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Saudi Arabia to bring together the world's best trotters?



EDITOR'S EYE

By Derick Giwner
[X @harnessevegy](https://twitter.com/harnessevegy)

If you missed the 2026 Prix d'Amerique won by Hokkaido Jiel, click on [this link](#) and watch it now. Despite being contested on a track with ample moisture, it was a thrilling race with an unexpected outcome as the winner found a seam in the stretch courtesy of a breaking horse to pull off the upset as five horses were within three-quarters of a length at the wire.

Less than 24 hours after the finish of the race over 52,000 people had watched the video linked above and another 10,000 plus watched the [English version](#) as well. While it is certainly wonderful to see such a large audience showing interest, it was another video which caught my eye and piqued my interest.

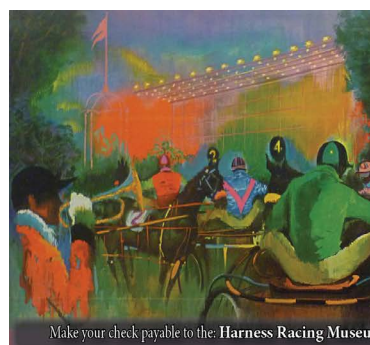
French horse racing media outlet Equidia posted a video on X with Ahmed Osilan, the President of a Saudi Arabian project called Saheel Kingdom of Arabian Horses. The initiative is designed to attract global and equine tourism to the area as part of Vision 2030, which [Wikipedia](#) describes as a government initiative launched in April 2016 to diversify Saudi Arabia's economy, society and culture.

What was most striking during the [six-plus minute conversation](#) was that the project will include trotters and there is a major event planned for 2027.

"We have big ideas," said Osilan. "For the trot, it will be the first facility in the region hosting global events and our target date is September 2027. That is when we will have our first event in Saudi."

"The ambition is to attract global trot players from around the world to visit Saudi Arabia and

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 3](#)



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STAY HUNGRY

Somebeachsomewhere – My Little Dragon | p, 3, 1:47.3 (\$1,303,709)

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Frantic Hanover p, 2, 1:49.1f.

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Earnings of \$543,720

Millionaire Seven Colors p, 3, 1:48.1h
earnings of \$1,104,411

Hungry For Love p, 3, 1:49m earnings of \$564,436

Brue Hanover p, 5, 1:47.4s earnings of \$547,341

Redwood Hanover p, 3, 1:49s earnings of \$522,054

Binge On Yankee p, 4, 1:48.3m earnings of \$514,477

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Photos: Barbara Livingston

have the opportunity to win races and prizes,” continued Osilan.

Saudi Arabia is of course no stranger to hosting worldwide races with huge purses. According to [Wikipedia](#), the region hosted the first Saudi Cup in 2020 and it was won by American thoroughbred Maximum Security. U.S.-based horses have three wins since the inception while Japan has won twice and Ireland once. The \$20 million race is scheduled for February 14 this year and is meant to fall between the Pegasus World Cup at Gulfstream, recently won by Skippy Longstocking, and the Dubai World Cup on March 28.

“We have a very clear plan for what we will be offering and it definitely will be very attractive,” said Osilan. “It will definitely be competitive to the global standards and hopefully will be able to attract some global champions to come.”

While Osilan was unwilling to reveal the potential purse of the new event he called the “Saudi Trot Race,” even if it approached one-quarter of the prize pool of the Saudi Cup (\$5 million) it would be more than triple that of any currently-existing harness race in the world. That would have to appeal to a North American-based owner.

With owners often citing the much bigger paydays of stallion duty as the main reason for retiring after just two years of racing, could the Saudi Trot Race be an answer to keeping a horse racing as a 4-year-old and beyond?

The timing of the event isn’t without serious issues for horses based in North America. Putting aside that it would likely clash with a number of older trotting stakes typically scheduled for September like the Maple Leaf Trot, Charlie Hill, Miss Versatility and Caesars Trotting Classic, it could also seriously water down the \$1 million MGM Yonkers International Trot which has typically been placed on the second Saturday in September. Would that race need to be moved to retain its stature?

One serious question that any owner or trainer will have to consider before potentially taking the journey to Saudi Arabia is the heat. A Google search shows that the average high temperature in the area during September is between 91 and 108 degrees, cooling off to 65 to 82 degrees at night. If someone elected to come from the U.S. it may require a period of acclimation.

The first week of December would probably be a better date for North American trotters, though that might not work as well for Europeans with preps for the Prix d’Amerique going on.

Regardless of whether the lure of big money could attract trotters from North America, it is always promising to hear about new opportunities for harness racing. Maybe one day we’ll have a global circuit of races for trotters where there is clear opportunity throughout the year and easy travel options to all regions. That is something to dream about for the future.

NEWS CLOSER TO HOME

There was much talk over the last few days about the handle at The Meadowlands on January 24. The total of \$3,379,086 wasn’t so much noteworthy because it was extraordinary but rather due to the timing of the races.

To explain, The Meadowlands went with expedited post times on that Saturday due to an impending snowstorm that was expected to hit the area the following morning. Post time was moved from 6:20 PM to 6:00 PM and the first race went off at 6:02 PM rather than the typical 6:32 PM. The last race went behind the gate at 10:47 PM, about an hour earlier than the typical Saturday. So in theory the card was about 30 minutes shorter than normal, an average of 2 minutes less per race.

The shortened program produced the highest handle the track has seen since November 15 (\$3,443,597) when it hosted a card with eight stakes races. That prompted the crowd to immediately jump to the conclusion that a quicker pace was ideal for producing more handle.

You’ll get no argument from this corner that cards need to be quicker and that the appeal of sitting around for long periods of time isn’t going to lure a younger generation that wants everything now. But a one-night sample where the competition was just two other major tracks – Northfield and Woodbine Mohawk Park – isn’t proof positive that a shorter program will work week-in and week-out. It is also worth noting that the storm was hitting half of the U.S., meaning most people were home and looking for something to do. It was also the first Saturday of the year without NFL playoff football. We saw firsthand during COVID that when people are stuck home and there are fewer entertainment options, racing handle jumped.

One checkmark in the column saying that the quicker posts could work is that the handle was basically flat year-over-year (\$3,379,086 vs. \$3,325,777) for that Saturday, and the number looks even better when you take into account a \$141K increase in the 2025 Pick 5 pool due to a \$28K

Hall of Famer Carmine Abbatiello, 89, passes

By Ken Weingartner



USTA PHOTO

Hall of Fame driver Carmine Abbatiello, one of harness racing’s most successful and popular drivers throughout a career that spanned more than four decades, passed away Tuesday (Jan. 27), his family announced. He was 89.

Mr. Abbatiello, who drove in his first race in 1956, was a fixture on the New York-New Jersey circuits, and over the years captured numerous driving titles in the region – most notably a combined total of nearly 20 at Roosevelt and Yonkers. He attended high school on Staten Island and from there worked eight years with his brother Anthony, another Hall of Famer, before going on his own in 1964.

In 1959, Mr. Abbatiello tied for the driving title at Freehold Raceway before winning multiple crowns there in the early 1960s. He also was a driving champion at Monticello Raceway during the early days of his career.

Mr. Abbatiello enjoyed his first top-25 finish in the national driver standings in 1962, with his 83 victories ranking No. 21. He ranked in the top 20 the next four seasons before breaking out in 1968 with 237 triumphs and \$854,482 in purses to finish No. 3 and No. 6, respectively, in those categories in the national standings.

Mr. Abbatiello led the sport in purses in 1975 (\$2.27 million) and again in 1978 (\$3.34 million), when he shared Harness Tracks of America’s Driver of the Year Award with Herve Filion. In addition, Mr. Abbatiello ranked among the top five in purses on 11 other occasions. He had a total of nine years among the top-five winningest drivers, including second-place finishes in 1970 (with 294 victories), 1978 (387) and 1979 (393).

His final year with more than 1,000 drives came in 1989. At the end of that season, Mr. Abbatiello ranked No. 2 all-time in wins, with 6,944, and No. 4 in purses, with nearly \$47.7 million. He ended his career with 7,170 victories and \$50.3 million in purses.

Known as “The Red Man” because of his bright red driving colors, Mr. Abbatiello was elected to the Harness Racing Hall of Fame in 1985. Among other accolades, he received Harness Horsemen International’s Man of the Year Award in 1982, the same year he was feted with Carmine Abbatiello Night at Roosevelt Raceway – only the second driver, after Billy Houghton – to receive the honor.

Such was Mr. Abbatiello’s popularity that he appeared in a beer commercial and had a restaurant – the famed Carmine’s in New York City, launched by Arthur J. Cutler – named in his honor.

carryover that night. That shows expediting post times didn’t affect the bottom line, but looking at just the starting and finishing points of the card doesn’t tell the entire picture. You need to compare apples to apples and see what was different.

In a race by race comparison from January 25, 2025 to January 24, 2026, the differences in timing between races basically came in the first two contests and prior to the start of each Pick 4. The Meadowlands shaved 13 minutes from timing during races one and two, going from 47 minutes between races in 2025 to 34 minutes in 2026. The average time between races before the start of the Pick 4 went from 62 minutes in 2025 to 52 minutes in 2026. That’s basically the entire time difference between the two cards. Every other race either went off in the exact time for both cards or was a minute or two different, some in favor of 2025 and others 2026.

