

The Saratoga

Special



# Cloud Burst

Win Win Win gets there in wild Forego triumph



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**Film at 11.** A brave photographer weathers the storm during the early stages of Saturday's Forego.

Tod Marks

## here&there...in racing

Presented by Shadwell Farm



### BY THE NUMBERS

**1:** Cooler of craft beer waiting for The Special's Tom Law doing a Fasig-Tipton Stable Tour Tuesday morning (see Worth Repeating).

**5:** Times Cover Photo (who runs in Thursday's fourth race) has been claimed in her last eight starts.

**35:** Dollars paid for a winning ticket on Sunday's 10th race winner, Safe Conduct, picked by The Special's Rob Whitlock.

**39.66:** Time of the first published breeze at Burke Equine in Saratoga Springs.

**41:** Kentucky Derby losses from Post 17, where Tiz The Law drew for Saturday's 146th running.

**175:** Picnic tables loaned by Saratoga Race Course to the Saratoga Springs school district for use at Saratoga High and Maple Avenue Middle to maintain proper social distancing.

### NAMES OF THE DAY

**Noah And The Ark, first race Wednesday.** The Irish-bred hurdler is out of Well Water. Where was he on Saturday?

**Democratic Values, third race Wednesday.** Klaravich Stable's 3-year-old is by Honor Code out of Freedom Flag.

**Brickyard, 10th race Wednesday.** Cherry Knoll Farm's 3-year-old gelding is by Take Charge Indy.

**Thursday, third race Thursday.** For obvious reasons. If Matt Schera's 2-year-old filly is going to get a stakes win, it'll be on a Thursday.

**Spin A Yarn, sixth race Thursday.** Chester and Mary Broman's 3-year-old filly is by Forty Tales out of Satin Sheeks.

### WORTH REPEATING

"I've trained a few that Pinky and Babes could probably beat. But I've also trained some nice ones though."

**Trainer Phil Serpe, reminiscing about draft horses who used to pull his grandfather's Borden's milk truck**

"Just remember roses are still red in September."

**Churchill Downs announcer Travis Stone**

"Great work on Saturday's Saratoga Special! I especially liked Joe's column on protests, Tom's reflection on his former coach and Sean's humanization of what's important in life."

**Dan Collins, Bona Venture Stables**

"You need to get in on some branding, Tiz the Original Law, stuff like that."

**Turf writer Greg Hall to The Special's Tom Law**

"That one might make The Special."

**Trainer Mike Trombetta after Win Win Win won the Forego**

"What a game."

**Jocks' agent John Panagot after his jockey, Javier Castellano, won the Forego on Win Win Win**

## The Saratoga Special

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**Family Picnic.** Steve (left) and Erik Asmussen seek some shelter near the paddock during Saturday's races.

Tod Marks

## The Chief

"Years ago, all of them used to say they either like the turf or they don't. I never breezed horses on the turf. But, now, I don't know. You look at the guys who win the turf races, they breeze a lot over it."

– *Trainer H. Allen Jerkens, 1929-2015*



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### WORTH REPEATING

"Jersey's second best guy with a guitar."

**Ryan Clancy, about singer songwriter John Gorka**

"I appreciate his skills every day."

**Jocks' agent Jason Beides after his jockey, Jose Lezcano, won with Lovely La La Sunday**

"I'm a 'traveling' jock. I'd have been at Saratoga several times already. The protocols have probably cost me three Grade 1s."

**Hall of Fame jockey Mike Smith, on dealing with the coronavirus protocols**

"Riding as long as Ned The Coachman..."

**Trainer J.B. Secor, telling a story about an amateur jockey**

"Willie Simms twice rode Kentucky Derby winners. If you watch the rescheduled Kentucky Derby next weekend, why not remember the Augusta jockey who won it twice: William "Willie" Simms, the best horseman our town ever produced."

**Bill Kirby in the Augusta Chronicle**

"Coincidentally, my day is going to be slightly derailed."

**The Special's Tom Law after doing a Fasig-Tipton Stable Tour with Phil Serpe and winding up with a cooler full of IPAs**

### STALLION RACE

Leading stallions at the 2020 Saratoga meet (compiled by The Special using dutiful, if somewhat haphazard statistical analysis from free sources):

Sire.....	Wins
Into Mischief .....	14
Hard Spun .....	9
More Than Ready .....	9
Uncle Mo .....	9
Central Banker .....	7
Maclean's Music .....	7
Tapit .....	6
American Pharoah .....	5
Cairo Prince .....	5
Candy Ride .....	5
City Zip .....	5
Declaration Of War .....	5
Freud .....	5
Summer Front .....	5
Verrazano .....	5

"He likes to have a target, but he had to have very good vision to find the target he set for himself the other day."

**Live Oak Stud's Bruce Hill, on the come-from-way-behind Win Win Win**

"Luis Perez had her wrapped up turning for home, he was looking for competition, perhaps a stakes race will be where she finds it."

**Finger Lakes announcer when Spin A Yarn, entered in Thursday's Park Avenue, romped in her latest win**

"We might have spoken about Crackerjack Jones a few years ago."

**Trainer Chris Progeno when taking a call from The Special**

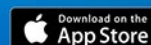
"Even most of my golf carts miss all the fun of the backstretch! Lol, wait till next year."

**Golf cart Mike Grigely, in a note to The Special**



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## POSTCARD TO SARATOGA

Dear Saratoga,

I'm looking out at the Pacific Ocean. I've had a great summer here. The people have been super nice. And how do you not like the weather? It's completely different from Saratoga, but both are amazing places. I miss being at Saratoga. That place took my heart. I'm disappointed I'm not there anymore, but I'm happy with this Del Mar situation.

It 100 percent could have been worse (to lose Saratoga and not have an alternative like Del Mar). This has been a great distraction from not being at Saratoga. I don't know what's going to happen down the road. I will be in Kentucky for two weeks for the Derby, Kentucky Downs and doing some announcing at the Fasig-Tipton sale.

The Derby is the Derby. It's still the most exciting two minutes in sports. It will be a lot different in September with no people there, but it's still the most important 3-year-old race there is. I think it will be very difficult to beat Tiz The Law. I think he's amazing. I think he might be better than American Pharoah and Justify.

— Larry Collmus

*They say when one door closes another opens, but it rarely includes a view like the one Larry Collmus has enjoyed this summer from the announcer's booth at Del Mar. After parting ways with NYRA, Collmus was left only with his work on NBC as the voice of the Triple Crown and Breeders' Cup. (He calls his 10th Kentucky Derby for the Peacock Saturday.) When Trevor Denman decided in June to stay home in Minnesota rather than travel to California during the pandemic, Del Mar reached out to Collmus, who happily accepted the fill-in role.*

## QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Times are different and we are really blessed to be able to run here. I'm really glad we didn't run this meet at Belmont. Saratoga is a great place for people, but it's a better place for horses. Being outside and in the cooler air, it was like 49 degrees the other day. Horses love that."

**Trainer Phil Serpe**



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## With Phil Serpe

No season of The Saratoga Special and Fasig-Tipton Stable Tour would be complete – even amidst the pandemic and during the spectator-free meet – without a stop by Blue Heaven.

Trainer Phil Serpe's regular spot, dubbed Blue Heaven with the sign to prove it, and just off the main track near the five-eighths pole gap, provides the perfect oasis for his runners and anyone fortunate to get an invitation to take a load off on a patio chair under a leafy maple tree.

"I'll be with you in five minutes, I need to go look at a horse," Serpe said Tuesday morning while training wound down a few feet away on the main. "Take a seat next to the cat, let him help you out."

Serpe returned a few minutes later, after checking on one in a neighboring barn since all the stalls in Barn 22 are full for the 2020 meet. A hotwalker cooled out a late trainee and gave a warning.

