

The *Times*

Steeplechase
& Eventing

Complimentary

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**Good Night Shirt bounds off
with fifth Grade I, championship**

2008

CHAMPIONSHIP EDITION



To Tom Voss and everyone at Atlanta Hall Farm,
Roger Horgan for the introductions,
the race meets and racetracks,
and the sport of steeplechasing.

Thanks for a great season and best of luck in 2009.

From Be Certain and Alnoff Stable

COUNTRY LIVING IN VIRGINIA



Old Keswick, C. 1736 550+ acre horse property with board fencing throughout is one of the premier estates in Keswick. For the past 6 decades, the farm has been well known for breeding and raising some of the finest thoroughbred horses in the industry. The manor has 11 ½ ft ceilings and original woodwork as well as graciously proportioned rooms (including 7 bdrms.) Extensive horse facilities (36 stalls), several cottages, summer kitchen and pool complex. This is a rare opportunity to purchase one of the finest estates in Virginia. \$13,500,000



Wareham Farm – 60 acres on banks of the Ware River with brick manor home meticulously crafted and reminiscent of Jefferson's Monticello. The home's situation offers striking water views and features a pillared portico at the front and columned loggia to the back. Dependencies include a caretaker's cottage, 5 stall stable, a pier with pavilion and boat lift (6' MLW), a freshwater pond, impressive formal gardens designed by Francois Goffinet. \$8,950,000



Homestead Farm, C. 1800 – Privately located in Cismont area, 14 mi. from downtown Charlottesville. 173+/- acre property being used as a horse farm with horse amenities situated in both Albemarle and Louisa counties and within The Keswick Hunt Territory. Historic home has been painstakingly restored with finest materials such as heart pine in the floors, kitchen cabinets, copper roof and an incredible stone fireplace. \$3,200,000.



Little England, c. 1716 – Historic Georgian home is one of the country's best preserved colonial plantation homes. Property is bounded by York River and Sarah's Creek providing docking for a large yacht. Surrounding land is mostly pasture with one acre freshwater pond. The fourteen rooms showcase some of the finest examples of colonial paneling and woodwork in Virginia. PRICE REDUCED \$7,000,000



Willowbrook, c. 1869 – Charming, completely renovated horse property in a desirable area of The Keswick Hunt. 35+/- acres with six stall center aisle stable and four bedroom house with a new gourmet kitchen and located just 10 mi. from Charlottesville and UVA. A small gem surrounded by some of the most impressive larger estates in the Old Dominion. PRICE REDUCED \$2,500,000



Millwood Lane – 63.94+/- acres ideally located in the Keswick Hunt in an area of fine estates and equestrian properties. This land is best suited for a country estate with long road frontage and a bold stream. The property is under conservation easement to the Virginia Outdoors Foundation. There is an existing well on the property. \$1,750,000



Greenwood, c. 1800 – Historic, Orange Co. Equestrian Estate dating to c. 1800. House sits on 111 rolling acres of productive pasture with some hardwoods. Well built 9-stall center aisle stable, fencing. Dependencies include guest cottage, smokehouse and summer kitchen. Property on National Register. Formerly owned by James Madison's family and is next to Montpelier. PRICE REDUCED \$1,790,000



Malin Ridge – A southern Colonial style manor home situated on a promontory over looking 37 acres of rolling, lush pasture with breathtaking views of the SW mountains in the heart of Keswick. This renowned gentleman's farm is an excellent horse property with a stable, run-in shed, equipment shed, fencing and cross fencing. Architectural details include random width heart pine floors and paneling, plastered ceilings and elegant room proportions. \$1,650,000.



Chancellor's Rock – Featured twice in Architectural Digest, Chancellor's Rock is a sophisticated and elegantly understated 446 acre estate in the tradition of Virginia's Hunt Country. Remarkable natural setting. Every expected amenity and is the perfect country retreat. PRICE REDUCED \$9,900,000



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Entries

What's Happening and Where To Find It

Here's your newspaper. Didn't think it would ever come out, did you? Truth be told we weren't too sure either. The year's final edition is always the longest, but 60 pages is a *Times* record. Thanks for sticking with us. Enjoy a look back on 2008. We've got races to recap, champions to profile and friends to say goodbye to – human and equine. It was a wild ride. We sure enjoyed it, hope you did as well. See you next year.



PAGE 12-13

Fun in the Sun

Steeplechase racing returned to Palm Beach just in time to close out the 2008 season while Guelph closed out a championship and her career the only way she knows how – on the front end.



PAGES 14-18

If The Shirt Fits...

Good Night Shirt capped a memorable year in memorable fashion, nailing a too-good-to-lose Preemptive Strike late in the Colonial Cup.



PAGES 21-40

Trophy Time

There were some surprises and some familiar names that adorned the 2008 roster of NSA champions. From Aizpuru to Via, we give you a little insight into all of them.



PAGES 48-49

Pick Sixed

The NSA may have its set of champions but we've got a pretty nifty list ourselves – nice job everyone. See you in the standings next year.



PAGES 50-57

Eventing Champions

Feel-good stories reign supreme in this year's group of 2008 U.S. Eventing Association champions.



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May 8	September 18	December 11

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On the Cover

Unbeaten in 2008, champion steeplechaser Good Night Shirt and Willie Dowling fly a fence early in their Colonial Cup victory at Springdale Race Course in Camden, S.C.

Photo by Tod Marks



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The Saratoga Special, The Special At Keeneland, Thoroughbred Racing Calendar, Writing for Daily Racing Form, Mid-Atlantic Thoroughbred, The Blood-Horse, The Racing Post, etc., Newsletters, American Steeplechasing yearbook, National Steeplechase Association public relations consulting, Specialty products from lawn jockeys to Tervis Tumblers, Custom brochures and graphic design for your farm or business.

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The Steeplechase and Eventing

Times

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I PICKED UP THE TIMES AT:

Maryland-breds finish 1-2 in Colonial Cup.



Congratulations to the connections of Good Night Shirt and Preemptive Strike for sweeping the top two spots in the Grade I Colonial Cup.

Good Night Shirt (Concern–Hot Story, Two Punch):

Breeders Tom and Chris Bowman, owner Sonny Via, trainer Jack Fisher.
2007 Eclipse Champion. Earner of \$934,493 over jumps (third all-time). Pictured above right.

Preemptive Strike (Roanoke–Mirkwood, Far North):

Breeder Klobia Carroll, owner Polaris Stable, trainer Sanna Hendriks.
Multiple stakes winner. Earner of \$425,856 over jumps. Pictured above left

Maryland-bred Guelph clinches second filly/mare championship

Guelph

(Sky Classic–Distant Drumroll, Eastern Echo)
Breeder Mary Voss, owner The Fields Stable, trainer Tom Voss.



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News and Notes from around the circuit

FOR STARTERS



Tod Marks

The photo is from April in Kentucky, but you get the point. The horses are done for 2008 – and so are the rest of us. Take a nap.

Worth Repeating

"I don't know what he's on, but he should get a to-go cup."

Matt Firestone after visiting Matt McCarron in the hospital

"We have good help – most of them we don't pay."

Auctioneer Steve Dance, after volunteer Jay Williamson suggested Dance advertise in *Steeplechase Times*

"It's a winter blanket – for Florida."

Auctioneer, trying to sell a fly sheet in December

"I like everything about (deer) hunting, except for the killing part."

Owner/rider Larry Ensor, as he passed a tree stand on his farm

"It's the prop, duck and wheel set, but we left the wheeler at home so it's just prop and duck."

Trainer Lilith Boucher on a Camden schooling session

"You'd think a journalist would have an overnight in his back pocket."

Toby Edwards, to a disorganized reporter trying to figure out the Colonial Cup race lineup the day before

Jockey: "Do you want me to ride that horse in the morning?"

Trainer: "No. If you do that you might not ride him in the afternoon."

"If it was Old Blue, the truck would have bounced right off."

Veterinarian Dr. Jeff Witwer, on the gash put in the hood of his gray Volvo (not nearly as tough as the old blue one) by a truck

"An old trainer once gave me some advice. He told me to always tell the jockey three things, the first one and then forget the other two."

Trainer Bill Wofford

"Apparently, he's changed his initials."

Spectator who saw trainer Jack Fisher riding a lead pony, whose saddle towel read B.S.F.

"As the field goes behind 'le petit bois . . .'"

Announcer Tony Bentley, going French, as the timber horses crossed behind "the little woods" at the Colonial Cup

"Washer said he'd buy me lunch at the Flying J on the way home."

Trainer Winky Cocks, after shipping mate Dave Washer won the opener at Palm Beach

"I always walk in here with grand ideas and then I chicken out."

Beth Fout, on shopping at The Tack Room

Local reporter at Palm Beach after Guelph won at Palm Beach: "How ecstatic are you?"

Trainer Tom Voss: "I'm happy."

Voss-experienced reporter: "He doesn't do ecstatic."

"I love these silks, but I feel a bit like Kermit The Frog."

Jockey Padge Whelan, walking through the crowd to an interview tent (in The Fields Stable's aerodynamic green silks)

"Free food and champagne at the Players Club? Sounds pretty good. Hey, you want to go to the Players Club for free food and champagne?"

Voss, finding out where the victory party was (and inviting friends) after Guelph won the feature at Palm Beach

More Tom Voss: "Hey Robert, you're not going to go over your expense allowance down here are you? It's still \$5 a day, even in Palm Beach."

Assistant Robert Cutler: "Do they have a Golden Corral here?"

"It was stored for a bit."

Owner Karen Dempsey, on fitting into a 25-year-old skirt

"Nobody likes to fall, but when you fall on a cool old horse like him on your last ride of the year, it's tough."

Jockey Xavier Aizpuru, after falling with Dreadnaught at Palm Beach

"I haven't seen the million yet, but I've been waiting for it. Are they going to send me a check?"

Trainer Jack Fisher, on being the first NSA trainer to surpass the million-dollar mark in purse earnings for a single season

Chasing A Legend

With his record-setting 2008 season, trainer Jack Fisher moved to second on the career earnings list.

Though he has a long way to go to catch Hall of Famer and career leader Jonathan Sheppard, Fisher now occupies the No. 2 spot on the leaderboard and is the only active trainer with a realistic chance of duplicating Sheppard's career purse number of \$18 million (and counting).

Twenty-two years into a training career, Fisher has 336 career victories and \$7.9 million in career earnings. At the same point in his still-going career, Sheppard had won 476 races and better than \$4.6 million.

Of course, Sheppard also boasted the following gaudy numbers through his 22nd season (1987): 14 training championships, eight Eclipse Awards (singles by Athenian Idol and Martie's Anger, two by Cafe Prince and four by Flatterer). Fisher has four championships and will get his second Eclipse Award when Good Night Shirt is officially crowned the 2008 champion in January.

FOR STARTERS

Take A Number

1 Coyote in the hunter trial field at Springdale Race Course two days before the Colonial Cup.

2 Coats purchased by Jack Fisher from the English Country Classics trailer after the Colonial Cup.

12 Jockeys who've ridden Bubble Economy over jumps (seven have won on him).

19 Times Jack Fisher yelled "Come on, Shirt!" during the stretch of the Colonial Cup.

72,035 Price (in dollars) of the Lexus in the owner/trainer tent at the Colonial Cup.

2,995 Price of the alloy wheels on the Lexus.

240 Price of the floor mats in the Lexus.

0 Price of the post-race meal trainer Tom Voss consumed while leaning on the Lexus.

2 Men in a horse suit walking around in the crowd at the Palm Beach Steeplechase.

0 Newspapers in ST history as large as the one you're holding. Sixty pages is a record – thanks for reading, we hope it didn't dent your front door.



Ilse Schwarz

SPOT THE TRAINER? This mix of Palm Beach steeplechase fans includes one top conditioner intently watching his horse. Hint, he's the only person in the photo with his foot on the rail – and he won two races on the season's final day.

The Name Game

Algezir, Colonial Cup. Purely for history's sake, we looked him up. Algezir is named for Algeciras, gateway to the straits of Gibraltar and a port for ships to northern Africa 700 years or so ago. The city is mentioned in Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales."

Roseland, Palm Beach. Roseland Ballroom has been a fixture in New York City nightlife for decades (coming in January: Reel Big

Fish and The Pretenders; fancy footwork has been a big part of this mare's family for decades, too, from her dam Strictly Ballroom to her damsire Fred Astaire, back through to Nijinsky and Northern Dancer.

Torino Luge, Palm Beach. Don't know how much tobogganing goes on in this fellow's native Australia, but his dam was Snow Chariot and he was foaled with the Turin Olympics on the horizon.

Join the Sanna Hendriks team that has produced champions **McDynamo** and **Pompeyo**, timber champion **Irish Prince**, Grade I winners **Praise The Prince** and **Lord Zada**, Maryland Hunt Cup winner **The Bruce** and more.

15 wins and best "strike rate" (26%) among NSA Top 10 in 2008.

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2008 stakes winner and Grade I-placed Preemptive Strike.

WE NEED YOU IN 2009

Tod Marks

Four join board

Fenwick, Fout, Allison, Torsilieri win election

Under new election rules put into place this year, National Steeplechase Association members elected four men to new terms on the company board of directors. The quartet consists of Peter Fenwick, Doug Fout, Will Allison and Guy Torsilieri.

Fenwick, Allison and Torsilieri are all involved in race-meet management while Fout is a trainer. They officially join the board in January. In addition, race meet chairmen's committee head Turney McKnight joins the board as an official voting member.

The election process opened voting to all members (licensed owners and trainers, regular members and patron members) and ballots were counted by the Thoroughbred Racing Protective Bureau. From more than 600 ballots mailed, 296 were returned and 290 were official based on voting instructions and deadlines. Fenwick led all vote-getters with 232, followed by Fout (231), Allison (157), Torsilieri (156), Don Yovanovich (149) and Richard Hutchinson (143). The four highest vote-getters were elected.



Doug Lees
Peter Fenwick

Fenwick, Fout and Torsilieri all have past NSA board experience. The former, chairman of the Grand National timber meet, begins a second three-year term. Torsilieri (co-chairman of the Far Hills Races and former NSA vice president and treasurer) served two terms previously, but was not on the board in

New Clancy on the masthead

ST editor/publisher Sean Clancy and his wife Anne welcomed an addition to their family with the birth of Miles Alexander Clancy Wednesday, Dec. 10. He weighed in at 8 pounds, 5 ounces and was 21 inches long.

Mother, father and son are doing well – though they could use a little more sleep.

2008. Fout (one of the top trainers on the circuit) is also a past officer of the board, and is also the chairman of the Middleburg Spring Races. Allison is chairman of the Virginia and International Gold Cup meets at Great Meadow.

Fenwick accepted the second opportunity to serve.

"I'm thrilled to contribute to the board, but it's not something you run for – you're asked to serve and I had a second eligibility so I wanted to keep doing it," he said. "You have two terms, and for a young guy like me there was a lot of learning in the first term. I feel like I can contribute more in the second term."

He sees plenty of work for the board and the sport in 2009 and pointed chiefly to the impact of a smaller economy across the country.

"Purse structures are at risk and how race meets are going to sustain purses for this coming year is going to be the challenge," Fenwick said. "It's going to be a topic for everyone to deal with, and togetherness is as important as anything we will do as a board."

Officers for 2009 will be chosen at the NSA's January board of directors meeting in Baltimore.

Steeplechase News • • • •

Up slightly from 2007, purses set record at \$5.3 million

The 2008 NSA season set new highs in total and average purses. Total purses reached a record \$5,359,100, up \$1,455 from last year, while the average purse of \$27,483 also broke new ground, topping last year's mark of \$26,655.

NSA purses topped the \$5-million mark for the third time in the last four years. The NSA sanctioned 195 individual races in 2008, down six from 2007. The loss of the Little Everglades and Queen's Cup meets in the spring and the cancellation of three races at Shawan Downs in September due to heavy rain factored on the negative side but were offset by new racing at Kentucky Downs, Monmouth Park and Palm Beach.

NSA Annual Awards Dinner set for Jan. 16 in Baltimore

The 2008 season gets its official send-off with the annual awards dinner at the Maryland Club in Baltimore Friday, Jan. 16. The evening will salute all of the NSA champions, and also includes dinner and dancing. Activities get started with cocktails at 6 p.m. Tickets cost \$150 per person and all steeplechase fans are encouraged to attend. For reservations and information, contact the NSA at (410) 392-0700.

The day also includes the annual meeting of race chairmen at noon.

ST completes '08 season

The 2008 ST publishing season closes with this edition. The next edition will be March 13, 2009. For more, see www.st-publishing.com.

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Two-time jockey champ McCarron retires

BY BRIAN NADEAU

Matt McCarron, the two-time champion steeplechase jockey, has retired from racing after suffering multiple injuries as the result of a fall at the Palm Beach Steeplechase in Wellington, Fla. Nov. 29. He exits with 187 career wins, ninth on the all-time list.

McCarron, 37, was aboard Orison in the final race of the season – the \$75,000 Palm Beach Stakes – when he came off his mount at the second-last fence. McCarron suffered a fractured C7 vertebrae, a crushed disc in his neck, fractured left scapula (shoulder blade), broken left collarbone and five broken ribs on his right side.

“I had surgery in Florida on December 7 and they removed a disk in my vertebrae and inserted a plate in the front and the back to stabilize the vertebrae between the C6 and C7 area,” McCarron said. “Obviously it’s not how I wanted to go out. I had toyed with trying to get to 200 (wins) but after 16 years and an injury like this, that’s enough for me. I’m happy to be able to walk away.”

McCarron returned home to Kennett Square, Pa. Dec. 17 and will begin a rehabilitation process that should have him at full strength by summer.

“I’m stuck in a (neck) collar and I’ll be undergoing bone stimulus for four hours a day for the next four months, but other than that the doctors have said I’ll be as good as new in six months,” McCarron said. “I consider myself extremely lucky to be able to be up and walking.”

McCarron rode one ARCA flat race at Fair Hill in 1991 and rode sparingly over hurdles in 1992 before scoring his first career victory aboard Forty Four Thunder at Fair Hill in 1993. He picked up his final win earlier on the Palm Beach card when he guided Roseland home. He retires with \$3,971,627 in career earnings, fourth on the all-time list since the NSA began charting jockeys’ yearly earnings in 1988.

McCarron won his first riding title in 2003, when his 16 victories tied him with David Bentley. He repeated in 2004, scoring 24 victories, still the



Tod Marks

Matt McCarron

highest since 2001. In his 17 seasons, McCarron won many important stakes on the steeplechase calendar, including the Carolina Cup, Colonial Cup, Zeke Ferguson, Georgia Cup, Temple Gwathmey, Imperial Cup, International Gold Cup, Noel Laing, Middleburg Hunt Cup, National Hunt Cup, New York Turf Writers Cup, Royal Chase, A.P. Smithwick, Miles Valentine and Virginia Gold Cup. He was the regular jockey of 2004 champion Hirapour and piloted greats Sur La Tete and McDynamo as well.

The son of flat jockey Gregg McCarron and nephew of Hall of Fame flat jockey Chris McCarron, Matt grew up with racing in his blood. While many retired jockeys remain close to their sport after retirement McCarron indicated he wouldn’t be back at the racetrack anytime soon.

“I haven’t completely figured out what I want to do. There are several avenues I could explore. I’ve worked with (fellow jockey) Gregg Ryan for the past 10 or 12 years in the horse insurance business, so that is something I may go into, but I don’t see myself being directly involved in racing,” McCarron said. “Right now I’m just concentrating on getting healthy and enjoying the holidays with my family and friends.”

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.



SUPPORT YOUR FOUNDATION!

Dear Steeplechasing Supporter:

As you are probably aware, 2008 has been a difficult year for many horse sports in terms of safety concerns that resulted from high-profile accidents and injuries. In flat racing, the fatal breakdown of Eight Belles in the Kentucky Derby, as well as the publicized admission of steroid use on horses by some trainers led to outcry from animal-rights groups and a critical self-examination of the sport by many of its participants. In Three-Day-Eventing, multiple injuries and some fatalities to both horses and riders led to investigative pieces on the sport by both HBO and ESPN, and have caused many in that sport to call for drastic reforms.

In light of these occurrences and the increased scrutiny of all horse sports, the efforts of the National Steeplechase Foundation to promote safety in steeplechasing have never been more important. We may feel fortunate that American steeplechasing has avoided some of the aforementioned criticism and negative publicity, but we are only one publicized bad accident away from the same scrutiny, and in the “YouTube” age of instant information, that certainly could happen. And no matter what publicity we get, we are always concerned about safety for our horses and jockeys.

On a positive note, the framework of the Foundation’s efforts so far has gone a long way toward avoiding some of these problems. We are grateful that you value the important role we continue to play; we could not do the work we do without your extraordinary support of these vital programs.

• **Safe Courses-Sound Horses:** The course inspection and assessment program that has been in existence for several years and is funded by the Foundation has resulted in dramatic improvements in racecourse conditions and increased safety in racing. In addition, the Foundation has funded educational trips overseas for NSA course inspector Barry Watson to examine how other steeplechasing jurisdictions handle course management, and that has led to ideas for improving American courses.

• **Drug testing at all NSA race meets:** Especially with increased sophistication of both performance-enhancing and masking drugs, as well as the recently-enacted ban on steroid use by the NSA, funding this program and keeping it as up-to-date as possible is critical.

• **In past years, the NSF has fully or partially subsidized safety helmets, Pro-Cush whips, and safety wings at NSA race courses.** It also gives a \$4,000 annual grant to the Marion DuPont Scott Equine Center to track equine injuries.

As you know, the Foundation is engaged in numerous other beneficial programs, such as promoting amateurism, supporting production of television and other media efforts to promote steeplechasing, and of course supporting steeplechasing in general and thereby the generation of approximately \$5 million donated to charities annually by NSA race meets.

I hope you would agree that, this year especially, it is the emphasis on safety by the Foundation that is so critical. We have been extremely effective in improving the safety of our sport, but we need to continue the momentum and look for ways to enhance it. **Your generous contribution to the Foundation now will allow us to continue this important work.**

I know you agree with me that safety in our sport is a paramount concern. Please join me and my fellow board members in supporting the National Steeplechase Foundation, the organization that promotes safety throughout American steeplechasing.

With heartfelt thanks for your consideration,
Samuel Slater, President

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

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NSA Spring 2009 Schedule

March 21.....	AIKEN SPRING.....	Aiken, SC.....	www.aikensteeplechase.com
March 28.....	CAROLINA CUP.....	Camden, SC.....	www.carolina-cup.org
April 4.....	STONEBROOK.....	Raeford, NC.....	www.carolinahorsepark.com
April 11.....	MY LADY’S MANOR.....	Monkton, MD.....	www.marylandsteeplechasing.com
April 11.....	STRAWBERRY HILL.....	New Kent, VA.....	www.strawberryhillraces.com
April 18.....	BLOCK HOUSE.....	Tryon, NC.....	www.blockhouseraces.com
April 18.....	GRAND NATIONAL.....	Butler, MD.....	www.marylandsteeplechasing.com
April 18.....	MIDDLEBURG SPRING.....	Middleburg, VA.....	www.middleburgspringraces.com
April 25.....	ATLANTA.....	Kingston, GA.....	www.atlantasteeplechase.org
April 25.....	FOXFIELD.....	Charlottesville, VA.....	www.foxfieldraces.com
April 25.....	MARYLAND HUNT CUP.....	Glyndon, MD.....	www.marylandsteeplechasing.com
May 2.....	VIRGINIA GOLD CUP.....	The Plains, VA.....	www.vagoldcup.com
May 3.....	WINTERTHUR.....	Wilmington, DE.....	www.winterthur.org
May 9.....	IROQUOIS.....	Nashville, TN.....	www.iroquoissteeplechase.org
May 10.....	WILLOWDALE.....	Kennett Square, PA.....	www.willowdale.org
May 16.....	RADNOR.....	Malvern, PA.....	www.radnoraces.org
May 17.....	HIGH HOPE.....	Lexington, KY.....	www.highhopesteeplechase.com
May 23.....	FAIR HILL.....	Fair Hill, MD.....	www.fairhillraces.org

Schedule subject to change. Check www.nationalsteeplechase.com for updates.

Letter Perfect

I'll be honest, I never thought he'd make it this far. But I never told him.

A flat rider trapped in a jump jockey's body, Matt McCarron showed up in steeplechasing like he got off at the wrong bus stop. He rode a handful of races in 1992 and began the next season with a last-fence fall over timber at Foxfield. His dad, former flat jockey Gregg McCarron, ran out on the course and helped him home.

Boy, they had a lot to learn.

Most jump jockeys bring jumping to the table first, whether it's foxhunting, or showing or Pony Club or simply riding ponies on the farm. The race riding comes second. For McCarron, it was the opposite. When your father wins some 2,400 races and your uncle Chris wins more than 7,000 and has a plaque in the Hall of Fame, the race riding comes easy. Jumping is a different story.

McCarron learned to jump late in life and it showed. Much to the chagrin of his father, who once told him he could do anything he wanted but become a jump jockey. Where Millers, Kingsley, Kiser, Hendriks, Houghton, Lawrence and most American-born jump jockeys were pushed by their parents, McCarron dragged his heritage to the foreign sport.

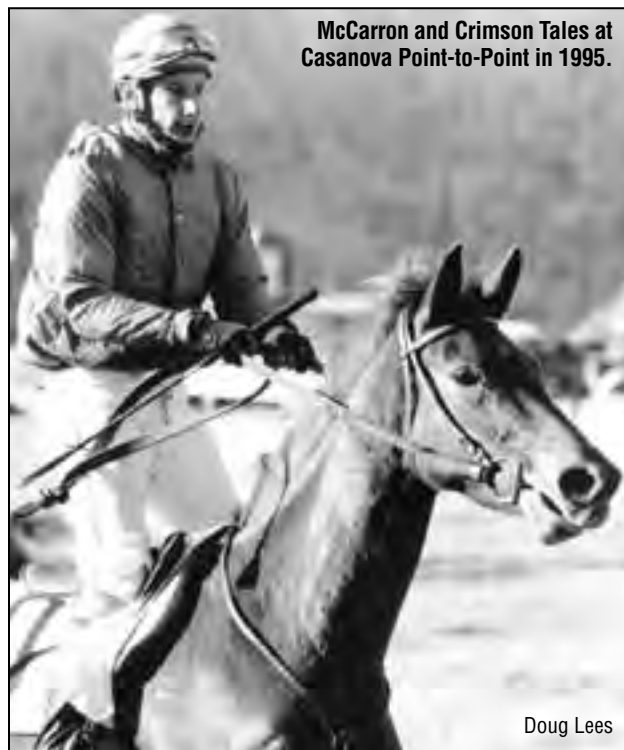
The kid jumped fences like a motorcycle rider; bmmpp, bmmpp, bmmpp. He rode too short, came to the races like it was a surprise and didn't know the difference between Joe Aitcheson and Joe Walsh.

