at The Meadowlands this past Saturday. It was just his second start for Engblom, with the first being a solid score at Yonkers in mid-December before the track closed for a brief hiatus.

Jason Bartlett guided Mind Hunter to a 1:51 career-best clocking, with the Captaintreacherous-sired gelding sprinting home by open lengths appearing well in hand.

“We’re not going to race him every week,” said Engblom of his projected schedule. “He’s eligible to some late closers at Yonkers and we’ll probably send him back over there when they re-open.”

Mind Hunter is the perfect horse to own and race at Yonkers because of his limited win total.

While Engblom expects to start as many, if not more horses in 2023, he is excited about the prospects for a pair of veteran trotters that will soon return to racing action. Specifically, the Muscle Hill-sired 6-year-old Sermon is rapidly on the mend and approaching a qualifying date shortly.

“He finished fourth in the Breeders Crown in 2021,” Engblom said of Sermon, who wasn’t that far behind Ecurie D in the late-October contest held at The Meadowlands. “He got injured last year and needed time. I expect him to qualify soon.”

Engblom hopes that Sermon could benefit from an Open class in 2023 that will look quite different with the retirement of Ecurie D, Back Of The Neck and Forbidden Trade, not to mention the mares Atlanta and When Dovescry.

Perhaps a notch below Sermon is the reliable Hayek that Engblom campaigned to perfection in 2022. The son of E L Titan split time between Harrah’s Philadelphia and Yonkers mostly, and that led to a career year with more than \$121K banked as Hayek was on the board



(ABOVE) LISA PHOTO; (BELOW) GRACE ZIMMERS

Per Engblom (third from right below) received the Trainer of the Year award from Harrah’s Philadelphia and he hopes Sermon (above) is one of his top horses this year.



20 times in 29 starts for his connections.

What has happened to the Engblom stable over the last few years is a direct reflection on his commitment to the horses and their care and acknowledgement from a growing list of owners to his ability to handle a large number without slippage. Many of the horses Engblom has been sent during the last 12 months have come from trainers with bigger stables. That Engblom has been able to give horses better attention with great results is a good reason why owners continue to knock on his door.

To his credit, Engblom remains low-key but his success story can no longer fly under the radar. The numbers in 2022 are vivid proof of the ability to change direction and prosper against all odds. When Jimmy Takter retired, his daughter Nancy and Per Engblom were the prime beneficiaries of quality young horses under his care. Over time it became apparent that the person sharing his last name would be first in line when it came to purchasing and training expensive yearlings. Engblom looked like he could have been the odd-man-out so-to-speak, but that’s not how the story would play out. Instead, thanks to a willingness to change direction and the hard work required to triple the number of starters in a calendar year, Engblom has now forged his own path with a stable well-balanced for raceway success. Perhaps of more importance is the fact that 2022 represented a year that allowed Engblom to make a name for himself and no longer be considered second in command to a Hall of Famer. Clearly that’s represented in some impressive statistics that come directly from Engblom and the hard-working staff he commands.

For now, Engblom will send out horses at The Meadowlands and soon Yonkers, and when Pocono opens in February there should be some at the Pennsylvania track few as well. Despite the growing number of horses in his care, Engblom has managed to keep his winning percentage above 20, a number that both bettors and owners will appreciate.



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Pondering Dexter Dunn as the best driver in Harness Racing



EDITOR'S EYE

By Derick Giwner [@harnesseveguy](#)

The title of this column is a question I've been asking myself recently. A year ago, Dexter Dunn became the first driver this century to win the Dan Patch Driver of the Year award in three consecutive years (the award began in 2003) and he topped that by becoming four-time winner in 2022, equaling Tim Tetrick (2007, 2008, 2012, 2013) atop the leaderboard in the category. Now, just five years since making the trek from his native New Zealand, we certainly have to wonder whether he has surpassed his contemporaries and become the best Standardbred driver in North America.

While everyone will focus on the four consecutive Dan Patch titles, and I can certainly make a strong case that Tetrick should've won in 2019, Dunn actually did something historic in 2022. He became just the second driver in history to earn a place among the top 25 in single-season earnings with less than 2,000 starts during the year. John Campbell accomplished the feat in 2001 when he went behind the gate 1,803 times and his horses earned \$14,182,238, or \$393.30 per start based on his 5% commission. Dunn blew those numbers out of the water with \$15,197,579 for just 1574 starts, an average of \$482.77 for each trip around the track.

While Tim Tetrick owns the record for most single-season earnings at \$19,734,781 (2008), that was accomplished in 4,048 starts. Though it is worth noting when discussing the greatest ever that Tetrick has amassed eight of the top 10 seasons in terms of earnings and should eventually retire as the number one driver in terms of career winnings.

While the reasoning behind Dunn's ascent to the top of his profession is based on more than simple numbers, they do tell much of the story. For instance, consider that Dunn was the only driver in the top 25 in wins at The Meadowlands in 2022 who produced a positive return on investment (6%) for bettors. Other than Joe Bongiorno (-4%), every other driver in the top 10 was -16% or lower (statistics courtesy StatsMaster).

More intuitively, Dunn has been moving horses up from various barns on a consistent basis at The Meadowlands. In December, after all of the stakes horses have been turned out and the only horses left on the track are the overnight warriors, Dunn put up 21 wins in 75 starts (28%) while more than doubling any other driver's win total during the month. On his last weekend in action before taking some holiday vacation time, he brought home CC Bank at 10-1 for owner trainer Frank Multari Jr., Love Me Hill at 4-1 for trainer Virgil Morgan Jr., Thanos at 2-1 for Travis Alexander, Livinthebeachlife at 2-1 for Ron Burke, Belmont Royale N at 3-5 for Nifty Norman and Ipanema Hanover at 7-5 for Jeff Cullipher. Six wins for six different trainers. Dunn also won for nine other trainers during December! That's what's so impressive, as many hot streaks are usually associated with a barn going on a good run, but Dunn is moving up all horses right now.

What he does seem to do most effortlessly is place horses in a position to win. He's extremely adept at rating first-over on the rim and certainly seems to find his way behind cover more often than most. On a mile track like The Meadowlands, I'm not sure there is a driver I'd rather have, though there are a handful who are certainly on par.

The above said, I've been less impressed with his half-mile-track prowess. Granted his sample size is small, but he only won 12% (108 starts) at Yonkers Raceway in 2022, seventh best among drivers with at least 100 starts. In comparison, Dunn won at 19% at The Meadowlands and 23.1% on the five-eighths at Harrah's Philadelphia. The results are



AMANDA STEPHENS

Dexter Dunn has won four straight Dan Patch Driver of the Year awards from the United States Harness Writers.

indicative of Dunn's style of racing. He's simply not the most aggressive driver on the planet and that is the best style on smaller tracks. That's not to say he can't fire a horse out, but it is clear as day that he picks his spots to use a horse's early speed and prefers to conserve energy for later in the mile.