Focusing on races two and three since they both had much shorter time between races, the total handle for them in 2025 was \$549,093 compared to just \$283,357 in 2026. That’s not good.

What could be worth consideration is shortening the amount of time prior to the start of the Pick 4. Despite going six and seven minutes shorter between races in 2026 and not honoring a \$50,000 guaranteed pool, both wagers handled almost the identical amount to 2025.

The bottom line is that we need to examine more than just one variable and evaluate it over a period of time before jumping to a conclusion that it is the best answer for the future.

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A lifetime of 'Lightning' strikes for owner/trainer Shaun Vallee



JAYWALKING

By Jay Bergman [X BergmanJay](#)

Not all horses are born for greatness. Some are born to be race-horses, but all too often find themselves caught up in the grueling aspect of hard training and hard races. It comes as no surprise that many careers are cut short by injuries suffered on and off the track and the inability to recover from them. This is no different in other sports where even the most gifted and talented succumb regularly to the wear and tear of competition.

It's rare that horses can go the distance without pause through a racing career and that's why it's rather special when you see a horse step on the track in January, under the toughest conditions, and do what's necessary to compete. In the case of Midnight Lightning, a 14-year-old by Camluck, the attraction has more to do with a life on the racetrack that has spanned more than a dozen years, specifically in one stable. Trainer-owner Shaun Vallee purchased him as a yearling at the Harrisburg Sale in 2013 and has had him for every start but one since.

"When I bought him, I was looking for a horse that would last," said Vallee in a bit of an understatement. "I thought being by Camluck would help that."

Midnight Lightning has done more than last. He was scheduled to make his 353rd career appearance on Friday, with co-owner Darran Cassar getting the drive in the fourth race at The Meadowlands, a division of the Meadowlands Amateur Drivers Club, but that plan disappeared when the track canceled live racing for the weekend on Thursday afternoon.

"I sold a 10 percent interest to Darran so that he could get preference into these races," said Vallee of the direction he's taken over time to give Midnight Lightning the opportunity to race with more regularity.

Now with more than \$480K banked it's within reason that the veteran could exceed a half-million through his career, but money seems to be the last thing on Shaun Vallee's mind, at least when it comes to one specific horse.

"Sure, he could be eligible to race in the Amateur class next year but that's not likely to happen," said Vallee. "My daughter Sarah in Sarasota (Florida) wants him as a riding horse."

Obviously, Midnight Lightning has made an impression on Vallee and the stable, and despite his lack of being a star horse on the track, is more than special around the barn. "He's a horse that loves people. He's got nice eyes," said Vallee.

What's interesting looking back at Midnight Lightning's career is just where he was in 2015 as a sophomore and the different directions horses take along the way.

Raced only once as a freshman in late 2014, the inexperienced Midnight Lightning started his career at The Meadowlands in earnest as a sophomore the next year and won for the first time on Valentine's Day, posting a 26 1/5 final quarter in a maiden-breaker.

With early spring late-closers still on the menu at the East Rutherford mile oval, Vallee entered Midnight Landing in the William (Buddy) Gilmour series hoping to gain some experience while racing against other inexperienced sophomores. Unknown before those contests was how deep the competition would be, but the world would get an early taste of a soon-to-be superstar in the Gilmour series. The soon-to-be superstar Wiggle It Jiggleit was also just getting his feet wet at the time and he showcased his enormous talent first during his sophomore campaign at The Meadowlands. That Midnight Lightning would be a solid third on two occasions in that series behind Wiggle It Jiggleit could have given the impression that he too was ready for the spotlight.

Vallee though never got too high on his horse. "I thought he was a nice horse then, but I didn't see him as a stakes horse. Well after those races we found out how good Wiggle It Jiggleit was," said Vallee.

Thusly, Vallee went back to doing what he had expected with Midnight Lightning and raced him through the classes while never quite reaching the top.



COURTESY SHAUN VALLEE

Midnight Lightning has made 353 starts and earned over \$480,000 in his long career.

Vallee sees it quite clearly why Midnight Lightning has been able to withstand the test of time and certainly the downsides of competitive racing.

"He's a horse that can take care of himself," said Vallee. "When I say that, I mean that he can go out there and race and only give 70 percent. He knows what he's got and won't overdo it."

That attribute has kept Midnight Lightning back in the entry box on a near-weekly basis while not exactly vaulted him into the winner's circle with any kind of regularity. Going into Friday's contest he's won just 32 times, or less than 10 percent of his races.

Having good genes also benefits when looking at the career of Midnight Lightning and though Vallee would not know it at the time, Midnight Lightning's older brother Genesee, the first foal from his dam Twin B Intimate, would also race at the age of 14, amassing 45 career wins.

While interesting, going back through Midnight Lightning's maternal line it's hard to draw comparisons between his career and a pair of brothers that were among the sport's titans of the aged pacing ranks in

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 7](#)



CAPTAIN OPTIMISTIC

(Captaintreacherous - Cinamony - Art Official) p,2,1:49; 3,1:48 -'25 (\$1,573,723)



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- U Winner of the **Cane Pace** and **Bluegrass Stakes** at age three, as well as his elimination for the North America Cup.

PERFECT STING

(Always B Miki - Shebestingin - Bettors Delight) p,2,1:49.2; 3,1:48.1 (\$1,861,447)



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- U The sire of NJ Classic Champion **PERFECT THOUGHT** p,2,1:51.1 -'25 (\$272,961).
- U The sire of NJSS Champion **BE PERFECT BG** p,2,1:50.1 -'25 (\$166,803).

SIX PACK

(Muscle Mass - Pleasing Lady - Cantab Hall) 3,1:49.1 (\$1,973,661)



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- U The sire of 2025 Hambletonian Champion **NORDIC CATHER S** 3,1:50 -'25 (\$1,124,113).
- U The sire of 2025 Peaceful Way Champion **SUGAR PACKET** 2,1:53.3s -'25 (\$327,147).



the late 60's and early 70's. Way back in time but somewhere within Midnight Lightning's genetic makeup we found Super Wave and Springfield, multiple Open Pacing stars that were fixtures at the top level for many years at Roosevelt and Yonkers Raceways.

While clearly lacking the talent of some of his ancestors, it was of note that despite not having the speed of his earlier years, Midnight Lightning did something extraordinary last year on Hambletonian Day eve, August 1 at The Meadowlands.

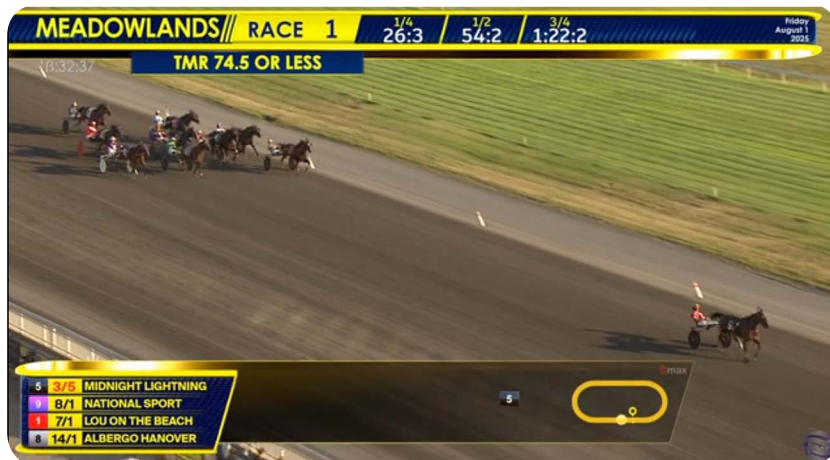
Racing in a lower Trackmaster class, Dexter Dunn was put down to drive the then 13-year-old in the Friday night opener raced during daylight. He sent Midnight Lightning to the top and got down to the half in 54 2/5, leaving his trainer and co-owner miffed. "He's never a horse that liked being on the front end," said Vallee. "I wondered what Dexter was doing."

What Dunn was doing was guiding Midnight Lightning to his first and likely only sub-1:50 mile with a 15-plus lengths victory in 1:49 4/5.

Asked to explain the final time, Vallee said, "You'll have to ask Dexter," while conceding Dunn's stature as a driver when compared with his.

Now among the 14 horses Vallee is training at his Jackson, New Jersey farm, he has a few others he's looking forward to that trainer Roland Mallar is working with at Pinehurst this winter.

"I've got a colt from my mare Jungle Genie N that Rollie is training," said Vallee.



MEADOWLANDS VIDEO SCREEN SHOT

Midnight Lightning crushing his foes by 15 lengths in a lifetime best 1:49 4/5.

The dam is a perfect four-for-four that includes last year's 2-year-old New York Sire Stakes-winning filly Miss Genie Mae. Jungle Genie N's second and third foals were both colts, with Vallee naming them Midnight Thunder and Half Past Midnight. Her 2024 foal and current 2-year-old in training is named Lord Of Thunder, and he's by Captain-trecherous. Given the names Vallee has chosen it's quite obvious that Midnight Lightning will forever hold a special place with him and his family.

HOKKAIDO JIEL TRIUMPHANT IN 2026 PRIX D'AMERIQUE

By Greg Reinhart

Franck Nivard moved into co-second all-time for wins by a driver in the Prix d'Amerique after winning his sixth edition of the event on Sunday at Vincennes Racecourse with upsetter Hokkaido Jiel.