"Watch out for the killer cats," while another calico strolled up.

"The only thing they're killing is the feed tub," Serpe said.

The setting and wins – three from just five starters since Aug. 14 – keep the mood light.

"It's business as usual for us. The flowers, grass, table and chairs, everything. The whole nine yards," Serpe said. "I love this place. I'd just as soon spend my time here than sitting at home."

Serpe pulled up a chair, took out his stall list and went through some members of the string with The Special's Tom Law.

**Tipple:** WellSpring Stable's 4-year-old Irish-bred filly by Requinto gave the barn its first win of the meet Aug. 14 in 5 1/2-furlong turf allowance. The barn's three wins have actually come for WellSpring, owned by Robert and Laura Vuckovich from Colts Neck, N.J. "We claimed her last summer here last year for WellSpring Stable. She was knocking on the door quite a bit, didn't really care for that turf course at Gulfstream. It's a little different, it's more hard and fast and she really liked the more give at Belmont. She won there and won here, too. That was great to get some wins. I was sorry I nosed out my friend Chris Clement but that's the way it goes, you know? Bob is a very successful entrepreneur, owned a pharmaceutical company and they're just really good people. Very understanding and



always do right by their horses. We lost Mr. Broman because he decided it was time to move on. This guy is like the same. He's not critical on you about things, he understands things, that things happen. He may not like it all the time but accepts it. It's good for those people, they had three winners up here and we have some horses for them down in Florida and had like three winners down there in the last month or so, too."

**Goodbye Brockley:** Hilly Fields Stable's 5-year-old Cosmonaut mare won the 2018 Statue of Liberty division of the New York Stallion Series here and is 4-for-19 with \$236,206 in earnings. She finished fifth in a 1 1/16-mile state-bred optional on the grass July 30. "She's still here. Never really turned out like her sister Lady Joan, who got retired last year because of an injury. We were hoping. Of all the horses out of that family, and we've had them all, she's the best built. We thought she might be the best one. But she's standing in the shadow of her sister. That's just the way it is. She's been in here, has an old tendon issue and she was in the other day. That turf to me was just too soft so it doesn't look like she's going to get to run back here. I always thought she would run in the slop and she won a race pretty easily down at Gulfstream. She was in a race here last year and it had rained buckets. I drove in the driveway, we were going to run her and I saw this big deviation in the track. I called and said, 'You better not run another race over here until you come look at the track.' They had to cancel the races. What happened was the float, the mud got up on the front of the float so it went down into the cushion. She never got to run in the slop here last year, for \$92,000, so we ran at Gulfstream for like \$42,000. We'll try her and she'll hit the breeding shed next year. That family, they kick out runners. She is a stakes winner so we'll see what happens."

**Fixed Point:** WellSpring's 5-year-old son of Midshipman broke his maiden at Saratoga in 2018 and hasn't run since finishing eighth in World Of Trouble Turf Sprint on Pegasus

Connie Bush  
**Trainer Phil Serpe's Saratoga shedrow feels like an oasis no matter what time in the meet you stop by.**

Day Jan. 25 at Gulfstream Park. He's breezed six times on the Oklahoma turf, including a half in :48.96 Monday. "We've been waiting to run back. Has had a few issues that he had to get worked on. Throat surgery like three times. But he's ready to start back. We were pointing toward an allowance race but there weren't enough horses to fill it. There's a void of horses here this year. We're going to run him in the Lucky Coin (Sept. 6) just to try and help racing along here the last week. He's a very fast horse, has had excellent works across the street, we have a lot of hope he'll come back and be able to run well for us."

**Safe Conduct:** The barn's most recent winner, 2-year-old Ontario-bred colt by Bodemeister won Sunday's finale and paid \$35. Fourth in his debut sprinting on the main track Aug. 13, he handled the switch to 1 1/16 miles on the grass and won by 1 1/4 lengths. "We breezed him on the turf the week before the race, he had a great breeze. We put a couple pace horse in front of him, the dogs were way out and :49 and 2 is actually an excellent work considering he came home in :24 and a tick, which would have been about :23 and a tick if he was on the rail. We knew he was going to run well on the turf but we went from auction maiden special to an open maiden special. There were five horses in there that you could say, 'Listen, this horse has got enough pedigree to be a stakes horse.' They were well meant. One thing about him, he's not the sharpest tool in the shed but he's like Forrest Gump. You know those guys, football guys where the coaches go, 'He's stupider than something or other,' and the other coach says, 'Yeah, but he sure can run.' That horse, you cannot tire him out. When he was on the front end I was just hoping. Jose Lezcano did a great job, he slowed it down. I know there was some give in the turf. That's what I was unsure of, because he's a really big horse. He's going to be a big heavy horse and sometimes they don't like that give in the turf. I was actually surprised we even ran on the turf that day. When they turned for home and he was still 2 in front I knew he wasn't going to stop. He's tireless."

What about his price, 16-1? "You know what? First time on the turf. You don't know. Like I said, they're betting on good turf trainers. Christophe had one in there. Chad had one in there. They were well meant in there and that's why those horses go off at those prices. It's unknown. You see first-time starters, it doesn't matter, it's unknown. It doesn't matter what they cost, they don't check their sales price tags at the quarter pole. I know this horse didn't."

**King Angelo:** Homebred for Tom Farone's Farone Stables, he's a recent arrival. Unraced at 2, son of Lemon Drop Kid is out of the three-time winning Awesome Again mare Cupid's

**Continued On Page 8**



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## Stable Tour —

■ Continued from page 6

Arrow, who finished ninth in the 2005 De La Rose Stakes at Saratoga. "He's a New York-bred and looks like he's going to be a nice horse. He's an unstarted 3-year-old, worked :48 and 2 out of the gate yesterday, pretty much in hand. He's within a month of racing hopefully. He looks the part and acts the part. One of those horses that as soon as he came in you knew there was something about him. It's not the quality, you didn't know how fast he was, he just had a good look about him. The way he acts, he's a real alpha. He's been coming along gradually and just overpowers his workmate. Tom seems like he's very conservative when they're 2. I just started training for him and that's his deal. You get a nice strong, fresh 3-year-old and that's what he is. What he was doing as a 2-year-old I honestly don't know. I just know that he's a nice horse and hopefully he's going to be all right."

**B C Belle:** A \$40,000 purchase at last year's Fasig-Tipton Saratoga New York-bred sale, 2-year-old daughter of Vancouver finished sixth in debut Aug. 28 in 5 ½-furlong maiden on main track originally carded for the grass. "She's from the first crop of Vancouver. We ran her the other day, she's bred inside out for turf. The race came off so we gave her the race experience. I felt pretty bad when she came back with 14 pounds of dirt all over her, but she got a race under her belt. The turf is definitely going to be her thing. We're excited about her, she's a nice looking filly, worked well across the street."

**Cairo Beauty:** WellSpring spent \$100,000 to buy filly by American Pharoah out of stakes-placed Stormy Atlantic mare Everlasting Beauty as a weanling. Now 2 she hasn't breezed yet while Serpe gets to know her. "She's just a little backward, because she's a big filly. We'll look for her late in the fall. We don't know a whole lot more about her because she's just starting her breezes. The pedigree is there. American Pharoah, it looks like they're doing pretty good."

**Deptford Warrior:** Hilly Fields' homebred 2-year-old colt by War Dancer out of Ladywell Court is a half-brother to Lady Joan and Good-bye Brockley. He's worked eight times, including three on the Oklahoma turf and four on the Saratoga main track. "A lot of 2-year-olds in general are a little behind and the problem is at Saratoga, if you're two weeks behind you miss your race. It's such a small window to run in. He's very close. He's from the first crop of War Dancer out of Ladywell Court. They're all runners out of his family. What's funny is War Dancer is out of Deed I Do, who we trained for Inniscarra Stable."

