

The *Time*

Steeplechase
& Eventing

Complimentary

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Super Mare

Guelph adds Fair Hill stakes to stellar career

Inside

- ♦ Voss, Aizpuru head list of spring stars.
- ♦ News from spring finale at Fair Hill.
- ♦ Eventing star Theodore O'Connor remembered.

Entries

What's Happening and Where To Find It

Six papers down, six more to bring you. Where did the spring season go? We hope Fair Hill was kind to you and put a few extra dollars in your pocket to amp up your bankroll for the flat tracks this summer. Guelph added the one missing piece of hardware to her mantle, taking the Valentine in fine fashion, and wrapping up a big spring for Tom Voss and Xavier Aizpuru. As for the eventing side of things, like many we were blown away by the loss of Theodore O'Connor.



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Pushing Forward, Back

Recapping the action this spring and looking ahead to Colonial Downs. Trainers and jockeys give us personal highlights while throwing out a few names to watch. Plus, an update on the injury front as well and when you can expect to see your favorite jockeys back in the saddle.



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Mirror Image

In a repeat performance of Nashville, Guelph led her rivals on a merry chase around the Fair Hill course, taking the Valentine in dominant fashion. Xavier Aizpuru left little doubt who the best jockey was this spring, booting home three hurdle winners to close the first half of the season.



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A Legend Passes

All-star steeplechase horse Highland Bud passes away at 23. Writer/photographer Barbara Livingston chronicles his life and the special bond he formed with Betsy Wells.



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Keeping Score

Colorado steeplechase fan Cathy Fowler sets the pace through May in the fantasy stable game.



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Eventing News

Horse (Pony) of the Year Theodore O'Connor leaves a legacy of accomplishments, broken hearts.



ST Publishing, Inc.

364 Fair Hill Drive, Suite F,
Elkton, MD 21921

In the Heart of Fair Hill Horse Country

Phone: (410) 392-5867
Fax: (410) 392-0170
E-mail: info@st-publishing.com
On the Web: www.st-publishing.com

The Staff

Editors/Publishers: Sean Clancy and Joe Clancy Jr.

Copy Editor: Jamie Santo

Staff Writer: Brian Nadeau

Advertising Representatives:

Michelle Rosenkilde (410) 557-7652
Harford/Baltimore Co. Maryland

Reney Stanley (804) 449-2388
Virginia

Contributors:

Barry Watson, Katy Carter, Tod Marks,
Cathy Roelke, Karen Aspinwall, Carl Hott,
Sam Clancy, Anne Clancy,
Joe Clancy Sr., Ruth Clancy, Ryan Clancy,
Jack Clancy, Nolan Clancy.

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On the Cover

Super mare Guelph and jockey Xavier Aizpuru head for the winner's circle after another stakes romp, this time at Fair Hill in the Valentine Memorial.

Photo: Tod Marks



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The Steeplechase and Eventing

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HEY BABY. Owner/trainer Linda Klein sent this photo of a recent foal by Waquoit out of Voxten Angel. The mare raced over fences for Klein and the foal was produced from a free season to Waquoit won by Klein's champion mare Orchid Princess.

Valentine Memory

Joy Slater, granddaughter of Miles and Joy Valentine, presents the trophy for the Valentine Memorial at Fair Hill each year.

The race has been run under a variety of definitions – novice stakes, open stakes and now a filly/mare stakes – but it more importantly serves as a link to steeplechasing's past. The Valentines campaigned such stalwart steeplechasers as Cancottage, Lucky Boy, Jacasaba, High Patches, Deux Coup and Down First among others. Guelph, this year's Valentine Memorial winner, would have looked good in the Valentine silks (pink, cerise hearts).

"She would wish she had her, that's for sure," said Slater, of her late grandmother's opinion of the gallant mare. "It's really fun to see a horse like her do well."

Further connecting to the past, Guelph's owner Betty Merck was Slater's pony-club leader in New Jersey.



News and Notes from around the circuit

FOR STARTERS

Take A Number

2: Times Nippy the Jack Russell Terrier – "Nippy!" – threw up in Todd McKenna's car on the trip from Unionville to the Fair Hill Races.

0: Jack Russells McKenna thought he had in his car when he left for Fair Hill.

10: Jump races won in May by jockey Xavier Aizpuru – at least one at every stop except Winterthur.

9: Jump races won in May by trainer Tom Voss – at least one at every stop except Winterthur.

134 3/4: Combined margin of victory of trainer Kathy McKenna's five winners this spring. Four were by a score or more; the narrowest decision was a 5 1/4-length squeaker at Aiken.

515,075: Dollars earned by the optimum (highest possible earnings) Pick 6 stable to date.

389,372: Dollars earned by the current Pick 6 leader.

Worth Repeating

"Rolling Rock made Saratoga look boring."

Mimi Voss, on steeplechasing's past fall place to be. The Rolling Rock Races last ran in 1983.

"Fools rush in where angels fear to venture."

Owner Betty Merck, who made her own tailgate spot adjacent to the paddock at Fair Hill

"I'll be there tomorrow."

Jockey Brooks Durkee, who sported a Delray Beach (Fla.) T-shirt at Fair Hill

"I now know that PEB got Jack Fisher's ankles just right."

Mary Guessford, comparing the yearbook cover cartoon to the trainer (who wore shorts at the Peoplechase May 31)

"Well, we never actually made it to the race part."

Former flat jockey Mike McCarthy, on an ill-fated ride aboard McDynamo at Delaware Park several years ago; the future steeplechase champion threw McCarthy before they made it to the starting gate.

More on McDynamo

Hall of Fame trainer Jonathan Sheppard did some research on his relationship with three-time champion steeplechaser McDynamo before a retirement ceremony last week and came up with a gem.

Sheppard never won a race in which McDynamo started. Sounds strange, but the 10 races the horse didn't win went to Anofferucantrefuse (trained by Tom Voss), Sharp Face (Jack Fisher), Hirapour (Doug Fout, twice), Sur La Tete (Neil Morris, twice), Paradise's Boss (Fisher), Preemptive Strike (Paul Rowland) and Good Night Shirt (Fisher, twice).

"I looked through all my old steeplechase yearbooks and we never did beat him," Sheppard said. "I never started a horse to finish in front of him, and any efforts I tried were futile."

Until the end. Sheppard-trained runners finished in front of McDynamo exactly once – in the champion's final start. Three Carat and Sovereign Duty checked in second and third in the 2007 Colonial Cup – with McDynamo sixth.

Bentley enjoys hometown win

Fenneka Bentley left work Friday, May 23, like countless others in Cecil County – eagerly awaiting Saturday's Fair Hill Races. But while many of the 15,000 racegoers were busy hitting the mutuel windows, Bentley was preoccupied with saddling Gil Johnston's Chislehurst in the fifth. Chislehurst rewarded backers and Bentley alike, paying punters \$30.20 to win and giving his trainer her first NSA score since going out on her own.

A veterinary technician for Equine Veterinary Care at the Fair Hill Training Center, Bentley served as an assistant to trainer Ricky Hendriks before deciding to take the plunge in the fall of 2006.

"After being with Ricky for five years I just decided it was time," she said. "I love horses and I need to be hands-on, so I started playing around at Fair Hill a little bit and a few people sent me some horses and it's worked out great."

One of the horses she received was Johnston's Chislehurst, a 6-year-old gelded son of Cape Town trained on the flat by Walter Bindner. Bentley started conditioning Chislehurst late last year, though the seeds were sewn long before, thanks in part to her husband, two-time champion jockey Dave Bentley.

"Dave started riding for Gil in 2005, his last year, and he said to her, 'If you ever want, please send us a horse,' " Bentley said.

"So Gil sent us Chislehurst last December. We started schooling him and teaching him to jump and he took to it very well."

A runner-up at Marlborough Point-to-Point, Chislehurst made his NSA hurdle debut at Middleburg April 19 in a \$25,000 maiden; he tired badly after leading early, checking in seventh, beaten 26 1/4 lengths. Bentley regrouped, put two 5-furlong breezes into Chislehurst over Fair Hill's Tapeta training surface, and pointed across the street.

"He was coming into the race good and was training well, but to be honest we were just hoping for a placing," Bentley said. "He's a bit strong, he still is, and he didn't make the whole distance at Middleburg, so we were just hoping to improve."

Though aiming just to hit the circle, Bentley fired a bull's eye in the \$15,000 maiden. Chislehurst settled on the lead for Willie Dowling and tenaciously held off favored News Flash by a neck. Bentley has four horses under her care, including Lenape Lou, second earlier on the card in a training flat race. Still, Chislehurst provided her with something special.

"It was a great feeling to win one at home, so to speak," she said. "Winning my first race, and having it occur at Fair Hill, that's really special and something I'll always remember."

– Brian Nadeau



Trainer Fenneka Bentley and Chislehurst.

Tod Marks

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Halfway Home

Voss shows the way as trainers aim for the summer racing season

BY BRIAN NADEAU

From afar, the spring highlights stuck out like a sumo wrestler at a salad bar – Good Night Shirt showed he was intent on defending his title at Atlanta and Nashville, Jonathan Sheppard reminded us why he's the master at Keeneland, and Be Certain made sure there would be no 4-year-old jinx at Radnor.

But what caught the eye of those right in the middle of the action? *The Times* looked back with a few of the spring season's main players while peeking ahead at the upcoming Colonial Downs schedule (six Sunday jump races, two each June 15, June 29 and July 13) and beyond.

- Tom Voss leads all trainers at the turn with a dozen wins, and the four-time champion's success mirrors his three-year run from 2000 to 2002, featuring quality over quantity. His 12 victories this spring came from only 38 starters – close to a 32-percent clip, with a remarkable 55 percent involved in the exacta. Showing no favorites, Voss posed with 10 horses, winning with maidens, novices, distaffers and claimers.

Novice runners Planets Aligned and Be Certain led the way, each taking a leg of the Steeplechase Triple Crown, while Guelph pitched in with a pair of filly/mare stakes scores.

"The spring as a whole went well, though I'm not sure there was any one highlight. If anything, I was just happy to see all the horses come to hand and run like we thought they would. We were fortunate to have good riders all the way through and that always helps too," Voss said. "Planets Aligned is doing good and he'll go in the A.P. Smithwick at Saratoga. He showed last year he likes that track and that's the next step for him, as he's no longer a novice. I haven't talked to the owners of Be Certain, so I'm not sure if he'll run at Saratoga or if we will wait for the fall with him. The same goes for Guelph, we aren't sure what we're going to do with her yet."

Voss holds a strong hand for the summer program at Colonial, with Fair Hill runner-up News Flash likely to be a heavy favorite when he surfaces in a maiden hurdle at the Virginia track.

"News Flash, Fogcutter and Clas-



Tod Marks

Temple Gwathmey winner Planets Aligned helped fuel a strong spring season for trainer Tom Voss.

sic Move will go in the maiden races at Colonial," Voss said. "We'll run some allowance horses as well, though right now I'm not really sure who will fit there and who will fit at Saratoga. Gigger will probably run at Colonial and some of the others we might wait on."

- Jack Fisher sits second with 10 spring scores, including a pair of Grade I victories by Good Night Shirt. Fisher, who also took down the world's richest timber race with Bubble Economy and upset the Radnor Hunt Cup with Monte Bianco, leads all trainers with \$355,100 in earnings.

"We had a great spring and winning the Georgia Cup and the Iroquois with Good Night Shirt was great," Fisher said. "I thought seeing (claimer) Duke Of Earl at Radnor, looking like Big Brown with Xav (jockey Xavier Aizpuru) looking back at the finish line, was pretty cool too."

Good Night Shirt has proven a more-than-capable successor to McDynamo this season. Now 7, Sonny Via's Eclipse Award winner ran his Grade I victory total to five with wins at Atlanta and Nashville. The \$150,000 earned this

See **TRAINERS** page 6 ►

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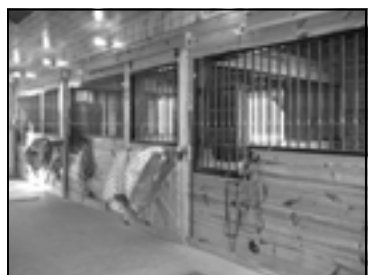
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Trainers —

■ Continued from page 5

season put him sixth on the all-time list at \$598,973. Currently enjoying his customary summer vacation, Good Night Shirt will return to action this fall, following a familiar path with the hope of securing another championship.