Nivard and Hokkaido Jiel landed in mid-pack from the standing start while Francesco Zet (Benjamin Rochard) led the way early. Francesco Zet would be passed by Keep Going (Mathieu Mottier) past the wire for the first time and then Keep Going got looped by Koctel du Dain (David Thomain). The final horse to sweep to the front would be Go On Boy (Romain Derieux) as he powered up three-wide and cleared with about 1,100 meters to go.

After Go On Boy took charge, that left Josh Power (Sébastien Ernault) uncovered and challenging while Epic Kronos (Paul-Philippe Ploquin) was on Josh Power's cover. Go On Boy and Josh Power continued to duel around the final turn and got some separation on the others as Koctel du Dain backed up badly from the pocket and forced horses that were on the inside, including Hokkaido Jiel, to the outside to get clear of him.

Go On Boy would make a break in stride turning for home, which put Josh Power in front. However, Hokkaido Jiel had managed to find room after going back to the pylons after getting around both Koctel du Dain and the off-stride Go On Boy, and he was able to surge past Josh Power late to win in a close finish. Epic Kronos was third, followed by Frank Gio (Mathieu Abrivard) and Just Love You (Alexandre Abrivard). Iroise De La Noé (Eric Raffin), who went off as the favorite in the betting, went on a break early after getting off to a slow start.

The final time in rain and sloppy conditions was 1'11"4, a mile rate of 1:54 4/5.

"Yeah, amazing. Perfect, I couldn't have dreamed of anything better," said Nivard, who added that he got off to a good start. "I took the risk of going [where Go On Boy was off-stride]. You have to be pretty sure and you need a bit of luck. I didn't know if I had won when I crossed the finish line.

"He's a great horse who is well-managed. He had some health problems but they managed to bring him back. I'm also happy for the owner because he's been investing for over 40 years with his breeding operation."



SCOPDYGA PHOTO

Nivard, who tied the six Prix d'Amerique successes of Alexandre Finn and now only trails leader Jean-René Gougeon by two, didn't drive Hokkaido Jiel in his prep races but took advantage of the chance.

"That was done at the last minute on Monday evening," he said of picking up the drive. "I think we should especially congratulate the agent. Thank you, and he did a great job because he was persistent, and he was right."

Ernault also commended the performance put in by Josh Power in his runner-up effort, saying, "We're not going to cry over a runner-up finish in the Prix d'Amerique." Ernault also admitted that being stuck out wide and exposed to the wind perhaps hurt his chances of getting a win.

Hokkaido Jiel, a 9-year-old stallion by Brilliantissime, won for the 12th time from 74 starts and has now earned 1,054,780 Euros. He is trained by Jean-Luc Dersoir for owner/breeder Ecurie Luck.

"Personally, it's magnificent. You have a life in horses, a life dedicated to the animal, and today is the culmination," Dersoir stated. "Maybe I deserved it, maybe. But you know, there are plenty of people who deserve it."

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CONFESSIONS

By Keith Gisser

Ohio celebrates, innovates

On January 10, Ohio celebrated its harness racing stars of 2025. But it wasn't all fun and games. The Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association (OHHA) announced several new initiatives, as did the Ohio chapter of the U.S. Harness Writers.

Undeclared 2-year-old trotter Big Ranger (In Range-Big Blue Bird-Tactical Landing) concluded his Triple Crown year by being named Horse of the Year (HOTY) defeating finalists Sipponsearoc (3-year-old pacing colt) and Setsoursightshigh (2-year-old trotting filly), who is also by In Range, making his first crop a dominant one.

An emotional trainer-driver Ronnie Gillespie, who suffered several personal setbacks, credited his team and also shared this about his HOTY: "I had a couple of trotting colts. He was a bit lazy training down. He had ability. I remember the day that all changed. I trained him February 16 and something spooked him and he ran off with me, still trotting. I got off and called Bluegrass Staking and said, 'I made a mistake, I nominated the wrong horse to the Breeders Crown. Can I make a change? Of course I couldn't.'"

Big Ranger won the Next Generation and the Ohio State Fair Stake at Scioto Downs, the Ohio Breeders Championship at Delaware and the Ohio Sires Stakes final to cap his perfect seven-for-seven season.

The strength of trotting in Ohio truly showed in the OHHA Stallion Auction, as a Ready For Moni breeding sold for \$17,100 (his stud fee is \$5,000, but his book is full and closed). In Range was not offered at the auction, but T C I, whose first crop was born last year, brought a breeding bid of \$18,000 (Note: when profiling the most expensive Ohio stallions last time, I failed to mention T C I and his \$10,000 stud fee. My apologies to Midland Acres).

Other major OHHA award winners included Roger Huston (Maynard and Stella Hagemeyer Significant Contribution Award), Chris Page and Ron Burke (Jerry Kaltenbach Memorial Award) for the top trainer and driver in the Ohio Sires Stakes, Samantha Mayhugh (Terry Holton Youth Award), Joe and Fran Darmofal (Dick Brandt Sr. Extra Effort Award) and Katie Hershberger and Parker Steck (Outstanding Groom Award).

Major USHWA award winners were Ronnie Wrenn (Winner's Circle Award for top Ohio horseman), Lester "Bud" Teeters (Rambling Willie Award for lifetime achievement) and Luke Hanners, who won the renamed Hunter Myers Memorial Award (formerly the Peter Haughton award) for best young horseman. Myers won the honor in 2014. Hanners' brother Austin won the award in 2024 and his father, the late Brad Hanners, was also a winner of the award.

The Ohio Chapter of the U.S. Harness Writers added John "Red" and Betty Shaw (Immortals), Billy Herman (Living) and Victory is Coming (Standardbred) to the Ohio Hall of Fame. Hall of Famers can be found

at harnessracingohio.com, which features bios, photos and videos of inductees, and which continues to be updated regularly.

In order to eliminate confusion about the Hall, the Ohio chapter agreed to add a nomination form so the public can provide input and nominations. Although Victory Is Coming was a public nominee, many people think the OHHA runs the process. A task force has been formed to formalize rules for criteria and voting. It is just one of many new innovations coming from the Buckeye State.

The harness writers re-elected Scott Mogan as President, and Randy Haines of Cool Winds Farm was voted Vice President.

The OHHA announced it would increase its video footprint, which includes streaming of every county fair race card and most major events in the state, revamping its Freshman Focus series, adding a seven or eight episode Breeder's Focus series, and are planning a number of other special event videos, including a Little Brown Jug documentary.

The organization's youth outreach will also expand in 2026. The successful Backstretch Buddies program will continue, offering kids assorted racing gear and info from mascot Willie Winit, but a new Youth Membership category has been added. For a \$10 membership fee, children under 12 will get an OHHA membership card and will receive all OHHA publications. The hope is that seeing these articles will inspire more of them to become active in our sport.

For horsemen, the OHHA Board voted to add a new tier of stakes racing for 2026. The Buckeye Stallion Series will feature a second

division (as yet unnamed) for 3-year-olds (2-year-olds may be added in the future). Entrants will carry a straight \$25,000 claiming tag. There will be five legs for \$15,000 and a \$30,000 Final. This will eliminate some pressure on the county fairs, which are often splitting purses four ways, and will put those horses where they do not have to race against horses dropping out of the Sires Stakes. Ironically, at least one Buckeye Stallion Series champion this year would probably have raced at this lower level at least to start the season. Fewer entries at the fairs will not hurt them, as most have dropped entry fees while raising nominating fees. Horses can move among the stakes classes, if nominated, but cannot race in more than one series in any given leg.

At the suggestion of Scioto Downs Director of Racing Jason Roth, the board also voted to add Ohio State Fair races for veteran horses. The four divisions will be limited to the top nine money-winners in each class and will go for a purse of \$65,000. This returns the possibility of a veteran

horse to win an Ohio Triple Crown. The Board is also looking at restoring preliminary legs to the Ohio Sires Stakes, leading up to their finals, where entrants are now based on earnings.

2026 marks the 50th anniversary of the Ohio Sires Stakes and the OHHA is seeking photos, newspaper clippings and any other information available, especially from the first couple decades. If you have information, send material to staylor@ohha.com.

As John Campbell pointed out in his remarks at the awards banquet, the rise and stature of Ohio racing is indisputable. Four Breeders Crown champs had Ohio connections in 2025. The state also hosts the Breeders Crown (at Scioto Downs) this fall. And yet, with all of these achievements, the state continues to look at new opportunities. To quote the band Timbuk 3, "The future's so bright, I gotta wear shades."

Now cash, hopefully on the competitive Ohio product.



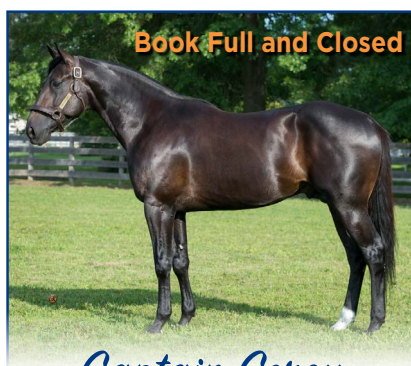
DERICK GIWNER

Ronnie Gillespie (right) was all smiles after winning the Ohio Sire Stakes final at Hollywood Dayton Raceway last year.