**Bella Domenica:** Robert and Catherine Gennett's 3-year-old New York-bred filly by



Tod Marks

**Trainer Phil Serpe.**

Giant Surprise finished second and fourth in maiden races here Aug. 8 and 26. "Filly that looked like she was struggling in her earlier races. We ran her late in her 2-year-old year and before racing got shut down. She's gradually improving and was second here two starts back. She just needs to run more ground, but at Saratoga you go from seven-eighths to a mile-and-an-eighth races. The mile-and-an-eighth races don't seem to go on the dirt. So when we get back to Belmont anything seven-eighths, a mile, something. She's knocking on the door."

**Amperсанд:** A \$34,000 buy this year by WellSpring Stable, 2-year-old Speightster colt earned more than that price winning his debut in 5 ½-furlong maiden originally scheduled for the turf but run on a muddy track Aug. 22. "As far as his name, I've asked Dr. V and his wife Laura why the heck they named him that. But it sounds better every time. He's from the first crop of Speightster, by Speightstown. I love Speightstown, he's becoming a sire of sires. They're precocious. He looked fast, but he looked a little slight at the sale. He needs to fill out some, which he will. But by the time we got him up, I guess it was around his second half-mile we knew he could run. He was fast. We were struggling to hold him down to :48 and change. He worked out of the gate one day in like :47 and change, literally in the four path and never, ever gave him his head. We knew he was fast and that he was eligible for the auction races. He didn't get to that race in time. Look, it's Saratoga and rain wasn't in the forecast but it's always in the forecast. So I put him in MTO. Yes it was a good spot because there were some well-meant turf horses in that race but he ran like a real pro. He didn't break sharp, he took dirt, had to come through the inside. Junior Alvarado was on (Foliage) for Al Stall, a Speightstown, a gorgeous looking horse that's a half to Lea, beautiful horse. That's the horse I was most worried about because the track still had some wet in it. Junior leaned on our horse and our horse, I think Jose Lezcano wanted to go around and Amperсанд wanted to go through and Amperсанд won that bet and went through. What was impressive about him was he ran like a horse that had run several times. We'll see what happens, we don't know what his future is yet but we'll see pretty soon."





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**LANE'S END**



# Wet Wet Wet

Win Win Win comes from storm clouds to win Grade 1 sprint



Win Win Win sweeps past Complexity near the finish of the Forego.

Tod Marks

## BY TOM LAW

## FOREGO STAKES RECAP

Mike Trombetta took his eyes off the small TV set he stood under to watch the field for Saturday's Grade 1 Forego make its way up the backstretch and tried to pick out Win Win Win through the lashing rain across the infield.

He couldn't see a thing – who could? – and felt uneasy.

Michael Trombetta Jr., the trainer's oldest son and his shadow for much of the meet, felt even worse.

"I thought he was eased," the younger Trombetta said behind his mask from the clubhouse porch.

No one could fault the Trombettas, or owner Charlotte Weber of Live Oak Plantation watching at home, for thinking the worst for Win Win Win. About 100 yards into the 7-furlong Forego 10 of the field's 11 runners were within about 5 lengths while the other, Win Win Win, lost so much contact that his image dropped off the TV screen. He

dropped so far back that his 7 chiclet icon dropped off the screen as the field hit the half-mile pole.

A minute later Win Win Win flipped the script, circled the entire field under Javier Castellano and won by a half-length over Complexity. The winning trainer did his best impression of North Carolina State basketball coach Jim Valvano, who ran around looking for someone to hug after winning the 1984 national championship on a buzzer beater.

"I thought something happened to him, he was nowhere," said Trombetta, who found his son and assistant Sarah Shaffer for hugs and high-fives as Win Win Win galloped out. "There hasn't been a horse close like that the whole meet. I didn't see him until they were turning for home when they made the turn. Oh. My. God."

Win Win Win's remarkable victory, in 1:21.71

over the sloppy and sealed surface, was his first in a Grade 1 in a 12-race career that has seen him go from a winner at 5 ½ furlongs twice as a 2-year-old to classics contender to starter in the Kentucky Derby and Preakness Stakes to middle-distance turf horse and back to one-turn competitor.

"We threw around all our options," Trombetta said of how Win Win Win landed in the Forego field that also included 2018 winner Whitmore, Grade 1 winners Complexity, Mind Control and Firenze Fire and multiple New York-bred stakes winner and 3-1 favorite Funny Guy. "He was second in the Blue Grass and showed up well. He's won on the turf. He's got a great closing kick and the one-turn, seven-eighths was something I wanted to revisit at the right time.

"After his last race it looked like he was rounding into form and we all like that third race off the

**Continued On Page 11**



# Forego —

■ Continued from page 10

layoff situation. We targeted this one and we've been working all summer to get here."

Trombetta prepped Win Win Win out of his Fair Hill barn through the spring and summer and he finished 10th in the First Defence Stakes going 7 furlongs on the grass at Belmont Park June 7 and second behind Complexity in a 1-mile optional at Belmont July 2.

He considered stretching the son of Hat Trick back out for the restricted Alydar Stakes Aug. 9 at Saratoga but thought back to his win in the Pasco Stakes at Tampa Bay Downs to start his 3-year-old season. That win put his name in the conversation for the spring classics and gave Win Win Win the 7-furlong track record of 1:20.89.

Trombetta eventually passed on the Alydar and circled the Forego, which he said in July "might be a little bit of a reach but it might be time to take the reach. We're throwing it around, we're undecided, we have time."

Win Win Win needed to train



Tod Marks

Jose Ortiz (left) on Complexity can't believe he sees Javier Castellano and Win Win Win at the finish.

"lights out" back home and then at Saratoga to earn a spot in the Forego field and did just that.

Shipped to upstate New York just before the middle of August, Win Win Win breezed in company with 4-year-old stakes-bound Declaration Of War filly Lucky Stride in his first spin over Saratoga's main track. He went 5 fur-

longs in a bullet :58.88 to his workmate's :59.33.

"His work in company when he first got here was off-the-charts good," Trombetta said. "It left me with a great feeling that he liked the track and was ready to go."

The Forego came up with a bigger field, 11, than the other Grade 1

sprint stakes at the meet, the Alfred G. Vanderbilt that attracted just five and wound up with just four following the gate scratch of Lexingtonian.

Ominous skies, which dumped rain on the area and left the track muddy for the penultimate Saturday card of the meet, resurfaced again when the Forego field assembled in the paddock. A light rain started to fall, winds picked up and thunder rumbled in the distance as an announcement came out with about 14 minutes to post that the field would go straight from the paddock to the starting gate.

"I thought we were back at the Derby last year," Trombetta said. "That's how hard it rained that day. It's all good. I think he can handle just about any surface you throw at him."

The steady rain became a heavy rain by 10 minutes to post. The Forego field made its way to the gate and went on its way after an uneventful break four minutes earlier than its scheduled post.

Win Win Win didn't impersonate a casually late party goer when the field left the gate, or when Complexity to

Continued On Page 12

.....

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# Forego —

■ Continued from page 11

his inside and Firenze Fire to his outside came together a few yards into the race but dropped back nonetheless.

Castellano kept Win Win Win about 10 paths off the inside rail in the early stages while Complexity, True Timber, Fortin Hill and Mind Control scrimmaged for the lead. Complexity led through the opening quarter in :22.28.

Win Win Win was already about 15 lengths back at that point, moved over a bit to about four paths off the inside and Castellano tapped him a few times on the shoulder to get a response.