Dunn is also quiet in the bike and doesn't overuse the whip. He has no whipping violations on his record or fines for removing his feet from the stirrups. The same can't be said for others who hold his profession.

Interestingly, while we laud Dunn for his on-track prowess, specifically at The Meadowlands, he wasn't the leading driver at the oval in 2022. Yannick Gingras beat Dunn in wins (136 vs. 117) with an identical win percentage of 19%. George Brennan, who only showed up at The Big M sparingly last year, led all drivers with over 100 starts (20 total drivers) at 20%. Since Yonkers went on winter vacation on December 22, Brennan, a.k.a. the "Minister of Speed," is tied for the most wins at The Meadowlands with fellow Yonkers stalwart Jordan Stratton at seven.

As expected, Dunn is planning to return from vacation in the coming weeks and he seems likely to rise to the top of the standings as usual.



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Some old, some new at Sunshine Meadows this winter



ON THE MARK

By Bob Marks [@BobMarks3](#)

The majority of what has been called the “Alagna Armada” will be going through their early paces and trots at Tony Alagna’s Advantage Training Center in Howell, New Jersey, formally known as the Tullo Center. Fortunately, some new faces in addition to familiar regulars have picked up the “slack” at the Sunshine Meadows Equestrian Village in west Delray Beach, Florida this year.

Courtesy of Jeff Bell’s annual 2023 edition of Champions & Future Champions In Training we note that the facility is almost full with several new trainers in residence.

At one point, the Alagna Armada would number well over 100 horses in the barns with closest proximity to “The Deck” where many prominent owners could be seen, especially on Saturdays, munching bagels and sipping coffee generally supplied by Murray Brown and Myron Bell. It was not uncommon for the Alagna individual training sets to number in excess of a dozen horses, not only simulating an actual race but occupying the entire homestretch as the armada endeavored to finish in proximity to each other at the wire.

This year Alagna has but a token presence under the supervision of his well-known “dam” Donna Lee. They are located primarily in barn 12 adjacent to the famed “deck”. One impressive youngster in particular is La Doriane (Trixtion-Magical Valentine), a home-bred full sister to the successful Gigondas.

Some of the slack taken up by the Alagna exodus is from the Travis Alexander stable, a Sunshine Meadows mainstay. However this year, Travis, along with assistants Doug Miller and Matt Krueger, is training 60-head including 35 2-year-olds. One to watch there might be Stay Cool Hanover (Stay Hungry-Sammys Magic Girl) purchased last year for \$240,000.

Then there’s Wally Hennessey, the perennial leading driver at Pompano who used to stable at the closed track but now has his own contingent at Sunshine Meadows. Included are several well-bred youngsters he’s conditioning for Northern based Trond Smedshammer’s American Viking Stable.

Lindy Farms has their traditional numbers with Domenico Cecere at the helm. It might be noted that that former trainer Frank Antonacci Jr.’s younger brother Philip Antonacci, now a thoroughbred trainer, celebrated his initial training victory in a five furlong affair at nearby Gulfstream Park.

Traditional Sunshine Meadows regulars like Casie Coleman, Fred Grant and Peter Wrenn have their customary numbers at their usual barn locations. In addition, there’s Jeff Webster, who brings along a good number of the Eric Cherry’s home-bred Let It Ride Stable youngsters.

Newcomer Desiree Jones has several for Canadian mainstay Gino Toscani. Others not as familiar to Northern readers include Amanda Fine, Dan LaGage and amateur driver Steve Oldford. The latter will be conditioning a couple of his home-breds.

Then there’s Joe Pavia, who was here last year with his contingent of 2-year-olds and raceway stock. Pavia has Wishyouweremine (Captaintreacherous-Moneyshot), who was obtained for \$185,000 last year. Also Zeppole Hanover (Stay Hungry-Zellweger Blue Chip), a \$140,000 purchase.

Up from Pompano is veteran Mickey McNichol, who generally would be racing at the now-closed track and is likely preparing to ship north to Tioga when they reopen next spring.

Brent MacGrath is back. I’m not sure if last year’s star sophomore Beach Glass is with him just yet but with Pebble Beach now in stud, that Somebeachsomewhere newly-turned 4-year-old, along with Downbytheseaside rival Bythemissal, should be major contenders in the aged pacing ranks. Especially now that Bulldog Hanover is safely in stud in Canada.

Haven’t seen that many of the owners who usually inhabit the deck just yet, but it’s still early and with the Hambletonian Society’s annual meeting just ahead in early March, they’ll be along soon enough. By then the colts and fillies will be going enough to make it more interesting.

On a sad note, Ron Ruggles, a deck regular and proprietor of M T Pockets Stables, passed on suddenly the other day. M T Pockets along with



DERICK GIWNER

Casie Coleman is a trainer who stables at Sunshine Meadows.

partner writer Victoria Howard had horses with both Tony Alagna and Peter Wrenn. The best of those Taurasi p, 3,1:48 3/5 (Racing Hill-Voluminous) will prep for his 4-year-old season at Sunshine Meadows having just arrived at “Alagna south” from his Kentucky turnout location.

It should be noted that the South Florida Training Center, also known as “Olympia” some eight miles due North from Sunshine Meadows in Lake Worth, has been sold. Consequently some of their regulars have gravitated to Sunshine Meadows. Undoubtedly some may have migrated to the opulent Palema training center in Vero Beach a good 90 minutes or more northeast from Sunshine Meadows.

As Sunshine Meadows hosted the well-attended Florida Breeders Stakes Championships in December, they will periodically hold official qualifiers for those raceway residents prior to the ship north later this spring.



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DiDomenico six-pack takes aim at Big M weekend pay dirt

By Jay Bergman

With 70 horses under his care, trainer Scott DiDomenico has few moments to concentrate on anything but his horses. Fortunately, between training trips on Wednesday morning, he was able to comment on the chances of six starters he'll send out this weekend at The Meadowlands.

For DiDomenico most of the comments concerned an issue that is not unique at this time of year. Specifically, many horses have missed weeks of racing due to limited opportunity as well as some cancellations.

The Cookie Monster drew the pole position in Friday night's third race at The Meadowlands and the now 6-year-old homebred from the \$1.4 million winner Handsoffmycookie may have found a class he can handle in this non-winners of \$3,000 event. It was Handsoffmycookie that catapulted DiDomenico's rise in the business a dozen years ago when she captured the New York Sire Stakes final and was a runner-up in the Breeders Crown while winning nine times in a dozen starts for DiDomenico. After a lengthy racing career, she retired to broodmare duty with The Cookie Monster her very first foal.

"He should be good in here," said DiDomenico, referring to Friday's contest where his charge has pole position and Tyler Buter in the bike.

As for DiDomenico's other Friday night starter Trizzle Trazzle in the 14th race nightcap, the trainer was a bit dismissive.

"She's been off too long," DiDomenico said. Nevertheless, there was a caveat in his commentary. "She did race very well in her last start getting parked to the half in 55 4/5 at Yonkers."