“We’ll look to keep Good Night Shirt on the same schedule as last year and start off in the Lonesome Glory at Belmont in September, then head to Far Hills and finish up in the Colonial Cup,” Fisher said. “He’s doing great right now. He’s out in the field just being a horse, getting a little break, and we’ll get him back going for the fall.”

Though his stable star is on sabbatical, the defending training champ plans to be active throughout the Colonial meet. Last season Fisher took an optional claimer with Duke Of Earl and he should be well represented this summer as well.

“Sound Blaster will head to the \$50,000 Zeke Ferguson (July 13) and Duke Of Earl, Quem Se Atreve and Mark The Shark will also run in the open division,” Fisher said. “Delta Park, Seeking No More, Seer and Hourigan will head to the maiden races.”

• Sanna Hendriks won 18 races from just 69 starters in 2007 and the two-time champion is on pace to better that mark this year. Tied with Fisher at 10 wins, she counts stakes scores from Preemptive Strike and the ill-fated Imagina.

“I’m a bit surprised I’m right in the thick of it, but we’ve had some horses step up and we’re looking forward to the fall. Obviously it was very sad to lose Imagina, but winning the Carolina Cup with her was a definite highlight of the spring,” Hendriks said. “I was also very happy to get a win with Preemptive Strike in the Imperial Cup. It was frustrating with him last

year, he had some good seconds but just didn’t get it done, so to win one was great. He’s on the way back and I think you’ll see him this fall. We’re getting ready to put some shoes back on him and get him jogging again, so we’re excited about that.”

Hendriks won’t be as active as some of the other leading trainers this summer, though she will point Radnor runner-up Nat Grew and Beech Cay, fourth at Nashville before disappointing at Radnor, to maiden races.

“Nat Grew and Beech Cay will run over the summer,” Hendriks said. “I really have no idea why Beech Cay ran so bad at Radnor but he’s doing well and I’ll try to get him going again at Colonial.”

• Jonathan Sheppard parlayed his six wins into \$318,197 in earnings, second only to Fisher. The Hall of Fame trainer dominated one of the biggest prizes on the calendar, Keeneland’s \$160,125 Royal Chase, by sweeping the exacta with Sovereign Duty and Sweet Shani. While Sheppard’s resume includes 23 training titles, 950 NSA victories and a plethora of Grade I wins over hurdles and on the flat, this year’s Royal Chase ranks near the top of his list.

“Winning the stakes at Keeneland was not only the highlight of the spring but it was one of the highlights of my career as well,” Sheppard said. “Being at Keeneland and the history of the race and of Keeneland itself, it was very special.”

With a light summer schedule for stakes horses, Sheppard noted the majority of his better runners (with the exception of Sovereign Duty, who is pointed to Saratoga) are on “cruise control” until the fall.

Sheppard won three of the eight jump races at Colonial last summer, including the Grade III Ferguson with Moneytrain. While the German-bred won’t be back to defend his title, Sheppard will be represented by Dr. Bloomer, who broke his maiden at Colonial last summer and took the Grade III Marcellus Frost on the Iroquois undercard this May. Sheppard plans on sending a few maidens to Virginia as well.

“We’ll run two or three maidens at Colonial, though I don’t have too many of them. Eat Em Alive and Decisive Play, who ran at High Hope, will go down there,” Sheppard said. “I also have Terpsichorean who ran second to another horse of mine, PromiseI’llbehome, in the ARCA race at High Hope. The winner had won an allowance race on the flat so it was a good effort by Terpsichorean. I have a new owner, John Sullivan out of Connecticut, and I got this horse from Barclay Tagg earlier in the year. He didn’t win for Barclay but we schooled him a little bit and he did quite well so I think he could prove to be a useful horse over hurdles.”

• Kathy McKenna spent the spring season “living the dream” to the tune of five wins and will have Sword Of Dubai (third earlier this year at Great Meadow to Run The Light and Dynaski) and Wave Warrior pointed to maiden races, while the venerable Sheriff Dillon and newly acquired In Pursuit Of Love will test open company.

• Virginia-based Doug Fout won a pair of races at Colonial in 2007 and Magic Maker, Coupe De Ville, Native Run and the filly World Away could all see action in maiden races.

Allowance runners could include Diego Cao and Dark Equation, both winners at Colonial last summer, as well as Discreet Charmer, Sussex County and G’day G’day, who broke his maiden at the New Kent track during April’s Strawberry Hill meet.

Fout also has Wheels Up At Noon, an impressive training-flat winner at Fair Hill who merits respect should he show up in a Colonial turf race or a maiden hurdle. The 4-year-old son of Outflanker won four times on the flat last year and knocked heads against 3-year-old turf stars such as Nobiz Like Shobiz and Red Giant en route to earning \$97,240.

Another Fair Hill flat winner, High Action, brings loads of back class if he turns to steeplechasing.

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A Repeat?

2007 champ
Aizpuru takes
over jockey race

BY BRIAN NADEAU

Xavier Aizpuru's hat trick at Fair Hill gave him 12 wins for the spring season and a three-win lead over Jody Petty, who is recuperating from a broken arm suffered in a fall at Radnor.

With Petty's return date still in limbo and Aizpuru's next closest pursuer at six wins, the Englishman sits in an enviable position as the summer approaches. Last year, en route to his first riding title, Aizpuru used the racetracks as a launching pad to his championship, picking up four wins at Saratoga and Philadelphia Park.

Aizpuru admits things could fall into place again, though he enters this summer with a different perspective.

"My spring has finished up really strong and it sets me up for the summer kind of like last year. It feels a little bit like last year, but I was a whole lot more tense about things last year, trying to be leading rider," Aizpuru said. "This year I'm going to try my hardest, but I'm more relaxed about it. I'm just very grateful to be riding good horses in the right races for the right trainers."

With six victories this spring, Willie Dowling sits third and has already surpassed his total for all of last year, when he booted home five winners. While Dowling has made his name as Good Night Shirt's regular pilot, the Irishman has shown he's more than capable if given the opportunity. This spring, he scored a pair of timber victories with Allimac – an open race at Middleburg over past champions Miles Ahead and Irish Prince followed by a romp in the Mason Houghland at Nashville.

"It's really been a great spring, especially winning two Grade Is. The Iroquois was the main goal and now we'll look to the Breeders' Cup as the next big goal. And then to ride Allimac to victory over Miles Ahead and Irish Prince was really special," Dowling said. "I came into this year riding with more confidence and it's helped me a lot. Riding over timber has really helped me as a rider too, it's taught me that you can't leave it up to the horse and just be a passenger out there; you've got to help them out."

While Aizpuru made it through the spring unscathed and in career form, the same can't be said for Petty and Padge Whelan, who suffered injuries during the latter half of the spring season. Even Dowling had a scare, with a chipped shoulder that will not require surgery as the result of a fall at Fair Hill.

The timing was particularly bad for Whelan, as the Irishman was just beginning to hit his best stride in the States. Riding for Tom Voss, the jockey broke his ankle when Motel Affair unseated him at Great Meadow May 3. In his absence, the Voss barn turned hotter than an attic in August, winning eight races, many with horses Whelan figured to be aboard. For Whelan, a return to the races can't come quick enough.

"I'm mad-eager to get back, that's for sure. Seeing how well Mr. Voss'



Tod Marks

Defending NSA jockey champion Xavier Aizpuru and trainer Tom Voss made a good combination this spring and lead their respective divisions at the break.

"I asked the doctor if I would be able to ride at Colonial June 15 and he looked at me and asked 'Are you serious?'" Jockey Jody Petty

horses have been running and getting off to the start I did, I'm really looking forward to getting back," Whelan said. "I broke my ankle on both sides and it's still pretty sore, so plans are on hold a little bit right now. I just got back on my first few sets (the last week of May) so we'll see how it comes along and take it from there."

Whelan had won four races from just 13 mounts, including the Grade II Temple Gwathmey at Middleburg aboard Planets Aligned and a maiden score with Gigger, his first ride in the United States.

"I was enjoying things and everything was working out great prior to my injury," Whelan said. "Riding a winner with my first mount was a thrill and winning on Planets Aligned in the stakes at Middleburg would be the one I enjoyed the most."

Petty was also enjoying a stellar spring, riding primarily for Hendriks, but the 2005 champion suffered a broken right arm in the fall that claimed star mare Imagina at Radnor.

While he won't make Colonial, Petty is optimistic he'll be back well before autumn.

"I just got my 10-day sutures out and they put another cast on me. I'll go back in 10 days and get that off, which will allow me to bend my elbow," Petty said.

"I asked the doctor if I would be able to ride at Colonial on June 15 and he looked at me and asked 'Are you serious?' So, needless to say, it was a pretty bad break, but I am making progress and getting better. I don't see any reason why I wouldn't be back for Saratoga."

The injury and the loss of Imagina put a damper on an otherwise successful spring for Petty.

While Imagina's memory will not be forgotten, the jockey did take two positives from Radnor, the return to form of Rainiero and Irish Prince, who have the veteran eagerly awaiting a return to the saddle.

"It's a shame because I had such a good spring. There was obviously some good and some bad. I still shake my head about what happened to Imagina. I know that can be part of the game, but she was just an amazing, amazing horse and it's really sad," Petty said. "On the bright side Rainiero did win that day and I still really believe in that horse. I'm excited about him in the second half of the year. And I know Irish Prince only finished third that day, but he seems to be rounding back into form and back to his old self, so I'm pretty excited about him this fall as well."



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2008 NSA Summer Racing Schedule

Colonial Downs

www.colonialdowns.com

Sunday, June 15 • \$15,000 Maiden hurdle
• \$20,000 Optional claiming hurdle
(NW \$14,000 once OTC or 3YO, or run for \$20,000)

Sunday, June 29 • \$15,000 Maiden hurdle
• \$20,000 Optional claiming hurdle
(NW \$12,000 once OTC or 3YO, or run for \$20,000)

Philadelphia Park

www.philadelphiapark.com

Sunday, July 6..... • \$25,000 Sport of Kings maiden hurdle
• \$30,000 Optional claiming hurdle
(NW20TMCS or 3YO, or run for \$30,000)

Colonial Downs

www.colonialdowns.com

Sunday, July 13..... • \$15,000 Maiden hurdle
• \$50,000 Zeke Ferguson Memorial Stakes (Gr. III)

Saratoga Jump Start

Sunday, July 20..... • \$25,000 Sport of Kings maiden hurdle
• \$25,000 Sport of Queens filly & mare hurdle
• \$25,000 Sport of Kings maiden hurdle
• \$25,000 Sport of Kings claiming hurdle
• Training Flat (Saratoga steeplechase-eligible horses)

Saratoga

www.nyra.com

Thursday, July 24..... • \$68,000 Optional claiming hurdle
(NW10TMCS or filly, or run for \$30,000)

Thursday, July 31..... • \$70,000 Jonathan Kiser Novice Hurdle Stakes
(NW prior to Jan. 1)

Thursday, August 7 • \$80,000 A.P. Smithwick Memorial Stakes (Gr. II)

Thursday, August 14..... • \$68,000 Optional claiming hurdle
(NW10TMCS or filly, or run for \$30,000)

Thursday, August 21 • \$70,000 Michael G. Walsh Novice Hurdle Stakes
(NW prior to Jan. 1)

Philadelphia Park

www.philadelphiapark.com

Saturday, August 23..... • \$75,000 Flatterer Hurdle Stakes (Pennsylvania-breds)

Saratoga

www.nyra.com

Wednesday, August 27..... • \$70,000 Optional claiming hurdle
(NW20TMCS or filly, or run for \$40,000)

Thursday, August 28..... • \$150,000 New York Turf Writers Cup Stakes (Gr. I)



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Tod Marks

Allimac helped owner Irv Naylor hit the top of the NSA standings.