But he learned. His career ended Nov. 29 with a fall from Orison to the Palm Beach turf – 187 victories, \$3,971,627 in purses earned, and a sport convinced. Me included.

Late in the 2000 season, McCarron whirled into the Colonial Cup jocks' room. Set to ride two races, he arrived late, pulled out dirty tack and won the Raymond Woolfe on Segregation Lane to complete an electric 13-for-37 season.

I couldn't believe he could be successful the way he applied himself to his business. Well, to me, it was a business. To him, it seemed like a lark.

Retiring after the day's races, I was disgusted with my friend's approach to riding races. It was all an af-



McCarron and Crimson Tales at Casanova Point-to-Point in 1995.

Doug Lees



Tod Marks

Left Photo: Matt McCarron and Hrapour fly the last fence of the 2006 A.P. Smithwick Memorial at Saratoga. Right Photo: Timber star Lord Kenneth gave McCarron a Virginia Gold Cup win.

terthought to him. He never even found a chair in the Colonial Cup jocks' room; that amazed me, he stood in the corner, balanced on one foot and got dressed. While I suffered from over-thinking most things steeplechasing, McCarron didn't think about any of it. I wrote him a letter.

Hello my friend. Be prepared for a letter from an old jump jockey. As you know, I have just retired. Now it's up to you. I'll get straight to the point. You have everything it takes to be champion jockey. I've told three people that up to now. Myself, Chip and Gus. Not a bad average, I figure.

You need to improve four things; confidence, appearance, jumping and style.

Take my place in the room, next to Chip and Gus, ride hard and have fun.

P.S. You need to want it more than anything in the world.

Whether my letter had anything to do with it or not, McCarron began to make me proud. He changed. He became a jockey. He wanted it.

McCarron averaged 6.25 wins a year for his first eight seasons and 15.2 for his final nine seasons; that 2000 season began a streak of nine consecutive double-digit yearly win totals, culminating in this, his final season.

He had ridden 50 winners at the end of 1999; 187 by the end of 2008.

The Maryland native won his first championship in 2003, tying David Bentley. The next season, he dominated the riding colony – winning 24 races and guiding Hrapour to win the Colonial Cup and an Eclipse Award.

As the victories piled up, so did the stock. He became the regular rider of Hrapour, winning the Royal Chase, A.P. Smithwick, New York Turf Writers Cup and Colonial Cup and also stood in when Grade I winners Sur La Tete and McDynamo needed a rider. He won eight races, including three stakes, aboard the venerable Greek Hero. There from the start, trainers Billy Meister, Alicia Murphy and Jimmy Day helped get him started. Neil Morris put McCarron on winners early on and remained loyal. Due to the wings of Hrapour, McCarron picked up the powerful Doug Fout barn. By the end, he rode winners for any and every trainer.

This year, McCarron picked up the spare on Be Certain for Tom Voss, and won the National Hunt Cup. The jockey teamed up with Fout to win Saratoga's New York Turf Writers Cup with Dark Equation. His last stakes win came aboard Class Real Rock



Doug Lees

for Lilith Boucher at Far Hills. His last win came four races before Orison, when he partnered with Dave Washer's Roseland in a filly and mare maiden. McCarron finished the year in a three-way tie for second and finished his career in ninth place all-time.

He won his 100th race in 2003 and was debating on making a run at becoming just the ninth jockey to win 200 when Orison dislodged him at Palm Beach. On the final day of his 17th season, with nothing left to prove, McCarron was playing with house money and knew it was about time to go. Orison made sure of it.

There lies the rub of being a jump jockey – right about the time you start getting plum rides and figuring out the horses, courses and people it's time to go.

A broken clavicle, a shattered scapula, five broken ribs and a broken vertebrae in his neck ended his quest for 200 and stopped an improbable and remarkable riding career.

"Do you want the exclusive?" McCarron asked from his hospital bed in Wellington, Fla. two days after the fall. "I'm retired. I didn't want to go out like this but after 16 years and getting hurt like this, I'm done. It's going to take a while to sink in . . . I'm trying not to think about it right now."

Think about it all you want – you made us all proud.



Tod Marks

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thanks to our team for the 2008 season.



Class Real Rock

Ch. g., Rock Point–Class Reality, Class Secret.

Champion Three-Year-Old

Winner of the Gladstone Stp. S.

Owner/Breeder: MEDE CAHABA STABLE & STUD LLC.

Trainer: L. Boucher. **Jockeys:** M. McCarron & R. Boucher.



Class Bopper

Ch. g., Bop–Class Vim, Class Secret.

Three-Year-Old Runner-Up

Winner of the Raymond Woolfe Memorial Stp. S., etc.

Owner/Breeder: MEDE CAHABA STABLE & STUD LLC.

Trainer: L. Boucher. **Jockey:** R. Boucher.



Class Shadow

Dk. B./Br. f. 4, Rock Point–Class Eclipse, Class Secret.

Filly/Mare Runner-Up

Winner of the Peapack Stp. S. over Guelph

Breeder: MEDE CAHABA STABLE & STUD LLC.

Owner: Star Ten Stable. **Trainer:** L. Boucher.

Jockey: R. Boucher.

2008 Total for MEDE CAHABA and STAR TEN STABLES

Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Earnings
24	6	4	5	\$161,268

Congratulations to all the champions of 2008
and best of racing luck in the future.

See you in 2009.

Tod Marks photos

Out In Style

Guelph clinches championship, closes career with win on final day

BY JOE CLANCY

WELLINGTON, Fla. — Halfway through the \$75,000 Palm Beach Stakes, trainer Tom Voss is just another guy at the races. He's standing behind a woman in an orange-white-and-brown Thanksgiving dress, he's taking six drags on a cigarette, he's watching, he's leaning on a fence (one foot on the lower rail).

And then he gives three "come on, girl" encouragements, snuffs out the cigarette and watches with pride as Guelph rolls home with a championship-clinching win in the final start of her career.

"It's a big sigh of relief, this is," said Voss. "They overcome you, these kind. They overcome all the things you do and they're still good."

The Fields Stable's Guelph came into the race needing to win or finish second to clinch the NSA filly/mare championship. Facing males for the first time since finishing fifth in the A.P. Smithwick this summer, Guelph (Padge Whelan) scooted around the tight course — using her superb jumping and quick gallop — to win by 6 1/2 lengths in 3:39 for the 2 1/4 miles. Dr. Bloomer (Robbie Walsh)

PALM BEACH STEEPLECHASE

Saturday, November 29

tested the winner with a circuit remaining and again on the backside but was no match while finishing second. Baby League (Danielle Hodsdon) finished third with the race's only other starter, Orison, losing Matt McCarron at the second-last.

Guelph zoomed past Class Shadow in the filly/mare standings, won for the fourth time this year and went out a champion as Voss and owners Betty Merck, Laddie Merck and Mimi Voss announced the 7-year-old's retirement.

"You try to ride the same whether it's a maiden claimer or a horse like her," said Whelan. "You go out and try to do your best. That's all you can do, but she gave me such a great spin it's just a case of steering her around. She did all the work. What a joy to ride."

Guelph thrives on heart and determination, which more than make up for her small size and withers injury (sustained in 2006).

"She's really, really tough, she jumps great, she's not overly big as everyone



Ken Braddick

Guelph powers away from Dr. Bloomer in the \$75,000 Palm Beach Stakes, the final race of 2008.

knows but she's got a huge heart," said Whelan. "It's a great feeling."

- Trainer Dave Washer gave Matt McCarron a leg up on Roseland for the Palm Beach opener, a \$25,000 filly/mare maiden hurdle, and provided specific instructions.

"You know, if you don't screw this one up we're undefeated for the year," Washer said. He was laughing at the time, but McCarron heeded the warning and guided Roseland to a 1 1/4-length victory to improve the trainer/jockey combination to a perfect 3-for-3. Washer and McCarron won a pair with Junood way back in the spring, and repeated the tally on the season's final day.

Roseland found a spot near the back of the five-horse field as Complete Ray set the pace. Racing greenly and bearing left on the right-handed course, Complete Ray took the field through nine fences but began to yield on the backside. Moon Dolly (Whelan) took over coming to the stretch, but Roseland cut the corner and quickened to the last. She drew off late to win in 3:46 2/5 for the 2 1/4 miles with Moon Dolly second and Class Tie (Xavier Aizpuru) third.

Owned by Daniel Geitner, Roseland came into the race off two thirds in three NSA starts and had run once this fall, a seventh against open company at Virginia Fall.

"I thought she'd be in front and maybe stop but on this course everybody wanted to be in front," said Washer. "She really sprinted from the last fence. That was good, she's all right. I came down here because I wanted to run in the claimer at Camden but they didn't use it. That's a good maiden race to win so it was worth coming."

McCarron loved winning for Washer, a former jockey (he won the Colonial Cup on Cafe Prince in 1975) with a small stable based in Camden, S.C.

"Winning for him means more to me than the \$25,000 purse," said the jockey. "I dropped back to fourth so I thought my chances were compromised but she jumped so well that she kept herself in it. We went around the last turn and she still had something there. If you stay down on the inside you can save a lot of ground, but trying to hold the inside you lose a lot of your momentum too. I let my horse drift and that kept her momentum."

- Winless in six starts over jumps this year, Arcadia Stable's Seeking No More headed south to Florida looking for that elusive maiden-breaker.

And took care of business like Tim Tebow.

Fourth early, Seeking No More (Aizpuru) cruised into third behind Plum

See **PALM BEACH** page 13 ►



Ken Braddick

Seeking No More (second from right) outruns Coupe De Ville (left) and Class Deputy (center) in the maiden at Palm Beach.

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Palm Beach —

■ Continued from page 12

Brush (Walsh) and Coupe De Ville (Paddy Young) with a circuit remaining and simply waited. Coupe De Ville took over on the backside and Seeking No More drafted into second, before powering away late with 1-length win in 3:41. Coupe De Ville stayed for second with Class Deputy (Richard Boucher) third.

A 4-year-old son of Dynaformer, the winner came into the race with two seconds and two thirds but put it all together on the sharp Palm Beach course.

"He's a sports car and you need a Lamborghini for this course where the other one I had in there (Commodore Bob) is a Rolls Royce and he can't handle these turns," said trainer Jack Fisher. "I don't think he's quite a Lamborghini, but maybe he's (an Alfa Romeo) Spider."

Sporty or not, Seeking No More finally broke through to the land of winners — even if rival Coupe De Ville (they ran against each other three times) didn't.

"They had a good battle at Kentucky Downs, but then another horse came and got both of them," said Aizpuru. "Coupe De Ville was in a good position and going comfortably so I was going to follow him for as long as I could. He was my main concern toward the end. My horse jumped the second-last and the last fantastic and once he jumped the last, in three strides I was pretty sure he'd get there."

- Forgive Doug Fout for sounding like a desperate man as Torino Luge charged down the stretch of the \$30,000 optional claimer at Palm Beach. It's been a long year.

"We've had such an up and down year," he said. "One minute you think it's going good and the next minute it's going bad."

Torino Luge has no such problem. It's going great. Two weeks after winning his American debut in a training flat race at Camden, the Australian import added a

hurdle win. Owned by Calvin Houghland, Torino Luge (Young) pressed the pace throughout and seemed to be holding off Dreadnaught when the latter fell at the last. Torino Luge sprinted home to win by 5 1/4 lengths in 3:39 2/5. Prep School (McCarron) inherited second with Fogcutter (Whelan) third.

Bought through Fout's agent Kevin Myers, the winner joined the barn in October after winning once over hurdles and three times on the flat in Australia. Fout likes what he sees so far.

"I think this is going to be a good horse, he does everything the right way," said the trainer. "He's only 15.3 (hands) but you get on him and he feels like a big horse — he's got a huge stride."

The win gave Fout 12 wins (fifth in the standings) from 107 starts (second highest) on the year.

- When Good Night Shirt won the Colonial Cup, he became the first horse to win five races in an NSA season since Regal Again won six in 2004. At Palm Beach, Slip Away joined the champion with five wins in 2008.

Slip Away (Whelan) faced five in the \$25,000 starter allowance hurdle and let chief rival Cradle Will Rock (Hodsdon) set the pace. The winner advanced from third to second on the backside, moved alongside at the second-last fence and sped off to win by 1-length in 3:35 2/5. Cradle Will Rock hung on for second with Major Malibu (Willie Dowling) third.

"It's a great achievement, really," said Whelan of the five-pack. "He's a lovely horse and it's nice to see him do it considering he lost his form halfway through the year. He's flying again."

Owned by Ken and Sarah Ramsey, the 5-year-old started his season with a win at High Hope before losing twice at Saratoga. Voss dropped him into a \$10,000 conditioned claimer at Foxfield where he finished second to Cradle Will Rock, who subsequently won the Appleton only to be disqualified. Slip Away returned with easy wins at Morven Park (claimer), Aiken (claimer) and the Colonial Cup (starter allowance).



Ken Braddick

On the way to his fifth win of 2008, Slip Away (right) battles with Cradle Will Rock in the starter allowance hurdle.

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Palm Beach Steeplechase

Palm Beach, Fla. Saturday, November 29.
Turf: Firm.

1st. \$25,000. F&M mdn. hurdle. 2 1/4 miles.

1. Roseland	L 154	McCarron
2. Moon Dolly (GB)	L 154	Whelan
3. Class Tie	136	Aizpuru
4. Complete Ray	136	Boucher
5. Awaiting Justice	L 154	Walsh

Mgn: 1 1/4. Time: 3:46 2/5.

O: Daniel Geitner. T: Dave Washer.

Dk. B./Br. m. 5 Skywalker-Strictly Ballroom, Fred Astaire. Bred by Layton Register (Ky).

2nd. \$25,000. SOK mdn. hurdle. 2 1/4 miles.

1. Seeking No More	L 148	Aizpuru
2. Coupe De Ville	L 148	Young
3. Class Deputy	154	Boucher
4. Quick Now	L 138	Petty
5. Nationbuilder	L 148	McCarron
6. Commodore Bob	L 148	Dowling
7. Decisive Play	L 154	Hodsdon
8. Plum Brush	L 154	Walsh
PU. Tap The Keys	154	Slater
PU. BK's Double Jade	149	McVicar

Mgn: 1. Time: 3:41.

O: Arcadia Stable. T: Jack Fisher.

B. g. 4 Dynaformer-Seeking Regina, Seeking The Gold. Bred by Stonewall Farm (NY).

3rd. \$30,000. Optional clm. hurdle. 2 1/4 miles. NW2 or for \$30,000 clm. price.

1. Torino Luge (Aus)	L 156	Young
2. Prep School	L 156	McCarron

3. Fogcutter	L 152	Whelan
4. Terpsichorean	L 146	Hodsdon
5. Cuse	L 151	McVicar
F. Dreadnaught	L 152	Aizpuru
PU. Feeling So Pretty	L 138	Boucher
PU. Aluckyperk	L 144	Walsh

Mgn: 5 1/4. Time: 3:39 2/5.

O: Calvin Houghland. T: Doug Fout.

B. g. 5 Semipalatinsk-Snow Chariot (Aus), Chariot (Aus). Bred by R.E. Maund (Aus).

4th. \$25,000. Starter allow. hurdle. 2 1/4 miles. Started for clm. price in 2008

1. Slip Away	L 158	Whelan
2. Cradle Will Rock	L 150	Hodsdon
3. Major Malibu	L 140	Dowling
4. Sheriff Dillon	L 146	Slater
5. Charismic American	L 146	Walsh
PU. Orpington	L 145	McVicar

Mgn: 1. Time: 3:35 2/5.

O: Ken & Sarah Ramsey. T: Tom Voss.

Gr./Ro. g. 5 Skip Away-Aurora Slew, Slew's Royalty. Bred by Glencrest Farm, Trontz & Madison (Ky).

5th. \$75,000. Hurdle stakes. 2 1/4 miles. The Palm Beach Stakes

1. Guelph	L 144	Whelan
2. Dr. Bloomer	L 154	Walsh
3. Baby League	L 146	Hodsdon
LR. Orison	L 146	McCarron

Mgn: 6 1/2. Time: 3:39.

O: The Fields Stable. T: Tom Voss.

Ch. m. 7 Sky Classic-Distant Drumroll, Eastern Echo. Bred by Mimi Voss (Md).

Heavy Starch

Shirt doesn't fold after stiff challenge from Preemptive Strike

BY JOE CLANCY

CAMDEN, S.C. – Jockey Jody Petty met with trainer Sanna Hendriks before the Colonial Cup and talked strategy.

“What’s my edge? I’ve got to have an edge,” said Petty, who took veteran Preemptive Strike into the Grade I stakes as a decided underdog against champion Good Night Shirt at Springdale Race Course Nov. 16.

COLONIAL CUP RECAP

Sunday,
November 16

Hendriks replied with the only edge her horse had: “Whenever you get a good fence, take advantage of it. He flies his fences, especially these, so let him.”

Preemptive Strike flew all 17 fences in the 2 3/4-mile race, but still didn’t have quite enough as Good Night Shirt prevailed by a neck in a stretch battle that conjured up Lonesome Glory-Mistico, Sailor’s Clue-Corrib Chieftain and even Lucky Boy-Soothsayer-Dream Magic. Good Night Shirt finished in 5:17 4/5, about a second faster than his win last year but well off Hirapour’s 2004 record. Owned by Sonny and Ann Via, Good Night Shirt completed a perfect 5-for-5 season, pushed his 2008 earnings to the brink of \$500,000 and left no doubt to his place atop American jump racing.

“Everybody wants to see a race . . . well, they saw a race today – and the champ won,” said jockey Willie Dowling. “It’s like a happy ending for everybody. I’m just so happy for the horse to finish it on a good note. You set the expectations so high when you do what he did before this race.”

Good Night Shirt came into the \$150,000 Cup with the 2008 Eclipse Award clinched, a second seasonal earnings record already set and a winning streak of five (all Grade I) dating to the 2007 Colonial Cup. He scared off all but four challengers: New York Turf Writers winner Dark Equation, 10-year-old multiple stakes winner Preemptive Strike, the always trying Best Attack and longshot Pleasant Pick. All but the latter carried at least one loss to the favorite, with Best Attack lugging around four.

But, racing doesn’t give away Grade I wins.

Second in the 2004 Cup, Preemptive Strike flew to an immediate lead with Good Night Shirt finding his predictable spot in second. Best Attack (Paddy Young) drafted into third, closer than normal. Dark Equation (Matt McCarron) got comfortable in fourth, followed by Pleasant Pick (Arch Kingsley). Like a giant slingshot, the leader put on a jumping clinic – launching into the air from far back and landing just as far on the other side (over and over again). Good Night Shirt struggled with his jumping rhythm but kept tabs on the front-runner from 5 lengths back, while Best Attack contentedly galloped



Good Night Shirt goes after Preemptive Strike upon landing over the last fence in the Colonial Cup.

Tod Marks



Early leader Preemptive Strike (center) battles winner Good Night Shirt (right) and Best Attack in deep stretch.

Tod Marks

in third. Jumping carefully over the stiff pine, Dark Equation lost time at his fences. Pleasant Pick never threatened.

Halfway through the race, Preemptive Strike looked to be in control while Good Night Shirt didn’t have his best stuff – or so it seemed.

“It looks like he’s jumping terrible but to me he’s smooth, it’s not that bad,” said Dowling. “When you have a horse like Preemptive Strike that’s beautiful, standing off in front like that, he’s going to make other horses look worse than they are.”

From afar Good Night Shirt looked tentative, and labored under the pressure applied by the front-runner.

“Oooh, Shirt,” trainer Jack Fisher said as his horse made an early jump-

See **COLONIAL CUP** page 15 ►

Colonial Cup —

■ Continued from page 14

ing mistake. “We’ve got to jump better than that.”

Preemptive Strike led the field past the mile marker with another huge leap at the 14th fence. Good Night Shirt chipped in, losing a length. He got it back at the 15th, and took aim at Preemptive Strike as they turned the corner at the top of the long stretch. With two fences still to jump, Dowling went outside of Preemptive Strike as Young stayed on the inside with Best Attack. Preemptive Strike answered with a perfect leap at the 16th to take another clear lead. He drifted out slightly, and Good Night Shirt moved inside just before the final fence. Still in contention, Best Attack lost his position with a sloppy jump after Good Night Shirt moved over — ending a strong bid.

“He kind of reacted to Willie changing direction, but I don’t think it cost us the race,” said Young. “He wasn’t really backing out of it, it was more like he couldn’t go any faster. Without the problem at the last, I would have been 2 lengths behind them instead of 5.”

Preemptive Strike touched down with a lead and looked destined to complete the upset if he could only fight off the champion for another half-furlong.

“I landed at the last and I knew he was right there,” said Petty. “Coming up the stretch, he came to me and just dwelt a little bit and I thought I might get him. But that’s a long stretch — really long.”

Even longer to a frontrunner trying to stave off a champion.

After landing, Dowling switched his whip to his left hand and got a response. Good Night Shirt caught Preemptive Strike, who responded again and took a slim lead.

Less than 100 yards from the finish, Dowling switched his whip back to his right hand and conjured still more effort from his horse to build a three-quarter length lead, but Preemptive Strike responded yet again and closed the gap to a neck — where it stayed. Using the rail on his left, Good Night Shirt straightened up and won the final tussle to the line.

“I thought I was beaten, I never thought I’d get up,” said Dowling. “It wasn’t until halfway through the run-in that he put his head down and was all out — he quickened just enough when we got to that rail. That’s a long run from the last, but I was glad to have it.”

Thanks to a long stretch and a gutsy effort, Good Night Shirt finished his perfect season despite a near-perfect effort from Preemptive Strike. A winner of his first four starts this year by a combined 13 3/4 lengths, Good Night Shirt needed a photo this time.

“Today proves that he’s a fighter too when they throw it to him,” said Dowling in the jocks’ room afterward. “Sanna and Jody did a good job with Preemptive Strike. They took it to me and made me work, but the Shirt is a special kind of horse.”

And that’s a big edge.



Tod Marks

Willie Dowling celebrates as Mary McGlothlin leads Good Night Shirt after his fifth Grade I win of the season.

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Heads *of the* Class

Boucher freshmen continue reign as Bopper adds victory in Woolfe

BY JOE CLANCY

CAMDEN, S.C. — Class Bopper flashed speed and jumping ability in the 3-year-old stakes at Far Hills Oct. 18, but showed his greenness too by ducking off course near the top of the stretch.

In the \$25,000 Raymond Woolfe Memorial at Camden Nov. 16, Mede Cahaba Stable's chestnut turned professional by battling for the lead throughout and staying straight at the finish.

Trained by Lilith Boucher and ridden by her husband, Richard, Class Bopper dropped in behind Miss Crown early, matched strides with her with a circuit remaining and took over down the backstretch the final time.

The winner survived a shaky last fence to score by 1 1/2 lengths over filies Diva Maria (Xavier Aizpuru) and Miss Crown (Bernie Dalton) in 4:08 4/5 for the 2 miles.

"We were thinking there would be a bit of pressure for him on the front end so I tried to rate him in behind but he's got such a big stride that I was worried I was going to strike into somebody," said Richard Boucher. "We went to the lead

COLONIAL CUP UNDERCARD

Sunday, November 16

and he settled a bit for me. His jumping still needs a little working on. He looks at the fences and then just seems to run right through his spot."

But right past other horses

A homebred son of Bop, Class Bopper won for the second time this year but settled for runner-up in the 3-year-old standings behind stablemate Class Real Rock (fourth in the Woolfe) who collected \$30,000 from his win at Far Hills.

- Last year, he broke the jockey's foot. This year, he bucked off the trainer "seven or eight times." At Camden, he finally paid them back.

Dubai Sunday (Darren Nagle) went to the front early, took a few jabs from Class Deputy midway through and then kicked clear to score by 2 1/2 lengths in his 13th hurdle try. Owned by Irv Naylor, the winner got the 2 1/4 miles in 4:32 1/5 to deny News Flash (Padge Whelan). Class Deputy (Boucher) finished third.



Tod Marks

Class Bopper (right) shows the way in the stretch of the Raymond Woolfe Memorial Stakes.

Second time and third once in five prior starts this year, Dubai Sunday kept finding additional energy to graduate.

"The track at Callaway (Nov. 1) was a bit too fast for him and he got tired running on the front end," said trainer Desmond Fogarty. "He's a very one-paced horse, he just stays and gallops so that's why he's on the front end. He'll get every yard."

A son of top Japanese stallion Sunday Silence, Dubai Sunday won two English bumpers before being sent to the United States by trainer Phil McEntee. Bruce Haynes bought the horse for Naylor in May 2007, and Fogarty took over the training — shenanigans and all — after Haynes' death early this year.

"Bruce bought him so some of the credit has to go to him, Lord have mercy," said Fogarty. "I'm delighted to see him win today. He owed us one."

- Owner Ken Ramsey talks about holding his trainers to a 20-percent standard. If his horses win at a 20-percent clip, he's happy and you have a job. If they don't, he's not and you don't.

Hey Mr. Ramsey, how does 63 percent sound?

Ramsey's steeplechaser Slip Away, trained by Tom Voss, improved to 4-for-7 this year (and stepped it up to 5-for-8 at Palm Beach two weeks later) with an easy romp in the \$20,000 Hobkirk Hill

See **CAMDEN** page 17 ►

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE

Good Night Shirt team

AND THANKS FOR AN EXCITING YEAR

— *Tom & Chris Bowman and family*



Tod Marks

Camden —

■ Continued from page 16

starter allowance over the Colonial Cup course.

Slip Away (Whelan) set up shop far off runaway leader Sunshine Numbers, closed into place down the backstretch and then ended the race – scoring by 5 lengths over Four Schools (Danielle Hodsdon) with Sunshine Numbers (Jody Petty) third. The winner covered the 2 1/4 miles in 4:26 2/5.

Whelan smiled as he recapped the race.

“Halfway down the back he was the winner,” said the jockey. “He jumped great, very clever and then I couldn’t pull him up. He made life very easy, very easy.”

Slip Away made his jump debut as a 3-year-old back in 2006, raced just twice in 2007 and finally broke through with a maiden score this spring at High Hope (his first start in nearly a year). After two ugly losses at Saratoga, he dropped to a \$10,000 conditioned claimer at Foxfield in September, and settled for second behind Cradle Will Rock.