Captaintreacherous

Somebeachsomewhere - Worldly Treasure - Artsplace
p, 3, 1:47.1M (\$3,148,657)



Captain Corey

Googoo Gaagaa - Luv U All - Angus Hall
3, 1:51.0F (\$1,090,333)



Greenshoe

Father Patrick - Designed To Be - Donato Hanover
3, 1:49.4M (\$1,353,772)



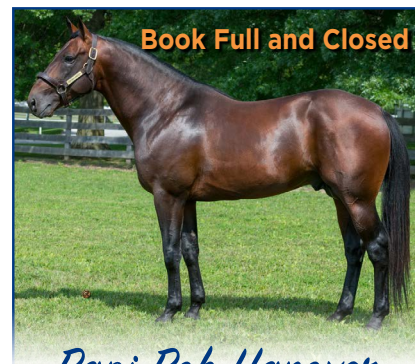
International Moni

Love You - Moni Maker - Speedy Crown
2, 1:53.1M; 3, 1:51.4M (\$775,463)



Nuncio

Andover Hall - Nicole Isabelle - Lindy Lane
3, 1:50.4M (\$3,645,363)



Papi Rob Hanover

Somebeachsomewhere - Panera Hanover - Rocknroll Hanover
p, 3, 1:47.1F (\$927,979)



Sig Sauer

Muscle Hill - Sigilwig - Donato Hanover
2,1:53.3; 3,1:49.3 (\$1,151,312)



Stay Hungry

Somebeachsomewhere - My Little Dragon - Dragon Again
p, 3, 1:47.3M (\$1,303,709)



Super Chapter

Chapter Seven - Lifetime Pursuit - Cantab Hall
3, 1:50.0F (\$1,757,359)



Tall Dark Stranger

Bettor's Delight - Precocious Beauty - Art Major
p, 3, 1:47.1M (\$1,741,645)



Volume Eight

Chapter Seven - Lass A Rope - Encore Encore
2,1:52.0M (\$434,002)

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Series finals highlight Saturday card at Woodbine Mohawk Park

By Jay Bergman

Woodbine Mohawk Park will be the scene for two series finals on Saturday night and driver Travis Cullen has an opportunity in both the C\$34,000 Blizzard Pacing Series final for 3 and 4-year-old fillies and mares as well as the C\$37,400 conclusion to the Snowshoe Pacing Series for male horses of the same class. Cullen has guided both Kobra Kate and Rb'stenacious T to consecutive victories in the two preliminary legs and now hopes to cash in in the rich finals.

"Things went her way," Cullen said when asked about Kobra Kate's most recent performance, a 1:57 wire-to-wire win on January 23 over the Woodbine Mohawk Park strip. A 4-year-old by Big Bad John that won just once in 26 tries in 2025, has found the winner's circle this year twice in four starts, all with Cullen in the bike.

While a soft early half-mile helped Cullen score decisively a week ago, the driver wasn't sure going to the front was a preferred strategy for the final. "They say she's much better from off the pace," Cullen said, and that may have been better reflected in her first-leg conquest, a 1:55 career record mark on January 16.

Kobra Kate landed post eight in Saturday's fifth race and will need to overcome a few obstacles if she's to sweep the series.

"I'm concerned about Poulton's mare," said Cullen, referring to D A Miss Universe (post 3), a second-place finisher in the opening leg of the Blizzard that was absent due to weather issues for the second leg.

D A Miss Universe, a late-developing daughter of Big Jim, has been raced from off the pace in all four career starts, capturing three of those impressively and finishing a solid second in her lone Blizzard series appearance. Her 26 4/5 final quarter in the lone defeat obviously caught the eye of Cullen and others as well.

One of the others is sent out by veteran trainer Walter Whelan, who will send out Who Are You (post 2) in Saturday's final. Who Are You, a \$7,500 yearling purchase for the cost-minded Whelan, has finished second in both legs of the series and hopes for better in the final.

"I think she can finish in the top three," said Whelan of the daughter of Captain Crunch that campaigned last year on the Pennsylvania Sire Stakes and reached the final.

In 23 starts as a 3-year-old in 2025, Who Are You won twice and finished second on six occasions.

"She's a nice mare that goes along well but doesn't always get the job done," said Whelan, who despite encountering negative 30-degree wind chills was out and training on Wednesday preparing his mare for the final.

Cullen sounded more than excited to guide Rb'stenacious T (post 5) in the Snowshoe Final, race eight on Woodbine Mohawk Park's Saturday program.

"We were very high on the horse," Cullen said of the 4-year-old by Freaky Feet Pete acquired late in his sophomore season. "In his first start he was in that race where Jody's (Jamieson) horse went down and was declared a 'No Contest'.

"That really shook him up and he was nervous the next few times we took him to the track."

That bump in the road last fall took some time to overcome with Rb'stenacious T making it to the Valedictory final on January 2 but over-pacing himself for the first three quarters and fading in the stretch. Since that 2026 debut Rb'stenacious T has been letter-perfect, with Cullen guiding him from well off the pace to victory on January 10 in an overnight race before moving into the Snowshoe where he's been far more manageable on the racetrack, with the results to prove it.

Rb'stenacious T reached the lead in more sensible fractions in both Snowshoe appearances and calmly marched down the road to victory. On Saturday there's likely to be a bit more action, with a pair of other leg winners looking to make their marks in the final. Booker Seelster (post 1) was narrowly defeated in the first leg of the series but bounced back with a 1:56 2/5 front-end score on January 24. The son of Sunshine Beach has been first or second in his five local starts since arriving here on December 20.

The Tulsa King (post 4) missed the second leg of the series but was solid winning out of the pocket for driver Todd Ratchford in his lone Snowshoe appearance on January 17. A son of Shadow Play, The Tulsa King finished third in the Valedictory final after a tough journey.

Saturday's Woodbine Mohawk Park program offers 11 races with first post scheduled at 6:15 p.m.



NEW IMAGE MEDIA

Rb'stenacious T goes for the Snowshoe series sweep on Saturday.

Guide to the 37th O'Brien Awards

Standardbred Canada (SC) is proud to present the 37th O'Brien Awards Gala this Saturday evening, Jan. 31, at the J-AAR Expo Centre at Western Fair District in London, Ont.

Whether attending in person or watching the live stream from the comfort of your home on standardbredcanada.ca, here's what you need to know for an exciting evening honouring Canada's best in harness racing!

37TH O'BRIEN AWARDS – SATURDAY, JAN. 31

RED CARPET LIVE

Hosts – Natasha Day & John Rallis

5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. (EST)

(Available for viewing on standardbredcanada.ca and SC's Facebook page)

37TH O'BRIEN AWARDS SHOW

Hosts – Greg Blanchard & Mark McKelvie

8:30 p.m. – 9 p.m. (EST)

Watch the pre-recorded presentations for Leading Owners, Media Excellence Awards & Outstanding Groom Award.

9 p.m. – 10:30 p.m. (EST)

Watch the live award presentations via live stream on standardbredcanada.ca.

(the link to the live stream will be posted in our Live O'Briens Coverage note on Saturday night.)

AFTER PARTY SPONSORED BY ALARM DETECTOR

10:30 p.m. – 2 a.m. (EST)

The order of award presentations will be as follows:

Special Presentation

Leading Owners Presentations

Media Excellence Awards

Outstanding Groom Award

Cam Fella Award

Future Star Award

O'Brien Award of Horsemanship

Horse Divisions (2-year-olds, 3-year-olds, older horses)

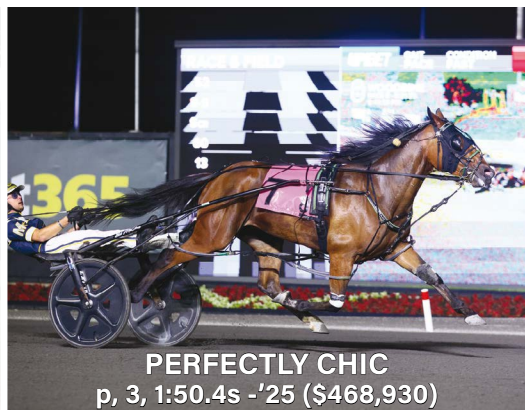
Armstrong Breeder of the Year

Keith Waples Driver of the Year

Trainer of the Year

Somebeachsomewhere Horse of the Year

-edited release (Standardbred Canada)



Winbak Farm Congratulates *the* 2025 O'Brien Award Finalists

Winbak Farm is a proud finalist for Armstrong Breeder of the Year. Thank you to all those who have been instrumental in supporting the Canadian racing industry. Congratulations on your achievements!