NSA Standings

TOP 10 THROUGH JUNE 14

Jockeys (Races Won)

	Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Money	Win%
Xavier Aizpuru.....	35	12	6	3	\$258,922	.34
Jody Petty.....	31	9	6	2	175,200	.29
Willie Dowling.....	24	6	3	5	265,500	.25
Paddy Young.....	39	5	4	4	83,750	.13
Carl Rafter.....	41	5	3	10	146,113	.12
Matt McCarron.....	34	5	2	3	107,506	.15
Danielle Hodsdon.....	32	4	7	4	213,525	.13
Will Haynes.....	11	4	4	1	58,650	.36
Padge Whelan.....	13	4	2	1	113,250	.31
Brooks Durkee.....	18	4	1	6	62,700	.22

Trainers (Races Won)

	Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Money	Win%
Tom Voss.....	38	12	9	4	\$315,200	.32
Sanna Hendriks.....	32	10	6	3	186,450	.31
Jack Fisher.....	42	10	2	7	355,100	.24
Jonathan Sheppard.....	34	6	10	5	318,197	.18
Kathy McKenna.....	32	5	1	9	61,400	.16
Doug Fout.....	54	4	3	6	99,906	.07
Desmond Fogarty.....	20	4	3	5	114,800	.20
Bruce Miller.....	18	4	3	2	138,263	.22
Mike Berryman.....	13	4	0	2	54,200	.31
Lilith Boucher.....	13	3	1	3	51,200	.23

Owners (Money Won)

	Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Money	Win%
Irv Naylor.....	28	5	4	5	\$167,150	.18
Calvin Houghland.....	19	4	3	4	162,572	.21
Sonny Via.....	2	2	0	0	150,000	1.00
Augustin Stable.....	24	8	3	3	144,800	.33
Hudson River Farm.....	2	2	0	0	114,075	1.00
Sally Radcliffe.....	8	1	3	2	75,513	.13
Kinross Farm.....	30	2	6	4	71,900	.07
Arcadia Stable.....	12	1	0	3	68,750	.08
Alnoff Stable.....	4	2	1	0	67,500	.50
Bill Pape.....	9	2	3	2	66,050	.22

Horses (Money Won)

	Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Money	Win%
Good Night Shirt.....	2	2	0	0	\$150,000	1.00
Sovereign Duty.....	2	2	0	0	114,075	1.00
Be Certain.....	4	2	1	0	67,500	.50
Bubble Economy.....	4	1	0	2	66,500	.25
Planets Aligned.....	2	1	1	0	58,500	.50
Imagina.....	3	1	1	0	58,500	.33
Allimac.....	2	2	0	0	57,000	1.00
Askim.....	2	1	1	0	51,300	.50
Guelph.....	2	2	0	0	48,000	1.00
Sweet Shani.....	2	0	1	1	43,822	.00

News from the NSF

The National Steeplechase Foundation is dedicated to the preservation and advancement of American steeplechasing through programs that promote safety, education, fairness, and the spirit of amateurism.



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Learning from the Experts



For the second consecutive year, the National Steeplechase Foundation sent Barry Watson, National Steeplechase Association starter and safety advisor, to England for a fact-finding trip aimed at seeing what can be learned from British jump racing and what can be brought home for use in the United States. During his 10-day visit in December, Watson visited the Sandown, Warwick, Chepstow and Cheltenham race courses and talked to everyone from Jockey Club officials to fence builders. He also spent time at the start during each racing day. In short, the trip proved valuable in many areas – course safety, course maintenance, starting procedures and the strengthening of contacts with various English racing officials.

The fifth installment of Watson's day-by-day report follows, and will appear in the next few Foundation advertising placements.

...

Dec. 15: I arrived at Cheltenham at 10:30 a.m. to walk the course with Richard Linley, the Jockey Club's senior inspector of courses. The covers from the night before had just been removed. They had provided the insulation from frost, and the grounds crew was well on its way to having the course prepared for the day's event. Thousands of divots had been repaired, filled, and seeded by hand. Much of the race rail had been moved out to provide fresh ground for the day. Richard was pointing out many of the nuances of Cheltenham on the way around. His experience as a rider and senior inspector covers some 30 years. Again, we theorized on what can cause some of the more complicated problems that surface from time to time. For instance, there may be, for whatever reason, a rash of incidents on a particular part of a racecourse that prompts investigation and change. But the attention of the riders may come into play, as they take whatever steps necessary to insure safe passage in an area where there have been difficulties. Then time passes without incident, and then years later a similar problem resurfaces at the same location without explanation. Could it be that in some cases it may be awareness that is the determining factor? I'm not entirely certain, but I believe it does play a part.

Eventually, we had a look at the second-to-last chase fence on the "old" course where Granit Jack had lost his life the month before. My first instinct was that it actually had a good-looking, slight-upgrade approach, and an innocuous landing area that wouldn't create a problem. However, when you start adding all the variables – where the fence is located in relation to the wire, shadows or a slight inconsistency in the ground around the fence – it was clear that these factors create a situation where falls can occur. And although steeplechasing can be inherently dangerous from time to time, it is critical that everything is done to protect the well-being of horse and rider, as well as the integrity of our sport.

Richard and I went on to talk about other details regarding formulas for the number and types of fences to be jumped at a distance of 2 miles, then each additional quarter mile, that have become standardized in the rules of racing in England. They are written to incorporate the characteristics of a racecourse, and thereby, not written in stone. I have thought there is too much jumping on some of our racecourses, but it has been premature to address these concerns. The time may come to adjust the current regulations regarding the amount of jumping over a 2-mile distance. In England, there are 12 fences to be jumped in a 2-mile chase and six additional fences each subsequent mile there after, with at least one ditch per mile. There are eight hurdles to jump in a 2-mile hurdle race, plus one for every subsequent quarter mile.

The National Steeplechase Foundation supports various initiatives to aid the growth of American steeplechase racing.

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Tod Marks

Guelph (Xavier Aizpuru) commands the front in the Fair Hill feature, the \$30,000 Valentine Memorial for fillies and mares.

Star Quality

Guelph completes trophy collection with triumph in Valentine Memorial

BY JOE CLANCY

FAIR HILL, Md. — The Tom Voss Thoroughbred honor roll drips with classy names such as John's Call, Quel Senior, Cookie, Wild Sir, Petroski, Welter Weight, Dreadnaught, Florida Law, Brigade Of Guards, Ironfist, Soaringoverseattle, Approaching Squall, Sam Sullivan, Lapseng, Teb's Bend. . .

But the trainer does not toss around superlatives lightly, so listen when he brags on a horse.

"You watch her jump and it's breathtaking, breathtaking, just breathtaking," said Voss. "She's a star. She gets passed over because she's a filly, but she's a real star."

Moments earlier the subject of Voss' superlatives, Guelph, won the \$30,000 Valentine Memorial Stakes for fillies and mares. Owned by The Fields Stable, the 7-year-old mare put on a clinic over the race's 2 1/4 miles and 15 fences. She outran, outjumped — outstarred — six rivals to claim the only NSA filly/mare stakes she had yet to win.

Two weeks after finishing 1-2-3-4 in the Margaret Henley at Nashville, Guelph, Jellyberry, Class Shadow and Dynaskill returned for the Valentine. As at Nashville, Guelph (Xavier Aizpuru)

led from the start. This time, however, she had company as Jellyberry (Carl Rafter) pressed the pacesetter throughout. Class Shadow (Richard Boucher) stalked in third among a tight pack. With a circuit remaining, Guelph led Jellyberry a length and they were 6 clear of the rest.

Down the long Fair Hill backside, Guelph continued to try to shake off Jellyberry and eventually did so by the top of the stretch — when Class Shadow took her shot. Guelph jumped the final three fences like they were the first three and drew off to score by 2 1/2 lengths in 4:22 3/5. Jellyberry stayed on for third. The winner paid a slim \$3.60 as the 4-5 favorite.

While not a runaway, Guelph makes good use of her front-running ability.

"Sometimes it looks like they're letting her get away, but in actual fact she was a lot more aggressive about the whole thing today — setting a good clip and jumping more aggressively," said Aizpuru. "But that's always a concern to me because she's not very big and I don't want her to use up too much energy early. She gave me all the big jumps in all the right places and every time they tried to come to her she was like 'catch me if you can.' "

FAIR HILL RACES

Saturday, May 24

Champion novice and distaff jumper in 2005, Guelph won four races that year but settled for third behind Footlights and Feeling So Pretty in the Valentine (her first try against winners). She returned in 2006 for another crack at the spring stakes finale — this time as the even-money favorite. While getting saddled, she flipped over and landed on her back. She seemed healthy despite the accident, but Voss (who wasn't there) told assistant Todd Wyatt and jockey Cyril Murphy to have Guelph scratched if anything seemed amiss. The 160-pound highweight lost by a neck to Isla Mujeres, who carried 21 fewer pounds.

"She ran great — just got beat carrying 160 pounds — so you couldn't think anything was wrong with her," said Voss. "The next day, it swelled up and we had it X-rayed. She fractured it in 16 places."

"It" was Guelph's withers — the high point of a horse between the shoulder blades. The withers are important to conformation, jumping, saddle placement and weight carrying. The injury caused her to miss the rest of 2006 and she didn't return until last fall — when she lost all three starts. The losing ended in 2008 as Guelph shined at Nashville and dazzled at Fair Hill.

Bred by Voss' wife, Mimi, and The Fields owner Betty Merck, Guelph improved to 6-for-11 over fences and pushed her steeplechase bankroll to \$143,650. Stakes victories have also come in the Crown Royal at Callaway Gardens, the Henley at Nashville, the Peapack at Far Hills and the Sport of Queens at the Colonial Cup.

"Come and get me," Voss suggested as the mare's opinion of herself. "You can try to jump with me, but look out baby, I'm a star."

You said it.

Additional reporting by Brian Nadeau.

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Fair Hill Spring Races

Fair Hill, Md. Saturday, May 24. Turf: Firm.

1st. Training flat. 7 furlongs.

1. Wheels Up At Noon	L 155	McCarron	3.60	3.00	3.20
2. Poplar Grove	L 152	Read		5.80	4.20
3. Get To Steppin'	L 155	Dowling			4.60
Exacta (4-7) \$12.00. Trifecta (4-7-1) \$171.00					

4. Country Cousin	L 155	Rafter			
5. Arch Hero		140 Hamilton			
6. Green Pro	L 150	Slater			
7. Plymouth Rock	L 150	Penman			
8. Not For Love's Boy	L 150	Hodsdon			
9. Ashley's Paradise	L 150	Trunzo			

Mgn: 4. Time: 1:28. O: Eldon Farm Racing Stable. T: Doug Fout.

Dk. b./br. g. 4 Outflanker-Noontime Jet, Tri Jet.

Bred by Mr. & Mrs. William Rainbow (FL).

2nd. Training flat. 1 1/4 miles. Amateur jockeys.

1. High Action	L 165	Durkee	6.20	4.20	3.20
2. Highcrest	L 162	Heeney		22.40	8.40
3. Game Face On	L 160	Gillam			3.40
Exacta (2-4) \$168.00. Trifecta (2-4-1) \$992.40. Double (4-2) \$8.00					

4. Witsand Bay	L 160	Chalfin			
5. General Skye	L 152	Read			
6. Sabotage	L 165	Chubb			
7. Green Velvet		145 O'Callaghan			
8. Regally Hitched		160 Wyatt			
*9. C R's Deputy	L 165	Penman			
10. Somber		155 Williams			
11. Harbour Gate	L 165	Slater			

*DQ from 2nd for interference with Regally Hitched.

Mgn: 2. Time: 2:16 2/5. O: Carl Barnes. T: Doug Fout.

Ch. g. 8 Theatrical (Ire)-Secret Imperatrice, Secretariat.

Bred by Harold Harrison (KY).

3rd. Training flat. 7 furlongs.

1. Auction Watch	L 155	Aizpuru	4.20	3.40	3.20
2. Lenape Lou	L 150	O'Callaghan		6.00	4.00
3. Big Sid's Party	L 155	Dowling			4.20
Exacta (2-6) \$41.20. Trifecta (2-6-7) \$437.00					

4. Where's My Nurse	L 145	McCarron			
5. Make Wayfor Norman	L 140	Gillam			
6. Quiet Virginian	L 155	Penman			
7. Wave Warrior	L 150	Rafter			
8. Running In Reality	L 150	Young			
9. Cripple Creek	L 155	Carter			
10. The Manner Born		145 Hodsdon			

Mgn: 5 1/2. Time: 1:30 3/5. O: Augustin Stable. T: Sanna Hendriks.

B. g. 5 Belong To Me-Tarika, Cozzene. Bred by George Strawbridge (PA).

4th. \$10,000. Mdn. clm. hurdle. 2 1/4 miles. \$10,000-\$5,000 clm. price.