Facing open claimers at Morven Park Oct. 11, Slip Away won off by 6 lengths. He repeated that effort to score by 17 at Aiken two weeks later. Then came Camden, a great schooling session over the natural Cup fences and another step forward as Slip Away came running when asked.

“He’s one-paced so he could be in front or he could be last at that pace,”



Tod Marks

See **CAMDEN** page 18 ► Slip Away (right) stalks Swimming River and Four Schools early in the Hobkirk Hill.

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Calvin	Lucy
Darren	Mark
Ian	Robbie
James	Willie

THANKS to the talented trainers...

*Ann
Billy
Kathy*

And, especially, the newest member of "The Top 10"

Desmond

THANKS to the Still Water Farm team...

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Blake	Leah
Buddy	Sarah
Casey	Scott
Chet	Scotty
Desmond	

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A champion which gave his all to steeplechasing

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Best Name
Wolfe Tone
Excentrikbydesign
Unbeliever
Siren's Echo
Lady Pith (Askim's full-sister)*

*All the best
– Irv Naylor*



Dubai Sunday (left) leads News Flash late in the Camden maiden.

Tod Marks

Colonial Cup

Camden, S.C. Sunday, Nov. 16. Turf: Firm.

1st. \$25,000. SOK mdn. hurdle. 2 1/4 miles.

1. Dubai Sunday (Jpn)	L 149	Nagle
2. News Flash	L 148	Whelan
3. Class Deputy	154	Boucher
4. Commodore Bob	L 148	Aizpuru
5. Artist's Stroke	154	Dalton
6. Northern Bay	L 140	Young
7. Plum Brush	L 154	Walsh
F. Jimtown	L 143	Mackenzie
L.R. Awaiting Justice	L 148	McCarron
P.U. BK's Double Jade	149	McVicar

Mgn: 2 1/2. Time: 4:32 1/5.
O: Irv Naylor. T: Desmond Fogarty.
B. g. 7 Sunday Silence-Lotta Lace, Nureyev.
Bred by Northern Farm (Jpn).

2nd. \$25,000. 3YO hurdle stakes. 2 miles. The Raymond G. Woolfe Memorial

1. Class Bopper	148	Boucher
2. Diva Maria	L 142	Aizpuru
3. Miss Crown	142	Dalton
4. Class Real Rock	152	McCarron
5. Rusty Reign	L 148	Walsh
6. Imperial Way	L 148	Whelan
7. Pleasant Top	L 148	Dowling
8. Praise Me	L 148	Young
P.U. Quick Now	L 148	Petty
P.U. Factor Five	L 148	W. Haynes

Mgn: 1 1/2. Time: 4:08 4/5.
O: Mede Cahaba Stable. T: Lilith Boucher.
Ch. g. 3 Bop-Class Vim, Class Secret.
Bred by Mede Cahaba Stable & Stud (Va).

3rd. \$20,000. Open timber. 3 1/2 miles.

1. Bubble Economy	L 165	Aizpuru
2. Patriot's Path	L 145	Nagle
3. Scuba Steve	L 165	Slater
4. He's A Conniver	L 160	Walsh
5. Music To My Ears (Ire)	L 161	Hundt
6. Ravens Rock	L 160	Young
P.U. Greyhame	L 150	Petty

Mgn: 4 1/2. Time: 7:01 4/5.
O: Arcadia Stable. T: Jack Fisher.
B. g. 9 Rakeen-Buttels, Vaal Reef.
Bred by Dr. & Mrs. Timothy Gardner & Mr. & Mrs. Rick Abbott (Pa).

4th. \$150,000. Hurdle stakes. 2 3/4 miles. The Colonial Cup (Grade I). Brush course.

1. Good Night Shirt	L 156	Dowling
2. Preemptive Strike	L 156	Petty
3. Best Attack	L 156	Young
4. Dark Equation	L 156	McCarron
5. Pleasant Pick	L 156	Kingsley

Mgn: Neck. Time: 5:17 4/5.
O: Sonny Via. T: Jack Fisher.
Ch. g. 7 Concern-Hot Story, Two Punch.
Bred by Dr. and Mrs. Thomas Bowman (Md).

5th. \$20,000. Starter allow. hurdle. 2 1/4 miles. Started for a claiming price in 2008. Brush course.

1. Slip Away	L 150	Whelan
2. Four Schools (Ire)	L 146	Hodsdon
3. Sunshine Numbers	L 142	Petty
4. Motel Affair	L 146	Aizpuru
5. Bow Strada (GB)	L 150	Walsh
6. Algezir	143	J. Murphy
7. Sheriff Dillon	L 142	Slater
8. Swimming River	L 142	Young
9. Dromineer	L 152	Traurig
P.U. Gather No Moss	L 142	W. Haynes
P.U. Summersville	L 142	R. Haynes
*R. Bounding Cat	L 142	Nagle

*-Refused to start.
Mgn: 5. Time: 4:26 2/5.
O: Ken & Sarah Ramsey. T: Tom Voss.
Gr./Ro. g. 5 Skip Away-Aurora Slew, Slew's Royalty. Bred by Glencrest Farm, Trontz & Madison (Ky).

6th. Training flat. 1 1/2 miles.

Amateur jockeys.

1. Torino Luge (Aus)	L 168	Gillam
2. In Denial	L 160	Williams
3. Complete Ray	157	W. Haynes
4. Wall Of Lead	L 160	Santoro
5. Junood	168	Washer
6. Class Miner	157	Nagle
7. Johann Star	L 168	R. Haynes
8. Class Skier	157	Dang

Mgn: 3. Time: 2:31 1/5.
O: Calvin Houghland. T: Doug Fout.
B. g. 5 Semipalatinsk-Snow Chariot (Aus), Chariot (Aus). Bred by R.E. Maund (Aus).

Camden —

Continued from page 17

said Whelan. "He'll tell you what pace he's going and all you have to do is sit there. He just gallops and he did it nicely."

• Let's see now. The key to winning the Camden timber race each November is . . . refusing at the Pennsylvania Hunt Cup? Something like that.

For the second consecutive year, Arcadia Stable's Bubble Economy bounced out of an act of disobedience up north into a victory down south. This time, he sat third or fourth through 3 miles of controlled jumping before accelerating between the final two fences to take command and win by an easy 4 1/2 lengths. Scuba Steve set a quick pace, followed by He's A Conniver and Greyhame early. He's A Conniver challenged Scuba Steve four fences from home, but couldn't sustain the run as Bubble Economy (Aizpuru) passed both horses after the second-last and laughed home in 7:01 4/5 for the 3 1/2 miles. Patriot's Path (Nagle) rallied for second with Scuba Steve (James Slater) third.

Aizpuru enjoyed his first spin aboard the now two-time timber champion, who set a record of \$110,250 for single-season timber earnings with his third victory of the year. The 9-year-old sprinkled the wins around that stop at the third fence in Pennsylvania, a pull-up at Radnor and three other defeats for trainer Jack Fisher.

"I've seen him run it feels like hundreds of times now and he's a really, really cool horse," said the jockey. "I've never been such a passenger. You really just have to leave him alone because the minute you try to tell him anything he's going to tell you different."



Tod Marks

Bubble Economy rolls home in Camden's timber race, his third win of the year.

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Tod Marks



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— ANN, SONNY, AND THE HORSES

NSA Standings

2008 FINAL TOP 15

Jockeys (Races Won)

	Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Money	Win%
Xavier Aizpuru.....	83	22	13	11	\$527,777	.27
Padge Whelan.....	52	14	14	6	491,478	.27
Jody Petty.....	65	14	11	9	326,125	.22
Matt McCarron.....	86	14	8	8	396,512	.16
Willie Dowling.....	56	13	6	12	768,743	.23
Paddy Young.....	99	11	16	14	323,440	.11
Danielle Hodsdon.....	73	10	13	13	456,295	.14
Robbie Walsh.....	88	9	5	11	351,118	.10
Carl Rafter.....	62	7	3	11	232,983	.11
Richard Boucher.....	42	6	6	6	174,272	.14
James Slater.....	62	5	9	7	145,825	.08
Liam McVicar.....	47	4	9	4	148,345	.09
Will Haynes.....	31	4	4	4	79,960	.13
Brooks Durkee.....	20	4	1	6	63,900	.20
Darren Nagle.....	25	3	7	2	83,900	.12

Trainers (Races Won)

	Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Money	Win%
Jack Fisher.....	122	26	12	21	\$1,156,907	.21
Tom Voss.....	97	25	23	9	742,778	.26
Jonathan Sheppard.....	92	16	18	17	742,996	.17
Sanna Hendriks.....	57	15	15	6	330,300	.26
Doug Fout.....	107	12	12	13	440,802	.11
Lilith Boucher.....	31	7	3	6	170,068	.23
Kathy McKenna.....	68	7	1	13	112,950	.10
Desmond Fogarty.....	41	5	13	6	185,450	.12
Bruce Miller.....	34	5	4	4	207,813	.15
Mike Berryman.....	37	5	0	4	81,560	.14
Neil Morris.....	49	4	9	9	105,540	.08
Richard Valentine.....	49	4	8	6	103,420	.08
Janet Elliot.....	25	3	2	3	96,820	.12
Jimmy Day.....	22	3	2	2	108,220	.14
Todd Wyatt.....	12	3	2	1	38,275	.25

Owners (Money Won)

	Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Money	Win%
Sonny Via.....	7	5	0	0	\$487,020	.71
Calvin Houghland.....	48	9	6	8	361,928	.19
Bill Pape.....	25	5	5	4	241,364	.20
Irv Naylor.....	51	6	14	7	239,050	.12
Augustin Stable.....	31	10	5	4	197,650	.32
Gil Johnston.....	38	4	4	5	176,544	.11
Alnoff Stable.....	8	2	5	0	168,138	.25
Arcadia Stable.....	32	6	3	8	165,500	.19
Peggy Steinman.....	12	2	3	2	142,056	.17
The Fields Stable.....	10	5	1	0	136,024	.50
Sally Radcliffe.....	15	1	4	4	124,013	.07
Hudson River Farm.....	3	2	0	0	114,775	.67
Shelia Williams.....	7	3	1	1	106,480	.43
Kinross Farm.....	49	4	9	9	105,540	.08
Mede Cahaba Stable.....	18	5	1	4	96,200	.28

Horses (Money Won)

	Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Money	Win%
Good Night Shirt.....	5	5	0	0	\$485,520	1.00
Be Certain.....	8	2	5	0	168,138	.25
Dr. Bloomer.....	8	2	1	2	125,550	.25
Dark Equation.....	6	1	1	1	124,356	.17
Guelph.....	6	4	1	0	123,424	.67
The Price Of Love.....	7	3	1	2	122,792	.43
Swagger Stick.....	10	1	3	1	116,344	.10
Sovereign Duty.....	2	2	0	0	114,075	1.00
Bubble Economy.....	8	3	0	2	110,250	.38
Class Shadow.....	7	3	2	1	88,068	.43
Best Attack.....	5	0	1	3	83,013	.00
High Action.....	3	2	0	1	77,690	.67
Seer.....	5	2	1	1	76,480	.40
Spy In The Sky.....	6	2	1	1	75,370	.33
Dynaski.....	4	2	2	0	72,700	.50

See Championship pages for divisional standings



Tod Marks

LOOKING BACK. Willie Dowling checks for competition as Good Night Shirt hits the finish line of the Grand National at Far Hills. The 2008 champion vaulted to third on the career earnings list for horses. Profiles of all the champions of the year begin on page 22.

All-Time Leaders

LEADING HORSES

Top 30 steeplechase earners (North American earnings only; no bonus earnings):

Horse	Earnings
1. McDynamo.....	\$1,310,104
2. Lonesome Glory.....	965,809
3. Good Night Shirt*.....	934,493
4. Victorian Hill.....	748,370
5. Sur La Tete.....	664,050
6. Rowdy Irishman.....	644,528
7. Flat Top.....	592,306
8. Hirapour.....	583,722
9. Praise The Prince.....	576,488
10. Tres Touche.....	573,670
11. Mistico.....	517,347
12. Ninepins.....	516,179
13. Al Skywalker.....	466,841
14. Warm Spell.....	457,964
15. Mixed Up*.....	457,730
16. Highland Bud.....	437,500
17. All Gong.....	435,989
18. Polar Pleasure.....	433,222
19. Saluter.....	429,489
20. Census.....	426,524
21. Preemptive Strike*.....	425,356
22. Flatterer.....	421,146
23. Double Bill.....	417,548
24. Steve Canyon.....	388,102
25. Romantic.....	379,102
26. Pompeyo.....	353,280
27. It's A Giggle.....	347,790
28. Summer Colony.....	347,422
29. Yaw.....	335,327
30. Master McGrath.....	331,355

LEADING TRAINERS

Steeplechase trainers with \$1 million or more purses earned in North America:

Trainer	Earnings
1. Jonathan Sheppard*.....	\$18,064,471
2. Jack Fisher*.....	7,979,121
3. Janet Elliot*.....	7,580,234
4. Bruce Miller*.....	6,750,746
5. Tom Voss*.....	6,736,808
6. Sanna Hendriks*.....	6,453,941
7. Burley Cocks.....	4,479,171
8. D.M. Smithwick.....	4,307,037
9. Charlie Fenwick*.....	3,877,652
10. Doug Fout*.....	3,442,914
11. Ricky Hendriks*.....	2,954,148
12. Neil Morris*.....	2,271,439
13. Kathy McKenna*.....	2,183,460
14. Mickey Walsh.....	1,993,881
15. John Griggs*.....	1,896,285
16. Sidney Watters Jr.....	1,696,919
17. Bruce Haynes.....	1,592,452
18. Jimmy Day*.....	1,495,991
19. George Bostwick.....	1,481,588
20. Alicia Murphy*.....	1,099,235
21. Morris Dixon.....	1,041,229

LEADING OWNERS

Steeplechase owners with \$1 million or more purses earned in North America:

Owner	Earnings
1. Augustin Stable*.....	\$8,603,262
2. Bill Lickle.....	3,226,421
3. Bill Pape*.....	3,153,328
4. Kinross Farm*.....	2,447,374
5. Arcadia Stable*.....	2,381,801
6. Lillian Phipps.....	2,016,353
7. John Griggs*.....	1,989,035
8. Timber Bay Farm*.....	1,963,324
9. Calvin Houghland*.....	1,920,181
10. Ann Stern*.....	1,759,896
11. Irv Naylor*.....	1,726,197
12. Gillian Johnston*.....	1,608,918
13. Kay Jeffords.....	1,477,669
14. Michael Moran.....	1,346,204
15. Sonny Via*.....	1,328,359
16. Rokeby Stable.....	1,326,937
17. Hudson River Farms*.....	1,248,091
18. Montpelier.....	1,224,225
19. Joy Valentine.....	1,123,307
20. Virginia Kraft Payson.....	1,087,580

LEADING JOCKEYS

Steeplechase jockeys with 100 wins or more in North America:

Jockey	Wins
1. Joe Aitcheson.....	440
2. Paddy Smithwick.....	398
3. Dooley Adams.....	301
Jerry Fishback.....	301
5. Thomas Walsh.....	253
6. Jeff Teter.....	231
7. Chip Miller*.....	207
8. Blythe Miller.....	202
9. Matt McCarron*.....	187
10. James Murphy.....	185
11. Craig Thornton.....	171
12. Robert McDonald.....	166
13. Sean Clancy.....	152
14. Doug Small Jr.....	150
15. Albert Foot.....	149
16. Gregg Ryan*.....	148
17. Rigan McKinney.....	147
18. Robert Crawford.....	139
19. J. Dallet Byers.....	138
20. Leo O'Brien.....	137
21. Thomas Field.....	135
22. Ricky Hendriks.....	130
23. Arch Kingsley*.....	123
24. Gus Brown.....	122
Chuck Lawrence.....	122
26. John Cushman.....	116
Jody Petty*.....	116
28. Thomas Skiffington.....	115
29. Ronald Armstrong.....	107
30. Flint Schulhofer.....	106
31. Charlie Fenwick.....	105
George Sloan.....	105
33. Gregg Morris.....	103
34. Jonathan Smart.....	103
35. Scott Riles.....	101

*Active in 2008

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Shirt Tale

BY JOE CLANCY

Pull out the condition book, check the stakes schedule, go to the races.

Training a good horse is that easy. Or so say the trainers.

Jonathan Sheppard: "You can be Horse of the Year by running four or five times, you don't have to run every three weeks. It's easier to train a very good horse. You can plan your year out – you know what day the Colonial Cup is going to be."

Bruce Miller: "The horses are the ones responsible, not us. Great horses are good enough and sound enough to keep it up."

Jack Fisher: "Training a horse like that is easy, the easiest thing in the world. The only real challenge is where to run and a 2-year-old could make that decision."

Between them, Sheppard, Miller and Fisher have trained the winners of 17 steeplechase Eclipse Awards. Fisher's Good Night Shirt will make it 18 next month after a 2008 campaign that included five Grade I wins, a record \$485,520 in earnings and legions of convinced witnesses.

He began life like so many other Thoroughbreds, on the farm. Specifically, the Maryland farm of Tom and Chris Bowman. A veterinarian who specializes in broodmares, Tom Bowman bred his Two Punch mare Hot Story to Concern back in 2000 and got a future champion – though no one knew it at the time. Good Night Shirt, named after an expression used by Bowman's mother, grew past sales yearling and 2-year-old runner until he was an unraced 3-year-old owned in partnership by the Bowmans and the Moscarelli family. Galloping at Fair Hill Training Center in 2004, the chestnut caught the eye of former jump jockey Sean Clancy and raced on the flat for Clancy and trainer Lizzie Merryman. After two wins in eight starts, Good Night Shirt was sold to owner Sonny Via and joined Fisher's steeplechase string in 2005.

The rest of the story simply climbed to a higher plane with each season – two wins in 2005, a stakes in 2006, championships in 2007 and 2008. Now, he boasts nearly \$1 million in career earnings and victories over McDynamo, Sur La Tete, Mixed Up, Preemptive Strike, Sovereign Duty, Gliding and others.

Call 2008 a year for the ages. He started in April at Atlanta, and ran down Hip Hop in the final yards going 2 miles. The Maryland-bred went another mile in May, easily winning the Iroquois for the second consecutive year. Rested for the summer, "The Shirt" ran the table in the fall – winning the Lonesome Glory at Belmont Park in September, the Grand National at Far Hills in October and the Colonial Cup at Camden in November.

Fisher called the perfect season a thing of beauty. Nothing went wrong on the race course, at the barn, on the road, on the gallops (turf or Polytrack).

"Not one problem," he said. "We just put him on the van and went to the races – no temperature, no pulled shoes, no drama."

No losses. Good Night Shirt won almost 10 percent of the NSA's 2008 purse structure, took five of the year's seven unrestricted Grade I races, ran his overall winning streak to six and leaped to third on the career earnings list. He actually earned more in 2008 than in three prior seasons combined.

Fisher credited his horse's constitution.

"He's a very sound horse, but it's mental as much as physical," said the trainer. "He's laid back. Whatever you want to do, he'll do it. That's really important. Other horses had the talent – Shamrock Isle was one – but they were hard on themselves. He's not that hard on himself."



Good Night Shirt went 5-for-5 to claim a second consecutive championship.

Tod Marks

GOOD NIGHT SHIRT

Ch. g. 7 Concern-Hot Story, Two Punch.
Bred by Tom and Chris Bowman (Md).

Owner: Sonny Via. Trainer: Jack Fisher. Jockey: Willie Dowling.

CAREER STEEPLECHASE RECORD

Year	Age	Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Earnings
2005	4	6	2	1	1	\$66,500
2006	5	5	1	2	1	68,310
2007	6	5	3	1	0	314,163
2008	7	5	5	0	0	485,520
Totals		21	11	4	2	\$934,493

A year after besting Grabel's single-season earnings record by a mere \$1,939, Good Night Shirt shattered his mark by \$171,357.

And maybe that's the key to overall greatness. Truly superb horses blend talent and durability with an ease of living.

They don't get cast in the stall. They don't stop eating. They don't get too fat in the off-season. And they're good enough on the race course to not over-do it. They don't leave a race so drained that the next one will prove difficult.

Until the steel-cage match with Preemptive Strike in the Colonial Cup, Good Night Shirt won without expending maximum effort – much like Miller's Lonesome Glory and Sheppard's Flatterer.

In 1995, Lonesome Glory won five of six. He started with a 1-length loss in the Temple Gwathmey (giving 18 pounds to winner Master McGrath), then reeled off victories in the Iroquois, A.P. Smithwick Memo-

rial, New York Turf Writers Cup and Colonial Cup. For good measure, he closed the year with an English handicap chase score at Sandown.

In 1984, Flatterer won four of five. He began at Atlanta with a win, finished second to Census at Hard Scuffle, and then won three in a row – the Turf Writers at Saratoga, the Brook at Belmont and the Colonial Cup.

With nine Eclipse Awards and international success (Flatterer placed in the English and French Champion Hurdles) between them, those two Hall of Famers did things Good Night Shirt has yet to achieve. But they never went 5-for-5.

"Lonesome never won every single race in one year; that's really rare," said Miller. "It's a great feat to keep a horse at that level, but horses like that can do it. They are good enough to win within themselves compared to other horses, and that helps them get to the next race."

Trainers talk about making a horse peak for a race, but these horses peaked over and over again during their best seasons.

"You can put a horse on simmer and bring him back up to the boiling point, but you have to have enough time to let your horse down and build him back up too," said Sheppard. "Jack deserves a lot of credit, because it's pretty bold to give up Saratoga and then have him come back at his peak against horses that haven't had a break (at Belmont). It's a very smart thing to do, but it takes quite a bit of courage in your convictions and your training."

And a really good horse.

Best Year Ever?

Shirt's perfect season stands with the greatest

BY JOE CLANCY

The greatest American steeplechase campaign in history? You be the judge. When Good Night Shirt completed a 5-for-5 season in Grade I stakes, people asked if it was the best ever. Times change, as do horses and races, but it's safe to say Good Night Shirt's 2008 deserves mention with the best single-season performances.

Crack open some books this winter, wrack your brain and see if you can find some others. The following made the ST list – slow down, read and digest the accomplishments of each horse.

McDynamo, 2003: In just three starts, he decimated rivals in the most complete season for the three-time champion. He won the Royal Chase, the Breeders' Cup Grand National and the Colonial Cup by nearly 27 lengths combined. The king at his peak.

Lonesome Glory, 1995: He lost his first start, the Temple Gwathmey at Middleburg in April but then rattled off five in a row – the Iroquois, the A.P. Smithwick, the New York Turf Writers Cup, the Colonial Cup and a handicap chase at England's Sandown Park. He gets extra credit for traveling, and for sweeping the two Saratoga stakes. A superb year in a superb career for the five-time champion.

Morley Street, 1991: Just one of his victories came on this side of the Atlantic, in the Breeders' Cup Steeplechase, but he did claim the Eclipse Award. He also finished the year undefeated in five starts over jumps. He took the Berkshire Hurdle at Newbury, the Champion Hurdle at Cheltenham, the Aintree Hurdle, the Breeders' Cup and the Ascot Hurdle. For good measure, he finished second in a Group III race on the flat at Doncaster before the Breeders' Cup run.

Flatterer, 1983: Like some of the other all-time greats, it's difficult to decide on his best year. After breaking his maiden at Atlanta and running second in a Foxfield allowance, he started at Saratoga (winning an allowance and placing fourth in the Turf Writers) and then did nothing but win – a Rolling Rock allowance, the Grand National at Foxfield, the Temple Gwathmey at Belmont and the Colonial Cup. Then just a 4-year-old, he won the first of his four consecutive Eclipse Awards that season.

Zaccio, 1980: Busy in all of his steeplechase campaigns, the chestnut put together a 7-for-9 season. He started with wins in the Imperial Cup at Aiken and the Carolina Cup, then finished third in the Sandhills Cup at Stoneybrook. He got back to winning in High Hope's Pillar Stakes, finished second in the Hard Scuffle and then won four – the Midsummer at Monmouth Park, the Indian River at Delaware Park and the Lovely Night and Turf Writers at Saratoga. The year ended on a down note when he lost Doug Small in the Temple Gwathmey. Zaccio won 11 of 14 jump starts (with two seconds and a third) between May 1979 and August 1980.

Leaping Frog, 1979: He never won a championship, but he put together a season that would have produced a title in many years. The late-running bay won the Carolina Cup, the Sandhills Cup and the Pillar to start, then finished third in the Bolla at Hard Scuffle, won the Midsummer at Monmouth, finished second in the Lovely Night at Saratoga, won the Turf Writers, won an amateur hurdle at the Pennsylvania Hunt Cup (when there were hurdle races there) and came up a half-length short of eventual champion Martie's Anger in the Colonial Cup. Great year from a fun horse who just missed being a star.

Quick Pitch, 1967: An oldie but a goodie. He started his year by finishing third in an Aqueduct allowance, but went on a six-race spree thereafter – winning the Land Boy, the Bushwick, the Holly Tree, the Midsummer, the Lovely Night and the Rouge Dragon. The speedster trailed a horse for just one chart call in the six wins.

Tuscalee, 1966: The record holder in terms of American jump wins with 37 went on a tear in his only championship season, which included 10 wins in 13 starts. He lost his first start at Middleburg April 16, but won his next five. The streak started at Middleburg April 23 and included wins in the National Hunt Cup at Radnor, and the Tom Roby and Georgetown stakes at Delaware Park. In going for a Delaware three-peat, he finished second in the Indian River giving 28 pounds to the winner, but rebounded to take the Midsummer at Monmouth via disqualification, the Fair Hill Steeplechase and the Manly (also at Fair Hill). He lost his jockey in the Brook at Belmont Oct. 4, but closed with wins in the Noel Laing (under 167 pounds) and the Daniel Sands at Virginia Fall. Owned by Alfred Smith and trained by Leiter Aitcheson, Tuscalee also put together an eight-win season in 1964 and a trio of four-win campaigns. He won at least one race every year from 1964-72.



NSA Archives/Rosanne Berkenstock

Leaping Frog went 7-for-10 in 1979 for Chadds Ford Stable.

Neji, 1955: One of the all-time greats, he went 5-for-8 with wins at distances spanning 1 3/4 miles to 3 miles. He won a Belmont allowance, finished third in the Corinthian Handicap, won the International, finished third in the Meadow Brook, placed second in the Broad Hollow and closed the year with three wins – over 16 days – in the Brook, the Grand National and the Temple Gwathmey (where he carried 167 pounds and spotted 18 to the runner-up).