Castellano continued to give him a few taps as the field made its way past the half-mile pole, into the far turn and toward the half-mile split in :44.63. Win Win Win raced more than 16 lengths back at that point but started to get rolling between the three-eighths and the quarter-pole. His momentum carried him out turning for home and Castellano let him do it naturally.

The official chart said he was “eight to nine wide into the upper stretch” but safe money might put it anywhere between 14 and 16.

“I rode the horse one time, at Belmont, and he didn’t break out of the gate,” Castellano said of the runner-up finish July 2. “I rushed to get the

spot I was looking for and didn’t have the best result. I learned through that experience and finally it paid off with a Grade 1 win, the Forego. I’m very lucky to be able to ride a horse like that.

“He was very far back and made a huge run to win the race. Not too many horses can do that. He did it and in a nice way. He’s a really nice horse . . . He made me look good.”

Complexity and True Timber, who contested the pace most of the way, offered no response while Win Win Win sailed by on the outside. They held second and third, respectively, three-quarters of a length apart and Funny Guy checked in another 1 1/4 lengths back in fourth. Whitmore, the 7-2 second choice, turned in one of the worst finishes of his 36-start career in seventh with Mind Control eighth, Fortin Hill 10th and Firenze Fire 11th.

Win Win Win earned a spot in the field for the Breeders’ Cup Sprint through the “Win And You’re In” series. Trombetta said he hadn’t thought much past the Forego. Trombetta’s Saratoga string went home to Fair Hill Monday, three wins, a second and three thirds from 20 starts and \$310,997 in purses.

“All the options become open again with a race like this,” said Trombetta, whose previous two Grade 1 wins came at Canada’s Woodbine Racetrack. “I really believed that this horse deserved a shot in a Grade 1 and the owner supported it. With their support we brought him up here to make sure he was ready to go.”



Sarah Shaffer and Jose Medina greet Win Win Win.

Tod Marks

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# Head Case

## Channel Maker stays straight and strong in Gr. 1 turf marathon

Channel Maker sets up on the lead early in Saturday's Sword Dancer.



Tod Marks (2)

### BY TOM LAW

Everyone knows the rules by now. Or at least they should.

Channel Maker's 34 starts provide the blueprint, if it's fair to call it that for a horse like that, of how things work. How he wants it to work. Well, most of the time anyway.

Particularly finicky and perhaps even sensitive – push or pull too hard and his head comes up – the 6-year-old gelding will pull himself and run rank between, beside or behind rivals. He seems most comfortable on the lead, but only when he breaks well and you don't force it.

The quirks go back to his 2-year-old season, when Danny Vella trained him at Woodbine and he won a small stakes as a maiden and finished third in the Grade 2 Summer Stakes there to earn a trip to the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Turf. He pulled, tossed his head in the air and was rank into the first turn at Santa Anita Park before attending a quick pace and finishing seventh.

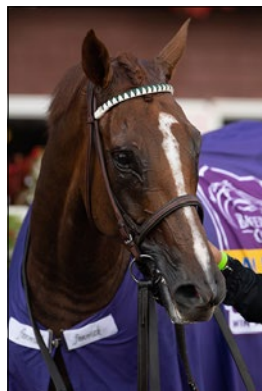
Bill Mott took over one start into Channel Maker's 3-year-old year, learned enough early and

### SWORD DANCER STAKES RECAP

won the Canadian classic Breeders' Stakes before trying him in the Grade 1 Joe Hirsch Turf Classic, Grade 2 Twilight Derby and Grade 1 Hollywood Derby. Channel Maker didn't win any of those races or the four to start his 4-year-old season before winning the Grade 2 Bowling Green in a dead-heat with Glorious Empire at Saratoga. He tossed his head there, too, and pulled for a half-mile before settling off the pace.

Mott called him "almost an overachiever" that day and continued to label the gelding that in Fasig-Tipton Stable Tours at the end of the 2018 and 2019 meets.

Channel Maker overachieved again Saturday at



Saratoga Race Course, smashing through the boggy inner turf course to win the Grade 1 Sword Dancer Stakes all the way on the lead. Manny Franco, two days before heading to Louisville for his Kentucky Derby ride on Tiz The Law, rode Channel Maker to his 5 3/4-length victory over Cross Border in the \$500,000 Sword Dancer.

Franco learned the lessons of Channel Maker's quirks riding him to a close fourth in the Grade 1 Manhattan July 4 and to a third via disqualification in the Grade 2 Bowling Green.

"He's not an easy horse to ride," Franco said of his second Grade 1 of the meet after Tiz The Law's Travers Aug. 8. "We try to go to the lead but sometimes he doesn't break good. Today we were able to make it and he was traveling the whole way fine and handled the soft ground really well."

Franco gave Channel Maker a good warmup on the sloppy and sealed main track, pounded with rain a half hour before during the Grade 1 Forego.

The skies threatened again before the Sword Dancer, guaranteed to be run on a saturated and

**Continued On Page 16**



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# Sword Dancer —

■ Continued from page 14

soft course after rains early Saturday morning and then once the races started. The National Weather Service issued a tornado warning for Saratoga County to expire at about post time for the Sword Dancer and as the seven runners were tacked up in the paddock the skies cleared and thunder subsided.

Mott watched the warmup and race from the racing office and liked the way the 1 ½-mile Sword Dancer set up when Channel Maker wound up on the lead when Marzo, who opened up a big lead early before fading in the Bowling Green, didn't go to the front under Ricardo Santana Jr.

"We thought Marzo could be on the lead and we might be laying second, but the opportunity presented itself for him to be on the lead and the jockey accepted the opportunity," Mott said. "Sometimes you make the right decision and it worked out."

Channel Maker rolled along on the lead, clicking through the first half in :51.14 and the mile in 1:42.33. He led



Channel Maker (head up as usual) gets to the finish line first in the Sword Dancer.

Tod Marks

by a length after the mile and when Franco asked for a bit around the far turn Channel Maker responded.

Channel Maker opened up by 2 lengths approaching the stretch the last time and drew off inside the final eighth while being wrapped up.

The 8-1 sixth choice of seven won in 2:34.86, well off Awad's course record 2:23.20 when he won the 1997 Sword Dancer but not surprising considering the moisture in the ground. Aquaphobia finished 3 1/2 lengths behind 3-1 favorite Cross Border to give

trainer Mike Maker a 2-3 finish with Sadler's Joy, last early and appearing to not favor the ground, fourth of seven as the second choice.

The Sword Dancer gave Channel Maker, who races for Wachtel Stable, Gary Barber, R. A. Hill Stable and Reeves Thoroughbred Racing, his third Grade 1 victory along with the 2018 Joe Hirsch Turf Classic and 2019 Man o' War. He earned an automatic bid in the Breeders' Cup Turf at Keeneland Nov. 7, a race where he's finished 11th and 12th the last two years.

Mott, winning his fourth Sword Dancer dating back to his first in 1987 with Theatrical when it was run at Belmont, didn't commit past the Oct. 3 Joe Hirsch. The prospect of soft ground might change his thinking.

"That water gets very deep," Mott said of the Breeders' Cup. "We've tried it a couple times and it hasn't worked out. You get a whole different group of horses. But who knows? There was a year at Keeneland where it was a bottomless ground and if that situation came up, maybe he would benefit from it."

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Yaupon makes it 3-for-3 in Saturday's Amsterdam for trainer Steve Asmussen.

Tod Marks

## AMSTERDAM STAKES RECAP

# Speed Surplus

## Asmussen adds player to deep sprint squad

BY TERRY HILL

William and Corinne Heiligbrodt won their first Breeders' Cup race last year, the Sprint with eventual champion male sprinter Mitole, after a successful three-decade run in the Thoroughbred business.