A 6-year-old mare by Mach Three, Trizzle Trazzle goes for an optional \$12,500 claiming tag in a conditioned event for non-winners of \$3,000 fillies and mares. Trizzle Trazzle drew post eight and is likely to return to Yonkers when that track opens the 2023 season next week.

On Saturday night DiDomenico starts the evening in the first race and from post one as he did on Friday. At the same time, his feelings regarding Ourrhythmbues N were not quite as positive as The Cookie Monster from the previous night.

"He qualified well but he's in with significantly better horses," DiDomenico said, pointing specifically to Whitecookie (post 8), a horse from the Burke stable that had been racing in \$75,000 claimers in December over the half-miler at Yonkers.

Ourrhythmbues N suffered an injury last July after racing at the \$50,000 claiming level at Yonkers and may need a couple of starts before he can regain the competitive level he's in with this Saturday. This non-winners of \$10,500 also includes the 5-year-old return of the extremely fast Carbine (post 2), a 1:47 4/5 victor last year at The Meadowlands who was a solid 1:52 4/5 qualifying winner on January 7 over the track.

One Off Delight A (post 5) gives DiDomenico a decent chance in Saturday's third race, a non-winners of \$5,000 conditioned event.

"He got shut off in his last race at Yonkers and finished very well," said DiDomenico. "I'm concerned with the time off, but he should be ok in that class."

DiDomenico's luck of the draw continued Saturday with Denmark Seelster making a return to the races in the fourth, a \$20,000 claimer honoring Martin Luther King.

"It was a bad claim," DiDomenico said as a matter of fact.

Taken by DiDomenico on October 28 at the \$25,000 level, Denmark Seelster made two starts in that class at Yonkers with no success and has now qualified back looking for a fresh start at The Meadowlands.

"He's raced on the big track in Canada so I'm hoping that will help," said DiDomenico.

When it comes to claiming horses, DiDomenico has had far more



COURTESY SCOTT DIDOMENICO

Trainer Scott DiDomenico has a stable of 70 horses that compete on the east coast.

successes than failures through his career and perhaps Statement Made A (post 1) in Saturday's 12th race will provide an upside after he was plucked on New Year's Eve at Harrah's Philadelphia. The now 10-year-old import closed out his 2022 campaign with a pair of wins and second-place finishes in December for his former stable.

"I'm on the track with him now," DiDomenico said on Wednesday morning before putting Statement Made A through his final training trip in advance of Saturday's stable debut. "I like him a lot and I think he'll be good from this spot, especially with George [Brennan] in the bike."

DiDomenico has just seven 2-year-olds in training and six 3-year-olds, with the rest of his stable overnight horses. "I'm focused on racing at Yonkers," DiDomenico said. "But I'd like to have a good number racing at The Meadowlands as well."

With a bit more conditioning, expect DiDomenico to be a solid player, especially in the claiming ranks at the mile track in East Rutherford.

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Cal Expo fighting a battle with Mother Nature

By Derick Gwerner

While California has experienced historic rainfall in recent weeks which has caused flooding, evacuations and fatalities, track officials at Cal Expo are hoping to return some form of normalcy to the harness racing community by altering its schedule to beat Mother Nature before she takes her next shot at the Sacramento area.

With Thursday the only day without rain predicted through the middle of next week, track General Manager Chris Schick requested and received approval from the California Horse Racing Board to move Sunday's card to Thursday in an attempt to allow the mostly isolated horse population (there are no other tracks in the vicinity for Standardbreds) a chance to race. Cal Expo has been forced to cancel four consecutive programs due to the unprecedented rainfall and hasn't held live racing since December 26. The cancellations have also pushed back the track's stakes schedule multiple weeks, but barring a rash of future issues the California Sire Stakes and other events will be contested in the coming months.

According to Schick, the issue with racing has more to do with the starting car being able to safely get around the track than the actual racing surface. "It's hard. We get the car out there at 1pm and it doesn't go as hoped. We can only guess whether it will be better in three hours," said Schick, who is in awe of the recent events. "Just when you think you've seen everything they throw this at you."

While having stone dust or limestone material would allow the track to better handle the weather issues, Schick, who runs the meet under the Watch & Wager banner, only leases the track and isn't permitted to alter the surface, which also hosts Thoroughbred races during the year.

To Watch & Wager and the California Harness Horseman's Association's credit, they handed out \$469 per horse to all who were entered recently – totaling \$100,000 – from the purse account to help offset the lost income suffered by the loyal horsepeople who travel out to California for the November to April meet. In addition, mostly for the sake of allowing horses to get raced, Cal Expo will race on Thursday despite wagering being unavailable at California sites.

Schick is optimistic about getting the card in on Thursday and is simply hoping for the best when it comes to Friday.

"It is going to rain most of the day Wednesday but we plan to work on the track that night and all day Thursday. It is supposed to be in the 60s and dry Thursday, so hopefully things work in our favor and we get that card in," said Schick.

While an inch of rain is expected to fall throughout the day on Friday, the good news is the advance forecast for the following weekend is more kind, with partly sunny skies and no more than a 37% chance of precipitation.

SCHEDULE UPDATE

**The next issue of
DRF Harness Digest will
be available on
Wednesday, January 18**



As of a few days ago the conditions at Cal Expo were far from ideal.

HELEN EMPEY (FACEBOOK)



2023 Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association Stallion Auction to benefit P.A.C.E.R.

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Bring On The Beach
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Dancin Yankee
Fear The Dragon
Heart Of Chewbacca
Lather Up

Lost In Time
Mister Big
Monte Miki
Mr Apples
Mr Coolie
Rodeo Romeo
Summa Cum Laude

The Panderosa
Well Said
Western Fame
Western Terror
Western Vintage

TROTTERS

Action Uncle
Centurion ATM
Enterprise
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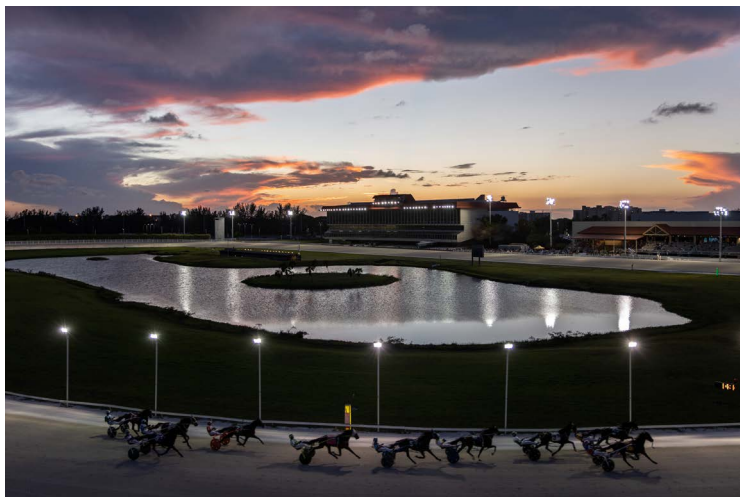
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Triumphant Caviar
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P.A.C.E.R. - Political Action Committee for Equine Racing

USHWA announces media award winners; Wlodarczyk wins with DRF Harness Digest entry



WALTER WLODARCZYK

'Pompano Sunset' appeared in an April issue of DRF Harness Digest.