1. London Grove	L 152	Aizpuru	15.80	6.20	4.20
2. Bounding Cat	L 152	Hodsdon		5.00	3.20
3. Justabud	L 149	Carter			3.40
Exacta (7-5) \$55.20. Trifecta (7-5-9) \$171.40					

4. Tracy Arm	L 156	Rafter			
5. Prancing Cat	L 148	Young			
6. Hey Doctor	L 156	Read			
7. Frosty To Go		156 McWade			
L.R. Salute The News	L 156	Durkee			
PU. Dixie Cheer	L 151	Madden			
PU. Let's Lindy	L 140	Boucher			
PU. Plum Brush	L 156	Walsh			
PU. Proper Card	L 152	J. Murphy			

Mgn: 3 1/4. Time: 4:28 1/5. O: Nina Gardner. T: Liz Merryman.

B. g. 6 Shadow Show-Rewarding Date, Squire. Bred by Nina Gardner (PA).

5th. \$15,000. Maiden hurdle. 2 1/4 miles.

1. Chislehurst	L 154	Dowling	30.20	15.80	11.80
2. News Flash	L 142	Aizpuru		4.20	3.20
3. Dubai Sunday (Jpn)	L 157	McCormack			8.00
Exacta (10-8) \$127.40. Trifecta (10-8-2) \$2,880.00					

4. Pop The Pirate (NZ)	L 154	Young			
5. Zozimus	L 154	Walsh			
6. Expel	L 142	J. Murphy			
7. Questioning	L 154	Rafter			
8. Charismic American	L 154	Hodsdon			
F. Duck Hunt	L 144	McVicar			
F. Never Fear	L 154	Read			
F. Two Terms	L 159	C. Miller			

Mgn: Neck. Time: 4:31 2/5. O: Gil Johnston. T: Fenneka Bentley.

Dk. B./Br. g. 6 Cape Town-Clever Tish, Clever Trick.

Bred by Cloyce Clark (KY).

6th. \$30,000. Sport Of Queens filly/mare hurdle stakes. 2 1/4 miles.

The Valentine Memorial					
1. Guelph	L 144	Aizpuru	3.60	3.20	2.20
2. Class Shadow	L 140	Boucher		3.40	2.60
3. Jellyberry	L 140	Rafter			2.20
Exacta (5-7) \$11.20. Trifecta (5-7-2) \$15.60					

4. Dynaskill	L 141	Young			
5. Analyze		140 Hodsdon			
6. Suntara	L 140	McCarron			
PU. Gypsy Beads		140 Gillam			
PU. Leaves Of Autumn	L 142	J. Murphy			

Mgn: 2 1/2. Time: 4:22 3/5. O: The Fields Stable. T: Tom Voss.

Ch. m. 7 Sky Classic-Distant Drumroll, Eastern Echo.

Bred by Mimi Voss (MD).

7th. \$15,000. Clm. hurdle. 2 1/4 miles. \$20,000-\$15,000 clm. price.

1. Motel Affair	L 151	Aizpuru	3.60	3.00	2.20
2. Quem Se Atreve (Brz)	L 140	Boucher		8.40	4.60
3. Sheriff Dillon	L 146	Rafter			3.20
Exacta (2-9) \$85.20. Trifecta (2-9-3) \$514.20					

*4. Four Schools (Ire)		146 McWade			
5. Gryffindor	L 159	C. Miller			
6. Thegooddiyoung	L 152	Hodsdon			
7. Humdinger	L 146	Dowling			
8. Sweep Domino (Chi)	L 140	McCarron			
PU. Silver Wheat	L 140	J. Murphy			
PU. Change Course	L 152	Young			

*Claimed for \$20,000 by Jacqueline Ohrstrom.

Mgn: 3 1/2. Time: 4:19 3/5. O: Blackwood Stable. T: Tom Voss.

Dk. B./Br. g. 8 Colonial Affair-Motel Queen, Bates Motel.

Bred by Larry Bowen (KY).

8th. \$10,000. Novice timber. 3 1/8 miles. NW over timber prior to 2008.

1. South Monarch	L 165	Young	3.00	3.00	2.40
2. Kilbreena (Ire)	L 160	Slater		4.20	3.60
3. Class Crimson		160 Boucher			4.80
Exacta (6-3) \$15.40. Trifecta (6-3-8) \$138.80. Double (2-6) \$3.40					

4. Floor Play	L 160	Rafter			
5. Irish Laddle	L 160	Walsh			
6. Broom	L 160	Curry			
7. Beneficial Man (Ire)	L 160	Durkee			
*R. Jamaica Me Laugh	L 160	C. Miller			
F. Shiny Emblem	L 160	Dowling			
PU. Bulawayo	L 160	McCarron			

*-Refused to jump.

Mgn: 3 1/2. Time: 6:47. O: Augustin Stable. T: Sanna Hendriks.

Dk. B./Br. g. 6 Conquistador Cielo-Just A Bird, Storm Bird.

Bred by George Strawbridge (Canada).



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ST0508



Motel Affair
(Xavier Aizpuru)
powers toward the
finish line in his
claiming hurdle
score at Fair Hill.
Tod Marks



King of the Hill

Aizpuru rules on home turf

BY BRIAN NADEAU

FAIR HILL, Md. – Like the chalkboard writings of a misbehaving third grader, the Fair Hill Races repeated one

theme over and over before school let out for the summer: “Xavier Aizpuru rode the winner.” With a flat score already in his saddle bags, the 2007 champion jockey pocketed the first of

his three jump wins on the card when he guided Nina Gardner’s London Grove (\$15.80) to an upset victory in the fourth, a \$10,000 maiden claimer.

Trained by Lizzie Merryman, London Grove made his jump debut a success, drawing off by 3 1/4 lengths over Bounding Cat (Danielle Hodsdon) and Justabud (Nick Carter). Sitting unhurried while in mid-pack, London Grove moved to the outside for a clear run as the field turned for home; the son of Shadow Show advanced to the lead two fences from the line and increased his advantage to the wire. The time for the 2 1/4 miles was 4:28 1/5.

Based at Fair Hill Training Center across Route 273 from the course, Merryman works with flat horses and won her first steeplechase since Charmed Circle at Radnor in 1998. But, her jump-racing connections run deep with the likes of champion Good Night Shirt and Grade I winner Pinkie Swear passing through her barn. She also worked closely with ex-husband Ricky Hendriks’ steeplechase string that included major winner Hudson Bay in the late 1990s.

London Grove joined the steeplechase set on the heels of a solid third at Atlantic City, the 6-year-old’s only start this season. After 10 tries on the flat, Gardner and Merryman felt it was time for a change.

“Nina asked me if I had any interest in having jumpers and I said I would run one over jumps,” said Merryman, who last started a jumper in 2002. “I have a lot of young horses for her and we rotate them in and out. He’s a very sweet, very level-headed horse that feels lovely when you gallop him. He’s a great mover and gives you a great feel when you’re on him. He had done some three-day eventing so he’s not as green as you would think. He had all the basics, we schooled him over hurdles one time and

he did it well. He’s got the stamina, he liked it, so we aimed for Fair Hill.”

And landed on top.

- Willie Dowling directed the fifth race like a Hollywood pro, showing plenty of action early while still saving a little something for a big finish. He turned the trick aboard Gil Johnston’s Chislehurst (\$30.20), who set a pressured pace then held off the hard-charging News Flash (Aizpuru) to give Fenneka Bentley her first solo NSA win as a trainer in the process (see sidebar, page 4).

Chislehurst broke alertly and took charge soon after the first fence, passing Zozimus (Robbie Walsh) and maintain-

ing a measured length over that rival as the field knocked off the first lap of the 2 1/4-mile contest. Chislehurst put away Zozimus as the field hit the final turn, but a new challenge emerged from Dubai Sunday (Calvin McCormack), who actually stuck a head in front as the pair straightened away in the stretch. News Flash came on the scene late, gaining ground with every stride. Chislehurst dug in and got home a neck to the good of News Flash, who held the same margin over Dubai Sunday as the three hit the wire.

Dowling notched his sixth win on the year, surpassing his total for all of 2007. Two-time champion jockey Dave Bentley, who helped his wife out by playing groom, gave Dowling a little pre-race help as well.

“(Chislehurst) was a bit keen at Middleburg and I had watched his races on video and Dave told me he was a very strong horse, so I expected to be up front,” Dowling said. “We jumped the first and I tried to settle him but decided it was better to go on with it and he actually settled in well for me when we made the lead. It takes a bit of jumping to win

See **FAIR HILL** page 13 ►

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Fair Hill —

■ Continued from page 12

on this course, you have those 15 jumps, but after the last I didn't think we were going to win. But when I asked him he really kicked in and battled for me."

- There was nothing seedy about Motel Affair (\$3.60), who took the seventh to give Aizpuru three hurdle wins on the day. Trained by Tom Voss, the 8-year-old entered the \$15,000 claimer off a disappointing run at Great Meadow where he unseated Padge Whelan, who injured his ankle and missed the remainder of the spring.

Cue Aizpuru, who got to know the son of Colonial Affair when they teamed for a second earlier in the season at Atlanta. This time they worked together like Stockton and Malone, sitting off the early pace of Quem Se Atreve (Richard Boucher) before starting a fastbreak to the wire for a 3 1/2-length score. The final time of 4:19 3/5 was the fastest on the day. Quem Se Atreve saved second by a half-length over Sheriff Dillon (Carl Rafter).

"Off of his previous two runs, he was sitting on a win," Aizpuru said. "He was very unlucky at the Gold Cup because he was slipping up on that turn and that notoriously catches horses year in and year out. Unfortunately for Padge he broke his ankle coming off of the horse that day and I feel terrible for him because he had a great start to the year and things seemed to be setting up for him, he's a great rider and a good guy, but it was just bad luck. I'm just very grateful that I have been chosen to fill his boots for now."

- South Monarch (\$3) ended the day with a decisive win in the nightcap, a \$10,000 novice timber. Trained by Sanna Hendriks for Augustin Stable, South Monarch (Paddy Young) stalked the early pace of Class Crimson before moving to the lead in mid-stretch to win by an eased-up 3 1/2 lengths over Kilbreena (James Slater) and Class Crimson (Boucher).

The winner returned from almost two years on the shelf to win three of four over timber. Fair Hill's novice conditions limited the field to horses that



Tod Marks
Top: South Monarch (right, Paddy Young) waits to make his bid early in the timber race. Left: Chislehurst (Willie Dowling) gives trainer Fenneka Bentley her first NSA win.

had not won over timber before this season, meaning South Monarch and Scuba Steve were the only timber winners in the field of 10. The winner, a 6-year-old son of Conquistador Cielo, looks poised for bigger things.

"I guess I do have to start thinking stakes with him," Hendriks said. "He's got the stamina and turn of foot, which is something he didn't really have as a hurdle horse. He jumped well at the Manor, and the Genesee Hunt Cup (in October) is an option. He jumped great and I was really pleased. Paddy gave him a great ride and the fact that he was fourth before the last tells you he waited as long as he could. This horse was dead-natural from the beginning and he jumped hurdles well as a 3-year-old, but he's been great over timber this season."



Tod Marks

London Grove (Xavier Alzpuru) heads for home with a maiden hurdle win.

year for trainer Ann Merryman. Stakes-placed on the turf, the 4-year-old son of Outflanker held his own against division heavyweights Nobiz Like Shobiz, Red Giant and Twilight Meteor.

- Fourth to Yeats in England's Ascot Gold Cup two years ago, Carl Barnes' High Action (\$6.20) was another class play in the second, a 1 1/4-mile test for amateur riders. Off since a run in the Group II Lonsdale Cup in August 2006, the 8-year-old returned as a runner-up in a training flat at Foxfield. He showed little rust at Fair Hill, notching a 2-length win for Fout.

The winner (Brooks Durkee) was aided by the antics of post-time favorite C R's Deputy. Last year's 3-year-old hurdle champion enjoyed the lead under Michelle Penman only to blow the far turn, carrying Regally Hitched out with him. C R's Deputy managed to get home second but was disqualified to ninth by the stewards, who moved Highcrest (Brendan Heeney) to second and Game Face On (Diana Gillam) to third.

- Auction Watch (\$4.20) dropped the hammer in the third, taking the 7-furlong training flat for Aizpuru, Hendriks and Augustin. The 5-year-old entered with an enviable 3-for-5 record on the turf, having won three straight last summer at Philadelphia Park in the span of a month. After a pair of distant finishes over hurdles at Strawberry Hill and Foxfield, the son of Belong To Me got a confidence booster Saturday, scoring by an easy 5 1/2 lengths over Lenape Lou (Gina O'Callaghan) and Big Sid's Party (Dowling).

Additional reporting by Joe Clancy.