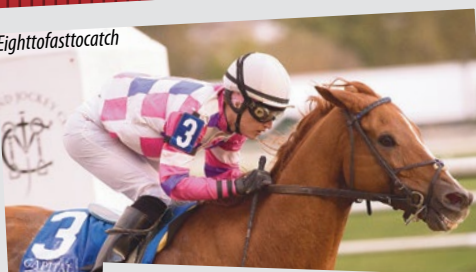
Mitole's retirement to Spendthrift Farm in Lexington left a void in the Heiligbrodt's stable and in Hall of Fame trainer Steve Asmussen's barn but there might be a potential replacement in a colt bought last June as a 2-year-old just while their champion was revving up.

Continued On Page 19

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# Amsterdam —

■ Continued from page 18

"I think they're pretty happy with what they bought right now," Asmussen said of Yaupon, bought for \$255,000 at the OBS June sale and winner of Saturday's Grade 2 Amsterdam. The 3-year-old Uncle Mo colt won the 6-furlong Amsterdam by 2 lengths over former stablemate Basin in 1:08.50, not far off Imperial Hint's track record 1:07.92 set last year.

"He had a little trouble out of the gate, but then he got going," said jockey Joel Rosario, who rode Yaupon to a Saratoga allowance win July 18. "He was trying right away and he had no problem with the mud."

Yaupon, who only broke his maiden nine weeks ago, ran his record to 3-for-3. All of his races have been at 6 furlongs so far, but Asmussen thinks he's capable of going farther.

"It's early," he said. "We held off getting him to the races at the start because of a few minor physical issues. Then we planned to run him over the winter, but something else cropped up. Again very minor, but when you've got a colt this talented — believe me, he's extremely fast — well, you want to err on the side of caution."

"As always, we'll see how he comes out of this one and go from there, but he could have a nice year."

If Yaupon continues successfully in sprints, he could run up against other Asmussen-trained colts in the Breed-

ers' Cup Sprint in Volatile, winner the Grade 1 Alfred G. Vanderbilt Handicap in July, and Echo Town, winner of the Grade 1 H. Allen Jerkens Stakes in August.

Yaupon went off as the 7-5 favorite despite facing three stakes winners in the field of six. The crowd's — the word is used euphemistically this year at Saratoga — second choice at 2-1 was last year's Grade 1 Hopeful and Saratoga maiden winner Basin.

Basin was mentioned in sentences that included the names of Triple Crown races just a few months ago. In May he finished second in the Grade 1 Arkansas Derby, but was later placed first when Charlatan was disqualified for a positive drug test.

After his next start, a 10th in the Grade 2 Blue Grass Stakes July 11 at Keeneland, his connections reevaluated the colt's future. The owners approached Todd Pletcher and asked him to take over the colt's training. The Amsterdam was Basin's first start for Pletcher and the first time in more than a year that he has run as short as 6 furlongs.

Though he couldn't catch the front runner, Basin ran gamely in the stretch to finish second, 2 lengths back. Pletcher was encouraged by his new charge's performance in the race.

Premier Star, with Ricardo Santana Jr. subbing for the injured Irad Ortiz Jr., finished third for trainer Mike Trombetta. Trombetta won the Grade 1 Forego a little more than a half hour later with Win Win Win.



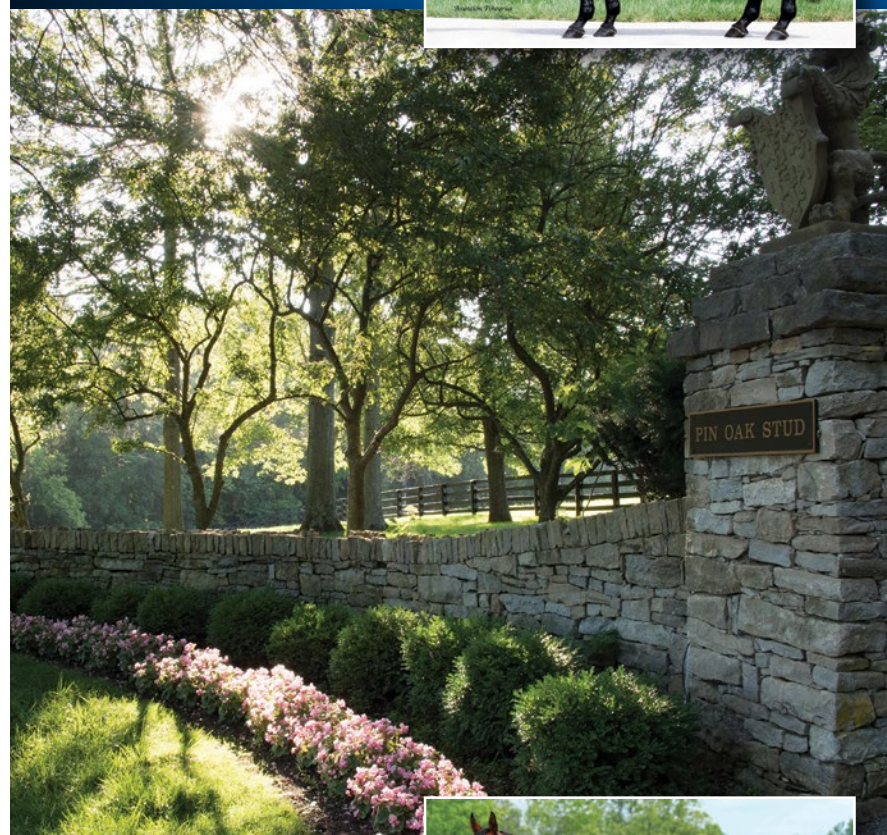
Tod Marks

Yaupon gears down while coming to the finish of Saturday's Amsterdam.

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Tod Marks

Bye Bye Melvin (left) rallies past Don Juan Kitten in the Saranac.

# See You Later

## Bye Bye Melvin handles soft turf for first graded stakes victory

BY TERRY HILL

"It was as soft as we've ever run here," Graham Motion said of Saratoga's Mellon Turf Course, officially rated soft for 113th running of Saturday's Grade 3 Saranac Stakes. "It was a bit like who disliked it the least. Today that was us."

Motion's 3-year-old colt Bye Bye Melvin proved that point when he caught the front-running Don Juan Kitten in the final strides to win by a head.

Jockey John Velazquez rated the winner, keeping him within striking distance in third most of the race.

"I didn't have any choice," he said. "I came out running just to get in position but he didn't want any of it. I grabbed him and he seemed to move a little more comfortably."

### SARANAC STAKES RECAP

"Even though they rolled the course it still felt like we were going very deep. And then the rain just before the start meant it was slick on top, too. When I moved outside of the front two in the stretch to challenge, he was trying as hard as he could, but he was slipping and sliding. He got there anyway."

Bye Bye Melvin notched his third win in nine starts and his first stakes victory.

"I wasn't surprised at the way he ran, even though he's kind of a handful in the mornings," said Motion.

Motion called Alex Campbell Jr.'s homebred Uncle Mo colt "a bit of

**Continued On Page 21**

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# Saranac —

■ Continued from page 20

a project, and he's been erratic" but he earned a shot at the Saranac after a second to Vanzzy on the grass at Monmouth Park in the Jersey Derby.

"I thought that was a strong race for us and I was surprised when I came out here and saw the difference in odds between us and the one that won it," Motion said.

Vanzzy went off at 4-1 while Bye Bye Melvin wound up the longest odds on the board at 19-1. In the end, Vanzzy finished eighth and last.

The runner-up, Don Juan Kitten, led at every call and was in front by 2 lengths coming into the stretch before getting caught at the wire.

"My horse ran his heart out," jockey Kendrick Carmouche said of Don Juan Kitten. "That soft turf took it out of him, he was running on 'E' when we got to the finish. He gave us 100 percent, that's all we can ask."