Kimberly Rinker and Bob Heyden were named winners of the 2022 John Hervey Awards for excellence in harness racing journalism while Mark Hall and Walter Wlodarczyk were named recipients of the George Smallsreed Awards for photography and Cujo Entertainment was selected winner of the Sam McKee Award for broadcasting, the U.S. Harness Writers Association announced Wednesday.

The winners will be recognized at the Dan Patch Awards banquet Feb. 19 at Rosen Shingle Creek resort in Orlando, Fla. Meadowlands Race-track Chairman Jeffrey Gural is continuing his longstanding sponsorship of the awards by providing banquet tickets for the winners.

Rinker won in the feature writing category for her story, "A Tale of Two Survivors," which appeared in the October 2022 issue of Hoof Beats magazine. To read the story, which focuses on horseman John "Duke" Sugg and his family's trotter Yanks Dugout, click [here](#). This is Rinker's second Hervey. Her previous award was also for feature writing.

Heyden won in the news/commentary division for his column, "The Incalculable Loss of Dave Brower," which appeared in the Oct. 13 edition of Harness Racing Update. To read the story, click [here](#). This is Heyden's second Hervey. His previous award was also in the news/commentary division.

Honorable mentions in the feature writing categories went to Tim Bojarski for "Heavenly Horse" in the July issue of Hoof Beats, James Witherite for "Safe at Home" in the September issue of Hoof Beats, and Dave Briggs for "There's Still Some Magic Left in the Old Game" in the July 19 issue of Harness Racing Update.

In news/commentary, honorable mentions went to Ray Coto for "Pompano Presented a Peek at Harness Racing's Grand Past" in the April 21 edition of DRF Harness Digest, and Debbie Little for "Kings for a Weekend" in the Jan. 18 issue of Harness Racing Update.

The writing categories were judged by a panel consisting of longtime sports and feature writer Paul Franklin, Gambling.com Group stateside journalist Lou Monaco, former Philadelphia Inquirer Sports Editor John Quinn, and harness racing Communicators Hall of Fame electee and former Hervey winner Bob Roberts.

In the Smallsreed competitions, Hall won in the race/action category for his photograph "It's Post Time," which appeared in the August issue of Hoof Beats. Hall is an eight-time Smallsreed winner.

Wlodarczyk won in the feature category for his photograph "Pompano Sunset," which appeared in the April 21 edition of DRF Harness Digest.

This is Wlodarczyk's first Smallsreed Award.

Honorable mentions in the race/action category went to Shelley Johnson for her photograph of a flock of birds landing on the infield of Eldorado Scioto Downs while horses race in the background and Jacob Cohen for a photograph of horses racing through the fog at Woodbine Mohawk Park. Johnson's photo appeared Sept. 14 on Harnesslink and Cohen's photo appeared Nov. 3 on Mohawk's social media platforms.

In the feature category, honorable mention went to Clive Cohen for his photograph "The Long Shadow" that appeared June 2 on Mohawk's social media platforms.

Judges for the photography categories were racetrack and newspaper photographer Bill Denver, former harness racing groom and longtime newspaper/magazine photographer Phil McAuliffe, and longtime features photographer Jerry Millevoi.

In the McKee competition, Cujo Entertainment was honored for its coverage of the Hambletonian, which appeared live on the Hambletonian Society's YouTube channel on Aug. 6 and was later broadcast on CBS Sports Network.

The show was produced by Curtis MacDonald and Cameron Chick as well as co-produced and directed by Luke vanBelkom. The show was hosted by Greg Blanchard, Dave Brower, and Michael Carter. To watch the entire one-hour broadcast, click [here](#).

Honorable mention went to Horse Racing Alberta for its feature on the "Fun for Fans" charity initiative that was posted Sept. 22 on the HRA website and social media channels and later picked up by local media CTV Edmonton and Todayville.

Entries for the Sam McKee Award were judged by Kurt Becker, track announcer at Keeneland and an Eclipse Award-winning broadcaster.

To take out a congratulatory ad in the Dan Patch Awards journal, please contact Kim Rinker at trotrink@aol.com or 708.557.2790. The deadline to place an ad is Jan. 23.

Tickets for the banquet are \$200 and can be ordered until Feb. 13 by contacting Judy Davis-Wilson at zoe8874@aol.com or 302.359.3630.

To inquire about sponsorship opportunities available for the weekend please contact committee chairman Shawn Wiles at swiles@empirerere-sports.com or 845.798.4074.

For more information regarding the banquet and award-winners, visit the U.S. Harness Writers Association's website [here](#).

-release (Ken Weingartner for USHWA)

Yonkers Raceway's 2023 meet begins Monday with new surprises

The 2023 racing season at Yonkers Raceway kicks off on Monday night (January 16) with an 11-race program and some new surprises for bettors and on-track patrons.

A \$40,000 Open Handicap Pace (race eight) is the feature on the card, and the headliner is Crunch Time A (post three, George Brennan/Nik Drennan). A 7-year-old gelding by Somebeachsomewhere, Crunch Time A is making his Yonkers debut after a four-for-four run over at the Meadowlands since being imported. He'll take on the likes of Nandolo N (post two, Jason Bartlett/Shane Tritton), who closed out last year with two straight victories in Westchester.

Monday night's program also has a \$10,000 guaranteed pool in the Pick 5. A 50-cent base wager, the sequence begins in the fifth race.

Fans attending the races live on Monday will notice a new state-of-the-art toteboard that was installed shortly before the conclusion of the 2022 season. The toteboard, which should greatly improve the on-track experience, is also capable of showing live video and replays.

Yonkers will also unveil a new slanted starting gate in the hopes of improving the chances for outside horses and providing a more even start for the entire field. The old starting gate had a two-foot differential from posts one to eight, while the new gate is supposed to have an eight-foot differential.

The new gate is expected to arrive Wednesday (Jan. 11) and track officials will test it with horses from the backstretch prior to the first live card on Monday.

To start off 2023, Yonkers will conduct live racing on a Monday through Friday schedule with a new post time of 7 p.m. (EST).

-release (Yonkers Raceway Media)

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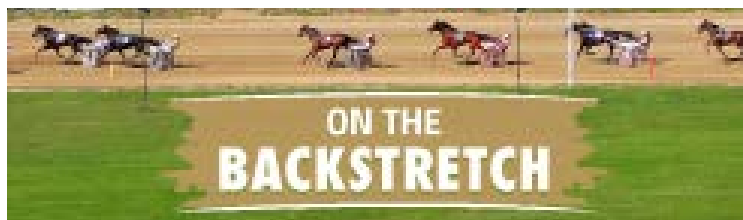
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BY DERICK GIWNER

A new edition of *On The Backstretch* will be out next week but for now, enjoy this “best of” which spans July to December 2022.