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Into Thin Air

Altitude training attempts to scale Thoroughbred racing's mountain

BY BRIAN NADEAU

Some 40 years after altitude training became popular for human athletes, the innovative technique is making inroads into the world of Thoroughbred racing. Spurred by Altitude Simulation Technologies (AST), a Boulder, Colo.-based company that specializes in installing oxygen-controlled stalls to simulate high-altitude conditions, altitude training has begun to gain momentum.

Altitude training first gained national attention at the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City, some 7,800 feet above sea level, when it was first noticed that athletes who had been exposed to higher altitudes outperformed their competitors who had not.

Training at a higher altitude has been shown to increase red blood cells in the body as well as lower a person's peak heart rate at exertion, both important factors in athletic performance. Theoretically, the more time a person spends at a higher altitude, the less exertion they will expend when they perform at lower altitudes.

AST takes this ideology a step further, believing that benefits can be realized

by living in high-altitude conditions and training under normal conditions. In laymen's terms the method is described as "living high, training low" and has been used by professional and college athletes. AST brings this thinking to the horse by installing an air-tight stall that helps simulate high-altitude conditions by reducing the oxygen in the air while not reducing the barometric pressure.

The horse spends the majority of its time in the stall, acclimating to the simulated conditions of higher altitude, and then trains outside, under regular conditions. This method has proven to increase red blood cell mass, improve a horse's heart rate recovery time after workouts, and broaden aerobic capacity.

AST is a part of Colorado Altitude Training, which has world headquarters in Boulder with distributors on four continents. CAT works with numerous teams and individuals in human athletics, with clients such as Nike, various Olympic Training Centers, T-Mobile Pro Cycling Team, the Philadelphia Flyers hockey team, and the last five men's world Ironman champions.

With an AST system installed, a horse



The altitude stall looks much like a normal stall, but duplicates high-altitude conditions in hopes of improving performance.

would spend a portion of its time in the stall (12 hours a day, for example), acclimating to a higher altitude, and then train under normal conditions.

"We use the same digital control system that we use on the human system. There is a constant flow of hypoxic (low oxygen) air, so it would be like you are in Vail (Colorado, 11,000 feet above sea level). The stall is sealed tight and this air helps to accelerate recovery. It helps to give you a conditioned athlete," Steve Nevin, AST's president, explained. "This

works well because at night your horse is exposed to the altitude, and in the day they can train at sea level. Any athlete with altitude exposure will perform better if the altitude exposure is properly applied. Our system allows the owner or trainer to dial in the altitude desired through our sensor board and gradually build up to 10,000 feet, which is where most owners have their horses. Ideally, the horse will be resting at altitude up to six weeks from a race."

See **ALTITUDE** page 15 ►

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Phillip Dutton Riding TRU LUCK
USEA 2006 Horse of the Year

Altitude —

■ Continued from page 14

The concept seems simple enough, but does it work? Nevin knows such a radical departure from conventional training methods could take time to convince the masses, but he firmly believes that he's got a winner on his hands.

"It's been tough to break through. People want to link the product to a horse's track record but that's tough to do. Owners can see the difference though," Nevin said. "The idea is to reduce the oxygen in the environment so that when you race at sea level it's easier on the horse. The altitude training changes a horse's threshold to exhaustion. The animal doesn't tire or show fatigue as much, has a faster recovery time, and they have their lactic acid build-up and production cut in half."

Basically, the system can help make a horse fitter. Faster depends on the horse.

And though the road is far from paved and a little rough at times, AST is making progress. Nevin cites Sheikh Mohammed's Godolphin Stable having about 60 stalls between its Newmarket and Middle East training grounds and Irish steeplechase trainer Willie Mullins recently installed an AST system. Kentucky-based flat trainer Joe Woodard installed an AST stall and is impressed with what he has seen so far.

"The science behind it makes so much sense to me," Woodard said. "It's the same idea that human athletes use, only it's easier for them to train at altitude. This way, the horse rests at altitude and trains at sea level or whatever

the altitude is where he is and gains the benefits."

Greg Fox, a Kentucky-based trainer and recognized equine physiology expert, admits altitude simulation is an intriguing concept, but also cautions there could be some potential drawbacks as well.

"From a purely academic point of view it might work from an enhanced red blood cell count. It's an interesting idea and there are some obvious benefits like increasing red blood cells and creating a more robust immune system," Fox said. "But there are obviously some risks as well. Moving horses in and out of a closed air environment requires special attention and can become quite complex."

From a purely performance and recuperative perspective, Dr. Megan Ross, a veterinarian at the Hassinger Equine sports medicine clinic in Aberdeen, N.C., has been impressed. Hassinger, a

rehabilitation clinic for horses, had an AST stall put in last summer to test the system on some recovering horses.

"We wanted to get a feel for it and how it works and see how the horses react to it," Ross said. "We took one horse in and after about a week of being at altitude he wanted to keep going after his training regimen, whereas before he had to be pushed to finish his workout. We also rescued a filly who was going to be slaughtered. She had been out in a field for about a year and came in and was very thin and out of shape. We were amazed at how quickly she responded to training for a horse in her condition. It use to take her 30 minutes to cool out and she was down to about 10 minutes after being at altitude. She wasn't sore or lame or anything like that. We have been very pleased with the results."

An AST system doesn't come cheap.

Total costs can reach upwards of \$40,000, a substantial sum that could surely frighten a potential client. But, as Nevin points out, in a sport where million dollar horses are common-place, \$40,000 isn't as big of a number as it may seem.

"For owners who are spending upwards of \$100,000 on different systems and training, this really isn't that big of an investment. The base cost is about \$36,000 and after stall setup you have about \$40,000 total. But if this system improves your horse and helps them win a race, you have your investment back right there," Nevin said. "It takes time for people to catch on but this is just a natural for endurance athletes, human or equine, and with steeplechase horses running farther than flat horse an owner or trainer that is a serious competitor should definitely take a look at this."

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Farewell, Highland

Former champ dies at 23, leaves lasting impression on people

BY BARBARA LIVINGSTON

Highland Bud, 1989 champion steeplechaser and two-time Breeders' Cup winner, was euthanized May 20 at age 23 due to a debilitating sinus condition. He was buried with his Colonial Cup blanket at the farm of Sherry and Charlie Fenwick Jr. in Butler, Md.

Highland Bud's interment near the ashes of his longtime friend Betsy Wells marked the final chapter of a remarkable love story. His death brought back memories of the group of young horsemen and women tied to the powerhouse stable of Jonathan Sheppard. Among them were Sanna Hendriks, Jonathan Smart, Todd Wyatt, Sherry Fenwick, Tom Finn, Ben Guessford and Graham Motion.

Betsy Wells was Sheppard's foreman when Highland Bud stepped into her life.

By Northern Baby out of Exclusive Native mare Fleur d'Or, Highland Bud was bred in Kentucky by William Floyd and purchased for \$47,000 at Keeneland on behalf of Sheikh Mohammed. Highland Bud initially raced in Europe and was a stakes winner. Yet he didn't flash championship potential and was offered at the 1989 Doncaster sales.

Jonathan Sheppard purchased the 4-year-old for \$170,000 on behalf of Margaret and Jesse Henley and said that, at the time, it was believed to be the highest price ever paid for a National Hunt horse at public auction.

Sheppard's stable brimmed with stars in the 1980s, including Flatterer and Storm Cat. Yet Wells, who often led Sheppard's first set on Highland Bud,



Barbara Livingston photos
Top: Highland Bud (center) heads for home in the 1992 Breeders' Cup.
Bottom: Betsy Wells.

The autumn he arrived in America, Highland Bud took an allowance hurdle at Middleburg under Guessford, and followed that up with a 10-length score in the Breeders' Cup Steeplechase at Far Hills. Ridden by the English champion jockey Richard Dunwoody (who had been aboard the gelding for two stakes victories in Europe) Highland Bud topped a Sheppard exacta over Polar Pleasure.

Highland Bud bested that effort with a 14-length score in the Colonial Cup under Dunwoody, and his 3-for-3 U.S. record earned him the Eclipse Award as champion steeplechase horse of 1989.

While physical issues hindered him over the next several seasons, Highland Bud captured steeplechasing's top race in 1992, again with Dunwoody up, taking the Breeders' Cup Steeplechase at Belmont Park over stablemate Mistico. The win came on



Betsy's birthday.

Highland Bud raced again in 1993, running second in the Breeders' Cup to the rising star Lonesome Glory, but was retired after suffering an injury in the Colonial Cup. Highland Bud finished with 10 wins and earnings of \$508,269, missing the board just four times in 27 lifetime starts. His NSA record included four wins, five seconds and a third in 12 hurdle starts; his \$437,500 in purses puts him among the Top 20 all-time earners.

Betsy and Bud were separated for more than a decade. Wells went to work for Sanna Hendriks, and Highland Bud was eventually turned out at the Tennessee farm of

Karen and John Gray. In 1996 Wells was diagnosed with cancer. Surgeries, radiation, chemotherapy and more cancer followed. Betsy's countless friends rallied with fundraisers.

Despite her tribulations, Betsy kept tabs on her beloved gelding. After receiving a particularly difficult cancer prognosis in the spring of 2005, she set a goal for herself – ride Highland Bud again.

Wells called the Grays to see if they would part with Highland Bud. They readily agreed and shipped him halfway. Wyatt sent a van to transport him the rest of the journey and Highland Bud soon arrived at the Fenwicks' farm. In

See **HIGHLAND BUD** page 17 ►



Highland Bud in retirement at the Fenwick farm.

grew to love the bay gelding most of all. He had the telltale look of his sire line, a fiercely competitive nature and strong personality. Betsy, who friends said 'always wore her heart on her sleeve,' was smitten.

"I just adored him," Wells said in 2005. "Conformation-wise, he was a stunning horse, and he had that beautiful rich bay color and the flashy bits like Northern Baby. Plus, he was a terrific mover. To me, he was the perfect package."

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\$84.10



Barbara Livingston
Highland Bud (left) and fellow retired steeplechase star Buck Jakes.

Highland Bud —

■ Continued from page 16

the hospital at the time, Wells received a “play-by-play” description from Sherry Fenwick.

By that summer, Betsy climbed back aboard the aging champion, and they shared happy times riding around the expansive property with Sherry. Before long, Betsy lost the strength to ride Bud, yet she continued visiting him regularly.

“It’s been a godsend to have him and to be able to ride him because riding to me is like coming home,” she said.

Wells died Feb. 13, 2006, less than a year after being reunited with Highland Bud. She was 55. Her ashes were spread at the Fenwick farm during a memorial service attended by countless friends. A magnolia tree was planted to mark the location.

Not long before her passing, Wells spoke of her mortality.

“You try to think, ‘What have I done in my lifetime? Have I done enough?’ And really, in the end of the day, it is all about your friends and your family. If you can leave this earth saying that people can say nice things about you . . . I think I’ve accomplished a nice thing, in a quiet way, with my friends. I’m not going to be headline news, but it is very lovely. I don’t think I could ask for anything more.”

Highland Bud carried on under the Fenwicks’ attentive watch. In 2006, however, chronic sinusitis set in, and despite surgeries and other treatments his condition deteriorated. Highland Bud had difficulty coming out of anesthesia after a 2007 surgery, and the infection continued. He eventually lost the ability to breathe through his right nostril.

Sherry Fenwick recently sent an e-mail to those who loved Highland Bud. Attached was a photo, taken nearly three years earlier, of a smiling Betsy aboard her Bud.

“I have loved and cared for this horse in the most special way, for the horse that he is and for what he meant to Betsy,” the message read. “He is the most important connection . . . to a past that we all share and love.”

Highland Bud spent his final days meandering an expansive paddock, knee-deep in grass in the company of friends: Buck Jakes, a near-white, 17-hand, two-time Maryland Hunt Cup winner; Talkin Butter, winner of the 1992 Temple Gwathmey; and Thelighfantastic, a winner of seven races and more than \$100,000. Two miniature donkeys ambled among them, one named Highland Betty.

Not far away, on a beautiful spot overlooking a jump course, a magnolia tree slowly grew.

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FF-49f (408)

STEEPLECHASE 'Pick Six' FANTASY STABLE GAME

Presented by The Whip Tavern

The top 49 stables (of 173) through June 14 are listed here.
See www.st-publishing.com for full standings.