Elkridge, 1942: He ran 20 times over jumps. Twenty. Starting with a Belmont allowance score, he notched seven victories in his first steeplechase campaign, with scores in the Indian River, North American, Broad Hollow, Governor Ogle, Battleship and the Manly. His year also included what may be the most frustrating fortnight in memory, when he lost three Saratoga stakes in 12 days by a nose, a neck and a neck.

Bushranger, 1936: You have to blow off some dust to find this guy. He ran just four times, never leaving Belmont Park, but picked up victories in the Corinthian, the Broad Hollow, the Brook and the Grand National (while toting 172 pounds). For his short career, he started 13 times over jumps with nine wins, two seconds, a fall and a lost rider. He may have done even better, but died from injuries sustained in a schooling accident in 1937.

Jolly Roger, 1927. Won his first Grand National carrying 165 pounds (defeating fellow Hall Of Famer Fairmount, who was actually giving him weight) and also captured the Brook, Charles Appleton Memorial, Bayside and the Corinthian. Finished the year with six wins and two seconds from eight races, with a bankroll of \$63,075.

Good And Plenty, 1904. Fans at Brighton Beach saw the 4-year-old finish second in his steeplechase debut. The granddaddy of American jumpers then rattled off eight straight wins – interrupted only by a third on the flat – including the Westbury and Champion handicaps. He followed up with a 2-for-2 campaign in 1905 and took the 1906 Grand National under 170 pounds.

Other Notables

Thrice Worthy, 1981-83: He never won a championship, but he did blaze to the longest winning streak in modern American steeplechase history (nine races) over parts of three seasons. In 1981, he broke his maiden at Atlanta and won an allowance at Middleburg before winning three stakes – the National Hunt Cup, the Tom Roby and the Lovely Night. He came back in 1982 and won the Sandhills Cup, the Pillar and the Bolla before heading to the sidelines again. The streak reached nine when he opened 1983 with a win in the Imperial Cup at Aiken. He finally lost in the Carolina Cup a week later. Thrice Worthy died recently at age 32. See page 46 for a look back at his career.

Saluter, 1995: Yes he was a timber horse, but he belongs here because of a 6-for-7 campaign that included wins at Middleburg, Virginia Gold Cup, Radnor, St. James, Virginia Fall and Montpelier. He missed being perfect by a length when second to Buck Jakes in the International Gold Cup.

Dosdi, 1979: Another timber star, he put together a 7-for-8 season with wins in the Grand National, Maryland Hunt Cup and Liberty Cup at Hard Scuffle in the spring. His fall campaign included scores at Foxfield, Rolling Rock, Red Bank and the Pennsylvania Hunt Cup. His lone defeat came at Fair Hill in May, when he finished second to Juggernaut.



NSA Archives/Robert Craig

English star Morley Street put together an unbeaten international campaign in 1991.

Market Fluctuation

BY SEAN CLANCY

Seth Klarman always names horses after economic terms – good or bad. His stable has campaigned horses whose names fit better in *The Wall Street Journal* than the *Racing Form*: Outperformance, Phantom Income, Subprime Lending, Market Psychology and Bubble Economy to name a few.

A bubble economy is defined as an unstable boom where trade values differ considerably from an item's intrinsic worth. Prices in an economic bubble can fluctuate erratically and become impossible to predict. Recent examples include Beanie Babies, dot-com stocks and the housing market.

Then there's Bubble Economy – the horse. Sometimes he trades considerably different than he's worth. He fluctuates erratically. And yes, he's unpredictable.

He's also timber champion for the second time. Owned by Arcadia Stable and trained by Jack Fisher, Bubble Economy has performed as a bubble economy – blue chip one day, penny stock the next – since his jump debut at Shawan Downs in 2002. He won his first timber championship in 2004 with a single win. Bubble Economy picked up a \$5,000 bonus because an amateur, Paddy Young, rode him in the Mason Houghland – his timber debut – at Nashville. He eked out \$800 more than Maryland Hunt Cup winner Bug River. Call it a championship by default.

The timber championship hinges on purses earned and Bubble Economy must have learned something from his former owner – an investment banker – because he strikes when the money's right. This year he upset Miles Ahead in the \$100,000 Virginia Gold Cup, the richest timber race on the schedule and returned to Great Meadow to snatch the \$50,000 International Gold Cup in the fall. The Gold Cups accounted for the two biggest purses he ran for during the year and those wins alone would have clinched his championship.

The 9-year-old Pennsylvania-bred won three races and set a single-season record with \$110,250, far above stablemate Monte Bianco's \$67,000. Of course, Bubble Economy lost five times, including a default when he refused at an early fence in the Pennsylvania Hunt Cup for the second year in a row. And for the second year in a row, Fisher wheeled him back in two weeks to win at Camden.

That's Bubble Economy – two-time timber champion and confirmed underachiever.

Fisher put it bluntly after the gelding won his first title. "He doesn't deserve it. Horse of the year? Secret Impression or Bug River or Pleasant Parcel. They're all better than he is. If we voted for it, he wouldn't get it."

And this year? "It hasn't changed," Fisher said.

Fisher doesn't pull punches. Inexplicably, Bubble Economy does. All the way back in 2002, he made his jump debut at Shawan Downs and ringed his tail like a propeller while finishing second to Coal Dust in a 3-year-old maiden. In his next 11 starts over hurdles, he broke his maiden at Colonial Downs and won two weak amateur hurdle races. Fisher switched him to timber early and he's won some of the sport's best races including the Grand National, Houghland, Ski Roundtop at Shawan and two Gold Cups this year.

"I guess the only better one (this year) was maybe Monte Bianco, but I broke him and I guess off winning two of the Gold Cup races, he deserves it," Fisher said. "He amuses me now; he used to frustrate me."

Fisher got so frustrated with Bubble Economy's effort at My Lady's Manor this spring, he brought out his tack and rode him in the Grand National the following week. They finished third and two weeks later, he won the Virginia Gold Cup under Chip Miller.

"He's got as much talent as any of my other timber



Bubble Economy won his second timber championship thanks to wins at the Virginia Gold Cup, International Gold Cup and the Colonial Cup (here).

Tod Marks

BUBBLE ECONOMY

Owner: Arcadia Stable. **Trainer:** Jack Fisher.
Jockeys: Brooks Durkee, Jack Fisher, Chip Miller, Robbie Walsh, Xavier Aizpuru.

B. g. 9 Rakeen-Buffels, Vaal Reef. Bred by Dr. and Mrs. Timothy Gardner & Mr. and Mrs. Rick Abbott (Pa).

Fifth season over lumber featured an eight-race campaign, with three wins, two thirds, a fourth, a pull-up and a refusal. Broke Irish Prince's single-season earnings record of \$102,000 with a victory at Camden in final timber event of the season. Also the timber champion in 2004.

TOP FIVE TIMBER HORSES

Horse	Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Earnings
Bubble Economy	8	3	0	2	\$110,250
Monte Bianco	5	3	0	1	67,000
Allimac	3	2	0	0	57,000
Askim	2	1	1	0	51,300
Erin Go Bragh	6	1	2	1	50,200

horses but he doesn't have the heart like Saluter – and over timber heart has a lot to do with it," Fisher said. "If he's got to dig down deep like a Good Night Shirt in the Colonial Cup, it's not going to happen. He was just born that way. I hate horses that don't try. I love horses like Mark The Shark, Duke Of Earl; they aren't that talented but they try every time."

Good Night Shirt earned his championship by taking each of his five starts in 2008. Bubble Economy tarnished his by stalling out in the Pennsylvania Hunt Cup; champions aren't meant to throw down their gloves and stomp off the field. Without that blemish, this is about his 7 1/2 miles of perfection in the Gold Cups and about a horse who has been plying his trade over jumps for seven straight seasons. He's made at least two starts every year since he left Rick Violette's

New York barn in the summer of 2002, running 39 times over jumps. But, alas, he occasionally dons the dunce cap and that's all anybody can talk about.

"He was a likable big horse, good mover, but you knew you weren't getting to the bottom of him. There was not a lot of try in him," Violette said. "You had to demand everything out of him. There was no question, he wasn't going to make it as a flat horse. He was not fond of the game."

A \$50,000 yearling purchase at Fasig-Tipton Midlantic in 2000, Bubble Economy made seven starts on the flat for Klaravich and Violette. In his second, he finished third in a turf maiden at Gulfstream Park; three starts later he finished fourth over the Belmont Park grass. The rest were pretty dismal. Fisher saw a big, raw project at Saratoga in 2002 and pulled the trigger. Bubble Economy ran at Shawan Downs about a month after joining Fisher's Maryland barn.

"They said he was a star over fences from the first day but I guess he's still a character," Violette said. "He obviously takes care of himself. It's on his terms and when everything isn't right, he's not going to put out. He found his calling but some mornings he doesn't want to get out of bed. If you make him get out of bed, he's not going to change his mind and you'll be sorry."

Robbie Walsh rode Bubble Economy three times this fall, aboard for a fourth at Middleburg, a Gold Cup win and a refusal in the Pennsylvania Hunt Cup.

"I got both ends of it," Walsh said. "He never picked up the bridle at Middleburg, then was much sharper at the Gold Cup. He left the paddock bucking and plunging and he carried me everywhere, it was just a matter of timing it right. Then he decided he wanted no part of it at the Hunt Cup. There aren't many timber horses that can quicken like him but I guess he's always been a bit of a thinker."

Despite all his thinking, he's won 11 races, earned \$315,050 and claimed two timber championships.

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Want Jumpers?

Our Stars of 2008

Good Night Shirt • Bubble Economy • Rare Bush • Dictina's Boy
Mark The Shark • Freeboard • Commodore Bob • Seeking No More

Their Achievements

- New Earnings Record • Eclipse Award • Timber Championship
- Five Grade I stakes wins • One Grade III stakes win
- Two Sport of Kings Maiden wins • Great Meadow flat race win
- \$700,820 in total NSA earnings

Looking Ahead to Next Year

Dictina's Boy: Won his jump debut in Sport of Kings Maiden at Callaway Gardens, over Camden winner Dubai Sunday. Instant action for Novice program for 2009. *Shares Available*

Under Shirt: Two-year-old gelding, half-brother to two-time champion Good Night Shirt and stakes-placed 3-year-old filly Story Of A Lion. Broken and ready to go to track. *Shares Available*

Treasure Map: Virginia-bred 4-year-old full-brother to Grade I turf winner Winchester, two-time winner on the turf. Schooled and aiming for 2009 season. *Shares Available*

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Time for Class

BY SEAN CLANCY

Richard Boucher knows things have changed. He and his wife, Lilith, have trained for Mignon Smith's Mede Cahaba Stable for 14 years. Smith almost always includes Class when she names her horses, dating back to her foundation broodmare Classicality. Over the years, the Class brothers and sisters melded together and rarely stood out.

Class Blast won two races for trainer Bill Walsh and jockey Doug Fout, way back in the 1980s. Or was that Class Symbol? Class Yankee won a novice stakes at Callaway Gardens a few years back. Or was that Class Vigor?

Now, the questions have changed.

"Mignon names them all with Class and I don't know if it's on purpose or not but it's confusing to people, no one knows which horse is which, me included sometimes," Richard Boucher said. "But now that's changing, people can't look down the overnight and dismiss them as one of those Class horses. Now, they say, 'Is that the one that won at . . . is that the one that beat . . . ?'"

Here's a cheat sheet for the Class class of 4-year-olds next year.

Class Real Rock, the 3-year-old champion, lags in the back and comes with a late run. He's diminutive to observe, explosive to ride. Under Matt McCarron, he came on like an epidemic and won the Gladstone at Far Hills. He came back at Camden and, McCarron admitted, got too far out of it and rallied to finish fourth. He earned the championship largely due to the \$50,000 purse offered at Far Hills.

Class Bopper, runner-up in the division, does his best work from the front. He grabs the bit like a dog on a bone and totes Richard Boucher every step of the way. He trounced older horses in his debut at Morven Park and had the Gladstone in the balance when he ducked inside instead of angling to the outside loop for the finish. He made up for that with a scintillating effort at Camden, revving his engines at the start and making it stand up all the way. He won twice, but missed out on a big check at Far Hills, thus handing the championship to Class Real Rock.

And, for the record, the stable likes 3-year-old Class Bop, who finished second at Foxfield in his career debut over jumps.

Got it? If not, you will. Probably soon.

"Hopefully they will come back next year and be bigger, stronger and be able to continue. A lot of 3-year-olds fall apart and never appear again. With their stamina and the way they're bred I'm hoping they'll last," Richard Boucher said. "They're both getting some time off and we hope they'll both come out and run well as 4-year-olds. They seem to be doing well and seem to be growing again."



Class Real Rock and Matt McCarron won the Gladstone at Far Hills.



Tod Marks

Class Bopper and Richard Boucher won the Raymond Woolfe Memorial at Camden.

were able to sit on them a little bit or run them on the flat a little. They were ready to run over hurdles in July but we didn't have to run them until the fall."

Class Real Rock failed to threaten in four flat attempts as a 2-year-old but put together a pair of decent efforts this summer over the Colonial Downs turf. Class Bopper won his turf debut as a 2-year-old but was disqualified for a prohibited substance and failed in three attempts as a 3-year-old.

Class Real Rock made his jump debut at Virginia Fall, finishing fourth (in a four-way photo for second) in a big effort while Class Bopper wired older maidens at Morven Park. They clashed at Far Hills and Camden with Class Real Rock winning the first round and Class Bopper taking the second.

"I don't know how I'll ever hold Bopper, he never came off the bridle at any moment in any race. It's tough for a horse to run at that speed the whole way," Richard Boucher said. "Class Real Rock is a little more sensible in that he will rate in behind horses, but there's a very fine line between him running off and him settling. Class Bopper is very competitive and very aggressive and you just can't stay behind. Class Real Rock will be a more competitive horse eventually because he can sit and bide his time."

Lilith Boucher likes the differences between the two horses. The trainer has a cheat sheet of her own, one that will focus on Class Bopper's jumping this winter and specific courses next spring.

"Class Bopper's going to be a really good horse. He's got to get his jumping down and he will. It's impressive to me that whenever he dives through one or makes a mistake, he's really careful at the next one," said the trainer. "Class Real Rock isn't as fast as Class Bopper but he'll be OK too. He wants hills and is better going longer."

CLASS REAL ROCK

Ch. g. 3 Rock Point-Class Reality, Class Secret. Bred by Mede Cahaba Stable & Stud (Va).
Owner: Mede Cahaba Stable. **Trainer:** Lilith Boucher. **Jockeys:** Richard Boucher, Matt McCarron.

Closed late to finish fourth in hurdle debut at Virginia Fall behind Orebanks, but arrived right on time at Far Hills, surging to the front to take the Gladstone, the \$30,000 winner's check and the division title by a length before running fourth behind stablemate Class Bopper in the Woolfe.

TOP FIVE THREE-YEAR-OLDS

Horse	Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Earnings
Class Real Rock	3	1	0	0	\$31,750
Class Bopper	3	2	0	0	24,000
Orebanks	2	1	1	0	15,000
Miss Crown	3	1	0	1	11,900
Diva Maria	2	0	0	0	7,000



Lilith Boucher

The Bouchers have watched the Virginia-breds grow from yearlings at their Pennsylvania farm to 2-year-olds in Camden to (basically) co-champion 3-year-olds. The duo followed Smith's blueprint: breed for stamina, educate on the flat then jump early and often. Class Real Rock and Class Bopper learned to jump in Camden and were ready to run by this summer. That experience paid

off when race day arrived.

"I was confident when we went to the races with both horses. Being in Camden and being able to school and get these horses focused on the jumping really helped," Richard Boucher said, while on the back of a horse in Camden. "We also were able to give them a light summer. We taught them how to jump and had them ready, but then we

get in the game...

and take advantage of state-bred programs in Pennsylvania and Virginia.



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2008 STEEPLECHASE RECORD

Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Earnings
31	7	3	6	\$170,068

CLASS REAL ROCK: 3-year-old champ; winner second time out.

CLASS BOPPER: 3-year-old runner-up; won first time out; two wins including stakes.

CLASS SHADOW: Stakes-winning 4-year-old filly; winner first time out.

CLASS BOP: 3-year-old second first time out in maiden special.

REMY CHRISTINE: Winner second time out over hurdles.

HONEY'S MEADOW: Leading horse at Colonial Downs in 2008 with three wins and a third.

Lilith and Richard Boucher
610-842-5375 or 610-842-5370



Class Real Rock

Tod Marks



Class Bopper

Doug Lees



Class Shadow

Tod Marks

Soaring Heart

BY JOE CLANCY

As Guelph exited the Palm Beach paddock, Tom Voss walked up and gave his mare three pats on the hip. No last-minute equipment check, no final instructions for jockey Padge Whelan, just three love taps.

They spoke volumes.

"She's all heart. She tries harder than any horse I ever saw," said the trainer. "I love a horse that gives its all out there every time, no matter what. You can't teach them how to run, you can't make them run, they either can or they can't."

Guelph can run.

In the final start of her career, she clinched her second NSA filly/mare championship, wearing out three male rivals in the \$75,000 Palm Beach Stakes and passing Class Shadow in the race for the division crown. The 6 1/2-length victory closed a career that began in 2005 with a maiden-claiming score. Guelph took eight of 15 lifetime starts over jumps, won every NSA distaff stakes at least once and earned \$219,074. More importantly, she captured hearts – winning over owners Betty and Laddie Merck, breeder/co-owner Mimi Voss, various jockeys, her trainer and witnesses from Atlantic City to Palm Beach.

"What a horse," said Betty Merck afterward. "It's been a pleasure."

The Guelph story goes back nearly 90 years and across a border, but owes its real beginning to an introduction in 1995. She is named after the Ontario city where Merck was born. Now 89, Merck went to Saratoga in 1995 (as part of a birthday present from her three children) and met Tom Voss. They chatted at an NSA cocktail party, visited at the barn, watched horses train at Oklahoma and talked – sort of – about Voss training for Merck. Two months later, Voss called on the morning of the Paul Mellon dispersal sale at Belmont Park. Merck met him there and they bought Brigade Of Guards, who went on to win several stakes and earn \$216,000 in four seasons.

Brigade Of Guards turned out so well that Mimi Voss started looking for brothers. She found a full-sister, Distant Drumroll, who was training with Billy Turner for Audley Farm. She joined the stable and won a cheap maiden hurdle at Oxmoor in 1997 before becoming a broodmare. Bred to Sky Classic, Distant Drumroll produced Guelph in 2001.

The chestnut with the skinny blaze was born on the Vosses' Atlanta Hall Farm and, despite being small, acted like a steeplechaser from the start.

GUELPH

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

Bred by Mimi Voss (Md). **Owner:** The Fields Stable.

Trainer: Tom Voss. **Jockeys:** Xavier Aizpuru, Padge Whelan.

Completed collection of distaff stakes trophies with wins in the Margaret Henley and Valentine Memorial. Captured division title by beating boys in \$75,000 Palm Beach Stakes on final day of season and retires with a career record of eight wins, two seconds and a third in 15 races over jumps. Half-brother Hold Your Fire won over hurdles at Great Meadow in October.

TOP FIVE FILLIES/MARES

Horse	Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Earnings
Guelph	6	4	1	1	\$123,424
Class Shadow	7	3	2	1	88,068
Imagina	3	1	1	0	58,500
Sweet Shani	2	0	1	1	43,822
Jellyberry	6	1	3	1	36,400

Sponsor Northview Stallion Station rewards the owners of the top three fillies/mares with stallion seasons.



Tod Marks

Guelph won the filly/mare championship for the second time, and was retired at the end of the season.

"She was out of Distant Drumroll, who is a full-sister to Brigade Of Guards so the jumping was there," said Tom Voss. "He was as good a jumper as you've ever seen. She jumped just like she does now the first day she jumped. Never backed off, she just went. You had to be real careful because she was always getting ahead of herself."

Guelph made five flat starts, none of them very good, and won her jump debut for a \$15,000 tag at Atlantic City in May 2005. She won three more times that year and finished as the novice and filly/mare champion. Brought back in time for Fair Hill in 2006, Guelph flipped while being saddled and (unknown at the time) fractured her withers in 16 places. Despite the injury, she finished second by a neck while giving 21 pounds to winner Isla Mujeres. Shelved for 17 months with the injury, Guelph returned in 2007 but lost all three starts last fall.

"She didn't run any good at all last year, I don't know why," said the trainer. "Maybe she just wasn't ready to run off the layoff."

Plenty ready to run this year, Guelph opened with a stylish score in the Margaret Henley at Nashville in May. She stole the start, led by 12 lengths early, took a breather, and drew off late to win by 3 1/2. That gave Guelph victories in four of the five filly/mare stakes on the circuit and she made it a clean sweep two weeks later in Fair Hill's Valentine. Third in the 2005 race and second in 2006, she simply dominated this year in a 2 1/2-length score. Fair Hill favors jumpers, and there are few better than Guelph.

"I'll never forget her run at Fair Hill," said Voss. "I don't think I've ever seen a jumping performance like that. Ever. You can't find much fault with the way she runs most of her races, but that day was incredible. That's the one I'll always think about."

After Fair Hill, Guelph tested males in Saratoga's A.P. Smithwick and finished a well-beaten fifth after

never being able to establish a lead. Saratoga rewards speed more than jumping, meaning Guelph couldn't use her strength and it showed. Rested until October, she reappeared in the \$50,000 Peapack at the Mercks' home course Far Hills. She jumped flawlessly again and fought off challenges the whole race, even when looking beaten just before the last fence. Class Shadow, three years Guelph's junior, never gave the favorite a break and won by 1 3/4 lengths despite a suspensory injury that ended her season. The win avenged two losses to Guelph earlier in the year and gave Class Shadow the lead in the filly/mare title picture.

Guelph narrowed the gap when she won Callaway's Crown Royal Stakes Nov. 1, giving up the lead late only to re-rally in the stretch. Trailing by less than \$10,000 as Palm Beach approached, the Guelph team sweated some late changes to race conditions (a planned filly/mare stakes didn't fill and the scheduled novice stakes was opened up to maximize entries). Scheduled for retirement after the Nov. 29 race, Guelph headed south needing to finish in the top two to secure the crown.

Voss pondered the decision to run once more.

"You get worried, you put all this pressure on yourself," he said. "I hate saying you're going to run them one more time because if something happens you look like a fool. You appreciate everything she does for you and then you say you're going to run her one more time..."

Guelph took care of the happy ending, flying around the tight course and kicking clear of Dr. Bloomer late in a four-horse field to collect the \$45,000 winner's check.

"It's not going to get any better than that," said Laddie Merck afterward. "Let her retire on top, she's proven everything she could and deserves to go out on top."

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2008 Record

Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Earnings
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Good Lovin'

BY BRIAN NADEAU

Danielle Hodsdon dismounted from The Price Of Love after his maiden win at the Carolina Cup this March. She thought of the past, the present and – most importantly – the future.

"There's always a worry first time out for the year they might be a little short, especially a horse that wants to be a little keen," Hodsdon said. "The fact that he ran around this course in the fall (of 2007) helped because this is a tough course to bring a youngish horse . . . It's as fast as any place we go and he handled it. That should mean good things later on."

Sure, Hodsdon's prediction wasn't exactly Nostradamus-like, but it was accurate.

The "good things" came this summer at Saratoga, where The Price Of Love took a pair of \$70,000 novice stakes. A 5-year-old from the long line of Bill Pape-Jonathan Sheppard homebreds, The Price Of Love ran seven times, with three wins, a second and two thirds, as his \$122,792 in earnings led all chasers who entered 2008 as maidens over hurdles.

The chestnut son of Prenup started nine times on the flat before making his hurdle debut in October 2007. He flashed talent that day at Philadelphia Park, running a close second to Rainiero. After two more in-the-money finishes at Callaway and Camden, he took a winter vacation and got ready for 2008.

He returned at Camden and showed renewed toughness, scoring by a half-length after battling on the lead the entire way. A neck loss – while giving the winner a dozen pounds – in an optional



Tod Marks

The Price Of Love flies a fence at Saratoga in the Jonathan Kiser Novice Stakes.

THE PRICE OF LOVE

Ch. g. 5 Prenup-Solitary Signal, Caveat. Bred by Bill Pape & Jonathan Sheppard.
Owner: Bill Pape. **Trainer:** Jonathan Sheppard. **Jockeys:** Danielle Hodsdon, Richard Boucher.

Led all first-year novices (horses that started 2008 as maidens over hurdles) by a handy margin, thanks to a pair of restricted stakes scores at Saratoga . . . Won first start of the year at Carolina Cup, after placing in three starts during 2007.

TOP FIVE FIRST-YEAR NOVICES

	Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Earnings
The Price Of Love	7	3	1	2	\$122,792
Class Shadow	7	3	2	1	88,068
Seer	5	2	1	1	76,480
Spy In The Sky	6	2	1	1	75,370
Dynaski	4	2	2	0	72,700

claimer at Middleburg had Sheppard thinking big.

The Price Of Love made his stakes debut against Be Certain and Planets Aligned in the National Hunt Cup at Radnor in May and checked in third, beaten 15 3/4 lengths.

Sheppard regrouped for Saratoga, pointing The Price Of Love to the \$70,000 Jonathan Kiser Novice July 31. Under a ground-saving ride by Hodsdon, The Price Of Love flew up the rail late to overtake Be Certain for a half-length score. Like many before him, The Price Of Love took to the Spa.

"He's the type of horse that loves attention and I think he thrived up here because of it," Hodsdon said after the race. "Up here with a nine-horse string, instead of at the farm with 50, they get a lot of personalized attention and I think he really, really thrives on that."

The Price Of Love doubled up at Saratoga in the \$70,000 Mickey Walsh Aug. 21, proving resolute in the lane to fend off Dynaski and Seer by a neck. Following Saratoga he ran fifth in the Monmouth County in September, struggling over the hard ground, and finished his championship season with a solid third in the Grade I AFLAC Championship at Callaway Gardens.

The Price Of Love continued the recent victorious run of Sheppard-Pape homebreds at the Spa, joining Mixed Up and Divine Fortune as Saratoga success stories. Hodsdon rode them all, but admitted the similarities end there.

"They're all very different horses," she said at Camden. "This little horse is a ball of energy all the time. He will bounce around in the paddock almost every morning when you go out. He doesn't have a mean bone in his body, but he can't walk, he's got to bounce around. As soon as you set him to work, he's all business."