HOWARD TAYLOR

You’ve taken some flak over the years for some of the people you’ve defended as an attorney in the sport. What do you say about that?

People think that I’m trying to get people off on technicalities but I am selective. I do turn down people, a lot of people. First, I try to help someone that needs help that couldn’t do it without me. Second, I do turn down people that I don’t believe in. Third, there are a lot of times where I believe someone deserves to get a suspension but not to the degree that has been given, so I try to help them get it reduced rather than get them off.

Another thing that people don’t know about me is that I have a great relationship with every state racing commission, outside of New Jersey. They know me and respect me, so I can get deals done where other people couldn’t because they know I’m honest.

If you had the power to change one thing in the sport, what would it be?

It is not the deepest concern but it is a major concern in the sport, and I’m as guilty as anyone, an inordinate percentage of the good horses are owned by an inordinately small percentage of the owners. I think that is a recipe for disaster when you have six or seven people owning 90% of the top horses. It’s bad. I don’t know what you can do about it and I’m right in the middle of it. Desperate Man, who won the North America Cup last year and was family owned, that was a feel-good story. The guy bought the horse as a cheap yearling and gave it to them as a wedding present. We need more of that, the little guy winning races.

TIM TWADDLE

What is your favorite track to race at?

The defunct Greenwood Raceway. It was a beautiful track on the beaches of Toronto. The barn area on the backside bordered Lake Ontario beach. I remember the smell of the air from the lake during the summertime. The scenery was great. It was just a nice part of Toronto and a great place to watch races from. A streetcar ran right by the front of the track and the place was jammed every day. I have great memories of that track – good and bad because I got busted up there a few times.

If you had the power to change one thing in the sport, what would it be?

I’d like to change two things. One would be the licensing. There should be one license good for everywhere. I stay out of New York because the licensing there is a nightmare. It seems everywhere you go you need to get fingerprints and other things. Any professional sport it is the same rules. A cross-check in Vancouver is the same as a cross-check in Florida. It should be the same thing in our game. A whipping violation should be the same in New Jersey as in Mohawk or anywhere else. The rules and the licensing should be more universal. I think that would inspire more people to jump in.

JACQUELINE INGRASSIA

With 1,176 career driving wins you rank third in history among women. Does it encourage you to see more women entering the sport via amateur racing?

Yes and I would like to see more. We’ve come a long way but there is still that stigma attached, not for me anymore because I’m old enough to be all these guys’ mother, grandmother maybe. Now I’ve gotten over it and it is in the past, but I can see where young women would have a tough time, it is tough for anyone, but especially tough for young women. A lot of times these women are names you never hear but they are the backbone of the sport as far as I’m concerned. These grooms and second trainers, they know how to put in a days’ work, and they just love the animals for the most part.

If you had the power to change one thing in the sport, what would it be?

I’d do away with the use of drugs. Frank and I have been together for 50-something years and we’ve never had a [drug] positive. I understand people get environmental positives, that can happen, but if only there is a way they can clean up the sport and stop them from what they are doing, and I’m pretty sure they are still doing it. I don’t know how or what it is, but it is bad for the sport and even worse for the animals. It’s an uphill battle. People who do these things are always one step ahead.

JESSICA OTTEN

You came to New Jersey in 2018. How hard has it been for a Michigan native to live on the outskirts of New York City?

It was a culture shock for sure. I come from a town with two-lane roads and the only time I hit traffic is when I’m stuck behind a tractor. Moving out here was so hard and it was a lot to adapt to. I really didn’t know anyone but the horsemen and outside of the track I didn’t really do anything for the first year or so. Then COVID hit and I made more friends when I came back. I really didn’t enjoy living here. The only thing I enjoyed was my job. I’m getting used to it now almost four years in, but it was hard.

If you had the power to change one thing in the sport, what would it be?

Human interaction with the horsemen. Like I said, Mohawk’s setup is incredible. People want to talk to the drivers and trainers. Obviously they are stars in our business, but they are regular people too. I did a promotion with The Meadowlands before COVID called Dine-Win-Tour. There is nothing more exciting than the look on a kids face when they get to meet the horses or their favorite driver or trainer. I wish there was a way that we could easily do that everywhere.

ANNIE STOEBE

How important are amateur races for the sport?

I think they are very important because it shows you don’t have to be the picture-perfect driver to be in the sport. I truly believe that something harness racing has even over thoroughbred racing, depending on the owner and their capabilities, the owner can actually jog their own horse and get to know their temperament. My good owner Lynn Curry, when he was trying to figure out who was going to train his horses, the first thing I did was let him jog a horse. To this day he says that is what drew him in, letting him go behind a horse around the track and have fun. It would benefit our entire industry to teach people who are becoming owners how big of a part they can play in their own horses.

That’s a big turnaround from Rodeo to winning one of the most prestigious Standardbred races in eight years, no?

It doesn’t matter if you are running around three cans or going a mile. Yes, there is a huge difference in training, but at the end of the day conditioning and care is all the same. I feel like I bring some of the things from

CONTINUED ON PAGE 17



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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

the riding horse world. A lot of my horses get ridden quite often. I raise every horse to ride because just like humans they need a day to go and be happy. I feel like when you ride them, they don't realize it is work, they just think it is something different and cool, like 'let's go on a trail ride'. As night and day as the two industries are, there are still commonalities.

PETE KOCH

What was your most memorable moment in harness racing?

It's funny, I was working at Buffalo Raceway and I remember saying to the trackman that I thought every race could beat two minutes tonight, back when that used to mean something. When that happened, it was a cool feeling. I go back far enough that qualifying time during the winter at Buffalo was 2:12 for pacers and 2:14 for trotters.

JAKE LEAMON

How often are horses or racing on your mind?

24/7. I've learned that when I leave the barn I have to turn it off a little bit. When I used to walk with my wife in the grocery store I would say, 'you know this horse would really be good if I put this on him' and she would look at me like, 'really, we are in the grocery store.' I would also wake up in the middle of the night and think 'I know how to fix that one.' Now I go home and I've learned to watch a baseball game and not think about the horses for a minute, but it took many years to turn it off.

STEVE JONES

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

That I work pretty hard. Most people see me at the sales laughing and carrying on but mostly I'm at the farm working.

If you had the power to change one thing in the sport, what would it be?

Eliminate the silly Gural Rule. It is hurting the people who support the business and The Meadowlands the most. It has done nothing positive for the sport.

ART ZUBROD

How do you view the future of harness racing?

Much better now than I thought five years ago. Five years ago I thought we were going down a path where in two decades we would be a boutique sport. I see a lot of strength in a lot of areas, from county fairs in Kentucky, Indiana and Ohio to the Sire Stakes, New Jersey is making a comeback, which is a big deal. The Kentucky program is just insane. Certainly in the coming years there will be substantial growth here.