The photo-finish Saranac victory could be seen as a measure of consolation for Bye Bye Melvin's connections. Just a week before, the colt's

older half-sister Mean Mary lost the Grade 1 Diana Stakes by a neck. Both horses are out of the mare Karlov Vary, both bred in Kentucky by Campbell and trained at Fair Hill by Motion. After the Saranac, both are now graded stakes winners.

The Saranac was scheduled at a mile on the inner turf, but with the Grade 1 Sword Dancer Stakes scheduled for later in the day on the same course, the New York Racing Association moved the Saranac to the Mellon. Observing the Mellon course after the race, the switch looked like a wise one as the Sword Dancer was then able to go off on the soft but not torn-up inner course several hours later.

The course change did necessitate a bit of creativity in the distance, however. A mile race had not previously been run on the Mellon so the run-up to the start was set back more than 175 feet to allow for a little more sorting out before the first turn. Even though NYRA analyst Andy Serling suggested that the actual race distance was more like a mile and 1/32, it would appear that Bye Bye Melvin is the current track-record holder for that distance in 1:39.92.



Tod Marks

Bye Bye Melvin and John Velazquez pause after winning the Saranac.



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Susie Raisher/NYRA

Letruska skips home with a win in Sunday's Shuvee.

# Southern Star

## Letruska returns to two turns, bounces back from Ballerina loss

BY TERRY HILL

SHUVEE STAKES RECAP

St. George Stable's Letruska, a homebred 4-year-old filly who until late last year was racing in Mexico, made a statement in the older filly and mare division when she won Sunday's Grade 3 Shuvee Stakes at Saratoga Race Course.

With Joel Rosario in the saddle, Letruska broke just a fraction late, shook off a slight brush from Our Super Freak on her outside and was in command by the clubhouse turn. Setting hot fractions, she led by 4 1/4 lengths coming through the final turn.

The Chad Brown-trained Royal Flag made a run in the stretch and at the sixteenth pole looked like she might overtake the former Mexican star, but Letruska dug in and pre-

vailed by a length.

Letruska's trainer, Mexico's Fausto Gutierrez, was ecstatic in the winner's circle. He'd been to Saratoga before this year, but only as a spectator; this year he's a participant.

"It's such an honor to just run at Saratoga and the win is very, very special," he said. "She's a wonderful filly. And I felt bad about her last race (a fifth in the Grade 1 Ballerina Aug. 8)."

Gutierrez admitted he was perhaps too ambitious for her with that start against the likes of Serengeti Empress, Bellafina and Come Dancing. He feels the 4-year-old daughter of Super Sav-

**Continued On Page 23**

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# Shuvee —

## ■ Continued from page 22

er might be better a little longer than the 7-furlong Ballarina. He dreams of a Breeders' Cup victory for Letruska and felt he needed a Grade 1 win to get there, thus making her graded stakes debut in that company.

"For that race she was absolutely nervous in the paddock. You could see it," Gutierrez said. "Today she was very professional."

Long an important trainer in Mexico, Gutierrez first made an impression in the U.S. in 2018 with a 3-year-old named Kukulkan. The colt had beaten everything he could see in Mexico and was 13-for-13. At the end of his 3-year-old year, Gutierrez brought him up to run in the Caribbean Classic Stakes at Gulfstream Park. He secured the services of Irad Ortiz Jr. and Kukulkan won the 9-furlong race by 10 lengths.

Last year he had another unbeaten 3-year-old in Mexico — Letruska, who is out of the graded-stakes-placed Successful Appeal mare Magic Appeal and was 6-for-6 south of the border. Employing the same Gulfstream strategy, Gutierrez also brought her to South Florida at the end of her 3-year-old year for the Copa Internacional del Caribe Stakes. She went gate to wire in the 10-furlong test.

That's when Gutierrez started dreaming of the Breeders' Cup.

Three weeks after her American debut, Letruska finished 13th in the Tropical Oaks in her turf debut. She came back to post a win and a third against allowance foes at Oaklawn Park in April. At the end of June, she won the Added Elegance Stakes at Oaklawn.

"I knew it would be a huge step for her, maybe too huge," he said. "The competition in Mexico isn't like here, but even down there her times were good."

And so Letruska was shipped to the Spa to try the Ballarina. After her fifth there he put the dream on a back burner. But it was still there.

The Shuvee win has clearly fanned the flame. Gutierrez is now looking at possibly running in Keeneland's Grade 1 Juddmonte Spinster Oct. 4. The trainer is well aware that the Spinster is a 'Win And You're In' for the Breeders' Cup Distaff.

## Saratoga Leaders

TRAINERS	1ST
Chad Brown .....	26
Todd Pletcher .....	26
Christophe Clement.....	19
Mike Maker .....	18
Linda Rice .....	13
Rudy Rodriguez .....	12
Steve Asmussen .....	11
Jim Bond.....	10
Bill Mott .....	9
Orlando Noda .....	9
Wesley Ward .....	9
Brad Cox .....	7
David Donk .....	7
Shug McGaughey.....	7
Jorge Abreu .....	6
Jeremiah Englehart .....	6
Ray Handal.....	6

JOCKEYS	1ST
Jose Ortiz.....	49
Irad Ortiz Jr. ....	47
Joel Rosario .....	44
Luis Saez.....	30
Javier Castellano .....	26
Tyler Gaffalione .....	21
Jose Lezcano .....	19
Manny Franco .....	18
John Velazquez .....	16
Dylan Davis .....	13
Junior Alvarado.....	12
Ricardo Santana Jr.....	12
David Cohen.....	7
Eric Cancel .....	6
Kendrick Carmouche.....	5
Benjamin Hernandez .....	5

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\*-Includes partnerships

"Es posible," he said.

Javier Castellano, aboard the runner-up Royal Flag coming off a third in the Grade 3 Molly Pitcher, appreciated the effort of the 4-year-old Candy Ride filly.

"She ran well," he said. "She was moving pretty quick, then coming from behind. She split horses, cut the corner inside the quarter pole and we were aiming for the leader. But, we were just second best."

Our Super Freak finished three-quarters of a length back in third with last year's Shuvee winner Golden Award fourth in the field of nine. Nonna Madeline, winner of the restricted Summer Colony last time out and the 5-2 favorite, finished eighth.

The advertisement features a background image of a horse race in progress, with dust kicked up by the horses' hooves. In the upper left corner is the Hallway Feeds logo, which consists of a stylized 'H' inside a circular frame with the words 'HALLWAY FEEDS' below it. The main text, 'SOME HORSES EAT HALLWAY FEEDS, OTHERS EAT DUST.', is written in large, bold, white capital letters across the center of the image. At the bottom left, the words 'Hallway FEEDS' are written in a script font, and at the bottom right, the phrase 'MADE FOR THIS™' is written in a bold, sans-serif font.



# Six to Go

Turf juveniles, New York-breds highlight start to meet's final week

BY SEAN CLANCY

It's that time of the year. Back-to-back 2-year-old stakes on the turf today and Thursday and New York-breds Friday. Tick, tick, tick. Six days to go and our summer comes to a close.

Some summer.

The With Anticipation, the featured ninth race Wednesday, attracted six juveniles at 1 1/16 miles on the turf. Looking for a fresh preview, a new voice? Reeve McGaughey, son of Hall of Famer Shug McGaughey, entered Ellis Park maiden winner Nathan Detroit. Perfect, young trainer with a Saratoga legacy, we haven't interviewed him since Wise Dan was champion. Make the call. Mucous. Not coming. Next.

## SARATOGA RACING PREVIEW

The Grade 3 With Anticipation winnows to just five starters, including two maidens for the 1 1/16-mile contest.