Plum Creek Farms	Cathy Fowler
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Bubble Economy	\$66,500
Imagina	\$58,500
Planets Aligned	\$58,500
Sweet Shani	\$43,822
Gigger	\$12,050

\$389,372

First Base Stable	Nolan Clancy
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Sovereign Duty	\$114,075
Imagina	\$58,500
Preemptive Strike	\$27,000
Classy Brute	\$24,000
Coal Dust	\$14,900

\$388,475

Geraldal Stable	Allison Janezic
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Bubble Economy	\$66,500
Imagina	\$58,500
Planets Aligned	\$58,500
Preemptive Strike	\$27,000
Bee Charmer	\$0

\$360,500

PonyUp Stable	Ashley Monroe
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Bubble Economy	\$66,500
Imagina	\$58,500
Planets Aligned	\$58,500
Preemptive Strike	\$27,000
Bee Charmer	\$0

\$360,500

Dukester	Dr. Charles Reid
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Sovereign Duty	\$114,075
Imagina	\$58,500
The Price Of Love	\$27,000
Irish Prince	\$5,000
Orsay	\$0

\$354,575

First Last Best Guess	Susan Haldeman
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Imagina	\$58,500
Planets Aligned	\$58,500
Miles Ahead	\$28,800
Preemptive Strike	\$27,000
The Price Of Love	\$27,000

\$349,800

3D Stable	Dallas Butts
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Bubble Economy	\$66,500
Imagina	\$58,500
Askim	\$51,300
Run The Light	\$19,500
Toughkenamon	\$0

\$345,800

Mrs. Rodddd	Erin Ray
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Imagina	\$58,500
Planets Aligned	\$58,500
Best Attack	\$43,013
Run The Light	\$19,500
Coal Dust	\$14,900

\$344,413

Champagne Taste	Lisa McLane
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Bubble Economy	\$66,500
Imagina	\$58,500
Preemptive Strike	\$27,000
The Price Of Love	\$27,000
Mixed Up	\$12,500

\$341,500

Cheese In The Trap Stable	Adrienne Hall
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Sovereign Duty	\$114,075
Sweet Shani	\$43,822
Dreadnaught	\$19,500
Mixed Up	\$12,500
Straight Gin	\$0

\$339,897

Up and Over Stable	John Tower
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Sovereign Duty	\$114,075
Sweet Shani	\$43,822
Dreadnaught	\$19,500
Mixed Up	\$12,500
Toughkenamon	\$0

\$339,897

Clover Hill	Vivian Rail
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Bubble Economy	\$66,500
Planets Aligned	\$58,500
Sweet Shani	\$43,822
Dreadnaught	\$19,500
Sur La Tete	\$0

\$338,322

The Cheltenham Invasion ..	Richard Hutchinson
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Imagina	\$58,500
Planets Aligned	\$58,500
Miles Ahead	\$28,800
The Price Of Love	\$27,000
Mixed Up	\$12,500

\$335,300

Block House Farms	Chuck Ross
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Imagina	\$58,500
Planets Aligned	\$58,500
Miles Ahead	\$28,800
Preemptive Strike	\$27,000
Gigger	\$12,050

\$334,850

Kfar Tapuakh Stable	Howard Newstadt
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Imagina	\$58,500
Planets Aligned	\$58,500
Best Attack	\$43,013
Dreadnaught	\$19,500
Irish Prince	\$5,000

\$334,513

Thidwick's Retreat	Mary Anne Steele
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Bubble Economy	\$66,500
Imagina	\$58,500
Preemptive Strike	\$27,000
Run The Light	\$19,500
Mixed Up	\$12,500

\$334,000



Tod Marks

South Monarch (here with Brianne Slater) would have made a good timber choice.

Hurler Was The King!	Bradley Johnson
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Bubble Economy	\$66,500
Sweet Shani	\$43,822
Best Attack	\$43,013
Preemptive Strike	\$27,000
Baby Bert	\$500

\$330,835

Picture This Stable	Tod Marks
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Imagina	\$58,500
Planets Aligned	\$58,500
Miles Ahead	\$28,800
The Price Of Love	\$27,000
Sur La Tete	\$0

\$322,800

SeaHorse	Alix Michel
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Imagina	\$58,500
Planets Aligned	\$58,500
Miles Ahead	\$28,800
The Price Of Love	\$27,000
Divine Fortune	\$0

\$322,800

In Theory Farm	Sharon Gibson
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Bubble Economy	\$66,500
Imagina	\$58,500
Preemptive Strike	\$27,000
Junood	\$14,700
Seeyouattheevent	\$0

\$316,700

Genesee Valley Racers	Gail McGuire
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Imagina	\$58,500
Hip Hop	\$28,100
Preemptive Strike	\$27,000
Private Attack	\$25,500
Classy Brute	\$24,000

\$313,100

Leah's Leapers	Leah Marks
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Imagina	\$58,500
Planets Aligned	\$58,500
Miles Ahead	\$28,800
G'day G'day	\$10,500
Gliding	\$4,500

\$310,800

Wishlownedthesesix Stable	Jeff Murphy
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Imagina	\$58,500
Planets Aligned	\$58,500
Miles Ahead	\$28,800
Mixed Up	\$12,500
Bee Charmer	\$0

\$308,300

Inkslinger/Ben Nevis Stables ...	Paul Peterson
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Imagina	\$58,500
Planets Aligned	\$58,500
Monte Bianco	\$41,000
Bee Charmer	\$0
Divine Fortune	\$0

\$308,000

Flag Is Up Farm	Tiffany Webb
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Imagina	\$58,500
Planets Aligned	\$58,500
Miles Ahead	\$28,800
Gigger	\$12,050
Sur La Tete	\$0

\$307,850

Try Again	Jim McVey
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Bubble Economy	\$66,500
Imagina	\$58,500
Preemptive Strike	\$27,000
Magic Maker	\$4,050
Divine Fortune	\$0

\$306,050

Browntrout Stable	Douglas Lees
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Imagina	\$58,500
Planets Aligned	\$58,500
The Price Of Love	\$27,000
Erin Go Bragh	\$10,400
Kilbride Rd	\$0

\$304,400

Ottomatic Stables	Becky Forry
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Imagina	\$58,500
Planets Aligned	\$58,500
Miles Ahead	\$28,800
Sussex County	\$8,300
Orsay	\$0

\$304,100

Mile-High Hurdles

As any astronomer knows, sometimes a little distance provides perspective.

Cathy Fowler can attest to that. Keeping track of the steeplechase set from the remove of Castle Rock, Colo., she's seen her Plum Creek Farms rise to the top of Pick Six leaderboard.

"Colorado is not the center of the steeplechasing universe," she noted. "More like a dark hole, really. I haven't had any opportunity to attend a steeplechase, but that is something I would really like to do."

An IT project manager by day, Fowler acquired data on the jumpers as any tech-savvy railbird might – online.

"I participate on a horse-racing message board. One of the posters there is extremely knowledgeable, and she starts threads for the spring, summer and fall seasons," Fowler said. "She picks

chases every weekend and the rest of us try to handicap them . . . I did really well with horses like Good Night Shirt, Bubble Economy and Imagina. When it came time to choose my stable though, I did solicit the advice of my message-board mentor. She didn't provide names, but she did offer direction as to what to look out for and take into consideration. Once I came up with those six names, I ran them by her and she said that looked like a pretty good stable."

Not bad at all.

Fowler leads the pack with \$389,372, putting her \$897 ahead of precocious punter Nolan Clancy, and receives a \$50 gift certificate for topping the charts at the end of May.

Like Reggie Jackson, Good Night Shirt is the straw that stirs the drink. Last year's champ has pride of place in 123 shedrows. Indeed, you have to go far afield to find a fantasy farm without

him; Bob Lunny's Rolling Thunder, 63rd in the standings, is the top Shirtless stable.

There are some rare commodities among the NSA's top 10 earners, however. Five folks own Be Certain, four have Askim, just a pair took Allimac and only one shrewd stable manager, New York's own Andrea Wasserman, got aboard Guelph.

Widely held names who haven't yet earned a check include Divine Fortune (28 stables) and Lair (20). The now retired Sur La Tete might bag a fox hunting for Zohar Ben-Dov, but he won't bring home any bacon to his 18 fantasy owners. Bee Charmer attracted 16 followers with his talent, which soon saw him at Keeneland, not in the Royal Chase, however, but contesting the Grade II Elkhorn, which to date isn't a NSA event – though they say he's in a steeplechase barn again.

– Jamie Santo

Malvern Stable	Casper Sigmon II
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Planets Aligned	\$58,500
Best Attack	\$43,013
Miles Ahead	\$28,800
Run The Light	\$19,500
World Away	\$3,600
	\$303,413
Chinese Checkers Stable	Bill Hutchinson
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Imagina	\$58,500
Best Attack	\$43,013
Preemptive Strike	\$27,000
Run The Light	\$19,500
Irish Prince	\$5,000
	\$303,013
Sweet Genius	Janice Woytek
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Be Certain	\$67,500
Imagina	\$58,500
Mixed Up	\$12,500
Sussex County	\$8,300
Irish Prince	\$5,000
	\$301,800
Occupational Therapy ..	Elizabeth Carter Newstadt
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Imagina	\$58,500
Planets Aligned	\$58,500
Jellyberry	\$28,500
Irish Prince	\$5,000
Diego Cao	\$0
	\$300,500
PedaltodaMetal	Bob Rush
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Imagina	\$58,500
Planets Aligned	\$58,500
Preemptive Strike	\$27,000
Irish Prince	\$5,000
Fogcutter	\$1,500
	\$300,500
Percey	Nattilie Hendriks
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Imagina	\$58,500
Sweet Shani	\$43,822
Preemptive Strike	\$27,000
Rochester	\$21,000
Late Launch	\$0
	\$300,322
Firethorn	Winfield Sapp
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Imagina	\$58,500
Planets Aligned	\$58,500
Preemptive Strike	\$27,000
Irish Prince	\$5,000
Two Terms	\$0
	\$299,000
Wu Farm	Jeremy Baskin
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Imagina	\$58,500
Planets Aligned	\$58,500
The Price Of Love	\$27,000
Irish Prince	\$5,000
Divine Fortune	\$0
	\$299,000
Broken Sound Farm	Marianne Vishno
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Imagina	\$58,500
Planets Aligned	\$58,500
The Price Of Love	\$27,000
Irish Prince	\$5,000
Diego Cao	\$0
	\$299,000
Crisis Management	Joanie Morris
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Planets Aligned	\$58,500
Sweet Shani	\$43,822
Best Attack	\$43,013
Lear Charm	\$2,700
Bee Charmer	\$0
	\$298,035
Beechwood Boulevard Stable ...	Bruce Rodger
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Imagina	\$58,500
Best Attack	\$43,013
Jellyberry	\$28,500
Mixed Up	\$12,500
Move West	\$4,900
	\$297,413
Frequent Flyer	Tracy Scott
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Imagina	\$58,500
Planets Aligned	\$58,500
The Price Of Love	\$27,000
Professor Maxwell	\$1,800
Three Carat	\$0
	\$295,800

Jordan River Stable	Mary Beth Martin
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Planets Aligned	\$58,500
Sweet Shani	\$43,822
The Price Of Love	\$27,000
Mixed Up	\$12,500
Straight Gin	\$0
	\$291,822
Gone On Stable	D Alex Allison
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Imagina	\$58,500
Planets Aligned	\$58,500
Run The Light	\$19,500
Irish Prince	\$5,000
C R's Deputy	\$0
	\$291,500
Overlooked Stable	Doug Allison Jr
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Imagina	\$58,500
Planets Aligned	\$58,500
Run The Light	\$19,500
Irish Prince	\$5,000
Divine Fortune	\$0
	\$291,500

Birdman Farms	Albert Vogel
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Imagina	\$58,500
Planets Aligned	\$58,500
Dreadnaught	\$19,500
Irish Prince	\$5,000
Divine Fortune	\$0
	\$291,500
El Coche de Agua Stables	Ryan Clancy
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Imagina	\$58,500
Planets Aligned	\$58,500
Dreadnaught	\$19,500
Lear Charm	\$2,700
Divine Fortune	\$0
	\$289,200
Ponygirl Stables	Elizabeth Watrous
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Imagina	\$58,500
Miles Ahead	\$28,800
Preemptive Strike	\$27,000
Mixed Up	\$12,500
Gigger	\$12,050
	\$288,850

Keeper of the Wass Farm ..	Andrea Wasserman
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Askim	\$51,300
Guelph	\$48,000
Rainiero	\$22,500
Mixed Up	\$12,500
Nat Grew	\$4,500
	\$288,800
Five by Five Stables	Sarah Watrous
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Bubble Economy	\$66,500
Imagina	\$58,500
Mixed Up	\$12,500
Bee Charmer	\$0
Sur La Tete	\$0
	\$287,500
On The Payroll	Kathleen Strakes
Good Night Shirt	\$150,000
Sweet Shani	\$43,822
Hip Hop	\$28,100
The Price Of Love	\$27,000
Private Attack	\$25,500
Orison	\$12,506
	\$286,928

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Theodore O'Connor leaves lasting memories in the eventing world.