MICKEY BURKE SR.

You got a Class 2 positive for Lidocaine in 2006 which after appeal led to a 123-day suspension in 2009 when you decided to hand over the operation to your son Ron. Why did you decide to just walk away?

I had to do 120 days and a \$12,000 fine. Howard Taylor handled the whole thing and told me that was the best we were going to get. There really was no reason for me to come back. Ronnie was doing a great job and history proves that it was the right move. When I turned it over to him we had right around 150 horses and we have 400 now with 300 in training. Ronnie and I swore we would never own more than eight broodmares and I think we now have 31.

How often are horses or racing on your mind?

From the time my feet hit the floor in the morning until I go to bed. I watch probably 95% of the horses we have race. I have three televisions and I put six tracks on them. Ronnie probably watches 99% of them. The damndest thing is, and this is part of being 86 years old, I'll watch the horses going behind the gate in the middle of the afternoon at The Meadows and fall asleep before the gate swings open and have to call Ronnie to find out where we finished [laughing].

What is the best advice you've ever gotten or can give about harness racing?

I haven't bet on a horse in over 40 years. I'm a firm believer that if you are going to be in this business, and I decided when I went into it, you can either own them or bet them, and I decided I knew more rich owners than rich gamblers. Look around, it has clearly been pretty successful.

GEORGE ANTHONY

From 1991 to 2021 you sent out a credible 358 winners (13%) but seemed to have a larger than life reputation that earned you the nickname "The King". How did you end up with that moniker?

When I came to New York in 1987-ish, it took me 18 months to become the leading trainer. I think I had about 110 wins in 1989. I was racing at Yonkers, Freehold and The Meadowlands. The nickname came from Jimmy Marohn. I had a horse that was 3-5 and an owner who had another horse in the race asked me if I liked my horse. I said he is going to be odds-on and should win for fun. When someone asked about my horses I always told them what I thought. I was never stingy with any information. Next thing I know the race goes off and the other guy's horse has me in a speed duel -- 27, 54 and change to the half -- and I knew my goose was cooked. That got me so hot. As I was getting undressed in the locker room I was letting some of the horseemen know how angry I was. The next week we are in the same race together. I think I had the 3-hole and he had the 4-hole. Luc Ouellette was driving the horse for me and I told him 'I don't give a damn if you finish dead last in here, if that horse gets the lead from me tonight I'm taking you off this horse.' The gate opens up and Luc goes right to the front and the other horse didn't threaten me. Luc put on the brakes, rated the horse well and we drew off in the stretch to win for fun. Anyway, I was kind of cocky and I had my feathers out, so I yell in the locker room at the end of the night, 'now hear this, when I want to cut a mile at Yonkers Raceway I'll cut it and no one will take it away from me. I'm the King of this place and don't forget it.' Jimmy Marohn came out of the shower with like five or six horsemen -- Joe Marsh, Rejean Daigneault, a couple of others -- and they all started chanting 'King, King King King'. The press got ahold of it and it stuck on me. I was winning at over 40% at one time and had 23 wins out of 26 races.

ALAN KATZ

Rumor has it you drive trainer Nancy Takter crazy. Is that true?

100% no. Maybe if she would answer her phone and stop texting, we would have a better relationship, but you are not going to teach her anything at this stage, and you can ask her dad [Hall of Famer Jimmy Takter] if I'm telling the truth.

I called Nancy a month ago in the car on a Sunday. It was like 3pm and I had to make a decision to do something. She picks up the phone and says 'Alan I can't hear you because my [car] hood is down.' [Nancy Takter laughing: "I was thinking to myself I really don't want to talk to Alan right now."] I was thinking, would you say that to Marvin Katz? She loves texting and we love talking. All of my trainers talk. [Nancy Takter laughing: "I give Alan at least three weeks of my life every year on the phone."] I told this to Jimmy Takter, I told this to Ronnie Burke and I'll tell it to any trainer who I work with, we've never been in the business to make money. We are in it to enjoy ourselves. When I told it to Burke he was flabbergasted. He said, 'Alan I make money every year.' I said that I don't. The only way we make money is with the stallions. You cannot make money with just racehorses, unless you are Burke.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

ON THE BACKSTRETCH

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

What is the best advice you've gotten about harness racing?

Get rid of them when they stink. Don't bring them back if they don't show anything at [age] 2. Your first loss is your best loss. I learned that the hard way. If they have problems at 2 they don't go away at 3. That is another thing with trainers, they hate selling horses. To get Nancy to sell a horse is like pulling teeth... Like No Lou Zing, she never wanted to sell. So when I say managing or coaching a trainer, that's when we want to have some input.

MITCHELL SKOLNICK

Your late father (Allen) and mother (Connie) started Southwind Farms and you worked there at one point. Why did you leave?

I had to. I was fired. Truly. I was fired. My father and I did not agree on a range of issues both personal and business. We argued often and it seemed we lived in a constant state of quarreling. I think he finally reached a breaking point.

Interesting when I reflect back on that time. I was angry. I remember saying to him "Hell with you - I'll open my own farm." And here is a cautionary tale. Anger wears off. By the time it wore off for me - I had 60 acres and a half a dozen horses. And there was no way to return to Southwind.

How do you view the future of harness racing?

From my early days in the business, I have been conscious of the commitment many of its participants have. When people argue - as I previously stated - that this is not a business, in one sense they are correct. It is a life for many. Racing horses gets under your skin. And for those who have been inoculated, it's a club that offers camaraderie, and for the lucky ones a moment to revel in success that comes from hard work and dedication.

There is a certain kind of individual that gravitates to this business. It is something that is inherent within them that causes them to dedicate themselves to this endeavor. Many came before us that had this essential characteristic. Many of today's participants in horse racing possess it. As long as the business remains populated by those who feel as we do, Standardbred Racing will be just fine.

MICHAEL COTE GAGNON

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.

DRF Bets Handicapper's Corner

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At DRF Harness we strive to provide the best handicapping information in the sport. Each week we'll use this space to bring you some of our handicappers' best bets and value plays. Use this information as one of your tools when wagering or simply click on the link above and head to DRF Bets to wager now.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 12

RACE 10

(5) DO YOU SEE IT was tons the best last week but he got a terrible trip on excess dead cover and he ended up in an impossible spot by the time the field reached the top of the stretch. He is a clear top pick here.

-Garnet Barnsdale



WOODBINE
MOHAWK PARK

FRIDAY, JANUARY 13

RACE 1

(3) NIGHT EXPLORER gets an interesting trainer change here and a class drop as well. If this guy brings his best they'll be racing for second.

-Derick Giwner



RACE 9

(5) NEED TO BREATHE is too good for these right now and she probably triples up here without much trouble.

-Barnsdale



WOODBINE
MOHAWK PARK

SATURDAY, JANUARY 14

RACE 13

(9) IDRAINTHESWAMP A was raced conservatively and wound up behind a dull foe that had him gapped out from the front pack. He made up good ground to catch the group but was flat late. That was really the perfect second start in the country and a good acclimating mile over this surface. I'm expecting a breakout mile.