American Monarch negotiated and flourished at two turns in his Aug. 8 debut, taking a turf maiden at today's distance. Owned by Mike Rutherford and ridden by Junior Alvarado, the son of American Pharoah broke sharp in his debut, found a sweet spot in fourth, bided his time to lower the boom and did just that with a half-length score over pacesetter Secret Position and the pent-up Pivotal Mission. The bay colt came back with two

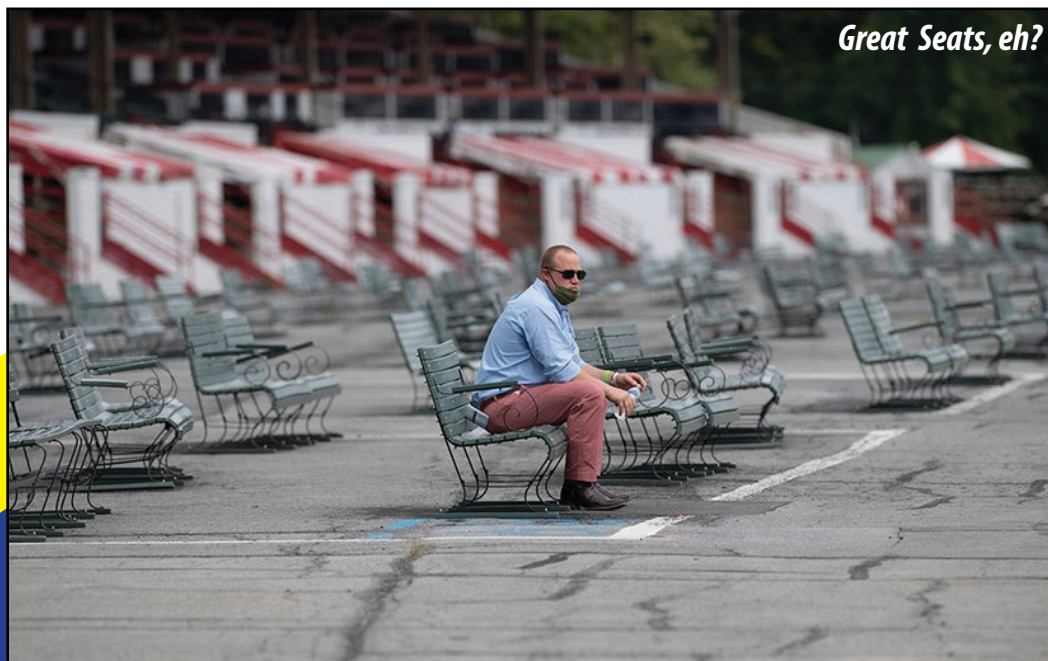
Continued On Page 25



Tod Marks

American Monarch is favored in today's With Anticipation.

## KIP ELSE'S KIRKWOOD STABLES TWO-YEAR-OLDS TO GO



Great Seats, eh?

Tod Marks

## PHOTO OF THE DAY

CAN'T MAKE THE YEARLING  
SALES THIS FALL?

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# Preview —

## ■ Continued from page 24

dirt breezes over the main track. The homebred colt is 7-5 on the morning line.

Wesley Ward tried to run Blame The Booze on the turf at Belmont Park July 10 but the 6-furlong dash was rained off. The son of Blame didn't miss a beat, wiring four rivals to score by 2 ½ lengths. Owned and bred by Mark Breen, the bay gelding has worked steadily at Saratoga, including four consecutive drills on the turf, pumping the engine with a bullet half-mile in :48.88 Aug. 28. Luis Saez takes over for Manny Franco, who left Monday for Churchill Downs.

Course winner Zippy Baby for Dermot Magner, maiden and first-time turf Winfromwithin for Todd Pletcher and Fire At Will, sixth behind American Monarch, for Mike Maker complete the field.

Iranistan highlights the final jump race of the season today. The high-weight at 158, the 6-year-old knows one way and that's all the way. He wired eight rivals, including five he faces again, three weeks ago for trainer Jonathan Sheppard, jockey Darren Nagle and owner Hudson River Farm. Sheppard also entered the talented but fragile Taper Tantrum. Jack Fisher, who looks for his fifth win of the meet, counters with Cracker Factory and New Member.

## Thursday

The P.G. Johnson, the sister act to the With Anticipation, anchors Thursday's card. Pegged as the third race at 2:17 p.m. on the 10-race slate, the 2-year-old filly turf stakes failed to draw a robust field as well, winding up with seven entries, including two main-track-only entries for Pletcher.

Christophe Clement, seven wins behind Pletcher and Chad Brown for leading trainer honors, punches with both fists, sending out course winners Plum Ali and Mischievous Dream.

Owned by Michael Dubb and company, Plum Ali broke her maiden with a stylish win July 23. Joel Rosario, who rides Thursday, convinced the chestnut filly to temper her speed in sixth of seven in the two-turn turf contest. In the middle of the second turn, Rosario took his thumb off the cork and it was over fast. Whip turned down, feet on the dash, she won by 2 ½ lengths.

Mischievous Dream sprinted in her winning debut, scoring by a length over New York-breds for July 19. Patricia Generazio's homebred came back to fade in the Bolton Landing Aug. 19. Irad Ortiz Jr. takes over for Tyler Gaffalione who's also at Churchill.

Graham Motion sends out game debut winner Invincible Gal. The British-bred daughter of Invincible Spirit won going 5 ½ furlongs on the turf Aug. 7 for Mike Ryan, Jeff

**Continued On Page 26**



Tod Marks

**Iranistan looks for his second win of the meet today.**


**CHURCHILL DOWNS**

## 2020 Derby Week & September Meet Stakes Schedule

SEPTEMBER 1 - SEPTEMBER 27

THE CHAMPIONS DAY MARATHON OVERNIGHT STAKES		UNBRIDLED SIDNEY	
Runs Tues., Sept. 1 \$115,000 Three Years Old & Up	Closes Aug. 15 (No nomination fee) 1 1/2 Miles, Dirt	Runs Wed., Sept. 2 \$150,000 Fillies & Mares, Three Year Olds & Up	Closes Aug. 15 (\$150 nomination fee) 5 1/2 Furlongs, Turf

POCAHONTAS (GIII) "WIN AND YOU'RE IN BREEDERS' CUP JUVENILE FILLIES DIVISION"		OPENING VERSE OVERNIGHT STAKES	
Runs Thurs., Sept. 3 \$200,000 Fillies, Two Years Old	Closes Aug. 15 (\$200 nomination fee) 1 Mile, Dirt	Runs Thurs., Sept. 3 \$115,000 Three Years Old & Up	Closes Aug. 15 (No nomination fee) 1 Mile, Turf

**KENTUCKY OAKS DAY**

LONGINES KENTUCKY OAKS (GI)		EDGEWOOD (GII)	
Runs Fri., Sept. 4 \$1,250,000 Second closing Fillies, Three Years Old	Closes Aug. 15 (\$500 nomination fee) 1 1/8 Miles, Dirt	Runs Fri., Sept. 4 \$300,000 Fillies, Three Year Olds	Closes Aug. 15 (\$300 nomination fee) 1 Mile, Turf

EIGHT BELLES (GII)		LA TROIENNE (GI)	
Runs Fri., Sept. 4 \$300,000 Fillies, Three Year Olds	Closes Aug. 15 (\$300 nomination fee) 7 Furlongs, Dirt	Runs Fri., Sept. 4 \$500,000 Fillies & Mares, Four Year Olds & Up	Closes Aug. 15 (\$300 nomination fee) 1 1/16 Miles, Dirt