Horseman Finalists

SEELSTER FARMS INC., TARA HILLS STUD LTD. & WINBAK FARM: Armstrong Breeder of the Year

JAMES MACDONALD, BOB MCCLURE & LOUIS-PHILIPPE ROY: Keith Waples Driver of the Year

LANDON CAMPBELL, DAMIAN MACLELLAN & MARY RATCHFORD: Future Star

JAMIE GRAY, CARL JAMIESON & DR. IAN MOORE: Horsemanship Award

JODIE CULLEN, DAVID MENARY & DR. IAN MOORE: Trainer of the Year

Pacer Finalists

BEAU JANGLES, TILTHECOWSCOMEHOME & WINDOR: Two-Year-Old Colt

A CLEAN DEAL*, DAYA & WINDEMERE SKYE: Two-Year-Old Filly

CRACK SHOT, FIFTH AND FIVE & PRINCE HAL HANOVER: Three-Year-Old Colt

CHANTILLY, CUSTARD DOLCE & PERFECTLY CHIC*: Three-Year-Old Filly

BRUE HANOVER, CALICOJACK HANOVER & ERVIN HANOVER: Older Horse

CAVIAR N CRACKERS, GRIT N GRACE & SYLVIA HANOVER: Older Mare

Trotter Finalists

ANOTHER GREAT MASS, ARDONNE & STROBE LITE: Two-Year-Old Colt

BINGO NIGHT, FLOWING TRIBUTE & STORYBOOK LOVE: Two-Year-Old Filly

EMOTICON LEGACY, GALEN ERSO & P L SPENCER: Three-Year-Old Colt

LASTING DREAM, MONALISHI & STORMONT BEAUTIFUL: Three-Year-Old Filly

AMIGO VOLO, LOGAN PARK & NASEY: Older Horse

BELLA CAVALLA, CALL ME GOO & EMOJI HANOVER: Older Mare

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Illinois Racing Board, Hawthorne discuss track's financial woes

By Marcus Hersh

Two days after the Illinois Racing Board suspended the state-issued license allowing Hawthorne Race Course to conduct an ongoing harness meet, the board held a regularly scheduled meeting Wednesday that provided no resolution to what local horsemen view as nothing less than an existential crisis.

The IRB on Monday evening issued a notification that they had suspended the license held by Suburban Downs, the name under which Hawthorne conducts the Standardbred side of the track's business, after harness horsemen reported that Hawthorne-issued checks were bouncing.

That called into question with more urgency than ever before the condition of Hawthorne's already shaky financial wherewithal. Six harness racing programs this month have been canceled over concerns Hawthorne could not pay out purses.

While Hawthorne's flat-racing meet scheduled to begin in late March operates under a different state license, there will be no Thoroughbred season, either, if Hawthorne can't stabilize its finances.

The IRB had requested that Tim Carey, Hawthorne president and CEO since 2005, testify at the Wednesday meeting, but Carey didn't show up, leaving assistant general manager John Walsh to face a surprisingly docile board.

Walsh said Carey didn't attend because he was working to resolve the financial problems that are close to bringing down the Chicago area's last racetrack. Hawthorne is paying

their employees and entities that provide their most important simulcast signals, but nobody else.

"I want all the horsemen to know we're not happy with any of this. None of us are pleased," Walsh said. "It is an issue with our bank."

Domenic DiCera, executive director of the IRB, said Hawthorne's bank – which wasn't named – had proven difficult to contact and had at times been uncompliant when requested to provide information.

In 2019, the Illinois Gaming Board approved Hawthorne's application for a license to build and operate a casino at the track, and for almost seven years Hawthorne and Illinois horsemen have held out hope that the planned racino could save racing here. Hawthorne began tearing down part of its grandstand in 2020 while announcing plans to open the casino by late 2021, but the project soon stalled, the grandstand partially razed, owing to financial concerns.

Thus began a pattern that remains unchanged even now, at this crisis point, with Hawthorne assuring horsemen's groups and the IRB that it was on the verge of obtaining financing or a partner that would kick-start the project. Track officials testified as much when the IRB awarded 2026 racing dates at its September meeting, and Walsh, offering nearly no details, went to the same playbook again Wednesday.

"We have looked at different scenarios for getting the casino up and running. We're working with a new partner, someone nearby," Walsh said. "I've never been so optimistic the last four years."

GM John Walsh expressed confidence that everything would be resolved in two to three weeks, which coincides with the end of the Standardbred meet on Feb. 15. Harness horsemen representatives expressed that they would wait until Tuesday, February 3 before possibly pursuing legal alternatives to the situation. They added that should things get cleared up they expected Hawthorne to make up the lost dates, preferably before the Thoroughbred meet starts on March 29 or at the end of the year.

Hawthorne has only about 400 stall applications for its upcoming Thoroughbred season, too few to realistically support a meet. Standardbred horsemen with race-ready horses don't know when they'll have a chance to run again. Both horsemen's groups, which depend on the track for funding, are running out of money. Thoroughbred and Standardbred horsemen have money sitting in Hawthorne accounts that they can't currently access.

Jeff Davis, president of the Illinois Harness Horsemen's Association, testified that in late December, Churchill Downs Inc. had obtained from a Cook County judge a \$1.64 million award from Hawthorne for unpaid fees, though Walsh disputed both the amount and even the existence of that award.

"We've sat here for months and listened to the broken promises. We're just about at a breaking point," Tony Simone, executive director of the IHHA, testified.

Marc Laino, former executive director of the IRB and now a board member, proposed to DiCera that the board establish an account into which all Hawthorne revenues would be deposited, allowing the board to determine how and to whom the money was paid. DiCera replied that board staff already had begun exploring establishing such an account.

"It's time for this board to act," Laino said. "If we don't act now, we won't ever act."

In the end, however, the board took no real action with regard to Hawthorne other than declining to approve a roster of racing officials for the upcoming Thoroughbred meet before knowing if there would be a meet.

Walsh said he believed a resolution would come before February. Hawthorne is scheduled to begin turning over its racing surface Feb. 16 in preparation for the Thoroughbred meet. Time is running out..





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YOUR JOB IS TO WIN IT.**

Are you in?

Driver/trainer Jacob Cutting feeling right at home in Saratoga

By Ken Weingartner

After setting career highs for wins and purses in 2025 in his first year based at Saratoga Casino Hotel – and earning a couple of awards in the process – Jacob Cutting is gearing up for the start of a new campaign at the upstate New York track, which begins its 85th season on Sunday (Feb. 1).

Cutting, who will turn 25 on Feb. 11, won a total of 152 races and \$1.55 million in purses as a driver last year while competing predominantly at Saratoga. All but 10 of his victories came at the half-mile oval and he finished fourth in the standings there – behind Jim Devaux, Brett Beckwith and Wally Hennessey.

In addition, Cutting's small training operation notched 31 wins and earned \$256,421 in purses. All of his training triumphs came at Saratoga, where he had a 16.7-percent win rate and finished 14th in the standings.

At the end of the season, Cutting received two Saratoga Casino Hotel/Saratoga Harness Horseperson's Association honors – the Johnny Page Driver Breakthrough Award and the Peerless McGrath Trainer Breakthrough Award.

"That was really cool," Cutting said. "It was a really good year. I'm good friends with Brett Beckwith, and he suggested that we should try it out here. We just kind of took a leap and it worked out. I'm very grateful to everyone who gave me an opportunity."

Cutting started his career in Western Canada (he is a Calgary, Alberta native) before enjoying success at Cal Expo, where he won a driving title, and Running Aces in Minnesota. He also spent time racing on the East Coast over the years but by last year he and his wife, Kendra, were ready to find a more permanent location to call home.

"We were kind of getting tired of moving around," Cutting said. "We were looking for a spot to settle down and be able to race almost year-round, and the way Saratoga's calendar is set up, it works out good. You can race pretty much year-round (February to mid-December) and then you've got a six-week break where you can either shut down the horses or ship somewhere else to race. You have options. That was what was most intriguing to us."

Having his own stable, which fluctuated between five and eight horses last year, helped Cutting get established at Saratoga as he got to know the horsepeople at the track, and they got to know him.

"You have to try to break in, and that's why having some of my own helps a lot," Cutting said. "It gets your name out there a little bit and people can see you drive a little bit. A lot of the trainers didn't know me, so it was taking one step at a time and getting to know them and learning

the horses. That's pretty crucial.

"There is so much to learn, with every horse you sit behind. You've got to be learning, otherwise you'll be lapped."

Working with his own horses can prove beneficial, even when he is driving horses for other trainers.

"As I learn with my own, it can help me with horses that I'm catch-driving for other people," Cutting said. "I might have an idea or two more than I would otherwise."

Cutting, though, has no plans to expand his training operation much beyond its current numbers. He entered this year with eight horses.

"I don't want to be shorting my horses, or my catch-drives," he said.

"I like to put time into both, so I try not to overbook myself."

Cutting enjoyed a steady workload as a driver at Saratoga as the season progressed. And he finished the meet strong, with an 18-percent win rate over the final six weeks, including a nearly 26-percent victory clip in December (15 wins in 58 starts).

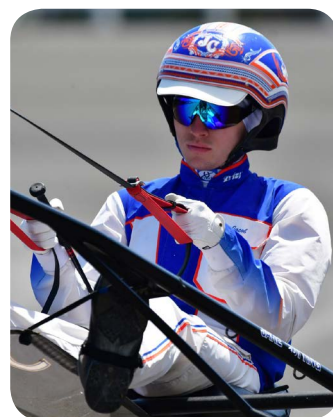
"It definitely picked up speed as the year went on," Cutting said. "The biggest thing was adapting to the half-mile racing there. It was a quicker pace than out west. You've got to be in the race. Obviously, you can win from anywhere depending on how a race unfolds, but I find that in more cases you have to be up in the early action."

"I try to be pretty universal (in terms of driving style). I was a more passive driver starting out; I figured I could always learn to be more aggressive. I think I've been more aggressive racing on the half-mile track than I had been before. I've definitely learned a lot."

Cutting has spent January driving at the Meadowlands while awaiting the reopening of Saratoga. He drove in three qualifiers at the Spa on Wednesday (Jan. 28) and is ready for the new season to begin.