-Giwner



FULL CARD ANALYSIS / PAST PERFORMANCES

Mohawk Park Analysis

Thursday Friday Saturday

Meadowlands Analysis

Friday Saturday

DHP PPS

HARNESS EYE PPS

TRACKMASTER PPS

FREE PPS

INSTANT RACING UPDATES VIA TWITTER: @DRFHARNES

NEWS FROM AROUND THE HARNESS INDUSTRY

RECORD HANDLE NORTH OF \$444 MILLION IN 2022 AT MOHAWK PARK

Woodbine Entertainment Tuesday (1/10) announced the 2022 Standardbred racing season at Woodbine Mohawk Park generated a record all-sources handle of \$444,171,816.92*.

The 2022 all-sources handle smashes the previous record of \$364 million in 2019 and is part of over \$1 billion wagered on Woodbine Thoroughbred and Standardbred racing in 2022.

"It's been a terrific year of racing at Woodbine Mohawk Park and the wagering results are proof of that," said Jim Lawson, CEO, Woodbine Entertainment. "Our Standardbred racing product and brand continues to grow globally which speaks to the quality of racing we have, in large part thanks to the talent, commitment and dedication of our horse people."

A total of 218 cards of live racing were conducted in 2022 at Woodbine Mohawk Park, marking the first full season since 2019. The average handle of \$193,707.73 per-race (2,293 races) was up from last year's strong average of \$191,398.92 (1,693 races).

Woodbine's significant brand recognition across North America remained a large part in the success of 2022, with \$329 million wagered through foreign outlets. The Home Market Area represented \$81 million of the year's total.

The 2022 season was highlighted by a few marquee event records.

The Pepsi North America Cup on Saturday, June 18, generated a record \$6.3 million handle, eclipsing the previous record of \$5.6 million from 2020. Superstar 3-year-old Pebble Beach captured the 39th edition of Canada's most prestigious harness race.

Later in the year, the third edition of the Mohawk Million generated a record handle of \$3.9 million as Oh Well strolled to a sparkling score in the \$1 million race.

The Breeders Crown, harness racing's year-end championship series, was held over October 28 and 29 at Mohawk Park. The two-day event generated \$8.9 million in handle, up from the 2019 total of \$6.6 million.

Key Highlights of 2022:

- > 39th Pepsi North America sets new record handle of \$6.3 million
- > Bulldog Hanover matches Canadian Record in Pacing Derby
- > Oh Well gives Hunterton a Mohawk Million hat-trick
- > Big Breeders Crown weekend brings in \$8.9 million in handle
- > MacDonald wins eight races in one night

The 2023 live racing season at Woodbine Mohawk Park is now underway. A total of 222 race dates are scheduled to be contested. Live racing currently takes place every Monday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Post time is 7 p.m.

*all dollars listed in Canadian currency

-edited release (Woodbine)

U.S. 2022 WAGERING DATA RELEASED

Total wagering on U.S. harness races in 2022 declined by 8.33 percent compared to 2021. In 2022, total wagering was \$1,487,258,371, which was \$135,086,255 less than the \$1,622,344,626 that was bet in 2021.

In addition, the average wagering per race in 2022 saw a decrease from 2021. The 2022 average of \$43,592 was \$3,766 (-7.95 percent) per race less than \$47,358 the year before. The per betting interest dropped from \$6,069 to \$5,659 year over year, a 6.76 percent decrease.

During 2022 there was a 10.48 percent increase in purses distributed compared to 2021. The 2022 total of \$483,775,811 in purses was \$45,879,203 more than the \$437,896,608 in 2021.

There were six more race days in 2022 than 2021. The 3,279 in 2022 was a minimal increase of 0.18 percent from the 2021 total of 3,273.

"The numbers tell part of the tale," said Mike Tanner, the U.S. Trotting Association's chief

executive officer. "Purses, owing largely to funding derived from gaming sources, remain incredibly high. There's never been a better time to own a Standardbred racehorse. The handle figure is a 4.37 percent increase over 2019 (\$1,424,886,558), which, not coincidentally, was the last year before 2022 that Canada raced a full and complete harness racing schedule. The drop off in 2022 cannot and should not be ignored, but it's important to consider the context."

ECONOMIC INDICATORS ON U.S. RACES -- YEAR-TO-YEAR COMPARISON

	2022	2021	% Change
Total Wagered	\$1,487,258,371	\$1,622,344,626	-8.33%
Per Race avg.	\$43,592	\$47,358	-7.95%
Per Betting Interest	\$5,659	\$6,069	-6.76%
Purses	\$483,775,811	\$437,896,608	+10.48%
Race Days	3,279	3,273	+0.18%

Please note: The information above includes U.S. and Canadian common and separate pool wagers on races contested in the U.S.

-release (USTA Communications)

NEW VOCATIONS HONORS DAVE BROWER WITH SPECIAL MEMORIAL

New Vocations Racehorse Adoption Program will plant a tree and install a plaque in memory of Dave Brower, beloved member of the harness racing industry who passed away unexpectedly in Lexington, KY, last October. Brower was the longtime lead TV host, morning-line oddsmaker and harness racing program analyst at The Meadowlands. His passing at age 53 was a huge shock to the racing industry. Jessica Otten, Marketing Coordinator and on-air talent for The Meadowlands, was asked to sit in for Brower at The Red Mile immediately after his passing. Otten generously donated her compensation from that weekend to New Vocations in honor of Brower. That donation along with others made in his memory will be used towards the special memorial.

In addition to his on-air commentary, Brower was a published author, writing "Harnessing Winners" in 2009. He hosted many national TV broadcasts, including last year's Hambletonian, seen on the CBS Sports Network. A fan of harness racing since childhood, Brower had a deep knowledge of and love for the sport.

"By planting a tree in Dave Brower's memory, we are ensuring that his legacy continues and his impact on the harness racing community will not be forgotten," said Dot Morgan, Executive Director of New Vocations. "This special memorial will ensure that his contributions to the sport will live on for generations here at New Vocations."

-release (New Vocations)

DIAMOND COWBOY
Standardbred | Starts: 326 | Earnings: \$756,153

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STANDARDBRED
TRANSITION ALLIANCE
2022
A COMMITMENT TO CHANGE

NEWS FROM AROUND THE HARNESS INDUSTRY

MAKE HOTEL RESERVATIONS NOW FOR DAN PATCH AWARDS WEEKEND

If you haven't made your room reservations for the U.S. Harness Writers Association's (USHWA) annual Dan Patch Awards banquet, presented by Caesars Entertainment, on Sunday (Feb. 19) at the luxurious Rosen Shingle Creek in Orlando, Fla., it's time to do so now.

If you are planning to attend the gala festivities that will honor the best equines and humans in the sport in 2022, room reservations must be made by Friday (Jan. 27). The USHWA rate for a standard room at Rosen Shingle Creek is \$209 (plus tax). For a direct link to the Rosen Shingle Creek special page to make USHWA room reservations, please click here.