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Why Certainly

BY SEAN CLANCY

Michael Chasanoff didn't want to go to the barn. The owner simply didn't want to see one of his horses, 3-year-old maiden Be Certain, so stayed away from trainer Roger Horgan's shed-row altogether.

"I paid \$300,000 for him and he ran twice, finished seventh and eighth, and didn't try. I didn't like him. I didn't want to be around him," Chasanoff said. "Roger called me and asked why I hadn't been coming to the barn. I said, 'I have a horse out there I don't like, get \$5,000 for him, anything.'"

They didn't take the \$5,000.

Instead, Horgan called his old boss, Tom Voss, and set up a school at Saratoga.

"You bring the horse, I'll bring the rider," Voss said. "We'll see what happens."

What happened was a revelation. Be Certain jumped like he knew it was 'next stop Suffolk' and he shipped to Voss' Maryland barn with sights on the 3-year-old series.

Be Certain saved his career, his relationship with Chasanoff and earned a championship this year as the leading second-year novice with \$168,138.

Bred in New York by Sugar Maple Farm, the son of Kentucky Derby winner Thunder Gulch made his career debut at Far Hills last year, finishing third behind divisional champion C R's Deputy. Be Certain won his next start, the Raymond G. Woolfe at Camden. This year, the 4-year-old put together two wins and five seconds in eight starts. He actually finished second the other time, but was disqualified when his jockey failed to weigh in at Stoneybrook this spring.

"It's a hell of a story. It was Roger's idea," Chasanoff said. "He took him over there to Voss and they were standing there with their eyes wide open, he jumped phenomenally from the first day. Roger called afterward and I said, 'Roger, do it.' The next thing I heard is that Tom Voss is starting him off in a stake. I thought, 'this man is nuts.' He finished third, I couldn't believe it. It's been remarkable ever since."

Voss started this year early with Be Certain, making a rare foray to Aiken where he finished second in March. Two weeks later, he was second at Stoneybrook but lost the check. Things began

BE CERTAIN

Ch. g. 4 Thunder Gulch-Do Mountain Doo, Mountain Cat.
Bred by Sugar Maple Farm (NY).

Owner: Alnoff Stable. Trainer: Tom Voss.

Jockeys: Xavier Aizpuru, Padge Whelan, Matt McCarron.

Sophomore steeplechaser finished second only to Good Night Shirt on the overall earnings list, despite settling for second money five times.

TOP FIVE SECOND-YEAR NOVICES

	Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Earnings
Be Certain	8	2	5	0	\$168,138
Dr. Bloomer	8	2	1	2	125,550
Swagger Stick	10	1	3	1	116,344
Red Letter Day	8	1	1	1	68,720
Planets Aligned	3	1	1	0	60,500

to jell after that, Be Certain handled a decent allowance field at Great Meadow and then upset stablemate Planets Aligned with a game effort in Radnor's National Hunt Cup.

Freshened until Saratoga, he ran twice, failing by a half-length to The Price Of Love in the Jonathan Kiser and again by the same margin to Dark Equation in the New York Turf Writers Cup, his first start in an open stakes. He just missed to Seer in the Monmouth County at Monmouth Park and then managed another strong effort when second to Good Night Shirt in the Grand National. Four straight seconds can be frustrating but he picked up lucrative checks and as one of the few 4-year-olds taking on big game, the future is certainly ahead of him. And for Chasanoff, who was once a big player in harness racing, the future is in jump racing.

"I love your game. The people are the best part of it. It's what the (flat) runners used to be," Chasanoff said. "I had heard of jump racing, that's about all. I didn't have any idea where it went, what the purse structure was, anything. Now I love it. It's been really nice. The people – that's the big difference. I have high regard and respect for the people. It's savory and clean, I'm enjoying that."

And enjoying Be Certain.

"Now, I love the horse. How fickle owners are, huh?" Chasanoff said. "I'm proud of him, he found his niche. We bought another one, Ground Frost from Bobby Frankel, to go jumping. Now, Tom keeps talking about him. We're in the jumpers."



Doug Lees

Be Certain blazed to the second spot on the 2008 earnings list.

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Fool Him Once...

BY BRIAN NADEAU

Ken Ramsey didn't build a fortune by hanging on to bad investments. So when trainer Niall O'Callaghan called in 1996 to say people were interested in buying one of Ramsey's horses, the Kentucky businessman didn't think twice.

"The horse wasn't doing too well on the flat and didn't really fit into our program," Ramsey recalled. "Niall called me up and said some people stopped by and wanted to buy him. 'How much?' I asked. He said they would pay \$5,000 for him. 'Get the check,' I told him."

Add another chapter to the book titled 'The one that got away.'

The horse was Flat Top and he would go on to win two Eclipse Awards and more than \$500,000 as a steeplechaser.

"Well, you know how the rest of the story goes," Ramsey said. "But I learned something that day. I knew that if they weren't working out with our flat program we still had a chance to make them into steeplechase horses, and that's what we've been trying to do ever since."

While Ramsey and his wife Sarah have hoisted some of flat racing's biggest trophies with standouts Kitten's Joy and Roses In May, working-class hero Slip Away gave the Artemus, Ky. native his first steeplechase award. The 2008 claimer of the year started eight times in five states from May to November, winning five and placing in one other for \$56,300 on the season. His four wins and \$43,800 in the claiming/starter ranks gave him the title. John Lennon would have been proud.

"It's quite an honor. Any time a horse wins five races – no matter what they are – it's quite an accomplishment," Ramsey said. "And Slip Away won his last four in a row by a combined 29 1/4 lengths, so it gives us a lot to look forward to."

Indeed.

Slip Away started the season at High Hope for trainer Tom Voss, winning a maiden by a measured three-quarters of a length. Ramsey admittedly got "a little ambitious" and ran Slip Away twice in novice



Slip Away gave owner Ken Ramsey his first seasonal steeplechase honor.

SLIP AWAY

Gr./Ro. g. 5 Skip Away-Aurora Slew, Slew's Royalty.

Bred by Glencrest Farm, Trontz & Madison (Ky).

Owner: Ken and Sarah Ramsey. Trainer: Tom Voss.

Jockeys: Xavier Aizpuru, Matt McCarron, Padge Whelan.

Earned \$43,800 in claimers and starter allowances, nearly \$10,000 more than runner-up Bow Strada, with four wins and a second. Including starts outside claiming ranks, matched champion Good Night Shirt with five total victories in 2008, and earned \$56,300.

stakes this summer at Saratoga. The 5-year-old son of Skip Away checked out of the Spa with a fifth and a pull-up.

Voss and Ramsey regrouped and lowered their expectations, and entered Slip Away in a \$10,000 claimer at Foxfield Sept. 28. The result was encouraging as Slip Away ran second behind Cradle Will Rock. It was the last time he would taste defeat in 2008.

Slip Away started his tear with a 6-length win in a \$15,000 claimer at Morven Park Oct. 11 and then

put on an even better show at Aiken two weeks later in a 17 1/4-length tour de force. Voss and Ramsey took advantage of Slip Away's conditions and ran him in a pair of starter allowances – where he could not be claimed. Little changed. Slip Away won by 5 at Camden Nov. 16 and closed out his campaign with a win at Palm Beach Nov. 29.

If Flat Top authored Ramsey's steeplechase handbook then Slip Away wrote the appendix. Flat Top started on the flat and made the successful transformation to jumps. Ramsey used the blueprint to score jump victories with Party Airs and Man From Artemus. Slip Away paved his own path. Bought to be a flat runner, he never panned out and never actually ran on the flat. He made his career debut until 2006 in the Woolfe Memorial at Camden. Showing ample promise, he finished second in his lone start as a 3-year-old.

Slip Away returned as a promising maiden in 2007, but pulled up at High Hope and fell while leading over the last at Colonial Downs. The fall knocked Slip Away out for the rest of

that season, but he returned with plenty of punch in 2008.

"We bought him with the thought that he would be a good flat horse, but it never worked out. He had a few problems and so we decided to turn him over to Tom," Ramsey said. "Tom's a great trainer and we've had a lot of success together, so we knew that he could still make a nice horse. He ran big in his first start over jumps but then nothing went right and he had some bad luck in 2007, so we just gave him some time to develop and it's really worked out great."

Slip Away's impressive run has Ramsey thinking of a bigger stage in 2009.

"The old gray," as we call him, is doing really good. He's back on the farm now and we'll send him back to Tom next spring and look to get him ready," Ramsey said. "He'll only be 6 next year and he's really turned on the form, so we'd like to step him up a bit and see if him can win a few stakes races. Maybe next year we'll be having a whole different conversation."

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The X Factor

BY SEAN CLANCY

Xavier Aizpuru escaped to the United States four years ago. Down and out as a journeyman jump jockey in England, he needed to revitalize himself and his career. Consider it done.

Two championships later, Aizpuru has proved that being in the right place at the right time is a crucial part of success.

Aizpuru regrets one thing about his four-year stint at or near the top of the American jockey colony – that he didn't come four years earlier.

The 33-year-old defended his 2007 title with a workmanlike 2008 performance that hinged on being in the right place at the right time throughout the year. He didn't control a big horse like Willie Dowling, who rode the wings of Good Night Shirt to lead the money-won category, and he failed to set Saratoga alight like he did last year, but Aizpuru engineered 22 wins to far outdistance a hard-luck trio tied for second.

Padge Whelan won 14 races in his first year since moving his tack from England, despite breaking his ankle in May. Jody Petty, champion in 2005, won 14 races despite an injury-riddled season. Two-time champion Matt McCarron won his 14th race of the year at Palm Beach and suffered a career-ending injury four races later, retiring with a broken neck after falling in the feature.

Aizpuru shot to the top aboard Jack Fisher's arsenal, winning 12 races for the leading trainer, but also picked up seven key wins from Tom Voss. Liz Merryman, Jonathan Sheppard and Sanna Hendriks provided singles to complete the championship tally.

Right place, right time.

"That probably sums up my whole season to be honest," Aizpuru said. "I was more relaxed about it this year. I was tense to the end of last year; I just wanted to get that first one and for all I knew, it could have been my only one. This year, I let things happen."

And happen they did. The winners came from all directions – 16 over hurdles and six more over timber (at which Aizpuru merely dabbles) – and under the unlikeliest of scenarios.

The jockey looked back on his 22 wins and how they came to be:

Monte Bianco, Camden. "I wasn't named on him. I went to ride Swagger Stick and he colicked so I was basically going to Camden to ride a flat race. Jack called me and pretty much told me I was riding him."

Orpington, Middleburg. "It fell into place, Padge was riding Gigger and the last thing you want to do is be in front too early on him, a horse fell and he ended up in front. He wouldn't be the toughest horse to beat when he's in front."

Duke Of Earl, Great Meadow. "Again, it was lucky. Motel Affair slipped up on the bend. I was pretty much just staying on at that point and Willie nearly got knocked clean off his horse at the second to last, by the time he got free, I was clear."

Dreadnaught, Nashville. "Padge got hurt at the Gold Cup (and missed the rest of the spring). I've never ridden a horse who wanted to lose as much as he wanted to – he knew tricks I didn't even know. Eventually he couldn't help it. He's a very talented horse but there's a lot going on upstairs."

Guelph, Nashville. "I didn't have a filly so that worked out. What a fun ride she is. It was a great credit to Voss and everybody to get her to perform like that."

Gryffindor, Willowdale. "Another for Voss. I had won on him last fall so that's a big plus. He was pretty tough in that spot and he just got it done."

Duke Of Earl, Radnor. "He was on fire that day. He loves that place."

Monte Bianco, Radnor. "He turned the tables on everybody. I thought he was good enough to do it. The course is always a question mark, horses either like Radnor or they don't. I wasn't surprised he won."

Slip Away, High Hope. "Again, spares for Voss. Jack ran a couple and could have put his foot down but he was kind enough to let me ride all of Voss' horses. Relentless galloper, jumped his way to the front at the first and kept galloping."

London Grove, Fair Hill. "Robbie Walsh was named on him, he had done all the schooling and then couldn't ride him. I wouldn't say I was doing cartwheels when I was asked to ride him but I know Liz does a good job with jumpers so it was better than clicking your heels in the tent. He won nicely."

Guelph, Fair Hill. "That was sweet, it meant she did the clean sweep of all the filly and mare stakes. She was reserved at Iroquois, but after that run, she was a lot more aggressive, I knew she would take a lot of catching."

Motel Affair, Fair Hill. "That's a funny one. I was supposed to ride Gryffindor but he carried a lot of weight so it made sense to switch Chip (Miller) and I. We switched about two races before, I had just won on Gryffindor but I was keen to ride Motel Affair."

Seer, Colonial Downs. "I wanted to ride News Flash because I just got beat on him at Fair Hill, but Jack put his foot down, one of the few times he did all year. I could see his point, he has to do what's right for his owners. Wouldn't you know, the horse goes on and wins and Jack says, 'I told you so.'"

Seer, Monmouth Park. "A long dry spell, broke my wrist playing soccer and missed two rides at Saratoga. The ground was rock hard and he never picked up the bridle but he attacked fences – I had never jumped fences like that. He impressed me."

See **AIZPURU** page 37 ►



Tod Marks



XAVIER AIZPURU

Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Win%	Top3%	Earnings
83	22	13	11	.27	.55	\$527,777

Defending champion took the lead in May with a triple at Fair Hill and never looked back, eventually capturing his second riding crown by a comfortable margin. Booted home a dozen for Jack Fisher, as well as a healthy chunk for Tom Voss. English-born jock has equalled or bettered his previous win total each year, and now owns 75 career NSA victories.

Aizpuru —

■ Continued from page 36

Confined, Shawan Downs. "There's always a chance Matt's going to pick up the second one for Sheppard but he had a filly to ride and Dani (Danielle Hodsdon) said she would probably ride Confined, then she hands me the colors for Confined. We got down to the start and my only instructions were to hunt around and see what happens. I said, 'If I'm hunting around in this stuff (a driving rainstorm), I'm hunting around from the front.' She loved it, jumped from fence to fence, and galloped them into the ground."

Meadow Larking, Virginia Fall. "A horse I rode a lot over hurdles and he always jumped like a timber horse. I was loath to say it, but he was one of the few horses I said, 'This horse will make a timber horse.' The biggest problem was his owner (Gil Johnston) — she's almost against timber racing as much as I am. Once she agreed to it, I knew we were in trouble. Jack sent me out there and said go have fun. He won impressively."

Monte Bianco, Virginia Fall. "That was the day I thought, 'This is the best timber horse in the country.' Effortless. He flew the second-to-last and it was over. Over."

Slip Away, Morven Park. "Padge picked Motel Affair. The beauty of it is I don't have to make choices, there's no pressure."

Move West, Morven Park. "Jody gets hurt. Who would have ever thought Sanna Hendriks would be coming in the jocks' tent looking for me to ride her timber horse? How could you turn down a ride like him? Morven Park, against that competition? All I had to do was stay on him."

Rare Bush, Far Hills. "Exactly. A great effort by the horse and the trainer to get there off the layoff and run like that. I felt bad for the horse, he just missed out winning the Carolina Cup, the Temple Gwathmey, so in a way it's karma to win (runner-up Rare Bush got the race when winner Cradle Will Rock interfered with third-place finisher Preemptive Strike). It was a huge effort and he got beat by a better horse on the day, but you've got to jump and you've got to jump clean. I was jogging back and Sanna said, 'You'll get this.' Again, a little bit of luck, right place, right time."

Bubble Economy, Camden. "He pulled his usual stunt in the Pennsylvania Hunt Cup (where he refused for the second year in a row). Jack decided he was going to Camden and I was riding. Robbie was already committed to He's A Conniver. He was brilliant. I felt like a passenger, I guess that's how you have to be with him. Jack came down and said, 'You're fired. I figured out what to do with him, change riders every race.' I said, 'I've got my win, thank you very much.' One day he'll be able to jump around any course. With me? I'm 33, I'd like to just point that out."

Seeking No More, Palm Beach. "I thought he would be tough, but I had said that four or five times about him this year. You can't say this was right place, right time because I've ridden him all year."

Sixteen horses. Five trainers. Dozens of scenarios, times and places. Twenty-two victories. And another championship for Aizpuru.



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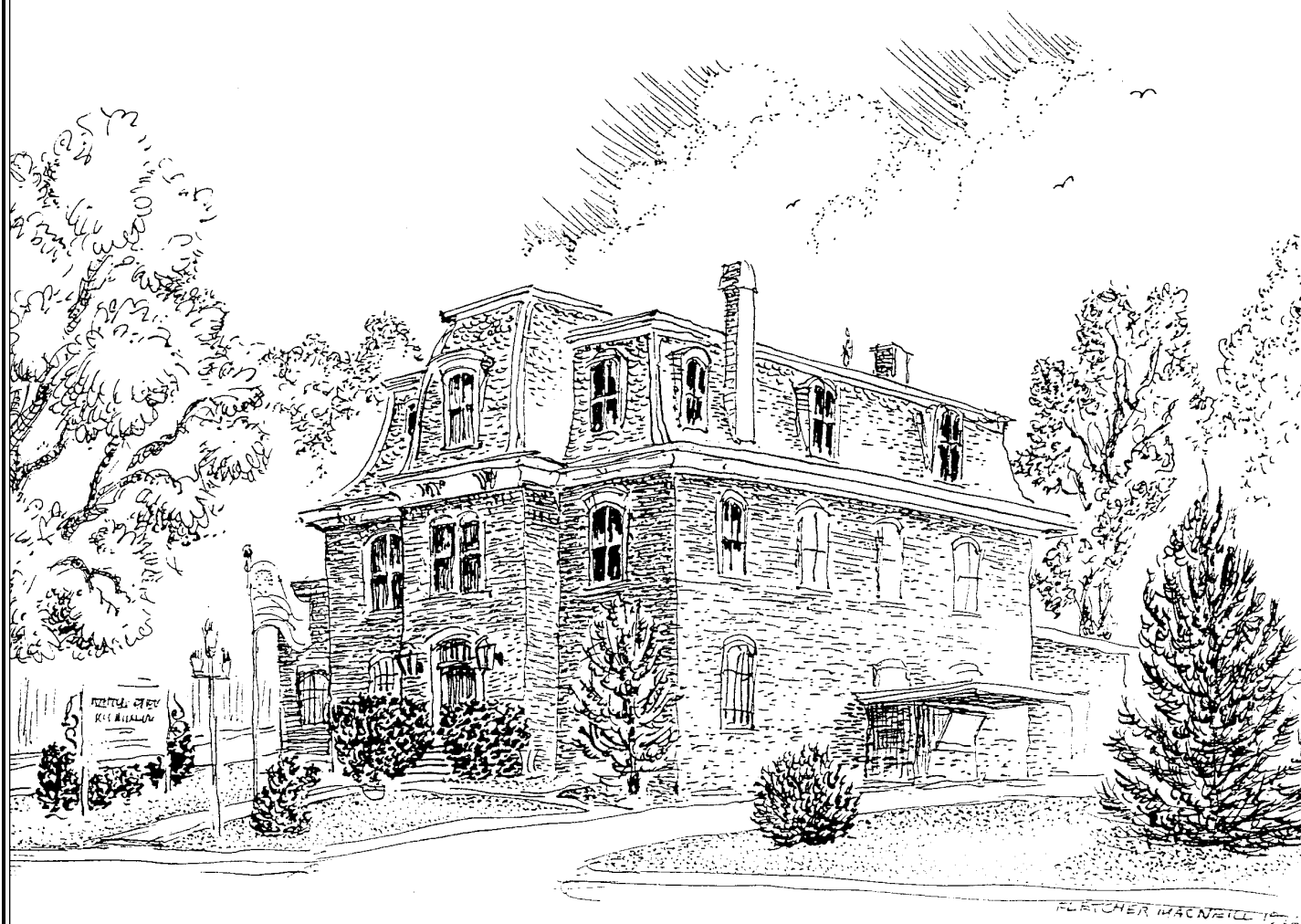
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Untied

BY JOE CLANCY

L leading the NSA trainer standings by two wins over Tom Voss at the start of the season's final day, Jack Fisher lobbied for a tie.

"It would be more fun to share it – I hope he wins two races," said Fisher.

Voss won his two races at Palm Beach, but contentedly settled for second behind his neighbor, friend and chief rival Fisher, who pulled down a single victory to clinch his fourth championship in the past six years.

"He deserves it as much or more than anyone," said Voss.

Fisher won 26 races, trained two divisional champions, won five races with Good Night Shirt. Voss won 25 races, trained two divisional champions, won five races with Slip Away. Fisher ran away with the earnings title, setting a record with \$1,156,907. Voss won at a 26-percent clip.

Along the way, the two men continued a friendship that mixes equal parts respect and chops-busting. Fisher (45) is the younger, louder one who shouts things across race courses and barn areas. Voss (58) is the older, quieter one who mumbles instructions and talks to his horses. One dips, one smokes. They often combine resources and ship their horses together. It's common to see one tack the other's horse. At Callaway this year, Fisher saddled two Voss winners including champion mare Guelph – a task that Voss doesn't dole out lightly.

"We're great friends. We don't give each other a break, ever, but we're fine, we're good," Voss said.

And they are the best at what they do. Fisher and Voss run horses wherever the NSA circuit goes – winning with equal aplomb over timber, in claimers, in stakes, with veterans and young horses alike. After 2008, they are tied with four championships apiece. They have won eight of the last 12, seven of the last nine.

Champion in 2007, Fisher came into 2008 as the favorite thanks to his usual large and productive stable. Big names Good Night Shirt and Bubble Economy returned. Monte Bianco looked like a player over timber. Claimer Duke Of Earl could be counted on for a few. Quality maidens flock to the Fisher barn the way free agents go to the Yankees.

Fourth in 2007, Voss also made any short list for the trainer championship. Despite not having a Grade I horse of Good Night Shirt's caliber, the barn was loaded. Be Certain and Planets Aligned led everybody's second-season novice list. Coal Dust could contend in the Maryland timber races. The barn boasted its usual contingent of classy maidens.



Tod Marks

Jack Fisher trained dogs – and horses – to new levels of success in 2008.

By the end of April, Fisher had notched four wins. By the end of May it was 10 including two Grade I wins by Good Night Shirt, a six-figure Virginia Gold Cup score by Bubble Economy and two timber wins by Monte Bianco. Voss more than matched and took a 12-10 lead into June with major wins by Be Certain, Planets Aligned and Guelph.

Quiet (for them) in the summer, Fisher won a pair and Voss picked up three in June, July and August though he suffered through six seconds.

The championship pendulum swung in September. Voss led 15-12 after Saratoga. Fisher opened the month with an upset win by Quem Se Atreve Sept. 13 at Kentucky Downs. 15-13. A week later at Monmouth Park, Fisher's Seer beat Voss' Be Certain by a head. 15-14. The next day, Good Night Shirt won the Grade I Lonesome Glory at Belmont Park. 15-15.

Fisher never trailed again.

He won three at the Virginia Fall Races Oct. 4-5, taking a timber stakes with Monte Bianco, a maiden timber with Meadow Larking and a maiden hurdle with Fiscal Storm. Voss answered with a triple – two wins at Morven Park and one at Philadelphia – the next weekend.

Fisher and Voss steamed into the star-studded meets on Oct. 18 tied at 18 wins apiece. Fisher won three stakes

JACK FISHER

Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Win%	Top3%	Earnings
122	26	12	21	.21	.48	\$1,156,907

Set a new earnings record in becoming first NSA trainer to surpass \$1 million in single-season purse earnings . . . Trained Good Night Shirt to second consecutive championship . . . Bubble Economy gave Fisher his ninth timber championship . . . Fourth overall training championship . . . Advanced to second on career earnings list with more than \$7.9 million . . . Installed state-of-the-art Polytrack training surface before fall season.



at Far Hills and the International Gold Cup 270 miles south. Voss won just one and the title chase looked over. Until Voss started it again – winning one at Aiken, two at Callaway Gardens and one at Camden – and closed the gap to two heading to the finale at Palm Beach. Fisher's horse Seeking No More broke his maiden (in his seventh try) in the day's second race, Voss' Dreadnaught fell at the last while in contention in the third, clinching the championship. Content, Fisher watched the day's final two races – both won by Voss.

"I don't think either of us really care," Fisher said. "Well, we're counting, and we care, but we've both won the title before so it's different."

Like his star pupil Good Night Shirt, Fisher turned in a year for the ages. He won 13 stakes, trained the overall champion and the timber champion.

His horses won seven of the 10 races worth \$100,000 or more. His horses earned almost 22 percent of the NSA's entire purse structure.

Voss marveled at his former employee's growth as a trainer.

"You can be leading trainer and break them all down, so it's a fine line," said Voss. "Jack's gotten better at getting horses to next year and keeping them good. They come back for more, they're running better now than they were a few years ago."

Fisher doesn't see himself that differently than he ever did, but does admit to be paying attention to Voss.

"The way he treats his horses, that's what I like – I always look at that," said Fisher. "He's out grazing them the day before, he's working, he's watching. Tom does his horses differently."

So does Fisher.

Jack Fisher

Champion Trainer

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Mr. Shirt

BY BRIAN NADEAU

Sonny Via left Far Hills after the 2007 Breeders' Cup Grand National cold, muddy and disappointed. Not necessarily in that order. His soon-to-be champion Good Night Shirt succumbed to local legend McDynamo and the soggy turf course and Via couldn't wait 'til next year. Though he would claim his first NSA Champion Owner trophy later that fall the countdown to next October had already begun.

Fast-forward to Far Hills in 2008. McDynamo was retired. Blue skies graced the grounds and a firm turf course guaranteed a level playing field. And Via couldn't see.

Back home in Free Union, Va., he battled a nasty case of bronchitis. Binoculars and Bloody Marys took a back seat to reading glasses and Robitussin. So much for that countdown to Far Hills.

"That bronchitis is a terrible thing. It came on me the night before we were going to leave and it was a real bummer. So I couldn't go and the race wasn't on TV. Well, I had to go about it another way," Via said. "So I had them call me up and I got to listen to the race on (Foxfield race director and longtime friend) Pat Butterfield's cell phone. Here he is, standing up there behind (announcer) Tony Bentley in the tower, holding his phone up while the race is going on. Well, they turn for home and Pat gets so excited about the finish that he is screaming and yelling and that comes over the p.a. system and you can hear it in the crowd. It was tough not to be there but that was a pretty neat way to experience it."

Like a 7-year-old huddled next to his radio listening to Red Barber's every word, Via balanced on the wire as Bentley gave the blow-by-blow description of the Grand National. In the end Good Night Shirt finished 4 lengths to the good and suddenly a bad case of bronchitis felt more like a something that would subside after an afternoon nap.