"I've been driving a little bit at the Meadowlands, but I'm pretty anxious to get back to driving regularly at Saratoga," he said. "I've been in the bike, but it's nice to be back in the bike at Saratoga."

A place that now feels like home.



JESSICA HALLETT PHOTO

Jacob Cutting is 24 years old.



CREDITS: WINBAK FARM FACEBOOK ACCOUNT / HANOVER SHOE FARMS X ACCOUNT

(left) The first arrival at Winbak Farm of Maryland was this He's Watching-Val's Girl filly. (below) Hanover Shoe Farms' Cankeysto enjoys the snow with her six-day-old Sig Sauer filly.



RACE OF THE WEEK

8 MOHAWK PARK SAT

1 Mile Pace SNOWSHOE PACING SERIES FINAL: 3 & 4 YEAR OLD COLTS & GELDINGS IN 2026. NW OF 2 RACES OR \$30,000 LIFETIME AS OF OCTOBER 31ST, 2025. Purse \$37,400

DAILY DOUBLE (RACES 8 and 9) | EXACTA | START OF SWINGER | START OF \$0.20 PICK 3 | START OF \$0.20 SUPERFECTA | \$0.20 TRIFECTA | START OF \$0.20 PICK 4

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2		ARTHUR IDLAM 31:56.3 (1/8) \$1,089		br g 4, by Arthur Blue Chip, Warden Woodie by Allies Western The Cardinal Stable,Tyne Valley,Pe-Gordon Idlam Inc,Bathurst,Nb		Last 5 Sts-\$5,930		1:56.3 Lon		26 Wbs 4 25 Wbs 0 24 Wbs 0		0 0 0		0 0 0		-Life		2 0		\$5,930 \$28,933 \$34,833							
15-1 J. D Ryan		117-17-13-19 (145)		M. B Spence 20-0-3-2 (.000)		Br.- Elmer James Folland,Charlottetown,Pe				28 Wbs 4 25 Wbs 0 24 Wbs 0		0 0 0		0 0 0		-Life		2 0		\$5,930 \$28,933 \$34,833							
24 Jan26		7Wbs		fst-17 ^o		274 :57 1:26 1:55 Snowshoe		18000 1 5 ⁵ 5 ⁶ ₁ 6 ⁶ ₂ 7 ⁷ ₃ 6 ⁷		JMacdonld		MSpence		284 294 283 291		1:56 2		73		-5 w -6 3w -4 6w +0 6w +3 2w		15.15 RbstnscTClpsCrKClcCrKPrnr 15.30 RbstnscTArthldmClpsCrK 3.70 HakaTmatangHasselhotPartyUp 6.30 BoothillHudy PartyUp Crsnbsbking		Poor cover empty-7 Yld,pkt,2d best-7 Gd fnd,wid,mil-8 Yld,shut,lost-8			
17 Jan26		6Wbs		fst-9 ^o		282 :58 1:26 1:54 Snowshoe		18000 7 1 ¹ ₂ 2 ¹ ₂ 3 ² 2 ³ ₁ 2 ³ ₁		JMacdonld		SpenceMB		282 294 283 282		1:55 1		78		-6 3w -4 6w +0 6w +3 2w		15.30 RbstnscTArthldmClpsCrK 3.70 HakaTmatangHasselhotPartyUp 6.30 BoothillHudy PartyUp Crsnbsbking		Poor cover empty-7 Yld,pkt,2d best-7 Gd fnd,wid,mil-8 Yld,shut,lost-8			
10 Jan26		4Wbs		fst-1 ^o		282 :58 1:27 1:56 20000		11000 2 5 ⁶ ₃ 5 ⁵ ₄ 6 ⁶ ₃ 5 ³ ₂ 4 ⁴ ₁		DSpence		SpenceMB		292 293 291 292		1:57 2		69		-10 4w -10 4w -10 4w		3.70 HakaTmatangHasselhotPartyUp 6.30 BoothillHudy PartyUp Crsnbsbking		Poor cover empty-7 Yld,pkt,2d best-7 Gd fnd,wid,mil-8 Yld,shut,lost-8			
5 Jan26		3Wbs		fst-2 ^o		272 :57 1:25 1:54 20000		11000 7 1 ¹ ₂ 3 ¹ ₂ 5 ³ ₃ 4 ² ₃ 5 ⁶		DSpence		SpenceMB		272 294 291 29		1:55 2		77		-5 w -6 3w -4 6w +0 6w +3 2w		3.70 HakaTmatangHasselhotPartyUp 6.30 BoothillHudy PartyUp Crsnbsbking		Poor cover empty-7 Yld,pkt,2d best-7 Gd fnd,wid,mil-8 Yld,shut,lost-8			
13 Dec25		11Wbs		fst-9 ^o		Nw2r37500lcl		20000 scratched-jg-transportation																			
3		CRAZY HORSE CREEK 31:57.4 (7/8) \$776		b g 3, by Dancin Lou, Farmers Tuition by Apaches Fame Barry & Debbie Bird-Brian Davey,Gores Landing,On		Last 5 Sts-\$6,690		1:57.4 FID		26 Wbs 2 25 Wbs 3 24 Wbs 0		0 0 0		0 0 0		-Life		2 0		\$6,690 \$2,445 \$8,535							
15-1 T. B Borth		100-6-11-15 (.060)		B. Bird 8-1-1-1 (.125)		Br.- Barry W and Debbie M Bird,Gores Landing,On				26 Wbs 2 25 Wbs 3 24 Wbs 0		0 0 0		0 0 0		-Life		2 0		\$6,690 \$2,445 \$8,535							
24 Jan26		2Wbs		fst-17 ^o		274 :57 1:26 1:55 Snowshoe		18000 5 6 ⁸ ₃ 6 ¹¹ 6 ¹¹ 6 ¹⁸ 5 ²¹		JPlante		BirdB		31 29 283 311		1:59 4		55		-5 w -6 3w -4 6w +0 6w +3 2w		7.90 TheTulsakingBkrSistr OldCrKPrnr 2.40 CrazyHorseCreek BestBet TenCaratGarrett 65.00 TwinBAllianceListenLndLKnws 21.55 WinsourDuke TheFeastLateForCoffee		Rtkown clip,e2-3 Down road,nal2-6 Tok,rail,try-10 Rtk,much best-8 Cvr,empty-8			
17 Jan26		2Wbs		fst-9 ^o		291 :57 1:26 1:53 Snowshoe		18000 5 6 ⁸ ₃ 6 ¹¹ 6 ¹¹ 6 ¹⁸ 5 ²¹		JPlante		BirdB		31 29 283 311		1:59 4		55		-5 w -6 3w -4 6w +0 6w +3 2w		7.90 TheTulsakingBkrSistr OldCrKPrnr 2.40 CrazyHorseCreek BestBet TenCaratGarrett 65.00 TwinBAllianceListenLndLKnws 21.55 WinsourDuke TheFeastLateForCoffee		Rtkown clip,e2-3 Down road,nal2-6 Tok,rail,try-10 Rtk,much best-8 Cvr,empty-8			
11 Jan26		7FID		fst-4 ^o		274 :57 1:26 1:54 Nw1r5000l		7500 6 5 ⁸ ₃ 4 ⁶ ₃ 2 ⁷ ₁ 2 ¹ ₂ 1 ²		SCoulter		BirdB		292 292 284 301		1:57 4		75		-7 4w -4 6w +0 6w +3 2w		2.40 CrazyHorseCreek BestBet TenCaratGarrett 65.00 TwinBAllianceListenLndLKnws 21.55 WinsourDuke TheFeastLateForCoffee		Rtkown clip,e2-3 Down road,nal2-6 Tok,rail,try-10 Rtk,much best-8 Cvr,empty-8			
3 Jan26		1Wbs		fst-7 ^o		281 :58 1:27 1:56 Nw1r9000lcl		18000 8 8 ¹¹ 9 ¹⁰ 9 ¹⁰ 7 ¹⁰ 4 ⁸		JPlante		BirdB		302 30 29 284		1:58 1		64		-4 6w +0 6w +3 2w		65.00 TwinBAllianceListenLndLKnws 21.55 WinsourDuke TheFeastLateForCoffee		Rtkown clip,e2-3 Down road,nal2-6 Tok,rail,try-10 Rtk,much best-8 Cvr,empty-8			
27 Dec25		1Wbs		fst-7 ^o		282 :58 1:27 1:56 Nw11000lcl		18000 3 7 ¹⁰ 7 ⁷ ₃ 5 ⁵ 6 ⁷ ₁ 6 ⁶ ₁		JPlante		BirdB		292 30 284		1:56 3		73		-4 6w +0 6w +3 2w		65.00 TwinBAllianceListenLndLKnws 21.55 WinsourDuke TheFeastLateForCoffee		Rtkown clip,e2-3 Down road,nal2-6 Tok,rail,try-10 Rtk,much best-8 Cvr,empty-8			
20 Dec25		1Wbs		fst1 ^o		28 :57 1:26 1:56 Nw11000lcl		18000 2 5 ³ ₃ 5 ⁴ ₃ 2 ¹ ₂ 1 ¹ ₂ 2 ¹ ₂		JPlante		BirdB		283 292 284 293		1:56 2		76		-3 2w		4.20 CalypsoCreekBkrSistrWdnslDk		Cvr,wide,outlicked-9			
4		THE TULSA KING 31:55 (7/8) \$2,058		b g 4, by Shadow Play, Racey Miss by Shanghai Phil Josh Macdonald,Little Pond,Pe-Mike Dicks,Wabamun,Ab		Last 5 Sts-\$15,314		1:55.3 Wbs 7/8 1:55 Wbs 7/8		26 Wbs 3 25 Wbs 7 24 Wbs 0		1 1 0		0 0 0		-Life		3 1		\$13,104 26 \$25,760 25 Tot -Life		3 1		0 0		\$13,104 \$50,681 \$65,833	
4-1 T. Ratchford		55-3-4-9 (.055)		M. M Ratchford 26-7-3-2 (.269)		Br.- Robin F Burke,Brackley,Pe				26 Wbs 3 25 Wbs 7 24 Wbs 0		1 1 0		0 0 0		-Life		3 1		\$13,104 26 \$25,760 25 Tot -Life		3 1		0 0		\$13,104 \$50,681 \$65,833	
24 Jan26		2Wbs		fst-17 ^o		274 :57 1:26 1:55 Snowshoe		18000 6 1 ¹ ₂ 2 ¹ ₂ 2 ¹ ₂ 2 ¹ ₂ 1 ¹ ₂		TRatchfrd		RtchfrdMM		291 284 283 29		1:55 3		76		-5 w -6 3w -7 4w -10 2w -7 7w		1.85 TheTulsakingBkrSistr OldCrKPrnr 27.20 DstLynLynsFmklyJ EthmPrny 29.30 GetWingsMajorThreatThsKng 9.50 GetWingsTrinidad DevilsWish		Own clip,kept busy-7 Yld,pkt, on wire-6 Strong on wire-10 Down road,caved-10 Down road,roused-6			
17 Jan26		2Wbs		fst-9 ^o		291 :57 1:26 1:53 Snowshoe		18000 6 1 ¹ ₂ 2 ¹ ₂ 2 ¹ ₂ 2 ¹ ₂ 1 ¹ ₂		TRatchfrd		RtchfrdMM		291 29 283 301		1:57 1		71		-7 4w -10 2w -7 7w		1.85 TheTulsakingBkrSistr OldCrKPrnr 27.20 DstLynLynsFmklyJ EthmPrny 29.30 GetWingsMajorThreatThsKng 9.50 GetWingsTrinidad DevilsWish		Own clip,kept busy-7 Yld,pkt, on wire-6 Strong on wire-10 Down road,caved-10 Down road,roused-6			
10 Jan26		11Wbs		gd1 ^o		274 :56 1:25 1:54 Nw3r64500lcl		22000 4 6 ⁷ ₃ 6 ⁷ ₃ 6 ⁶ ₁ 6 ⁵ ₃ 6 ⁵ ₃		TRatchfrd		RtchfrdMM		291 29 283 301		1:57 1		71		-7 4w -10 2w -7 7w		1.85 TheTulsakingBkrSistr OldCrKPrnr 27.20 DstLynLynsFmklyJ EthmPrny 29.30 GetWingsMajorThreatThsKng 9.50 GetWingsTrinidad DevilsWish		Own clip,kept busy-7 Yld,pkt, on wire-6 Strong on wire-10 Down road,caved-10 Down road,roused-6			
2 Jan26		9Wbs		fst-9 ^o		272 :56 1:25 1:54 Valedictory		34200 7 5 ⁴ ₃ 5 ⁵ ₃ 3 ² ₂ 4 ³ ₁ 3 ⁹ ₁		TRatchfrd		RtchfrdMM		282 281 283 294		1:55 4		78		-10 2w -7 7w		1.85 TheTulsakingBkrSistr OldCrKPrnr 27.20 DstLynLynsFmklyJ EthmPrny 29.30 GetWingsMajorThreatThsKng 9.50 GetWingsTrinidad DevilsWish		Own clip,kept busy-7 Yld,pkt, on wire-6 Strong on wire-10 Down road,caved-10 Down road,roused-6			
19 Dec25		6Wbs		fst-4 ^o		283 :58 1:27 1:55 Valedictory		17000 7 6 ⁷ ₃ 6 ⁷ ₃ 6 ⁷ ₃ 5 ⁸ ₃ 5 ⁴ ₃		TRatchfrd		RtchfrdMM		30 301 284 274		1:56 4		71		-7 7w		1.85 TheTulsakingBkrSistr OldCrKPrnr 27.20 DstLynLynsFmklyJ EthmPrny 29.30 GetWingsMajorThreatThsKng 9.50 GetWingsTrinidad DevilsWish		Own clip,kept busy-7 Yld,pkt, on wire-6 Strong on wire-10 Down road,caved-10 Down road,roused-6			
5		RBSTENACIOUS T (L) 31:51.2 (7/8) \$3,110		b h 4, by Freaky Feet Pete, Aunt Marlene by Third Straight Ronald & Travis Cullen,Dundas,On-Deborah McLeod,Edmonton,Ab		Last 5 Sts-\$36,500		*1:54.1 Wbs 7/8 *1:51.2 HoP 7/8		26 Wbs 5 25 Wbs 7 24 Wbs 0		4 3 0		3 1 2		-Life		4 3		\$28,000 26 \$18,690 25 -Life		4 3		0 0		\$28,000 \$43,522 \$71,522	
3-1 T. A Cullen		125-32-15-15 (.256)		J. Cullen 126-31-22-15 (.246)		Br.- R L Turner & Judy A Turner,KY				26 Wbs 5 25 Wbs 7 24 Wbs 0		4 3 0		3 1 2		-Life		4 3		\$28,000 26 \$18,690 25 -Life		4 3		0 0		\$28,000 \$43,522 \$71,522	
24 Jan26		7Wbs		fst-17 ^o		274 :57 1:26 1:55 Snowshoe																					