Depending on availability, rooms may still be available after Jan. 27 but can only be made by calling the hotel directly at 866.996.6338 and asking for the "Dan Patch Awards rate."

This will be the fifth time that Rosen Shingle Creek will host the Dan Patch Awards festivities. This year's banquet gets underway with the Red Carpet cocktail hour at 5:30 p.m., with the awards ceremony starting promptly afterward. The highlight of the evening will be the much-anticipated announcements of Trotter of the Year, Pacer of the Year and E. Roland Harriman Horse of the Year.

Remember, all attendees will receive a 10-percent discount at all of the hotel's restaurants, a 10-percent discount at the Spa at Shingle Creek, and a green fees discount at the Shingle Creek Golf Club. If you are attending, make sure you tell your restaurant server prior to ordering you are a Dan Patch Awards attendee.

Tickets for the Dan Patch Awards banquet are \$200. Tickets can be ordered until Monday, Feb. 13, by contacting Judy Davis-Wilson at zoe8874@aol.com or 302.359.3630.

14-karat horseshoe diamond ring as door prize

During the 75th diamond anniversary year of the United States Harness Writers Association (USHWA), it seems appropriate that a 14-karat diamond ring will be a highly-desired door prize for attendants of the Dan Patch Awards Banquet, presented by Caesars Entertainment, honoring the best and brightest human and equine jewels of 2022 harness racing, and to be held on February 19 at the Rosen Shingle Creek Resort in Orlando FL.

Bow River Jewelry of Mentor, Ohio, one of the leading equestrian jewelers in the country is the generous donor of the ring. Art Strozewski of Bow River is an honorary member of USHWA.

The ring is a 14-karat white gold horseshoe ring with 11 round brilliant cut diamonds, having a total weight of 0.50 carats of diamonds with G color, SI1 clarity. The ring has a retail value of \$2100. The lucky winner of the unisex ring will have it sized at the banquet.

Strozewski said, "Bow River is proud to be able to participate in USHWA's 75th anniversary, and we thank them for this opportunity." For his part, USHWA president Barry Lefkowitz stated, "We have worked with Art and Bow River for many years, and I'm delighted that he thought enough of our 75th-anniversary milestone to recognize it in this way."

-edited release (USHWA)

CATTLEWASH BOOK FULL & CLOSED FOR 2023

The Cattlewash Syndicate and Tara Hills Stud are pleased to announce the 2023 book for the World Champion Cattlewash is now full and closed. The fastest stallion sired by the legendary Somebeachsomewhere bred 178 mares last year and has once again been extremely popular with breeders.

A multiple stakes winner at 2, 3 and 4, Cattlewash earned over \$1.3 million while facing arguably the toughest group of pacers ever assembled each year he raced. Cattlewash has impressed horsemen and breeders alike with his outstanding good looks, kind disposition and extreme fertility. Knowledgeable horsemen have noted that Cattlewash is the mirror image of his sire Somebeachsomewhere, resembling him more than any of his other sons.

His first foals arrived in 2022 and he's apparently passing on those good looks. Ron Burke, who trained Cattlewash, was thrilled when upon inspecting a group of 10 foals this past October, remarking, "I was very impressed by the foals I saw. They have good size, great leg and are very

athletic. Looking at these foals was like looking at the foals of Somebeach"

"We continue to be truly overwhelmed by the reception Cattlewash has received here in Ontario," said Tara Hills' Dave Heffering. "His first Ontario foals will begin hitting the ground within the next few weeks and there's a lot of excitement and anticipation for their arrival."

Breeders are invited to email Tara Hills their comments and photos of their Cattlewash foals to tarahill@on.aibn.ca. Those received will be shared as posts on the Tara Hills facebook page for all to see.

-edited release (Tara Hills Stud)

VOLSTEAD BREEDING BOOK FULL & CLOSED FOR 2023

Dublin Valley Farms is proud to announce that their top trotting stallion, Volstead 1:51 3/5 (\$773,903), has his 2023 breeding season book full and closed.

Volstead (Cantab Hall – Madame Volo – Yankee Glide) was bred in the USA and was trained and raced in Europe where he won the Swedish Cup and was a Group 1 Invitational winner.

A record price of \$170,000 for a harness racing trotting yearling sold in the state of Ohio was set on Friday (Sept. 16) at the Ohio Selected Jug Sale and it was sired by Volstead.

The sale topper was hip # 103, Idas First Dance, a filly who was a first foal from a full sister to 2017 Ohio 3-year-year-old Trotting Filly of the Year Rose Run Sydney 4:1:54 1/5 (\$597,703).

"We are very proud that Volstead's yearlings averaged \$67,333," noted Robert Hershberger, owner of Dublin Valley Farms. "His yearlings looked the part and were well received by the trainers and the buyers."

"I want to thank all the breeders for their support," said Dean Miller, owner of Volstead. "And, as well, the yearling buyers who supported his first crop of foals."

Volstead stands at Dublin Valley Farms in Fredericksburg, Ohio for a stud fee of \$4,500. For more information contact www.dublinvalleyfarms.com.

-edited release (Steve Wolf for Dublin Valley Farms)

GUARDIAN ANGEL AS TO STAND AT HICKORY LANE FARM IN OHIO

ALC Stuteri, AB and Kjell Johanson's World Champion Guardian Angel As, 6, 1:50 1/5M (\$1,546,210) (Archangel -- Provide As -- Allstar Hall) will stand the 2023 breeding season in Ohio at Hickory Lane Farm.

A winner of over \$1.5 million, Guardian Angel As is the fastest trotting stallion standing in Ohio. He possesses an impressive resume of numerous Grand Circuit victories including winning the elimination and final of the \$450,000 Maple Leaf Trot, the \$250,000 Spirit of Massachusetts Trot, and the \$175,000 Cleveland Classic where he established the current world record for a 5-and-up aged stallion.

READ MORE

BYTHEMISSAL NAMED 2022 OHIO 3-YEAR-OLD PACING COLT OF THE YEAR

For the second straight year, the top sophomore colt pacer in Ohio gave the fans a year to remember. Bythemissal became the first Ohio-bred to win the Little Brown Jug in 34 years and captured the Ohio Sires Stakes Championship on the way to being named Ohio's 3-Year-Old Pacing Colt of the Year.

READ MORE

ENTRIES DUE FOR BLOODED HORSE WINTER SALE

Entries for the main catalog of the Blooded Horse Winter Sale will be taken through Friday, January 20. The one-day sale takes place Wednesday Feb. 15 at the Champions Center in Springfield, Ohio.

READ MORE

WINBAK FARM INTRODUCES COMPLETE 2023 STALLION LINEUP

Winbak Farm is excited to present the 2023 Stallion Roster. The farm is standing stallions in Delaware, Maryland, New York, Ontario and Pennsylvania in the upcoming breeding season.

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