Via and Good Night Shirt experienced a lot of memorable moments in 2008 and together they rode the crest to repeat championships. The retired insurance salesman, often flanked at the track by his wife, Ann, used the less-is-more strategy en route to the title. Via campaigned only two horses in 2008, but when one of them is Good Night Shirt stable size ranks right next to chess players' height in terms of statistical importance.

The lanky chestnut streaked to a perfect season, winning five Grade I races and breaking his single-season earnings record with an astounding \$485,520. That total, coupled with the \$1,500 brought in by maiden 3-year-old Pleasant Top, easily distanced Calvin Houghland (\$361,928).

Good Night Shirt ended his season – and cemented Via's title – with a game win in the Colonial Cup at Camden Nov. 16. In his previous three Grade I wins of 2008, he won with consummate ease by open lengths. In the Colonial Cup, he was fully extended to the wire and scored by a neck over Preemptive Strike. The geared-down, 6-length wins are nice, but Good Night Shirt's determined victory just reinforced why Via is in the game.

"At Camden someone asked me, 'Do you get nervous?' Well of course I do; I don't know what's going to happen until it's over," Via said. "I was very impressed with Preemptive Strike, he ran the race of his life that day, and he got beat. Things like that happen. I left his owner Gail Thayer a message and congratulated her on a great race. That's what this game is all about."

Via, 78, won his first race (with So Eager) as part of a syndicate back in 1989. He went out on his own a



Tod Marks

Champion owner for the second consecutive year, Sonny Via greeted Willie Dowling after five Grade I victories by Good Night Shirt.

HAROLD A. "SONNY" VIA JR.

Rode the success of champion Good Night Shirt (only other horse to start was 3-year-old maiden Pleasant Top) to second consecutive owner championship. Reached third-highest single-season total in history behind \$596,991 and \$541,417 by Augustin Stable in 2000 and 2001. Moved horses to Jack Fisher in 2003 and has increased earnings total every year since.

2008 STATISTICS					Earnings
Sts	1st	2nd	3rd		
7	5	0	0		\$487,020

few years later and enjoyed more lows than highs before finally settling in with Jack Fisher in 2003. Things began to take off from there and Via has increased his earnings each and every year. The rise was due in large part to Good Night Shirt, who entered the fray in 2004.

Just four years later the two sit on top of the sport with a pair of championships.

Not that it was an easy road. Via's stable struggled in its infancy, and after a run of tough luck he actually decided to walk away. Though he was cajoled into rethinking his decision, obviously for the better, he took a lesson with him that he still carries.

"You've got to get mentally prepared for disappointment. You are going to go through a lot of hard times in this sport," Via said. "Far Hills, last year, it was disappointing that we didn't get it done. The weather blew in the night before and I knew it wasn't good. But I was prepared for that and so it was OK.

I've seen people fly apart and lose it, but you've got to get over it. You've got to be able to move on."

The only thing that rivals – and surpasses – Via's passion for winning is his passion for his horses. He learned long ago that you don't get into the sport with the idea of padding your bank account. So rather than clutch onto false expectations he channels his emotions into those that carry his teal and tan colors in the afternoon.

"I feel very close to my horses. It's not about the money or the championships. I've been saying that all along. I like being a part of it, that's for sure, but it's all about the horse," Via said. "Championships are nice, and we'll try to defend the titles next year for sure, but in the end it's all about the horses and we just try to do right by them."

So will there be more equine talent on Via's roster next year?

"Jack seems to think so," Via said with a laugh. "You always hope to have more, and I'm really looking forward to the other horses as much as I am to Good Night Shirt. Fantorini missed this year with an injury, but it looks like he'll be back for next year. And we've got Pleasant Top, who's just a big dumb kid that we're hoping will develop into something special. It's a real challenge, and it gives me a lot of adrenaline. In 2008 we had the target on our back. Next year there are a lot of younger horses coming along, some nice novice runners and some other prospects, so it's exciting. But we still have Good Night Shirt, and he will be 8 and coming into his prime in my opinion. Jeepers creepers, if he's sound, he's right where he belongs, right at the top."

A spot Via has grown accustomed to.



Thanks...

...to Padge Whelan, Xavier Aizpuru, Cyril Murphy and Rob Massey for the riding, Tom Voss and the team at Atlanta Hall for the training, and the stellar care for all these years.



From **Guelph**
and everyone at
The Fields Stable

Tod Marks photos



Here's to the team.



The horses won.
The help worked.
The jockeys rode.



The owners supported.

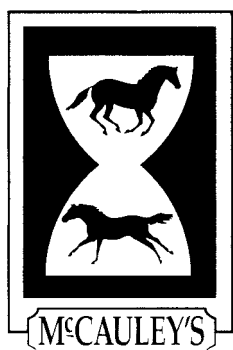
The race meets and racetracks put on the show.

And my wife put up with me.

I couldn't have done it without them.



Tod Marks & Doug Lees photos



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a visit
from



ST. Nicholas

*Twass the night before deadline, and all through the place,
Four editors struggled, with lots of white space.
Blank pages were laid on computers with care,
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there.*

Well, Santa *did* arrive at ST headquarters, and the jolly fellow left us a sackful of presents and awards to deliver:

A lawnchair: For trainer Kathy McKenna, so she can bide the time between her winners coming home and the race ending. She won five races by at least 22 lengths this past year, and three by 40 lengths or more.

A speedometer calibrated to MPH: For Irish jockey Paul Carberry, who must have set the cruise control incorrectly aboard Salford City at Saratoga.

Buckets of Water: For first-race winners Adam Helders, Will Haynes, Shane Burke and Ben Swope.

A new suit and a briefcase: For Matt McCarron. The two-time champion jockey was forced to retire after breaking his neck, collarbone, scapula (shoulder blade) and ribs in a fall from Orison at Palm Beach. On second thought, the would-be chef might prefer an apron and a spatula.

The Royal Chase trophy. For Sovereign Duty, winner of the 2008 Keeneland jump race. Sadly, it looks like he can keep it as the race won't be renewed for 2009.

The Where Have You Been? Award: Jockey Billy Santoro, age 58, won two races including the Grand National.

A replacement knee: For Jockey Chris Read who missed the fall season due to a bum bender.

A brass door knocker: For Coupe De Ville, who ran hard all year (10 starts, two seconds, four thirds) but finished as a maiden. Fellow maiden star News Flash (five seconds, two thirds) ran nine times without winning.

Upset of the Year: To Mecklenburg, who knocked off Dreadnaught at Atlanta.

A Rand McNally atlas: For the "Bop Brothers." Class Bop and Class Bopper went off course on the same day; Class Bop at Great Meadow and Class Bopper at Far Hills.

An automatic seat upgrade: For amateur jockey Brooks Durkee, who made the trip from his Florida home to win four races on the year.

Genealogy.com accounts: For steeplechase runners Distant Drumroll, Saturday Sunshine, Strawberry Angel, Gemini's Gem, Joli Princess, Maternity Leave and stallion Prime Legacy – all produced 2008 steeplechase winners.

Best Victory Celebration (On Foot): Good Night Shirt's "groupies" after the Iroquois.



Charlie Fenwick



Mecklenburg and Will Haynes



Matt McCarron

Best Victory Celebration (Mounted): Amateur jockey Charlie Fenwick's glee when crossing the finish line aboard Askim in the Maryland Hunt Cup.

Best Victory Celebration (Dismounted): Matt McCarron's Bart Connor impersonation in the Saratoga winner's circle.

Best Victory Celebration (Bar): The Dark Equation team seemingly entertained all of Saratoga in the Parting Glass after the Turf Writers.

Neil Diamond's "Coming to America" mp3: For jockey Padge Whelan, who stepped right into the role as Tom Voss' go-to jockey, winning 14 races. If not for a broken ankle suffered at Great Meadow in the spring, he might have been champion.

A rocking chair: For Dr. Ramsey, winner at the 2008 Pennsylvania Hunt Cup – he's still got it at 14.

A dome: For Shawan Downs.

Best Season by a Small Trainer: Camden-based Dave Washer won three races on the year, picking up two spring scores with Junood and a Palm Beach win with Roseland, from just 12 starts.

Breeder of the Year: Mignon Smith and Meda Cahaba Stable. Class is in session.

Best Group Effort: Bubble Economy, Miles Ahead, Hot Springs and Monte Bianco. The Fantastic Four provided a fantastic finish in the Virginia Gold Cup.

Best Group Effort II: The Price Of Love, Be Certain, Bee Charmer and Red Letter Day. The margins in a July 31 novice stakes at Saratoga were a half-length, a neck and a neck.

Best Performance in a Defeat: Preemptive Strike's runner-up effort in the Colonial Cup.

Best Performance in Defeat (timber division): To Tacloban, who gave his all to finish second to Rochester at Winterthur despite spotting the winner \$1 million in earnings. Shouldn't there be a rule against graded stakes horses running at Winterthur?

Claim of the Year: To Richard Valentine and Jacqueline Ohrstrom. They won the shake for \$20,000 claimer Four Schools, who promptly won the \$50,000 Zeke Ferguson.

Missed Claim of the Year: To everyone. Slip Away ran for a \$10,000 tag at Foxfield in September and won four times after that.

Best Single Jump: To Private Attack, for his leap over the final fence in the Grand National. After three horses had fallen in the timber stakes, he pinged the last like it was the first.

Best Use of the Condition Book: In the horse's first start in almost two years, trainer Doug Fout squeezed High Action into an optional claimer at Colonial Downs in June, then springboarded to a win in the Grade II A.P. Smithwick Memorial at Saratoga.

See **PRESENTS** page 45 ►



Congratulations "Gov" on the Breeders' Cup win by Forever Together

*From Cathy,
Joseph, Daniel,
Diana, David,
and the Ashwell team*



Barbara Livingston photos

Presents —

■ Continued from page 43

Overlay of the Year: To Wheels Up At Noon in a training flat race at Fair Hill. The flat stakes winner went off at 4-5, and should have been 1-9.

Best Flat Track Performance: Also to Wheels Up At Noon. Eldon Farm's hurdle prospect was so good on the flat that Doug Fout never got him over jumps in 2008. In five starts, all stakes, he won twice and finished second once for \$191,880. The jumps will have to wait.

Best Flat Track Performance II: To Jonathan Sheppard and Forever Together, who took Breeders' Cup Filly and Mare Turf in California.

Best Training Flat Race: Saratoga Open House. The stars come out at Saratoga and this race emphasized the point. Dark Equation led Mixed Up, High Action and The Price Of Love home. Though Mixed Up would not see action, Dark Equation took the Grade I Turf Writers, stablemate High Action annexed the Grade II A.P. Smithwick and The Price Of Love got untracked for his novice championship by taking the Jonathan Kiser and Mickey Walsh. Key race anyone?

Best-Bred Winner: Tax Ruling, a son of Dynaformer and the Mr. Prospector mare Fantastic Find. Fantastic Find was a Grade I winner and half-sister to Grade I winners Dancing Spree and Furlough. As a broodmare she produced Finder's Fee, who won a pair of Grade I stakes.

The Brad Pitt/Jennifer Aniston Bad Relationship Award: To Xavier Aizpuru and Swagger Stick, who parted company more times than they stayed intact.

The Red Light Award: To Jamaica Me Laugh, who stopped and wracked up half the field in the timber at Fair Hill.

Vezina Trophy: To jockey Jeff Murphy, who saved himself from Algezir's blunder at the second-last in the Hobkirk Hill at Camden.

The Brett Favre Award: To Jack Fisher, who came out of retirement to ride one race, a third on Bubble Economy in the Grand National.

Best Maiden Race: Radnor's Sport of Kings maiden, won by Dynaski, included six subsequent winners — Nat Grew, Dubai Sunday, Rainbows For Luck, Right Hand Red, Seer and Seeking No More.

Best Performance Under Difficult Circumstances: To the Haynes family and trainer Mike Berryman. They turned in a superb year in the results pages, even as they recovered from the loss of husband/father/friend Bruce Haynes.

Memories: To the people connected to Imagina, the first filly or mare to win the Carolina Cup. She was lost to injuries sustained in a fall at Radnor in May.

The Diego Maradona Award: To Xavier Aizpuru, who broke his wrist playing soccer this summer.

A nice hot bath: For Cuse, who started more times (13) than any steeplechaser in 2008.

A big box of red ribbons: To Tom Voss. His horses finished second 23 times (at least five more than any other trainer's) in 2008 — and he finished second (by one win) to Jack Fisher in the trainer standings.

And to all a good night!



Tod Marks
MOMENT'S PEACE. Rory Young (son of jockey Paddy Young) entertained jockey Danielle Hodsdon between races at Fair Hill in May.

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2008 NSA Champions

Highweight Amateur Timber Jockey – George Hundt Jr.

The seven-race highweight timber division stopped at My Lady's Manor, Grand National, Winterthur, Willowdale, Virginia Fall, Morven Park and the Pennsylvania Hunt Cup. Hundt didn't miss a race. Last year's champion repeated by winning at Winterthur with Michele Marieschi and Morven Park with Music To My Ears, both trained by Richard Valentine. His three seconds earned him the tie-breaker over Shane Burke, who scored back-to-back wins (by a combined 63 lengths) aboard Haddix and Western Fling.

Amateur Jockey – Will Haynes

Tennessean came into his own in 2008, his third year on the circuit. Haynes got his first sanctioned win at the season's first meet, as he and Classy Brute broke their maidens together at Aiken. Picked up another win for trainer Mike Berryman aboard Mecklenberg in Atlanta then doubled at Block House, taking a claimer on Fabi's Legacy for Linda Klein and winning the feature with Classy Brute. For the year, the 18-year-old finished with a symmetrical four wins, four seconds, four thirds from 31 rides.

Apprentice Jockey – Liam McVicar

Haynes and McVicar each booted home four winners, but McVicar gets the crown based on nine seconds. Irish-born jockey doubled his career total and picking up a pair of stakes wins for trainer Jimmy Day. After piloting Spy In The Sky to a maiden score at Middleburg, McVicar steered him to the Saratoga winner's circle in the \$70,000 Happy Intellectual Stakes then upset the Noel Laing at Montpelier aboard Triple Dip. Also won for Karen Gray, helping Cuse collect his elusive maiden at Great Meadow.

Timber Jockey – Xavier Aizpuru

The English jockey may claim that timber racing isn't his usual cup of tea, but he took the honors with six wins (from just eight mounts). He scored three times aboard Monte Bianco, including stakes victories in the Radnor Hunt Cup and Chronicle Cup. Other timber scores came aboard Meadow Larking, Bubble Economy and Move West.

Timber Trainer – Jack Fisher

The tag-team of timber champion Bubble Economy and the aforementioned Monte Bianco did the heavy lifting, contributing three wins each, while Shiny Emblem and Meadow Larking added individual tallies to give Fisher a one-win margin over last year's leader Sanna Hendriks.

Timber Owner – Irv Naylor

Returning to his customary spot after a brief absence, Naylor led all owners with \$177,400 in earnings to collect his fourth timber title in five years. His string posted four wins from 33 starts, and the victories were big ones – Allimac in the Mason Houghland, Askim in the Maryland Hunt Cup, Hot Springs in the My Lady's Manor – and were backed by 10 second-place showings.

Champion Owner – Sonny Via

Repeat winner rode Good Night Shirt to the title, scoring a clear win over Calvin Houghland. In addition to Good Night Shirt, Via also campaigned the 3-year-old prospect Pleasant Top. He finished with \$487,020, thanks mostly to five Grade I wins from The Shirt.

Champion Trainer – Jack Fisher

122 races, 26 wins, 12 seconds, 21 thirds. \$1,156,907. Defended his 2007 crown by holding off a late charge from Tom Voss on the season's final day to notch his fourth title in six years. Fisher ruled the earnings standings as well, becoming the first steeplechase trainer to surpass \$1 million in a season.

Champion Jockey – Xavier Aizpuru

83 races, 22 wins, 13 seconds, 11 thirds. \$527,777. English-born rider repeated as champion with another dominant performance. Benefited from his continued partnership with Fisher and Voss, winning 19 races for the top two trainers.

Champion Jockey (Money Won) – Willie Dowling

56 races, 13 wins, 6 seconds, 12 thirds. \$768,743. Enjoyed partnership with Good Night Shirt, but also won a Grade I novice with Swagger Stick and rich timber stakes with Allimac. Irishman is just the second jockey to crack the \$700,000 level after Gus Brown's \$815,897 in 2001.

Champion Three-Year-Old – Class Real Rock

Ch. g. 3 Rock Point-Class Reality, Class Secret. Bred by Mede Cahaba Stable & Stud (Va). Owner: Mede Cahaba Stable. Trainer: Lilith Boucher. Jockeys: Richard Boucher, Matt McCarron. 3 races, 1 win. \$31,750 in earnings. Led a bevy of talented 3-year-olds from the stable and takes the trophy based on his come-from-behind win in the \$50,000 Gladstone. The son of Rock Point sandwiched a pair of fourths – in a maiden at Virginia Fall in October and the Woolfe Memorial at Camden in November – around his Far Hills score but the winner's check gave him the edge over barnmate Class Bopper.

Claimer of the Year – Slip Away

Gr./Ro. g. 5 Skip Away-Aurora Slew, Slew's Royalty. Bred by Glencrest Farm, Trontz & Madison (Ky). Owner: Ken and Sarah Ramsey. Trainer: Tom Voss. Jockeys: Xavier Aizpuru, Matt McCarron, Padge Whelan. The category includes money earned in claiming and starter races and Slip Away made the most of his time in the ranks, earning \$43,800. After a maiden win at High Hope and a pair of disappointing efforts in novice stakes at Saratoga, the son of Skip Away dropped in for a tag at Foxfield. He finished second, but the gray gelding soon got white hot, taking platers at Morven Park and Aiken and starter allowances at the Colonial Cup and Palm Beach to end the year. All told, he matched champion Good Night Shirt's victory total of five and earned \$56,300.

Champion Timber Horse – Bubble Economy

B. g. 9 Rakeen-Buffels, Vaal Reef. Bred by Dr. & Mrs. Tim Gardner; Mr. & Mrs. Rick Abbott (Pa). Owner: Arcadia Stable. Trainer: Jack Fisher. Jockeys: Brooks Durkee, Jack Fisher, Chip Miller, Robbie Walsh, Xavier Aizpuru. 8 races, 3 wins, 2 thirds. \$110,250 in earnings. Arcadia Stable's 2004 champion rolled to a second title thanks to great days at Great Meadow, where he won the \$100,000 Virginia Gold Cup in May and the \$50,000 International Gold Cup in October. In between, the 9-year-old old picked up checks all around the timber circuit, capping his campaign with a victory at Camden that helped him set a new single-season earnings record.

Champion Filly/Mare – Guelph

Ch. m. 7 Sky Classic-Distant Drumroll, Eastern Echo. Bred by Mimi Voss (Md). Owner: The Fields Stable. Trainer: Tom Voss. Jockeys: Xavier Aizpuru, Padge Whelan. 6 races, 4 wins, 1 second. \$123,424 in earnings. Heads off to retirement with a championship, thanks in large part to a win over males in the Palm Beach Stakes on the season's final day. Filly/mare and novice champion in 2005, she ruled her division in 2008, beginning in May with distaff stakes wins in the Henley at Nashville and the Valentine at Fair Hill. She finished fifth against the boys in the Grade II A.P. Smithwick at Saratoga and second in the Peapack at Far Hills before notching two more stakes scores in the season's final month, the Crown Royal filly/mare stakes at Callaway and the inaugural Palm Beach in November. She retires as a seven-time stakes winner who took eight of 15 career starts over hurdles.

First-Season Novice Champion – The Price Of Love

(Leading horse that started 2008 as maiden over hurdles) Ch. g. 5 Prenup-Solitary Signal, Caveat. Bred by Bill Pape & Jonathan Sheppard (Pa). Owner: Pape. Trainer: Sheppard. Jockeys: Danielle Hodsdon, Richard Boucher. 7 races, 3 wins, 1 second, 2 thirds. \$122,792 in earnings. The Pape-Sheppard connection sent out another good-looking prospect who built some momentum in the spring before putting things together in the summer. The Price Of Love broke his maiden in his seasonal debut at Camden in March and finished third in the Grade II National Hunt Cup at Radnor in May. He really got rolling at Saratoga, winning a pair of novice stakes (the Jonathan Kiser and the Mickey Walsh).

Second-Season Novice Champion – Be Certain

(Leading horse that started 2007 as a maiden over jumps) Ch. g. 4 Thunder Gulch-Do Mountain Doo, Mountain Cat. Bred by Sugar Maple Farm (NY). Owner: Alnoff Stable. Trainer: Tom Voss. Jockeys: Xavier Aizpuru, Padge Whelan, Matt McCarron. 8 races, 2 wins, 5 seconds. \$168,138 in earnings.

Runner-up for the 3-year-old title in 2007 showed no signs of a sophomore jinx in 2008, winning twice in the spring, including the National Hunt Cup. Stayed busy at Saratoga, where he placed second to Dark Equation in the Grade I New York Turf Writers against open company. After losing the Monmouth County by a head, he again fared well in open waters, finishing second to Good Night Shirt in the Grand National at Far Hills.

Lonesome Glory Award – Good Night Shirt

(Leading horse by earnings) Ch. g. 7 Concern-Hot Story, Two Punch. Bred by Dr. and Mrs. Thomas Bowman (Md). Owner: Sonny Via. Trainer: Jack Fisher. Jockey: Willie Dowling. 5 races, 5 wins. \$485,520. Defended his crown in dominant fashion, going a perfect 5-for-5 in Grade I stakes and shattering the NSA single-season earnings record he set in 2007. Brilliant from start to finish, he annexed the 2-mile Georgia Cup and the 3-mile Iroquois in the spring and then returned in the fall to take the Lonesome Glory in September, Grand National in October and Colonial Cup in November. The Jack Fisher trainee is odds-on to claim his second consecutive Eclipse Award (as the steeplechase division's official champion) in January. Leads all Maryland-bred Thoroughbreds (flat or jumps) in 2008 earnings.



Doug Lees
Highweight amateur champion George Hundt and Music To My Ears fly a fence at Morven Park.



Doug Lees
Left: Champion apprentice Liam McVicar.
Right: Champion amateur Will Haynes.



Doug Lees
Champion timber owner Irv Naylor with the Maryland Hunt Cup.



A winner of nine consecutive races in the 1980s, Thrice Worthy draws off at Delaware Park.

NSA Archives

T.W.: Totally Wonderful

Steeplechase legend, Ky. barn favorite Thrice Worthy dies

BY BRIAN NADEAU

In his eloquent classic “All Things Must Pass,” George Harrison sang “Sunrise doesn’t last all morning . . . sunset doesn’t last all evening . . . all things must pass, all things must pass away.”

The Beatles great didn’t know Thrice Worthy, but it’s hard not to hear those words and think of the steeplechase great, who died Dec. 4 at age 32 after a bout of colic. Along the way, Thrice Worthy left an indelible mark on a litany of friends and admirers.

A stakes winner on the flat for trainer Eddie Gaudet, Thrice Worthy rose to prominence after trainer Jonathan Sheppard bought him in 1980 for owner Will Farish.

The bay gelding won his first hurdle start at Atlanta in 1981 to start a tear, winning his first nine starts over jumps by a combined 121 3/4 lengths. He blended a high cruising speed with a lethal dose of stamina. Among those nine wins were lopsided stakes scores in the National Hunt Cup, Tom Roby, Lovely Night, Sandhills Cup, Pillar, Bolla and Imperial Cup. The streak, which ended in the Carolina Cup in 1983, stands as the longest in the modern era.

John Cushman piloted Thrice Worthy during every race of the streak, in as much awe of his mount as were his rivals.

“I remember seeing his past performances before a race at Belmont and the charts were all solid 1s. He was ahead at every call of every race. I had never seen anything like that,” said Cushman, champion jockey from 1980-83. “He was by far the best 2-mile to 2 1/4-mile horse I ever rode. He could not get beat at that distance. He was just fast; a tearaway. He was quick at his fences and I would just never move on him. Never. I’ll never forget him. He would go out and try so hard every time – he would give 120 percent.”

Thrice Worthy won 13 times in 20 jump starts before retiring in 1984, due to leg injuries that plagued him throughout much of his career. If he was a great horse on the track, he became a legend off of it.

Sarah Nims, who owns Dogwood Springs Farm in Versailles, Ky., bought Thrice Worthy from Farish in early 1986 with the idea of making an event horse out of him. But “T.W.,” as he became known, didn’t take to dressage so Nims instead veered in a different direction, using Thrice Worthy’s talents around the farm – as an equine barn foreman.

“He would help me break the yearlings and younger horses and just teach them how to do everything,



NSA Archives

Thrice Worthy (right, John Cushman) flies a fence in the 1981 Lovely Night Stakes at Saratoga.

from loading into a trailer to walking into the barn. Basically he was always saying, ‘I’m here to help.’ He did everything I ever asked him to do,” Nims said. “He was like a babysitter around the farm and people called him the Commander in Chief of the barn. I never met a horse as smart as T.W. was. I always joked that he was a person in a horse suit.”

Talk to people that have been around world-class Thoroughbreds and they all tell you the same thing: good horses just know that they are good. They know it during their time at the track and the knowledge never leaves them. Thrice Worthy was no different.

“He knew he was a champion. Even when he was running around outside the barn, if a horse took off he would make sure he would not get beat by anyone else,” Nims said. “He was his own person that’s for sure. He had the run of the barn and would go anywhere he wanted to. He was galloping around up until a few days before he died. I lost a friend as much as I lost a horse.”

Dr. William Hess of the Woodford Equine Hospital was one of many who dealt with Thrice Worthy. Hess began treating Nims’ horses over the past six months and like everyone else he left with a lasting image.

“He was just a super horse and a favorite of all the doctors that treated him. They all have stories about him,” Hess said. “T.W. was one of those mascot horses. Things were done his way. You couldn’t stall him, he got to roam free. He wouldn’t wear a halter, but when you called him he would come. At 32, he looked as good as any 15-year-old horse I’ve ever seen. He lived a fabulous life.”

NOTES: In his career debut as a 2-year-old in 1978, Thrice Worthy lost to eventual Horse of the Year and Hall of Famer Spectacular Bid going 5 1/2 furlongs at Pimlico . . . The Virginia-bred son of Twice Worthy won 25 of 66 career starts (including stakes scores on the flat and over jumps) and earned more than \$300,000.