Meadowlands cancels weekend racing

Due to extremely low and potentially hazardous cold temperatures forecast for the Garden State this weekend, the Meadowlands Racetrack is cancelling live racing for Friday, January 30; Saturday, January 31; and Sunday, February 1.

Qualifiers, scheduled for Saturday at 4 pm, are also cancelled.

"I spoke with Mark Ford, President of the SBOANJ, at length today regarding the weather," said Big M Chief Operating Officer and General Manager Jason Settlemyer. "Many of the horsemen expressed to Ford their concern with the negative temperatures our area would be feeling. Both the track and the SBOANJ want to ensure the health and wellness of our horsemen, women, and equine athletes. Based upon the feedback we were receiving, the decision was made to cancel live racing."

The Meadowlands Racetrack, the FanDuel Sportsbook, and Winners Bayonne will remain open for simulcasting and sports wagering.

When racing resumes next Friday, February 13, there will be a \$7,802 Pick 6 carryover. As always, check The Meadowlands' website, playmeadowlands.com, for all racing, dining, event, and wagering information.

-release (Meadowlands)

Details announced for 2026 Mohawk Million

Woodbine Entertainment is now accepting entries to purchase a slot in the 2026 Mohawk Million (G1) at Woodbine Mohawk Park.

The price to purchase a slot in this year's Mohawk Million has been increased from C\$50,000 to C\$60,000. A total of 10 slots (each priced at C\$60,000) are available once again.

The Mohawk Million for 2-year-old trotters is scheduled for Saturday, September 26 at Woodbine Mohawk Park.

The deadline to submit a slot purchase contract for the Mohawk Million is Tuesday, February 17. The contract must be accompanied by C\$30,000.

Should more than 10 parties submit to purchase a slot, a draw will be held to determine the 10 slot owners. Those selected in the draw will then have until June 1 to submit the remaining C\$30,000 of the slot fee.

Each slot is an entity that may be sold, traded or leased. Slot owners must declare a horse to race in their slot by Monday, September 21 at Noon.

The conditions for the Mohawk Million will again limit an owner and/or trainer to declaring a maximum of three horses to the event.

Any interested parties or those seeking more information on the Mohawk Million can contact Bill McLinchey, Vice-President of Standardbred Racing, at bmclinchey@woodbine.com.

To view the conditions and slot purchase contract in the 2026 Woodbine Major Stakes Booklet, [click here](#).

-edited release (Woodbine)

BULLDOG HANOVER & CATTLEWASH BREEDINGS FEATURED IN AUCTION

Breedings to Bulldog Hanover, Cattlewash, and Muscle Hill will be offered as No Guarantee in New Vocations' 28th annual stallion auction, held via OnGait.com from February 3-5. All other breedings, including closed-book Summa Cum Laude, will be sold on a Live Foal basis. These include Greenshoe, JK's Endofanera, Rebuff, Stay Hungry, Bettor's Wish, Volume Eight, and Tall Dark Stranger. Mares must be optimal breeding candidates and are subject to approval.

"The stallion auction is crucial to funding our Standardbred division," said New Vocations founder Dot Morgan. "We are incredibly grateful to the breeders who have generously supported it over the years."

Additional breedings may be added to the auction through Monday, February 2. Any unsold breedings and post-auction donations will be offered throughout the season. All proceeds support the rehabilitation, transitional training, and adoption of retired Standardbred racehorses and broodmares.

View breeding list: https://newvocations.org/news_detail/153

DRF Harness

Entries & Results

DRF Harness has entries and results for all U.S. tracks and live odds for all North American tracks



DRF.COM/HARNESS

DRF HANDICAPPER'S CORNER

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 head to your nearest ADW and simply make a win bet.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 29

RACE 3

(5) CHEVRON ART N prevailed handily from the eight-hole versus NW5000L5 company last Tuesday, and I think has room to build on that tonight from a better post.