Emily Daily

What a pony, what a life

Eventing star Theodore O'Connor gone too soon after training accident

BY SEAN CLANCY

Karen O'Connor paused and then laughed

"It's a great story, isn't it? Who knows where it's going to end. We all know where we want it to end, but who knows?"

That was after the Pan Am Games, when Theodore O'Connor, the pony, had taken it to his bigger and stronger eventing rivals to secure a gold medal for himself and the United States team. Fresh off finishing third at Rolex (the only pony to ever compete there), Theodore O'Connor rolled through the Pan Am Games, stifling another round of skeptics, one year to the Olympic Games in Beijing.

Now, it's over.

And none of us can believe it. Unfathomably, Theodore O'Connor was euthanized after a farm accident May 28. The chestnut pony was on a routine ride when he got loose and ran home, lacerating tendons and ligaments in his hind leg.

It wasn't supposed to end like this.

Selected to the short list for this summer's Olympics, Theodore O'Connor was the feel-good story in a sport decimated by injuries, fatalities and bad press. Now, it's over.

On a trip to Wellington, Fla. about three years ago, I ran into Karen O'Connor at the showgrounds. She was there, honing her show jumping with international rider Laura Kraut. Like all horsemen, she asked if I had any nice horses and I asked her if she had any nice horses. Her eyes lit up.

"I have one who I'm really excited about," O'Connor said. "He's a pony."

Yeah, yeah, we all have horses we think of as ponies. You know the ones; clever to a fault, turn on a dime, get in your pockets and flip over water buckets.

"A pony?"

"Yeah, a pony," O'Connor said. "He's 14.1 and a little bit. A pony. But he can jump. You should see him. I've never been on a jumper like him."

If I didn't know O'Connor, I would have said she'd lost her mind. Just what she needs, a pony. With miles on the clock, she's fooling with a pony and thinkings she's going to go advanced on a pony. Then I saw Theodore O'Connor jump and I knew she hadn't lost her mind.

He sprung like a jack in the box at his fences. Boing. Boing. Boing.

Whether it was through the Head of the Lake at Rolex or over a cross rail on the farm, he jumped like he was good at it. And knew it. His rider knew it too. Brave and bold – but precise – Karen O'Connor rode Theodore O'Connor



Shannon Brinkman

Teddy's Greatest Hits

- USEF/Farnam Horse of the Year (2007)
- Individual Gold Medal – Pan Am Games (2007)
- Team Gold Medal – Pan Am Games (2007)
- Sixth at Rolex Kentucky (2008)
- Third at Rolex Kentucky (2007)
- First at The Fork CIC*** (2007)
- Seventh at Poplar Place CIC*** (2006)
- Ninth at Jersey Fresh CCI*** (2006)
- Seventh at The Fork CIC*** (2006)

like a horse. It was only when you walked up to him that you realized he was a pony.

Born in 1995, Theodore O'Connor rose to the advanced level with Christan Trainor before O'Connor climbed aboard for the first time in the fall of 2005. From there, they began a three-year odyssey. It wasn't perfect; they had a stop at Fair Hill in 2006, jumped the wrong option at the Fork this spring, collected 40 jump penalties at Red Hills this spring. Just growing pains as the pair wowed themselves and the world of eventing – competitors and fans alike.

Asked if he would ride a pony, gold medalist Phillip Dutton laughed at the notion. Then had to think about it.

"Probably not," Dutton said, at last year's Pan Am training session. "But Karen can do it, she's good at it. And he's an exceptional horse."

Er, pony.

His finest moments came on the sport's biggest stages. Third at Rolex last year, sixth this year, first at the Pan Am Games.

Karen and David O'Connor have retired some of the greatest names in the sport; Joker's Wild, Bally Mar, Grand Slam, Biko, Custom Made, Giltedge, Prince Panache, Worth The Trust. Sadly, Theodore O'Connor's name won't join that legendary list.

It takes days to finally get up the nerve to call O'Connor. Her cell phone doesn't ring. It's turned off. Straight to voice mail. The enormity strikes. It's just as well, not sure I could have handled it anyway.



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Anything but small when he jumped, Theodore O'Connor flies a fence at The Fork last year.

Shannon Brinkman

Worth Repeating

People enjoyed talking about Theodore O'Connor. Here are a few of the best from the past two years:

"What Karen and Theodore O'Connor have done and achieved together is pretty remarkable, it brings it back to the partnership with the horse, I don't think many people would believe that she could do that with a pony. I probably wouldn't have ridden the horse if they asked."

**Competitor Phillip Dutton,
at a July 2007 practice session**

"I was expecting a lot more trouble in the shipping, he had never flown before, there was a big unknown there, but he was a champ. He stood like a Trojan the whole time, took everything in stride, matter-of-fact about the whole thing. As long as he had his bag of hay in front of him, he was good to go. Then I was really delighted with the dressage, he improved his score by eight points from Kentucky. The pony just keeps stepping up to the plate."

"I knew he was good, I knew he was as cute as could be and I knew he was an incredible jumper for his size but nobody ever could believe he could be capable of putting the whole package together. Being settled enough to do the dressage, having enough training for the dressage to stay in there with the big horses, and he far exceeds a lot of the horses in his jumping talent. It's pretty unbelievable."

**Rider Karen O'Connor,
on the 2007 Pan Am Games**

"Teddy loves attention. He used to be a shy and reserved gentleman, but his character has developed — he's pushy now. He needed individual attention to bring out his character. Human interaction is important to his continued development. His riders (Nicolle Villers, Christan Trainor, and Karen) appreciated him and he learned that he mattered."

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On Fire

Roberts, Blazer team up to win again; Vizcarrondo scores in CCI one-star

BY KATY CARTER

While Ken Griffey Jr. quietly makes his way toward the 600 home runs, Laura Roberts is doing much same, calmly racking up a laundry list of achievements during the spring season. The 16-year-old's most recent success came with Galway's Blazer at the Virginia Horse Trials May 23-25 at the Virginia Horse Center in Lexington, Va.

Roberts secured the CCI*JY (for riders ages 14-21) win on their score of 62 points, while Kaitlin Spurlock finished second aboard Baseline (63.6). Andrew Diemer rode to third on Cold Harbor (65.7).

"Blazer did everything I asked," said Roberts. "In dressage he was spot on the whole time, and on cross country he just took me around the whole course. In the stadium, he was awesome he jumped everything great."

Although together just a year, Roberts and her 12-year-old Connemara/Thoroughbred cross established a solid record at the preliminary level before adding the victory at Virginia to their expanding resume, which includes a win at the Fair Hill CIC* in April.

The pair executed a lovely dressage test, earning a

score of 52.4, good enough for second behind Molly Curtiss and Savannah IX (50.2)

Coaching from Jennifer Simmons and experience from Fair Hill proved to be an important part of their preparation for the long format one-star.

"Dressage was a little easier for me here than at Fair Hill because I'd been in front of more than one judge before and I'd been in the large ring before," she said. "Although never having done the long format, I was relying heavily on Jenn's word and everything else I just learned as I went."

On endurance day, the pair skipped around the Virginia Horse Center's hilly terrain, turning in a double-clean round on phase D.

"Overall the cross-country course was really nice," said Roberts. "It had its difficult questions but they weren't all in one place on the course; they were spread out."

Leading up to the CCI*, Blazer's fitness was of utmost concern for Roberts, who took their routine trot and canter sets up a notch about a month before Virginia.

"The biggest thing for me was to watch his fitness and not push him harder than he wanted to go," she said. "But he was amazing the whole way around the course. He jumped the last jump as good as the first."

Roberts certainly enjoyed her time in Lexington.

"My favorite part was probably steeplechase, even though I did get on the wrong side of the tape and have to circle back around to get on the outside," she said. "Blazer was a good sport about it though and made the circle when I asked."

Though the steeplechase cost them 9.6 time penalties, dressage leader Curtiss was penalized for dangerous riding, vaulting Roberts into the lead after Saturday's competition. Three horses and riders were eliminated on phase D and two retired.

Asked if she was nervous heading into Sunday's show-jumping phase, Roberts joked: "My parents get nervous before I ride so they were in the stands far away from me and I didn't see them until after awards."

The 16-year-old noted that her fondness for show jumping helps calm her jitters.

"I think that since I like stadium it helps keep my nerves down no matter where I am in the standings," she said.

Preparation helps too.

"When I walked the course with Jenn all the distances seemed to be good for Blazer, and they were when I rode it," she said of the forward, flowing show-jumping course set in the Horse Center's indoor coliseum. "I tried not to let the indoor affect the way I rode I tried to just ride the way I know how to ride. Jenn's advice was to trust my eye and have fun."

The strategy worked, resulting in a double-clear round to capture the blue ribbon.

"When it was all over, my parents were excited and relieved that everything went well," she said. "I think they were just glad that Blazer and I were still in one piece. For me, I think the whole weekend was just a great learning experience. The important part is that I learned a whole lot more about Blazer and about eventing. Winning really is just indescribable, all you can really do is smile."

• Valerie Vizcarrondo and Trick teamed up to win the CCI*, riding clean to finish on their dressage score of 52.4. Tracy McRae and Merrimac led after the opening day, followed by Vizcarrondo in second and Wendy Bebie and Hoover. All three pairings went double-clean in cross country, but only Vizcarrondo kept clean in the arena to take home the blue ribbon. McRae had a rail to finish second at 56.1, while Bebie's six penalty points put her third with 60.5.

Bebie, who has been contesting CIC three-stars at The Fork and Jersey Fresh with Phoenix VIII, enjoyed taking Hoover out for a spin in his first one-star.

"It was so much fun to do a classic again," Bebie said. "Hoover is a very forward horse with a pretty tough mouth; he was absolutely amazed and happy to be out on steeplechase with me letting him go."

Eventing is a change of pace from Hoover's "regular job" – hunting with Piedmont Fox Hounds.



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For more qualifications and details visit

Visit www.NAPTP.com or call 866-415-JUMP

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Tod Marks Photos

Carlerback scores at Malmo

Viktor Carlerback won on her home turf, taking the seventh leg of the FEI World Cup in Malmo, Sweden.

Riding her top horse Bally's Geronimo (owned by her mother, Marie) in the CIC***-W, Carlerback stood second after dressage, and remained in that position after cross-country as fellow Swede Linda Algotsson retired and Germany's Dirk Schrade raced into first aboard Sindy with the only round approaching the optimum time.

Carlerback and Bally's Geronimo sealed the victory in the stadium with just four penalty points to finish on 65.1, edging Germany's Andreas Dibowski and Butts Leon and the Polish combination of Pavel Spisak and Weriusz – both of whom jumped clean – by four-tenths of a point.

Carlerback, a teacher from Dwajofors, has been a member of the Swedish team for the last three championships and finished 12th at Badminton in 2006.

Cross-country leader Schrade dropped two rails in the show jumping and fell to fourth on 66.8; German rider Peter Thomsen and Ghost Of Hamish (74.0) finished fifth.

Irishman Curran takes Tattersalls

Irishman Geoff Curran capped a big day for his country with a momentous win in the inaugural CIC***-W at Tattersalls, the eighth leg of the FEI World Cup series.

Curran, who rides for the Irish army and only switched from jumping to eventing in recent years, sat fifth after dressage with Kilkishen on 45.2, but rose to third with one of the faster cross-country rounds.

The title was decided in the ring, which saw only one clear show-jumping round.

Dressage leader (and 2007 Rolex Kentucky champ) Clayton Fredericks entered the arena in second, but the Australian collected 19 penalty points on Ben Along Time and finished eighth.

New Zealand's Andrew Nicholson, aboard his likely Olympic ride Lord Killinghurst, led after cross-country but

slipped to second with 12 faults, finishing with 57.6.

Curran, no doubt aided by his jumping experience, accrued just four faults in the arena to take the blue ribbon by four-tenths of a point.