Game Over

The Hoffberger Pick 6 proved to be the biggest thing to happen to Chicago steeplechasing since that timber race at Arlington Park. Led by Good Night Shirt (natch) and dark horse Dark Equation – who was only in four fantasy stables – Rodd Santo's Monochrome Farm brought the title to the Second City.

Dark Equation may have sealed the deal, but he didn't provide much drama – as number-crunching steeplechase aficionado Richard Hutchinson noted months back, the Turf Writers Cup win virtually eliminated the virtual competition. Being the younger brother of the *Times*' copy editor, Santo isn't eligible for the year-end prize; Rodd said he was happy just to get his name in the paper, though he did inquire if there was a plaque.

Officially, Lisa McLane's Champagne Taste gets to break open the bubbly; it should be quite a celebration.

"This is the fourth year I've done it," McLane said. "I was always excited making it to the top 30. To win the whole shebang is great."

A personal assistant who hails from Upperville, Va., McLane has been around horses most of her life, including professional stints at the Keeneland sales and the Kinross Farm office. Still, timber racing holds pride of place.

"I've been a timber fan the whole time, ever since I was able to get up on my father's shoulders and watch the Maryland Hunt Cup," she said. "I grew up in Harford County, Maryland – I didn't understand hurdles until I moved to Virginia."

McLane enjoys everything about jump racing, from the gorgeous settings to the amazing athletes, human and equine.

"I feel blessed by the sport," she said. "The steeplechase community is a wonderful community."

Nepotism also eliminated third-place finisher and web wizard Sue Haldeman, designer of the ST site, and fourth-place finisher Sam Clancy, wife of a certain newspaper publisher, from prize eligibility, so consolation awards go to Ashley Monroe and Allison Janezic.

The top theoretical stable – Good Night Shirt, Be Certain, Dr. Bloomer, Guelph, The Price Of Love and Bubble Economy – earned \$1,135,674, so if you wanted to be a millionaire, that was the crew. High Action and Seer led the "I could have had a V-8" contingent, as both earned more than \$75,000 yet went unselected by anyone in the game.

The top 38 stables are listed here. See www.st-publishing.com for full standings.

– Jamie Santo

Previous winners of the Hoffberger Insurance Group Pick 6 Crown.

- 2007: Winfield Sapp
- 2006: Howard Newstadt
- 2005: Pauline Hutchinson
- 2004: Vivian Rall
- 2003: Employees of Opdyke Truck and Equipment (led by Becky Forry)
- 2002: Pauline Hutchinson
- 2001: Janet Hutson
- 2000: McLane Hendriks
- 1999: Kelly MacKinnon

STEEPLECHASE 'Pick Six'

THE HOFFBERGER INSURANCE GROUP FANTASY STABLE GAME

Presented by The Whip Tavern

Monochrome Farm	Rodd Santo
Good Night Shirt	\$485,520
Dark Equation	\$125,948
The Price Of Love	\$119,600
Preemptive Strike	\$67,000
Erin Go Bragh	\$50,200
Sweet Shani	\$43,822
	\$892,090

Champagne Taste	Lisa McLane
Good Night Shirt	\$485,520
The Price Of Love	\$119,600
Bubble Economy	\$110,250
Preemptive Strike	\$67,000
Imagina	\$58,500
Mixed Up	\$12,500
	\$853,370

First Last Best Guess	Susan Haldeman
Good Night Shirt	\$485,520
The Price Of Love	\$119,600
Preemptive Strike	\$67,000
Planets Aligned	\$60,500
Imagina	\$58,500
Miles Ahead	\$28,800
	\$819,920

Samiam Stable	Sam Clancy
Good Night Shirt	\$485,520
The Price Of Love	\$119,600
Best Attack	\$83,013
Preemptive Strike	\$67,000
Jellyberry	\$36,400
Incomplete	\$9,000
	\$800,533

Geraldal Stable	Allison Janezic
Good Night Shirt	\$485,520
Bubble Economy	\$110,250
Preemptive Strike	\$67,000
Planets Aligned	\$60,500
Imagina	\$58,500
Bee Charmer	\$16,000
	\$797,770

PonyUp Stable	Ashley Monroe
Good Night Shirt	\$485,520
Bubble Economy	\$110,250
Preemptive Strike	\$67,000
Planets Aligned	\$60,500
Imagina	\$58,500
Bee Charmer	\$16,000
	\$797,770

Dukester	Dr. Charles Reid
Good Night Shirt	\$485,520
The Price Of Love	\$119,600
Sovereign Duty	\$114,075
Imagina	\$58,500
Irish Prince	\$17,500
Orsay	\$0
	\$795,195

Hurler Was The King!	Bradley Johnson
Good Night Shirt	\$485,520
Bubble Economy	\$110,250
Best Attack	\$83,013
Preemptive Strike	\$67,000
Sweet Shani	\$43,822
Baby Bert	\$500
	\$790,105

Plum Creek Farms	Cathy Fowler
Good Night Shirt	\$485,520
Bubble Economy	\$110,250
Planets Aligned	\$60,500
Imagina	\$58,500
Sweet Shani	\$43,822
Gigger	\$29,150
	\$787,742

Browntrout Stable	Douglas Lees
Good Night Shirt	\$485,520
The Price Of Love	\$119,600
Planets Aligned	\$60,500
Imagina	\$58,500
Erin Go Bragh	\$50,200
Kilbride Rd	\$0
	\$774,320

First Base Stable	Nolan Clancy
Good Night Shirt	\$485,520
Sovereign Duty	\$114,075
Preemptive Strike	\$67,000
Imagina	\$58,500
Classy Brute	\$31,660
Coal Dust	\$14,900
	\$771,655

The Cheltenham Invasion ..	Richard Hutchinson
Good Night Shirt	\$485,520
The Price Of Love	\$119,600
Planets Aligned	\$60,500
Imagina	\$58,500
Miles Ahead	\$28,800
Mixed Up	\$12,500
	\$765,420

MVP Stable	Ernie Moulos
Good Night Shirt	\$485,520
The Price Of Love	\$119,600
Preemptive Strike	\$67,000
Imagina	\$58,500
Irish Prince	\$17,500
Mixed Up	\$12,500
	\$760,620

Steeplestakes.com	Van Cushny
Good Night Shirt	\$485,520
The Price Of Love	\$119,600
Preemptive Strike	\$67,000
Imagina	\$58,500
Irish Prince	\$17,500
Mixed Up	\$12,500
	\$760,620

Sweet Genius	Janice Woytek
Good Night Shirt	\$485,520
Be Certain	\$168,138
Imagina	\$58,500
Irish Prince	\$17,500
Mixed Up	\$12,500
Sussex County	\$12,000
	\$754,158

Thidwick's Retreat	Mary Anne Steele
Good Night Shirt	\$485,520
Bubble Economy	\$110,250
Preemptive Strike	\$67,000
Imagina	\$58,500
Run The Light	\$19,500
Mixed Up	\$12,500
	\$753,270

Picture This Stable	Tod Marks
Good Night Shirt	\$485,520
The Price Of Love	\$119,600
Planets Aligned	\$60,500
Imagina	\$58,500
Miles Ahead	\$28,800
Sur La Tete	\$0
	\$752,920

SeaHorse	Alix Michel
Good Night Shirt	\$485,520
The Price Of Love	\$119,600
Planets Aligned	\$60,500
Imagina	\$58,500
Miles Ahead	\$28,800
Divine Fortune	\$0
	\$752,920

Bossy Boots	Faith Hutchinson
Good Night Shirt	\$485,520
The Price Of Love	\$119,600
Preemptive Strike	\$67,000
Sweet Shani	\$43,822
Miles Ahead	\$28,800
Sur La Tete	\$0
	\$744,742

Twelfth Night Farm	Nicholas Schweizer
Good Night Shirt	\$485,520
Bubble Economy	\$110,250
Swagger Stick	\$103,744
Seeking No More	\$24,700
Mark The Shark	\$18,050
Thrumcap	\$0
	\$742,264

Wu Farm	Jeremy Baskin
Good Night Shirt	\$485,520
The Price Of Love	\$119,600
Planets Aligned	\$60,500
Imagina	\$58,500
Irish Prince	\$17,500
Divine Fortune	\$0
	\$741,620

Broken Sound Farm	Marianne Vishno
Good Night Shirt	\$485,520
The Price Of Love	\$119,600
Planets Aligned	\$60,500
Imagina	\$58,500
Irish Prince	\$17,500
Diego Cao	\$0
	\$741,620

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Grade I winner Dark Equation keyed a Pick 6 victory by Monochrome Farm. Tod Marks

Try Again	Jim McVey
Good Night Shirt	\$485,520
Bubble Economy	\$110,250
Preemptive Strike.....	\$67,000
Imagina	\$58,500
Magic Maker	\$19,050
Divine Fortune.....	\$0
	\$740,320
In Theory Farm	Sharon Gibson
Good Night Shirt	\$485,520
Bubble Economy	\$110,250
Preemptive Strike.....	\$67,000
Imagina	\$58,500
Junood.....	\$14,700
Seeyouattheevent.....	\$0
	\$735,970
Kfar Tapuakh Stable	Howard Newstadt
Good Night Shirt	\$485,520
Best Attack	\$83,013
Planets Aligned	\$60,500
Imagina	\$58,500
Dreadnaught	\$29,500
Irish Prince	\$17,500
	\$734,533
Chinese Checkers Stable	Bill Hutchinson
Good Night Shirt	\$485,520
Best Attack	\$83,013
Preemptive Strike.....	\$67,000
Imagina	\$58,500
Run The Light	\$19,500
Irish Prince	\$17,500
	\$731,033
On The Payroll	Kathleen Strakes
Good Night Shirt	\$485,520
The Price Of Love.....	\$119,600
Sweet Shani	\$43,822
Hip Hop	\$28,100
Orison	\$27,206
Private Attack.....	\$25,500
	\$729,748
Clover Hill	Vivian Rall
Good Night Shirt	\$485,520
Bubble Economy	\$110,250
Planets Aligned	\$60,500
Sweet Shani	\$43,822
Dreadnaught	\$29,500
Sur La Tete.....	\$0
	\$729,592
Block House Farms	Chuck Ross
Good Night Shirt	\$485,520
Preemptive Strike.....	\$67,000
Planets Aligned	\$60,500
Imagina	\$58,500
Gigger	\$29,150
Miles Ahead	\$28,800
	\$729,470
3D Stable	Dallas Butts
Good Night Shirt	\$485,520
Bubble Economy	\$110,250
Imagina	\$58,500
Askim.....	\$51,300
Run The Light	\$19,500
Toughkenamon	\$3,400
	\$728,470

Frequent Flyer	Tracy Scott
Good Night Shirt	\$485,520
The Price Of Love.....	\$119,600
Planets Aligned	\$60,500
Imagina	\$58,500
Professor Maxwell	\$2,000
Three Carat	\$0
	\$726,120
Lucy's Lunging Leapers	Lucy Seginak
Good Night Shirt	\$485,520
Swagger Stick	\$103,744
Preemptive Strike.....	\$67,000
Quem Se Atrave	\$38,620
News Flash.....	\$21,100
Feeling So Pretty.....	\$7,803
	\$723,787
Jordan River Stable	Mary Beth Martin
Good Night Shirt	\$485,520
The Price Of Love.....	\$119,600
Planets Aligned	\$60,500
Sweet Shani	\$43,822
Mixed Up.....	\$12,500
Straight Gin.....	\$0
	\$721,942
Mrs. Rodddd	Erin Ray
Good Night Shirt	\$485,520
Best Attack	\$83,013
Planets Aligned	\$60,500
Imagina	\$58,500
Run The Light	\$19,500
Coal Dust	\$14,900
	\$721,933
Keeper of the Wass Farm ..	Andrea Wasserman
Good Night Shirt	\$485,520
Guelph	\$123,424
Askim.....	\$51,300
Rainiero	\$25,300
Nat Grew	\$19,500
Mixed Up.....	\$12,500
	\$717,544
Beechwood Boulevard Stable ...	Bruce Rodger
Good Night Shirt	\$485,520
Best Attack	\$83,013
Imagina	\$58,500
Jellyberry	\$36,400
Move West.....	\$34,900
Mixed Up.....	\$12,500
	\$710,833
PedaltodaMetal	Bob Rush
Good Night Shirt	\$485,520
Preemptive Strike.....	\$67,000
Planets Aligned	\$60,500
Imagina	\$58,500
Irish Prince	\$17,500
Fogcutter.....	\$17,300
	\$706,320
Sold Half of Them Stable	Sean Clancy
Good Night Shirt	\$485,520
Bubble Economy	\$110,250
Best Attack	\$83,013
Seeking No More	\$24,700
Divine Fortune.....	\$0
Lair.....	\$0
	\$703,483

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10 Years Running

BY KATY CARTER

Awesome (aw-sum) adj.

1. Inspiring awe.
2. Showing or characterized by awe.
3. Slang. very impressive.

Example: Event horse Dobbin and Corinne Ashton had an awesome 2008 season.

"Maybe it seems a bit much, but it's the only word I can think of to describe the feeling," said Corinne Ashton, owner and rider of Dobbin, the 2008 United States Eventing Association Horse of the Year. "This is more than a once-in-a-blue-moon honor. What a fun and great year we've had."

Dobbin, a 14-year-old chestnut Thoroughbred gelding, carried Ashton, his owner and pilot of more than a decade, to early season intermediate and advanced wins at Pine Top in Georgia and an intermediate win at Groton House II in New York. The pair also completed Rolex Kentucky CCI**** before adding advanced wins at Millbrook in New York and the CIC*** World Cup Qualifier at Wit's End Farm in Ontario to their resume. While they were at it, they finished the 2008 season with a second at Fair Hill CCI**.

Dobbin tallied 175 points to secure the 2008 title. Allison Springer's gray Thoroughbred Destination Known secured the reserve championship on the strength of 170 points, while Olympic silver medalist McKinlaigh and rider Gina Miles took the third spot with 169.

"This year was the best he has ever felt," said Ashton, "so clearly we did something right."

Ashton, who grew up riding in her native Scotland, moved to the United States 20 years ago and settled into an accounting career, only to "escape" and return to the horses. After establishing a business training and selling young horses, she found Dobbin through a classified ad in a local paper 11 years ago. Originally slated as a resale project, the chestnut gelding soon exhibited the combination of movement, athleticism and brains that earned him a permanent place on Ashton's farm in Princeton, Mass.

"Dobbin's been going advanced for six years now and been incredibly consistent," Ashton said. "Not only does he have talent, but he has the brains as well. He enjoys eventing now more than ever."

There is no question that Ashton is thrilled with her horse's season. But even without a USEA title, she would have treasured Dobbin's run at Fair Hill.

"Fair Hill has been our nemesis," she said. "And for no particular reason, we were shortlisted for the Pan Am games, then I broke my tail bone. Then last year, we had a runout on cross country. It was one silly thing after another and I was not giving up."

This year, they emerged from cross-country day as the overnight leaders, but a rail at the final show jumping fence put Amy Tryon and Coal Creek at the



Dobbin and Corinne Ashton touch down over a fence during the cross-country round at Fair Hill.

head of the victory gallop by a mere two-tenths of a point.

"Going into the last day in first place was great," Ashton said. "I got far too close to the last jump, but Dobbin was brilliant all three days in all three phases. There is no reason to dwell on a silly mistake. As Peter Green told me, 'You finally got that monkey off your back.'"

Ashton, who recently gave up her United States Equestrian Federation amateur status to ride as a professional, is intent on continuing to build her

SmartPak Horse of the Year

A pair of blue ribbons at both intermediate and advanced levels and a three-star win at Wits' End led to a division-clinching runner-up outing at Fair Hill in October.

Final Standings

Horse/Owner	Pts
1. Dobbin/Corinne Ashton	175
2. Destination Known/Allison Springer	170
3. McKinlaigh/Gina Miles	169
4. Twizzel/Tivoli Farm	166
5. Bailey Wick/Acorn Hill Farm	161

career along with Dobbin's. They have been named to the USEF Eventing Winter Training List for the first time, earning a place on the B squad along with Jan Byyny, Buck Davidson, Sara Dierks, Kim Severson, Allison Springer, Amy Tryon and Jennifer Wooten.

"Amongst my peers, I still seem an amateur," she joked. "Dobbin needs less practice than I do, but my riding has continued to evolve. I have been waiting a long time for (the training-list nod)."

Ashton keeps her riding education as varied as possible, taking lessons, participating in clinics, and watching other people teach and ride. She trains regularly with Mara Dean and Phillip Dutton, but credits close friend and trainer Marcia Kulak with the greatest influence.

"Marcia and I have become very good friends as she's been helping me the last few years," said Ashton. "She motivates me to build on the good training we have. She spends half her time in Scotia, N.Y. and the other half in Wellington, Fla., so a lot of her winter help comes over the phone . . . I take lessons from various people. Mara and Phillip have helped me a great deal, and I also enlist the help of some dressage people. I really like to watch a lot and learn a great deal by doing so."

After the New Year, Ashton and Dobbin will head south to Aiken, S.C. for the winter. Until last year, they were only able to spend a few weeks at a time.

"Aiken is great," she said. "Up here in Massachusetts winter is difficult at best. We go from hard, frozen ground that is muddy on top to wonderful sandy footing. Although he hates to travel, I promised Dobbin we'd go back."

The proverbial question of future plans looms and Ashton is not shy about communicating her hopes of competing abroad.

"It is my dream to go back to the U.K. and compete," she said. "Finances, of course, are curtailing those hopes, but one can dream."

And for now, as the snow begins to fly in New England, Dobbin has been relegated to a mandatory vacation, for which he appears not at all grateful.

"He is turned out and bored to death," Ashton said. "He is naturally very social and is quite a party animal, so he loves events. He's very annoyed right now and wants someone to chew on."

He deserves it.

Anthony Trollope

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FF-268 (508)

Like Clockwork

BY SEAN CLANCY

Phillip Dutton won his ninth consecutive United States Eventing Association leading rider award (his 10th overall) in 2008. With 738 points, the Australian-born gold medalist outdistanced his student Boyd Martin by 102 points. Dutton finally earned his first Rolex trophy when Connaught took home America's biggest prize. Beyond that, Dutton rode in the Olympics as an American for the first time, but was disqualified for a technicality in the show jumping.

Like always, there were big moments and sour moments on his way to the championship.

The Times caught up with Dutton on a dreary December morning at his True Prospect Farm in Pennsylvania.

Describe your 2008 season. "It's always exciting and it's always disappointing – that's the sport. The upside was I was fortunate to represent the U.S. in the Olympics for the first time and I won the Rolex event after many attempts. To be a part of a horse like Connaught, it's not just what he's done, it's what he went through to get there. He had virtually every injury you could have and the cross country didn't come easy for him; I had a couple of bad falls when he first came here. He's been through a lot. That's rewarding. The disappointing part, the number one was the heavier boots at the Olympics, getting caught in something that I had no idea you weren't allowed to do, that was disappointing. Things didn't go that well injury-wise either. The Foreman was out, Truluck was out, Woodburn was sitting in a good position at Burghley and I didn't present him. That was disappointing, but the good thing was they all came out of it well and looking forward to next year."

A few years ago, you mentioned that your days of riding three or four horses at every event are over. Still feel that way?

"Boyd did a lot of the riding for me this year because I did a lot of traveling, but it sort of depends. We have a good string of horses from the two-star up and I'll probably ride all of those. I think how we'll work it in the future is I will still ride the green ones in one of every three or four events to get a feel for how they're coming along and evaluate them. There will be a time, but I don't see it yet."

Is being leading rider your ultimate goal for 2009? "Winning it is a priority, winning three-day events is probably a bigger priority. If you win something like this, it means you have a pretty good string of horses and it means you were pretty consistent. You've got a lot of other goals and what comes with achieving those goals is the title."

What horses will lead you to accomplishing those goals in 2009? "I've got a new one that Jan Bynny had been competing named Dario, I'm excited about him. We just bought a horse off Simone Kann, Balmoral Tim Tram, he's a big Australian Thoroughbred, he'll be doing a two-star as well. Then Annie Jones has a new



Phillip Dutton won his first Rolex Kentucky championship with Connaught.

Anthony Trollope

doesn't owe us anything anyway – but we'll see how the spring goes. Woodburn will go to Kentucky. Then Kheops Du Quesnay, I've got a bit of work to do on his dressage but potentially he could go to Kentucky. Bailey Wick will go to New Jersey or Bromont."

How good a string is it? "It will be the strongest group I've ever had. I enjoy riding them, they all have the makings of really big-time horses."

What's your take on the 2008 Olympics?

"Apart from Gina Miles our performance at the Olympics was not good enough. There isn't a lot of difference between winning and losing but it was pretty clear that by the time we get to Lexington 2010 (for the World Equestrian Games), we need to have a really strong team. I can feel there is some excitement and determination in a lot of the riders; 2009 is a great time to build toward that goal, maybe take a trip overseas, maybe not even compete, but just to see their standard and get ahead for next year."

Will it motivate the team? "You've got to understand, we trained for a different kind of cross-country course, it was a very short, more of a horse-trials course. I don't want to make excuses but the World Championships will be a lot different. Fortunately I have quite a lot of depth in my horses, but riders in general need to get more depth so they're not relying on just one horse – one, to get a lot more practice and two, when things happen as they do in injuries, you're not locked out."

What about Boyd finishing second overall?

"You've got to be careful what you wish for. It's been ideal for me because all these horses that I'm talking about, I felt totally confident in him, that I could leave and he would compete them at a good level and do a good job. All the owners are totally comfortable with that. I can't tell you how much of an addition it is to have

Boyd and (his wife) Silva training here, watching her ride dressage is inspiring. It's been a win-win for everybody."

Will he beat you one day? "Well . . . the next level for Boyd to get to is to not rely on my horses and have owners of his own. I'd like to think people could send horses to him and still have him here with me. I think he'd like to do that too. He's only been here, let's see, a year and a half. He couldn't have hoped to get as far as he has."

Why him? "First and foremost, he loves competing, he loves horses and he enjoys the sport. There is an enthusiasm about it every day and he's always trying to learn and trying to improve the horses every day. There are a lot of great riders out there and it just so happened that he felt this was the best place for him to be. I think there is still a respect there for me, I'm sure there will come a time he decides he can't learn much more from me, but at the moment, it's still working."

Rider of the Year

Won for the ninth consecutive year (and 10th time overall). Australia native now rides for American team. Won Rolex Kentucky with Connaught.

Place	Final Standings Rider (home state)	Points
1	Phillip Dutton (PA)	738
2	Boyd Martin (PA)	636
3	Sarah Cousins (PA)	517
4	Buck Davidson (FL)	376
5	Leslie Law (FL)	365

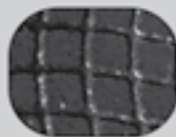
one, Mighty Mangaroo. Bruce Duchossois has a nice one, Wild Tiger. Truluck broke his coffin bone last year, he's just coming back to work. The Foreman had surgery to take out his splint bone, hopefully he'll come back and if everything goes as planned, he'd go to Kentucky or Badminton. Connaught is getting to an age where he doesn't owe us anything – well he

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Home Run Hitter

BY KATY CARTER

The Major League Baseball record for highest batting average in one season, .440, belongs to Hugh Duffy, a former textile worker who played for the Boston Beaneaters in the 19th century. Based on her 2008 eventing season, if blue ribbons were base hits, USEA Young Rider of the Year Jennie Brannigan would have made short work of the 114-year-old record.

Aboard Cooper, her partner of two years (and USEA Intermediate Horse of the Year), the 21-year-old Brannigan batted a cool .667, racking up six intermediate wins, including the CCI** individual gold at the North American Young Riders Championships and Florida Three Day Event CCI*. The pair not only won in four different states, but in four different time zones. For good measure, Brannigan also earned wins aboard three other horses at the training and preliminary levels and moved Cooper, a 7-year-old Dutch Warmblood, up to advanced.

"Not to sound cheesy, but this was a fairy-tale year. It's hard to say which moment was best," said Brannigan who hails from San Diego. "Cooper and I started the year off well, then there was Young Riders and winning the Gold Cup Series and being Intermediate Horse of the Year. Moving up to advanced and jumping around Morven (Park) was great – I can't stress how amazing he is."

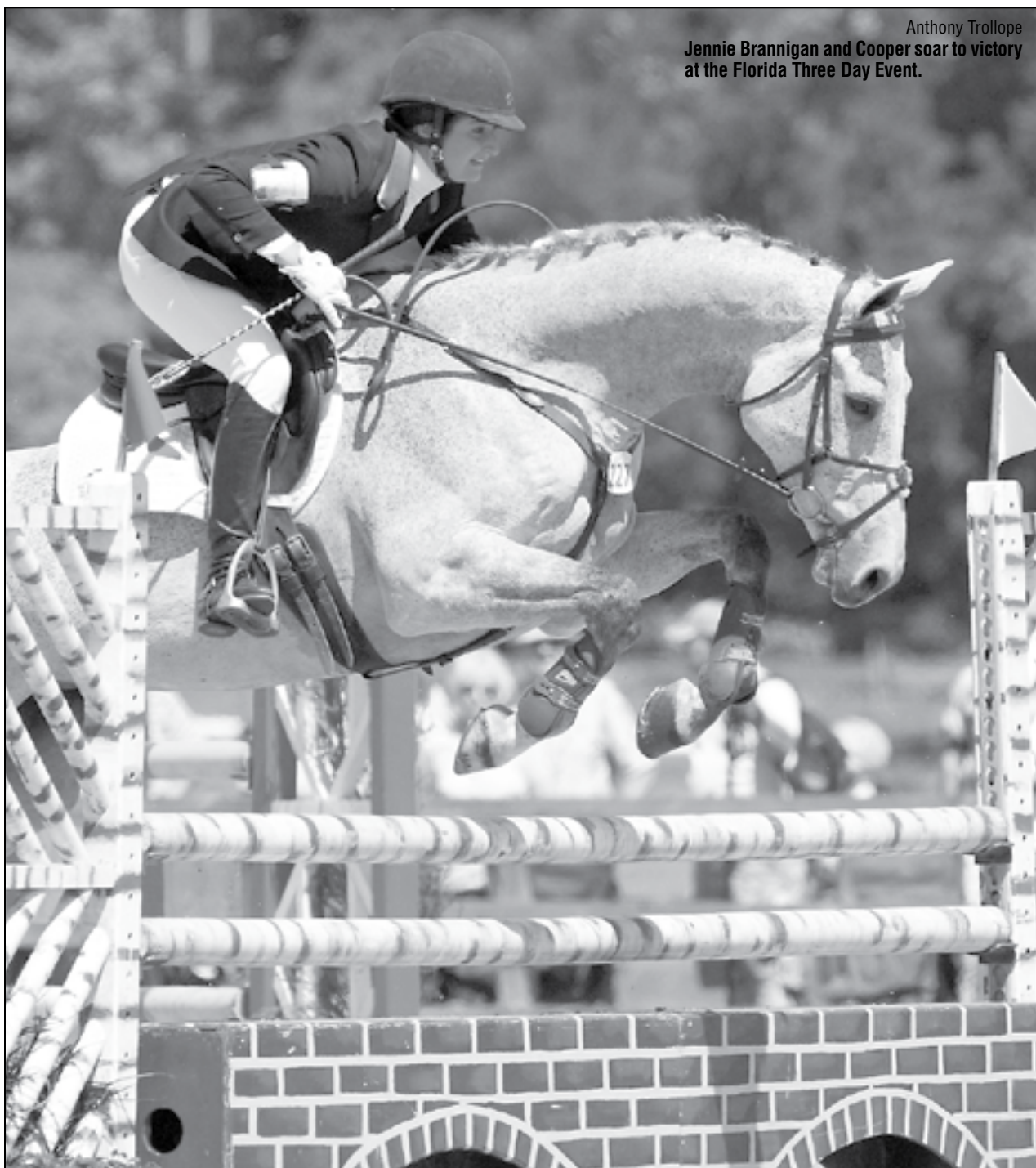
Though not from a horsey family, Brannigan got her start in everything equestrian when she was 9, first learning to foxhunt with Jane McGirk and the Cornwall Hounds in Illinois. By the time she was 13, Brannigan had become Allison Springer's first working student. When she moved west, Brannigan learned under the tutelage of show-jumping legend Susie Hutchison, honing her skills in the ring by riding everything and anything in Hutchison's barn.