-Greg Reinhart

EMPIRE CITY.
CASINO
YONKERS RACEWAY

FRIDAY, JANUARY 30

RACE 3

(6) TROPICAL CYCLONE managed to find an opening after saving ground around the final turn. She raced well on debut and should be better tonight.

-Kevin Plowcha



WOODBINE
MOHAWK PARK

RACE 2

(2) TWIN B SUNKISSED returns from a five-race stint at The Meadowlands culminating with a drop-and-pop jogola score last week in debut for new connections; veteran has plenty of local experience usually facing better than she sees here.

-Matt Rose

EMPIRE CITY.
CASINO
YONKERS RACEWAY

SATURDAY, JANUARY 31

RACE 8

(4) THE TULSA KING was a transportation scratch last week after he rode a pocket trip to victory in leg one of this series. He draws well and should provide better value this time around.

-Plowcha



WOODBINE
MOHAWK PARK

FULL CARD ANALYSIS / PAST PERFORMANCES

Mohawk Park Analysis

Friday Saturday

Yonkers Analysis

Thursday Friday

DHP PPS

HARNESS EYE PPS

TRACKMASTER PPS

FREE PPS

INSTANT RACING UPDATES VIA TWITTER: @DRFHARNESS

NEWS FROM AROUND THE HARNESS INDUSTRY

DAN PATCH WEEKEND ROOM DEADLINE JAN. 30

The U.S. Harness Writers Association's (USHWA) annual Dan Patch Awards banquet, presented by Caesars Entertainment, is set for Sunday night, Feb. 22, at Rosen Shingle Creek in Orlando, Fla. The deadline to make room reservations is FRIDAY, JAN. 30, and can be made by using the [USHWA link to the hotel's reservations page](#).

The Dan Patch Awards banquet annually honors the best and brightest performers, both human and equine, of the previous season. The award winners are selected by USHWA, with all winners already having been announced except for Pacer of the Year, Trotter of the Year, and Horse of the Year, which will be revealed the night of the banquet.

There will also be a two-hour Diamond Creek Farm outdoor welcome reception on Saturday night, Feb. 21, with the second half featuring country singer Mitch Rossell, presented by Team Beau Jangles. Also, USHWA will hold its annual directors' meeting on Saturday, Feb. 21, and its general membership meeting the morning of the banquet.

Tickets for the Dan Patch Awards banquet are \$230. There is also a reduced-priced menu option for children 12 and under. Dinner tickets can be ordered until Feb. 16 by contacting Judy Davis-Wilson at zoe8874@aol.com or (302) 359-3630 or Elizabeth Lewis-House at elizabeth.lewis.house@winbakfarm.com or (409) 707-2915. [Click here](#) for an order form.

All standard rooms under the USHWA block are \$209 nightly (plus applicable taxes). For room reservations, please [click here](#) for USHWA's dedicated hotel link. After the Jan. 30 deadline, attendees must contact Rosen Shingle Creek directly at 866-996-6338 or 407-996-6338 and ask for the Dan Patch rate.

Also, the deadline to place an ad in the Dan Patch Awards Journal is Friday, Jan. 30. Contact Kim Rinker at trotrink@aol.com.

-release (U.S. Harness Writers Association)

DIAMOND CREEK FARM MOURNS WESTERN MONTANA: 5.11.04 - 1.27.26

Writing these soliloquies is never easy, but this one comes harder than others. Hall of Fame broodmare and matriarch of Diamond Creek, Western Montana, has passed away. No words can really fully encompass the impact Montana has had on Diamond Creek, but we tried our best in a letter to her.

Western Montana - You were truly one of a kind. From the very beginning, you made it clear that you would always do things your way—and in doing so, you left an imprint that will never fade. You challenged everyone around you to rise to a higher standard of horsemanship, patience, and understanding. Those challenges became lessons, and those lessons became part of who we are.

You were integral to the growth and success of Diamond Creek Farm. Through your strength, presence, and remarkable ability to pass on quality, you helped shape generations of stallions, racehorses, broodmares, and foals. Your influence extends far beyond pedigrees or records; it lives on in the standards we uphold, the decisions we make, and the confidence with which we look toward the future. You arrived before the farm had a history—before there was momentum, before success was assured—and what followed helped define who we would become.

Your legacy is extraordinary. Time and again, your descendants have carried forward your substance, your determination, and your unmistakable character. Few mares leave such a lasting mark on both a farm and the people behind it. You taught us how to breed with purpose, how to be patient, and how to recognize true value long before it becomes obvious to the world.

You were never ordinary, never easy, and you will never be forgotten. You are the cornerstone because you helped build something enduring—something strong, respected, and meaningful. Success in this business is never built overnight, and it is never built alone.

Thank you, Western Montana, for everything you gave—and for everything you continue to give through the generations that follow.

-release (Diamond Creek Farm)

SHENANDOAH SPRING MEET RACING APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE FEB. 2

Shenandoah Downs will usher in its 11th year of pari-mutuel harness racing April 11 and continue a 7-week spring meet thru May 24 with programs every Saturday & Sunday at 1:05 PM. A 7-week fall meet will follow and extend from September 19 - November 1. Dates for both campaigns were formally approved

by the Virginia Racing Commission at its December meeting.

Racing applications for the spring session will be available at shenandoahdowns.com beginning February 2 and need to be submitted to the race office by March 11. Peter Szymanski enters year number three in his role as Director of Racing and Karen Fagliarone returns for her second year as Racing Secretary. For more details, horsemen can contact Karen at 732-239-0281 or e-mail her at raceoffice@shenandoahdowns.com.

The barn area opens Monday April 6 and pre-meet qualifiers will be offered on Tuesday April 7 at 10 AM. After that date, qualifiers will take place on Saturdays at 12 Noon --- including opening day, April 11. Racing entries will be taken every Wednesday for both weekend race cards. Saturday entries will clear on Thursday and Sunday's will clear on Friday.

Shenandoah Downs will experiment by going with seven horse fields this spring whenever possible (in non-stakes races) as a new safety initiative.

A new multi-leg Seven Bends Claiming Series --- celebrating the seven bends of the Shenandoah River that wind through Woodstock --- will be formalized in the coming days and posted on the track website.

Virginia Sire Stake and Breeder's Fund eliminations and finals for 3-year-olds will take place during the spring season. Sire Stake trot eliminations (April 18) and pace eliminations (April 19) will lead up to \$60,000 final rounds --- for both gaits --- on April 25. Three-year-old trot eliminations (May 9, 16) and pace eliminations (May 10, 17) will lead up to \$80,000 final rounds --- for both gaits --- on May 23.

A single round of \$20,000 Breeders Fund Aged trot and pace events will be conducted on May 2. Virginia Breeder's and Sire Stake events for two-year-olds will take place in the fall meet.

Shenandoah Downs will continue to make use of its new 175-stall, 32,500 square foot horse barn which debuted last fall. The Virginia Equine Alliance funded the \$2 million project to create a permanent structure to safely house horses during both meets. Two additional smaller barns are utilized as well along with 60 ship-in stalls.

Shenandoah Downs is conveniently located in Woodstock, Virginia halfway between Winchester and Harrisonburg at I-81, Exit 283 --- in the heart of the Shenandoah Valley. The Shenandoah County Fair is held there every summer and includes a four-day non-wagering harness meet which in 2026, will run from September 2-5.

-release (Shenandoah Downs)

USHWA DELAWARE VALLEY STALLION AUCTION

From Wednesday (Jan. 28) through Friday (Jan. 30), 4 breedings will be sold on onGait.com to benefit the Delaware Valley Chapter of the United States Harness Writers Association (USHWA).

- E L Platinum (DE) - Courtesy of Sonja Booth
- Molotov Cocktail (DE) - Courtesy of Winbak Farm
- Sports Column (DE) - Courtesy of Blake Macintosh
- Wearinmysixshooter (MD) - Courtesy of Mike Hall

Three of these stallions stand at Winbak Farm of Delaware and Wearinmysixshooter stands at Winbak Farm of Maryland.

The proceeds will benefit Delaware Valley USHWA, a nonprofit organization who has supported various industry causes such as the Harness Horse Youth Foundation, Goshen Historic Track, Harness Racing Museum and the Caretaker of the Year award for the tri-state area (Delaware/Maryland/Virginia), which was recently awarded to Sue Vannier.

The auctions will close on Jan. 30. Payments for the breedings are due up front with no live foal guarantee.

-release (USHWA Delaware Chapter)

FAMILY VALENTINE'S DAY CRAFT EVENT AT HARNESS MUSEUM

Bring the kids to the Harness Racing Museum & Hall of Fame, located at 240 Main Street, Goshen, NY on Saturday, February 7th from 10:00 am - 11:30 am for a fun-filled Valentine's Day celebration. Participants will create a heart suncatcher, decorate cards, make a treasure box filled with sweet candy treats and each child will receive a small gift. The cost for each child is \$10. Parents, Scouts, 4-H and Pony Club members are free.

For more information on all the Harness Racing Museum & Hall of Fame events, please visit our website at www.harnessmuseum.com. The Museum is located at 240 Main Street, Goshen, NY.

-edited release (Harness Museum)