British Olympian William Fox-Pitt finished third aboard Burghley winner Parkmore Ed (66.0), with fellow Brit and Olympic reserve Pippa Funnell fourth aboard Ensign (67.3). The home crowd had additional reason to cheer as Ireland's Patricia Ryan finished fifth aboard Fernhill Clover Mist (68.5)

Deauville gets World Cup Final

Deauville, France, will play host to the 2008 FEI World Cup final Sept. 18-21. The final will introduce FEI's global partner for eventing, HSBC bank, as the series' new title sponsor. The top 40 riders from the qualifiers will gather for the HSBC FEI World Cup Final at the Deauville-Clairefontaine racecourse.

With nine more qualifiers to run, the FEI World Cup series returns to the southern hemisphere, to Melbourne, Australia, June 6-9. The Moscow qualifier, scheduled for June 7-10, has been postponed to August due to adverse weather conditions affecting the course.

Rules Changes

The United States Equestrian Federation Executive Committee approved a number of immediate rule changes, the main one being that: "The first fall of competitor, at obstacles, on the cross-country course will result in elimination."

Keeping in step, the International Olympic Committee and FEI Bureau approved an eventing rule change stating that "horses and riders will be eliminated after one fall at fence at cross country and in the jumping test." Effective Aug. 1, the new rule will cover all events, including the upcoming Olympic Games. According to the rules currently in place, horses are eliminated after a first fall and riders after a second fall.

USEA Rider Of The Year

Pl	Rider	Pts
1	Phillip Dutton	516
2	Karen O'Connor	264
3	Michael Winter	251
4	Bruce Davidson	212
5	Sarah Cousins	199
6	Amy Tryon	197
7	Boyd Martin	194
8	Allison Springer	191
9	Becky Holder	167
10	Stephen Bradley	162

SmartPak Horse Of The Year

Horse (Owner)	Pts
1. Connaught (Bruce Duchossois)	142
2. Leyland (Elisabeth Nicholson)	119
3. Courageous Comet (Tom Holder)	115
4. Critical Decision (Jessica Ransehausen)	112
5. Arthur (Allison Springer)	110
6. Ballynoe Castle RM (Cassie Segal)	109
7. The Good Witch (Daisy Tognazzini)	103
8. Tipperary Liadhnán (Friends of Kim Severson)	100
9. Somerset II (Chris Desino)	91
10. Wonderful Will (Sher Schwartz)	90

FEI World Cup Standings

(after eight events)

Pl	Rider (country)	Pts
1	Clark Montgomery (USA)	160
2	William Fox-Pitt (GB)	126
3	Pippa Funnell (GB)	115
3	Oliver Townend (GB)	115
5	Viktor Carlerback (SWE)	100
5	Geoff Curran (IRE)	100
5	Michael Jung (GER)	100
5	Heelan Tompkins (NZ)	100
5	Heidi White-Carty (USA)	100
5	Francis Whittington (GB)	100

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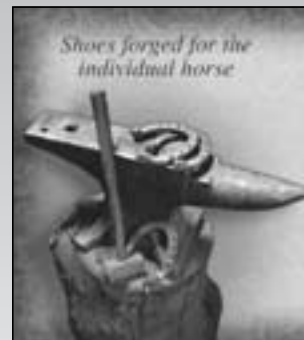
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The

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TIMES EDITORIAL

Looking back on the blur of spring season

June. Can you believe it? The month of cook-outs, graduations, Father's Day, summer. As usual, the steeplechase season zipped through March, April and May like Big Brown running away from a field of donkeys.

Nineteen racing venues in nine states shoved into 14 racing days in nine weeks. Feel dizzy? So do we.

Highlights? Plenty. Guelph returning to form to complete a sweep of the NSA filly/mare stakes. Good Night Shirt proving his ability with Grade I scores at 2 and 3 miles. Jonathan Sheppard again showing why he's the best with a 1-2 sweep of the Royal Chase. Will Haynes winning four races. Charlie Fenwick III finally getting the Maryland Hunt Cup. Success by young trainers Desmond Fogarty and Todd Wyatt. Imagina's historic Carolina Cup win. A double for Junood and owner/trainer Dave Washer. Two victories from rookie filly Class Shadow. Pals Pride returning to win the feature at Stoneybrook. A Mike Berryman double at Block House. Amateur jockey Brooks Durkee finding success after a long absence. A Maryland timber win by Private Attack for longtime steeplechase enthusiasts Julie and Dan Calhoun (made us think of Mountain Dew). Proof that class tells, no matter the discipline as millionaire flat horse Rochester won twice over timber. Horse whisperer Chip Miller coaxing Bubble Economy home in the Virginia Gold Cup. Two wins at the Iroquois for hometown owner Calvin Houghland. Owner Irv Naylor atop the standings, thanks largely to his powerful timber contingent. Willowdale wins for locals Nannette Robertson and Gene Weymouth. High Hope wins for locals Ken Ramsey and Normandy Farm. Owner Nina Gardner won a jump race with homebred London Grove, a son of Gardner's homebred sire Shadow Show. Relatively fresh steeplechase owners Dapple Stable, Normandy Farm, Bob Kinsley, Homer Osborne, Alnoff Stable and Richard Stokes found success.

Lowlights? We had those too. Imagina's fatal fall at Radnor. The absence of Little Everglades and the Queen's Cup from the NSA circuit. They were missed, and contributed to decreases in NSA purse money distributed (\$2,273,675), races held (96) and horses participating (724 starts by 361 horses). Injuries to jockeys Jody Petty and Padge Whelan.

Hope for the future? You bet. As is often the case, plenty of work remains but jump racing could go to Kentucky Downs and Palm Beach this fall. The Saratoga Open House is expanding, and even has a name, "Saratoga Jump Start." NSA stewards met in May to discuss issues including horse safety standards (keep improving them and we all win). SOTA and the NSA will meet later this month to discuss topics at a one-day conference in Virginia.

As usual, there was plenty we wanted to write about but didn't. Jockey Cyril Murphy's retirement. The quiet man handled his business for trainer Tom Voss and won 67 American races over the past eight seasons. We never got to him, but still hope to. The NSA adopted a steroid regulation that will take effect this fall. Bravo.



Tod Marks

Two Loose.

Two Terms heads for the barn after losing jockey Chip Miller in the maiden hurdle at the Fair Hill Races.

Peoplechase a hit, despite the climb

About 20 yards into my leg of the Peoplechase Relay Race I wondered why I did it. Wet, slimy, muddy, a little chilly, I cranked the pedals on my Trek mountain bike and gazed up the hill in front of me. It might as well have been Everest – only green – and I begged for an easier gear than "Granny."

But I made it and the Steeplechase Times team checked in 10th (of 14) after the first event. We rallied all the way to eighth (one point out of seventh) by the end, and enjoyed the rest of the day much more thanks to less rain, less taxing events, an unmatched setting and great hosts. The Pennsylvania Hunt Cup staged its second Peoplechase, best described as silly human Olympics, Saturday, May 31 near Unionville, Pa. The day of competition (a little) and socializing (lots) raised money for the November race meet's charities and provided a great cap to the spring steeplechase season – without racehorses.



Don Verrico

ST's Skip Achuff and "Killer Bee" negotiate the cones in the bending race.

The Outside Rail

By Joe Clancy

Created somewhat on a lark two years ago, Peoplechase pits teams of seven in a variety of games – some serious, some not so. The teams compete for points with a grand champion crowned at day's end. The idea is to have a little fun, raise a little money and compete (loosely) in something other than horse races.

"I've always done harebrained things," said Hunt Cup co-chair Anne Moran, who organized the Peoplechase along with director Kathee Rengert and a hard-working team. "It sounded like a fun thing to do, I don't know."

Harebrained or not, the day was fun.

This year's event doubled as a retirement party for steeplechase champion McDynamo (who stayed in the barn due to the unsuitable weather) complete with speeches, presentations, video highlights, food, drink, live music and names such as the McPeoplechase and the McEclipse Award for winning the McPeoplechase.

McDynamo would have been proud of the efforts – though he would have motored up the hill with considerably more ease than I did. The games started with

See **PEOPLECHASE** page 27 ►

Peoplechase —

■ Continued from page 26

the relay – a combination of running, biking and canoeing. Six team members participated (two runners, two bikers, two canoers) in the race which started with two half-mile legs of running and jumping/climbing fences on the race course, moved on to a mountain-bike stage, a canoe stage (two teammates paddling around the Ledyards' pond) and the final mountain-bike climb up the hill to the start/finish line near the ruins on the race course.

From there, things got less arduous – though far from easy. We golfed, we kicked soccer balls, we rode ponies (well, team captain Skip Achuff did), we tested our teamwork in the buddy walker race. For those that have yet to tackle buddy walkers, think tandem snowshoeing only with no snow and three people at a time. The day concluded with a surprise event based loosely on American Idol, only each team had to write a limerick featuring McDynamo's name somewhere in the verse.

The latter competition proved to be a great equalizer, though ST received an oddly low mark from Tony Bentley, who was apparently playing Simon Cowell (coming this fall: a new feature, *Announcer Critiques*). Come on Tony, a 3? How could we get a 3 for the following bit of whimsy?

There once was a horse from near here;
Who made all the jump people cheer.
They called him McDynamo,
And man could he go.
The only thing better is beer.

OK, that's pretty lousy but no lousier than the rest written in 15 minutes after a day spent trying to learn how to walk with boards tied to your feet and other such feats. We placed near the top thanks to better marks from visiting Irish trainer Ted Walsh and Paula Abdul wannabe Julia Steinberg, moving ST up the ladder though far from the three-way tie at the top. The leaders (Augustin Stable, the LaMotte family and the Abbott family) produced 71 points apiece while ST finished with 57. Officials broke the tie based on the relay finish and the victory went to Augustin.

And before you cry foul (Augustin wins everything!), the rules prevented a team from stocking itself with star athletes. Moran and her team created a level playing field with rules that required three men, three women, one player under 25 years old and one player over 55 years old in addition to the team captain (who could not compete in the relay but could substitute in other events). Organizers also provided a team coordinator to make sure everyone got where they were supposed to at the proper times – Mark Rowland did a superb job keeping the ST team pointed in the right direction even though he was probably expecting better from us. Next year, Mark, next year.

The Augustin team – Stewart Strawbridge, Ricky Hendriks, McLane Hendriks, Sanna Hendriks, Liz Strawbridge, Wendy Hendriks and James Slater – placed third in the relay



The ST team (from left: Tina Freudenberger, Sam Clancy, John Freudenberger, Joe Clancy, Ryan Clancy and Mary Verrico) gets ready for action at the Peoplechase.

Don Verrico

and were among the leaders in the other events. If Slater (who read the limerick) was from Ireland instead of England, the score would not have been close.

Other participants on the day included teams representing Applestone Farm (Morans), Chester County Hospital, the Manning/Spence families, the Fisher family, the Fisher/McKnight families, Hunt Cup Productions, the Arader family, Cheshire Hunt, Brandywine Valley Association and Polaris Stable. Based on early returns, the Peoplechase turned a neat profit – ensuring donations to the Brandywine Conservancy, the Brandywine Valley Association, Cheshire Land Preservation Fund, the Natural Lands Trust and the Stroud Water Research Center.

"For a crazy day of games, we did all right," said Moran. "Those things don't work unless you get the people behind it to do the work and come have a good time. We're such a competitive community that it can be difficult, but it worked."

The night ended with a video tribute to McDynamo (well done Hunt Cup Productions), a few speeches, some gifts and even a handful of tears. Horses like McDynamo come along rarely and deserve a send-off. The Peoplechase fit perfectly. Especially once the weather settled down and the sprawling fields of the race course brightened with late-afternoon sun. The scene forced deep breaths, pauses, reflections on a great day.

Thanks everyone, now about that hill.



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Tattersall's last book, **CONVICTION** was optioned by Harry Connick, Jr. for a major motion picture and purchased for syndication in Australia's **Sydney Morning Herald**.

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Obituary

James P. Barry, NSA member

James Patrick Barry, chemist and avid steeplechase enthusiast died May 11 from aspiration pneumonia, after enduring the effects of several strokes for 18 years.

Born in Southampton, N.Y., Barry earned his bachelor's degree in chemistry from Pennsylvania State University. He served in the Army during World War II, then continued his postgraduate education at Columbia University. He held

managerial positions at several companies in the chemical industry.

A member of National Steeplechase Association and the Virginia Steeplechase Association for many years, he supported the sport as an active volunteer and official at steeplechase events in the Mid-Atlantic region.

He enjoyed riding in his spare time until his disability prevented him from participating in the sport he loved.

He is survived by two daughters and a son.



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