"Allison is the person who got me into eventing and taught me everything," Brannigan said. "I mean everything – riding, horse management, braiding. After I moved to California, I had the opportunity to work for Susie. I worked my way up from hacking horses to training and competing her young horses and even teaching."

Brannigan purchased Cooper two years ago from Kelli Temple. He had not gone beyond beginner novice, but early on, the striking 16-hand gray gelding proved he had the aptitude and talent to excel in eventing. And when Brannigan's advanced-level partner, Kozmo, ran into soundness issues, Cooper was ready to heed the call.

"He was awesome from the beginning," Brannigan said. "He was not originally my main focus, because I was competing Kozmo at advanced at that time, but after I retired Kozmo from the FEI stuff, Cooper really stepped up. He's never let me down and always rises to the occasion."

While Cooper's bloodlines scream "show jumper," his competition record is solid in all three phases. He



Anthony Trollope
Jennie Brannigan and Cooper soar to victory
at the Florida Three Day Event.

finished 2008 with a third in his advanced debut at Morven Park, and Brannigan credits her partner's intellect for their success.

"He's a beautiful mover and phenomenal jumper," said Brannigan. "But if I had to name his best asset, I'd say it's his mind. He's so incredibly consistent; he travels well, eats well, he is just a very chill, cool guy. I mean, I can ground tie him. We met all of our goals this year. I am so lucky to have a great horse for next year. He's a class act. I owe this horse a lot"

Cooper is enjoying a well-deserved vacation, allowing Brannigan to spend some additional time with her string of young, up-and-coming competition horses, all of whom had successful 2008 seasons.

Brannigan's top young horses include her bay 6-year-old Irish Thoroughbred gelding Cambalda and Plain Jane, a bay 6-year-old Oldenburg-Thoroughbred mare owned by Mona Munos.

Cambalda (another purchase from Kelli Temple) and Brannigan won their first outing together at training level at Seneca Valley (Md.) then moved up to preliminary and notched a win at the Maryland Horse Trials and seconds at Flora Lea (N.J.) and Waredaca (Md). Known in the barn as "Ping," Cambalda also

won at the preliminary level with Temple in the irons. Plain Jane competed at the preliminary level early in 2008, then completed the Florida Three Day Event CCI* in April.

"Ping is also very easy going – nothing phases him," said Brannigan. "I'm very excited about him. We'll aim for a one-star in 2009. Plain Jane and I finished strongly at prelim and she has the makings of a top-level competitor."

Looking to the future, Brannigan exudes a focused sense of excitement. Having recently begun working for Phillip Dutton at his True Prospect Farm in Unionville, Pa., she'll winter in Aiken, S.C., working to further her training and horsemanship over fences and on the flat, with additional assistance from Grand Prix dressage rider Silva Martin.

"Right after Young Riders, I went to work for Phillip," Brannigan said. "Between Phillip's help and dressage training with Silva, everything is going so well. I have never had this kind of help before and everything is going 10 times better. I'm very excited to be a part of Phillip's barn. I'm so lucky to have sound horses, to have good horses and I'm very excited to see how it comes together next year."

Maui Jim Young Rider of the Year

Earned 146 points (more than two-thirds of her total) aboard Cooper, who took blue ribbons in a pair of two-stars and numerous intermediate tests, but got contributions from Kozmo and Plain Jane, among others.

Final Standings

Place	Rider	Pts
1.	Jennie Brannigan	216.0
2.	Tiana Coudray	103.0
3.	Callie Judy	89.5
4.	Bonner Carpenter	87.0
	Karen Shull	87.0

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Pan American

BY KATY CARTER

To call Ronald Zabala a road warrior is an understatement. The 2008 USEA Adult Amateur of the Year not only racked up 133 points to take the year-end championship over Kelly Sult (113) and Julie Boyer (91), but he racked up some serious frequent-flyer miles.

All adult amateur riders face the eternal question of how to address the career-family-riding relationship conundrum. Zabala, an insurance and real-estate entrepreneur, splits time between his home in Ecuador and riding in Pennsylvania and Florida. In between hopping from plane to plane, he pounds the pavement to events in the United States and South America, all while managing his business ventures and employees.

"The biggest challenge is having to fly every month to train, compete, travel, then fly back to Ecuador to take care of business," he said. "When I'm in the U.S., I bring my laptop computer everywhere, which has wireless broadband; that way I keep in touch 24/7 with my companies."

Zabala keeps horses in North and South America. His North American contingent is made up of four horses: Che Mr. Wiseguy, a Belgian Warmblood gelding going advanced; Che Italica, an Argentine saddle mare currently running intermediate; Che Jota Jota, his preliminary ride, an Ecuadorian Andalusian/Thoroughbred gelding; and Che Wonderboy, a Belgian warmblood stallion competing in the Level 7 and Level 8 show-jumping classes and Second Level dressage.

"The most talented horse I have is Che Mr. Wiseguy," Zabala said. "Actually, he got me 97 percent of the points necessary to get both USEA Adult Amateur of the Year and Advanced Level Master Amateur awards this year."

A dark bay, Wiseguy runs advanced horse trials and has competed through the CCI*** level with Zabala. Some of their top efforts in the United States include seconds at the Stuart (N.Y.) CIC** and Poplar Place Fall CIC***. Last year, they finished a notable 13th at the Fair Hill International CCI***.

"My main accomplishment this year was qualifying for the Olympic Games," Zabala said. "I was fifth reserve in the world, but unfortunately for me, another rider from my area had more points, got the spot and competed in Hong Kong."

While Zabala enjoys eventing in the States, the 2008 event most special to him was the Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) Three Day Event CCI***, where he and Wiseguy finished third.

"It was very challenging since it took place in the same showground as the Pan American Games in 2007," he explained. "It was also very interesting since I made many new good friends who share my same passion – eventing and horses."

Zabala, who holds a bachelor's degree in finance from Boston University, actually gave up horses for a time to concentrate on his education and developing his business ventures.

Stackhouse Saddles Adult Amateur of the Year

Che Mr. Wiseguy was the go-to guy for Zabala, bringing him all but 10 of his points, highlighted by a win in the CCI*** in Rio, second in the CIC*** at Poplar Place and a 13th at Fair Hill International.

Final Standings

Place	Rider	Points
1.....	Ronald Zabala	133
2.....	Kelly Sult.....	113
3.....	Julie Boyer	91
4.....	Ashley Adams	89
5.....	Martha McDowell.....	69



Anthony Trollope
Ronald Zabala and Che Mr. Wiseguy
took third at Rocking Horse.

"I had to stop riding for nine years," he said. "But I did it in order to be able to afford my equestrian sports at an international level. I always knew I would come back to riding and wanted to do it the right way, with good horses and good trainers."

When he came to the United States to begin training in 2003, Zabala sought help from Karen and David O'Connor, with whom he worked for three additional years. Since then, Zabala has also worked with many other top equestrian professionals, including Jimmy Wofford, Joe Fargis, Phillip Dutton, Cathy Wieschoff, Betsy Steiner and Oded Shimon. Since last year, Zabala made the move to Jessica and Missy Ransenhousen's facility in Unionville, where all of his U.S. horses live.

"I keep my horses at their beautiful farm," said Zabala. "Having been a show jumper all my life, when I started doing eventing, I found dressage to be my weak phase, but thanks to them, it's improving every day. Someday I might even be able to do a good sitting trot."

In addition to training with the Ransenhousens, Zabala supplements his routine with additional lessons and clinics.

"There are many riders and trainers that I admire and I try to learn from them by taking lessons with them, asking for advice, or just by watching their videos," he explained.

It is clear that Zabala holds all of his horses in great esteem, but Wiseguy is definitely the Heisman candidate.

"Thank God I have very good and very sound horses now. I work hard with my trainers to help them improve in all three phases," he said. "Wiseguy is super talented, brave, good mover, careful, smart and very beautiful. He sure is my dream horse."

Zabala is proud to say that he has refused several

purchase offers from riders in eventing, dressage and show jumping, but is especially proud that he has refused them all.

"There is no way I could sell him, as he is the best horse I have ever had in my life and I love him and admire him very much," he declared. "To be honest, nothing makes me happier in my life than Wiseguy. I really enjoy riding him playing with him, and taking care of him. Of course, my ex-girlfriend never liked it when I said that."

Looking ahead to 2009 and beyond, Zabala's goals are of epic international proportions.

"I am training very hard now to get ready for the next Olympic Games in 2012 in London," he said. "I will also try to do Rolex in April, then the World Equestrian Games in 2010 and the Pan American Games in 2011."

While he has certainly worked to get to the top of the sport, Zabala never lost his sense of humor.

"When I was training with the O'Connors, I competed at Radnor and it was the first time I had gone double-clear at that level," he recalled. "My horse started to get tired toward the end of cross country and I started to tell him, 'Come on Buzz, come on!' trying to wake him up. After that, Karen came into the barn and said 'Ronald, what is that talking to your horse about? That is too noisy. That does not look good. You ride like a South American amateur rider!' When Karen got double gold in Brazil at the Pan Am Games, I saw her coming to the double corners and she was making a lot of noises to get Teddy's (Theodore O'Connor) attention. Then I went back to her barn and said 'My dear Karen, here in Brazil you are riding like a South America amateur rider – I guess it is contagious!' "

A Great Year for The Good Witch

The Good Witch only competed four times in 2008, but that's all the 12-year-old Irish Sport Horse needed to secure the 2008 USEA Mare of the Year honors, taking the division on the strength of 103 points. Julie Boyer's Rumor Hazit took the reserve championship (91) and Tsunami III ended the season, her first with rider Sally Cousins, in third (90).

"Pooh", ridden by Jennifer Wooten and owned by Daisy Tognazzini, competed primarily in California, where she earned an advanced/intermediate win at the Three-Day Ranch Horse Trials and put forth a runner-up outing at the Galway Downs CIC***. The highlight of the year came in Kentucky with a strong seventh at the Rolex CCI****. The pair ended the season back on the West Coast with a fifth in advanced at Twin Rivers International Horse Trials.

Wooten, head trainer at her Trinity Farm in Ramona, began riding as a child, participating in pony club and working her way up the rankings. She and The Good Witch were named to the USEF Short List for the 2008 Olympic Games and traveled east from their California base to participate in the mandatory outings with Chef d'equipe Mark

Phillips. The pair has been named to the 2009 USEF Eventing Training List and will participate in additional training sessions with Phillips.

"The Good Witch is more than just a competition horse," said Wooten, 30. "She is an amazing athlete and partner that loves her job almost more than I do. Her enthusiasm makes each competition feel like a canter around the field."

Tognazzini and her husband, Donn, purchased The Good Witch in 2002 specifically for Wooten to compete. It's been a good match, as Wooten and the bay mare have achieved success in the States and abroad, finishing 14th at the Jersey Fresh CCI*** and 11th in the four-star at Pau, France, in 2007 and completing at Blenheim CCI*** and the Eventing World Cup in Malmo, Sweden, in 2006.

— Katy Carter

Top Five Mares

Pl.	Horse / Owner	Points
1.	The Good Witch / Daisy Tognazzini	103
2.	Rumor Hazit / Julie Boyer	91
3.	Tsunami III / Sarah Cousins	90
4.	Tika / Skyeler Icke	82
5.	The King's Spirit / Peter Barry	77
	Kejsarinna / Maya Black	77

Martin to ride for the home team

Australian-born eventer Boyd Martin, runner-up in the Rider of the Year standings, has announced he will represent the United States in future competitions.

Currently assistant trainer to Rider of the Year Phillip Dutton, Martin is based at Dutton's True Prospect Farm in West Grove, Pa. He and his wife, Silva, have lived in the States for two years and plan to remain. (Silva, a German citizen, has filed papers to change her citizenship as well.) Martin, like Dutton, was born in New South Wales, Australia. Dutton became a naturalized citizen in 2006 before joining the U.S. squad last year; Martin has dual citizenship thanks to his American mother.

"In a sense I've already got a family tie to American representation, because my mum represented the U.S. in the 1968 winter Olympics in speed skating," said Martin in a release. "When I told them I was thinking about making the switch, both of my parents thought it was a great idea. Since I've been an American citizen for the past 15 years it was just a case of changing my nationality as a rider, but it's still a big deal; when I contacted Sara Ike, the USEF High Performance manager for eventing, she made it clear to me that as far as the FEI is concerned, you can only change once."

Martin enjoyed a career year in 2008, with a list of accomplishments that includes winning the CIC** at Bromont aboard Galileo, finishing ninth at Rolex Kentucky on Neville Bardos and winning the CIC** at the Stuart Horse Trials on Bailey Wick.



Amy Drago

LEADING LADY. Sally Cousins and The Robber Baron fly a fence at Plantation Field, one of the highlights of her USEA Leading Lady Rider title. The Pennsylvania-based rider amassed 517 points to outdistance Karen O'Connor and Amy Tryon.



Amy Drago

USEA Mare of the Year The Good Witch flies a fence during Rolex 2008.

Training List Announced

The United States Equestrian Federation named the 2009 Eventing Training List. These horse/rider combinations will be invited to participate in training sessions to be held at various locations throughout the country. The sessions, which have yet to be scheduled, will be conducted by USEF Eventing Coach Capt. Mark Phillips.

A List

Rider	Horse (Breed)	Owner
Will Coleman	Twizzel (Westfalen)	Tivoli
Phillip Dutton	The Foreman (Thoroughbred)	Ann Jones
Phillip Dutton	Truluck (Thoroughbred)	Ann Jones, Shannon Stimson
	or Woodburn (Thoroughbred)	Acorn Hill Farm
Becky Holder	Courageous Comet (Thoroughbred)	Thomas Holder Jr.
Karen O'Connor	Mandiba (Irish Sport Horse)	Joan Goswell
Gina Miles	McKinlaigh (Irish Sport Horse)	Laura Coats, Gina Miles, Thomas Schulz
Amy Tryon	Coal Creek (Thoroughbred)	Kathryn Sullivan

B List

Rider	Horse (Breed)	Owner
Corinne Ashton	Dobbin (Thoroughbred)	Corinne Ashton
Jan Byyny	Syd Kent (Thoroughbred)	J.C. Chester
Buck Davidson	BallyNoe Castle RM (Thoroughbred)	Carl and Cassandra Segal
Sara Dierks	Somerset (Thoroughbred)	Christopher Desino, Sara Dierks, Edith Hornberger, Sean Rameika
Kim Severson	Tipperary Liadhnan (Irish Sport Horse)	Kim Severson
Allison Springer	Destination Known (Thoroughbred)	Allison Springer
Amy Tryon	Leyland (Thoroughbred)	Elisabeth Nicholson
Jennifer Wooten	The Good Witch (Irish Sport Horse)	Daisy Tognazzini

The Outside Rail

By Joe Clancy

Goodbye to Bob

"Don't slam the door. Whatever you do, don't slam the door."

My father rented a cottage from Bob Witham one winter in Camden, S.C. and those were the only instructions. Bob didn't like the door to bang closed. He also didn't like dirt, too many distractions, leaving the mail on the table, that kind of thing. It was the perfect place for my dad. I coped during a brief stay or two, and made a friend for life.

I don't really know Bob Witham's life story. Not sure how he came to America or exactly why. Not sure what he did for a living besides horses. I do know that I always felt better after seeing him – either on my twice-yearly visits to Camden for the jump races or some other crossing of our paths.

"Joe, how are you?"

"I'm good, Bob, how are you?"

"Good, real good, working, busy, you know. How's your dad? Is he still riding? How's your mom? Is she still selling real estate? Tell them I was asking about them, OK?"

"Sure will, Bob (and I did)."

And so it went. Sometimes he'd go on a tangent, but it was usually business. He'd talk about the 2-year-olds he just sent somewhere, his spin on the state of the Thoroughbred game, life in Camden, the horses he used to ride. The conversations changed slightly, but Bob was always happy to see me and I was always happy to see him.

I won't see him anymore.

Witham died late in the morning of Dec. 17, five days after being severely injured in a fall at the Camden Training Center in his hometown. The 65-year-old former jump jockey was paralyzed from the neck down, unable to breathe on his own. He met with a priest and a lawyer. His brother and sister came in from overseas. Friends cut a vacation short to see him in the hospital and say goodbye. Others flew down and back in a day, just to let him know they cared. Still others visited every day, and in the end there were dozens and dozens who came to see him, enjoy his company, tell him what he meant to them. They say Bob was perfectly lucid, coherent, talking in a whisper, smiling a little, communicating any way he could, doing crossword puzzles – but he wasn't going to live. His body was just too damaged and there would be no recovery.

Living, working, smiling, probably telling a story one minute, in a hospital and unable to move the next. Saying goodbye to friends and family.

"It was a great life, with an unfair ending," said longtime friend Tom Voss, who spent time with Witham in the hospital. "Just bad luck. But he wanted to see people. He gave me 20 more minutes. He said thanks for everything. I said 'don't thank me, I should be thanking you.' He didn't have a mean bone in his body."

Witham came to America in the mid-1970s. Small of size but big in personality, the Englishman came to ride and lived with the Secor family in Maryland. On his first day in the country, he met Voss.



Tod Marks

The long and winding road won't be the same without Bob Witham.

"Delaware Park, in July, you know how hot it could get?" recalled Voss. "Bob was in a wool suit and a vest. He was a little guy with J.B. Secor and I remember that suit. It was hot, but he wasn't sweating. Everybody liked him, obviously."

Witham made friends everywhere – Secor, Voss, most of the Maryland horse crowd. He worked for Frank Christmas, then Sidney Watters. He gained a reputation as a star exercise rider while working for Hall of Fame trainer Frank Whiteley, who put Witham on three-time Horse of the Year Forego in the mornings. Witham often told a story of a near disaster – one rein came unbuckled from the bit – while galloping at Belmont Park. He never panicked, the old horse did his circuit and pulled up in the same spot as every other day. Asked what he was thinking at the time, Bob said, "---- me, my rein's broke and I'm on Forego."

Witham rode jump races for a variety of trainers, and won his first race aboard Jay's Trouble for Augustin Stable and Jonathan Sheppard at Block House in 1975. Eventually, he took a job with Voss and stayed (off-and-on) for 20 years. In 1980, Witham rode Blue Nearco to victory at Saratoga. The next year, he won a race on Bupersrose, dam of future Voss great Mickey Free, at Fair Hill. Witham also scored with Cookie at Fair Hill in 1981. That summer, the jockey broke both wrists in a fall from that horse at Saratoga (he laughed about the problems of using the bathroom).

My father once saddled a horse Bob rode at Saratoga. Bob showed up in the paddock without a whip. When my father asked why, Bob simply said "Well, the trainer told me not to hit him." Bob didn't want to be tempted.

Like many in steeplechasing at the time, Bob lived fast and furiously. He drank, he had a good time, he

stayed out late, he wrecked the same car three times in one Saratoga night. On one particular evening after the Montpelier races, Voss punched Witham in the mouth at a restaurant – knocking out his teeth. By the end of the night, they made up.

"We had some great times and we lived through a lot," said Voss. "When I saw him the other day, I told him we shouldn't be alive now anyway with half the things we did. There's no rhyme or reason we were still alive."

Witham also beat alcohol, put the madness behind him, hadn't had a drink in better than 20 years and got his teeth fixed.

"He had a great sense of humor, drinking or not," said Voss. "He didn't drink the last 20 years; he was the same person without all the destruction. He'd come up with these statements that would make you fall on the floor laughing, but he was very genuine. He wasn't trying to outdo anybody or make fun of anybody, it was just the way he was."

After his steeplechase days ended with that fall from Cookie (career total, eight American victories), Witham continued to work with horses. He moved to Camden, started a breaking and training business and prepped horses for clients such as Bob Levy and Shadwell Farm. Since 1992, Witham worked exclusively for Shadwell – taking a new batch of yearlings, and preparing them for the races. The graduates include 2006 Belmont Stakes winner Jazil, 2008 Grade I winner Alwajeeha and a host of other stars.

Shadwell vice president/general manager Rick Nichols will remember more than a man who did a job, however.

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Outside —

■ Continued from page 58

"He made my job quite easy; we sent him horses and let him do his job," Nichols said. "He was a fantastic horseman and that's what mattered to us. But I'll miss the friendship more than anything."

In Camden last month, Bob raved about the current crop of soon to be 2-year-olds in his barn. I hope one gets named Witham.

Bob stayed connected to the jump world via the Voss family, his friends in Camden and his position as the senior patrol judge at the Carolina and Colonial Cup. Dressed impeccably (I'm going to miss the sport coats), he took the work seriously, oversaw a great team and prepared for anything. The Cup programs won't look the same without his name there.

A few years ago, he even dusted off his boots and breeches and rode in some training flat races on the NSA circuit — winning aboard Commanders Palace, trained by long-time friend Mickey Preger, at Aiken in 1997.

"When it was time to go over to Aiken for the races, we couldn't find him, he was that nervous — or at least he acted like he was that nervous," said Preger, a fellow trainer at the Camden Training Center. "I used to joke that I put him on his last winner."

Despite being 20 years younger than Witham, Preger felt like a peer.

"He's the kindest person I ever met, hard-headed but kind," Preger said. "He meant a lot to a lot of people."

Bob the horseman who could ride Forego and prep world-class yearlings was also Bob the cook (he took classes in Columbia), Bob the host, Bob the guy who lost his keys just about every day. On the surface, he seemed like the absent-minded professor — little guy with a big smile and an accent, talking fast about 100 things at once. But there was more to Bob.

"He forgot his wallet, forgot his keys, forgot something everywhere he went," Voss said. "He made you feel like he didn't know what he was doing, but Bob always knew what Bob was doing. Down deep he had it all together, even if it didn't look like it."

For years, Witham stayed in Voss' house in Maryland when Tom and Mimi traveled to Saratoga each summer. Of course, Witham took the opportunity to host dinner parties twice a week. Ten, twenty, thirty guests at a time, they ate, socialized, enjoyed themselves.

"In our house," said Voss. "He had everybody in the community over at our house for dinner. Cooking, using all the pots and pans, using everything. We'd see people in Saratoga and all they could talk about was what a great time they had at our house. Amazing."

The Vosses considered Bob family. He stayed with them in Maryland. They stayed with him in South Carolina. He showed up when their children were born.

"I always, and I told him again in the hospital, felt like he was my eldest son even though he was older than I was," said Mimi. "He always spent time with us, was always part of our lives. He was always here and he was the sweetest



Bob Witham

Tod Marks

man in the world."

Which made saying goodbye that much more difficult. Visitors talked about how tough it was, but they also talked about not missing the chance. In the end, the visits were tougher on guests than on Bob.

"He wants to see everybody," said Preger a few hours before Witham died. "He's of 100 percent sound mind and very, very content with the whole thing. Any time now, they're going to take him off the machines, but he's OK with it."

"I can't imagine a more horrible thing happening, but he was very at peace with it," said Mimi Voss. "He wanted to say goodbye to all his friends. He had what he thought were little issues with some people, but he wanted to see them too."

Tom Voss saw spirituality in his friend.

"Whatever you do when you resign yourself that you're going to die, I guess that's what he had done," he said. "You turn yourself over to God, that's what they say. He was at peace."

And maybe that was Bob's last gift. Perspective in the face of tragedy.

People who saw him talked of a man comforting them — not the other way around. They remembered the things he liked — spur-of-the-moment dinner parties, shepherd's pie, horses like Forego, Camden, giving his safety speech to photographers at the Colonial Cup, laughing about salad tongs (ask Preger), looking at the next Grade I winner in Shadwell's shedrow, harassing Tom Voss, lending a stall or a bed to his friends.

He leaves all that behind, with us, and exits this world for another.

He didn't slam the door.

...

"We've got nothing to worry about, sonny boy."

Tom Voss summed up life in that short, silly sentence at the end of a conversation about Bob Witham. Voss meant that all the worries in the world don't stack up against a man facing the end of his life.

Remember that the next time you're overwhelmed by your in-box, your mobile phone, your bank statement, your Christmas schedule, your newspaper, your horses, your race meet, life in general.

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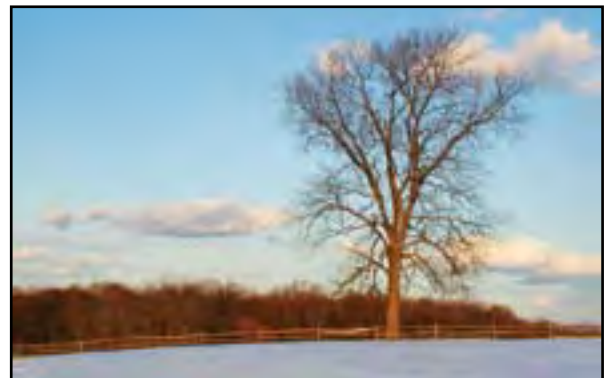
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