ALYSHEBA (GII)		TWIN SPIRES TURF SPRINT (GII)	
Runs Fri., Sept. 4 \$400,000 Four Year Olds & Up	Closes Aug. 15 (\$300 nomination fee) 1 1/16 Mile, Dirt	Runs Fri., Sept. 4 \$250,000 Three Year Olds & Up	Closes Aug. 15 (\$250 nomination fee) 5 1/2 Furlongs, Turf

**KENTUCKY DERBY DAY**

OLD FORESTER BOURBON TURF CLASSIC (GI)		IROQUOIS (GIII) "WIN AND YOU'RE IN BREEDERS' CUP JUVENILE DIVISION"	
Runs Sat., Sept. 5 \$1,000,000 Second Closing Four Year Olds & Up	Closes Aug. 15 (\$500 nomination fee) 1 1/8 Miles, Turf	Runs Sat., Sept. 5 \$200,000 Two Year Olds	Closes Aug. 15 (\$200 nomination fee) 1 Mile, Dirt

PAT DAY MILE (GII)		DERBY CITY DISTAFF (GI)	
Runs Sat., Sept. 5 \$500,000 Three Year Olds	Closes Aug. 15 (\$300 nomination fee) 1 Mile, Dirt	Runs Sat., Sept. 5 \$500,000 Fillies & Mares, Four Year Olds & Up	Closes Aug. 15 (\$300 nomination fee) 7 Furlongs, Dirt

AMERICAN TURF (GII)		LONGINES CHURCHILL DISTAFF TURF MILE (GII)	
Runs Sat., Sept. 5 \$500,000 Three Year Olds	Closes Aug. 15 (\$300 nomination fee) 1 1/16 Miles, Turf	Runs Sat., Sept. 5 \$500,000 Fillies & Mares, Four Year Olds & Up	Closes Aug. 15 (\$300 nomination fee) 1 Mile, Turf

ACK ACK (GIII)	
Runs Sat., Sept. 26 \$100,000 Three Year Olds & Up	Closes Sept. 12 (\$100 nomination fee) 1 Mile, Dirt

To nominate, call (502) 638.3806 or (800) 928.3372  
Ben Huffman, *Racing Secretary*  
Dan Bork, *Asst. Racing Secretary, Stakes Coordinator*  
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# Preview —

## ■ Continued from page 25

Drown and Team Hanley. Jose Ortiz takes over for John Velazquez, who, you guessed it, is at Churchill to ride Gamine in the Kentucky Oaks, Authentic in the Kentucky Derby and others on the stakes-filled docket.

“At this time of year, you don’t have much time to find out if they’re (Breeders’ Cup) caliber so you kind of have to run them in races like this,” Motion said. “You can’t really miss a beat. If she steps up, handles two turns and all the rest of it – I’m sure everyone else is probably saying the same thing – I would think she could go to the Breeders’ Cup. She’s pretty talented.”

New York-bred Simply Ravishing will take on open horses again for Ken McPeck. The light-moving daughter of Laoban handled five rivals in an impressive debut. Chuck Lawrence ventures north with Delaware Park maiden breaker Thursday. That’s her name, Thursday.

If it rains off, Pletcher has it cornered with two newcomers to his



Tod Marks

### Plum Ali looks to win Thursday’s P.G. Johnson.

barn. Union Gables won her debut for Gary Gullo at Saratoga Aug. 9 and Con Lima enjoyed a 5 ¼-length romp at Gulfstream Park for Carlos David.

The Park Avenue division of the New York Stallion Series offers a second stakes on Thursday’s program.

The 6 ½-furlong stakes for 3-year-old fillies attracted seven, including an undefeated Finger Lakes shipper.

Spin A Yarn made her debut at Finger Lakes in September. The daughter of Forty Tales drew off with ease to score by 12 ½ lengths for owners and breeders Chester and Mary Bro-

man. Trained by Chris Progeno, the dark bay filly took the winter off and returned with another facile score against allowance foes July 20. Nine days later, Progeno wheeled her back with a 6-length romp. A month later, she made it 4-for-4 with a 3 ½-length skip. That was eight days before the Park Avenue.

Watch the replay, it was like a morning breeze with a \$12,990 check. At 1-9, she won with her ears pricked in her fourth start without Lasix.

“She’s very good. Very good. I would have loved to run her a few more times at Finger Lakes but Saratoga is running out. I wasn’t shooting for this stakes race, but I started looking at Belmont for stakes races and I believe this is the last straight 3-year-old filly stakes for the year,” Progeno said. “She’s winning so easily here, that last race I just used as a work. By doing that, she showed me she deserved a shot at Saratoga. She proved to me that she belongs at Saratoga. I’ve had good success at Saratoga, our horses really seem to take to the Saratoga racetrack.”

Progeno planned to load his star

**Continued On Page 27**

# One Horse

*Buyers and sellers remember some names from Keeneland September sales of years past.*



W E



**SEPTEMBER**

SUN. 13 - FRI. 25

## HISTORY LESSON

*John Williams*

John Williams will tell you he’s “only old on the outside,” but ask him about the Keeneland September sale and at first you’ll hear about Keeneland July when he worked for Spendthrift Farm. “That was just special, a magical sale. The atmosphere, the parties and having Monday night referred to as Combs night (after Spendthrift’s owner). They were something, you know? Selling a Northern Dancer colt out of Gold Digger (in 1980) for \$1.4 million back when money was really money, raising (future champion) Landaluce and selling her to Wayne Lukas (in 1981), it was just fantastic.

“The September Sale has more than made up for the July sale (last held in 2002) though. Books 1 and 2, especially. Some great horses have come through there. It’s a marathon and you work the sale from beginning to end. I admire people who dig them out and go find horses. You see them turn out from all corners of that sale.

“Paul Manganaro and I bought a mare at the January sale in 2001, Resurge. She was by Seeking The Gold out of Resume. It was a good Phipps family. It wasn’t Blitey, but it was good. She was in foal to Arch, who was new. We’re \$50,000 buyers and we spent \$230,000. I was sweating bullets and Paul would just say, ‘Come on, hit her again.’ We got an Arch colt and he was sick as a dog for the first month. We bred her back on a mare share to A.P. Indy and sold her at Keeneland November for \$700,000. Then at the September sale the next year we sold that Arch colt for \$700,000. That was a pretty darn good lick. He was a dandy, but he sold that well because it was Keeneland September.

“You have to be there if you’re buying horses. It’s that kind of sale.”



# Preview —

## ■ Continued from page 26

filly Wednesday afternoon and ship three hours to bed down in Rudy Rodriguez's barn at Saratoga.

"She was a little bit of a head case when she was 2, but she's matured a lot. Even if she was to get a little wound up, let's face reality, it's a good year because there are no fans. If a horse can't stay relaxed at Saratoga this year then you've got problems," Prognosis said. "She's undefeated, she hasn't even been asked, I hope there's a lot more there. She'll need it, there are a couple of decent horses in here, it's not a super stellar bunch but they've shown some good form at times. She's fit, she's doing everything right right now, we have no excuses. She's going to be tested to see if she has more in the tank, I'm hoping she does."

Officer Hutchy carries a 9-5 morning line for Rob Atras. Claimed for \$25,000 from a win in her most recent start, the daughter of Boys At Tosconova makes her third start of the meet.

Gary Gullo tries to win a second stakes with Big Q, the only stakes winner of the group. The daughter

of Big Brown made six consecutive stakes starts from last year's Grade 2 Adirondack to the Bouwerie in June, winning one and picking up two seconds. Dropped into a state-bred allowance in her most recent start, she faded to seventh earlier at the meet.

Holmdel Park, Nicky Scissors, Mani Pedi and The Important One complete the evenly matched field.

### Friday

New York-bred Showcase Day takes center stage with six stakes Friday.

The Seeking The Ante triggers the day as the first race on the 12-race card restricted to state-breds. The \$150,000 opener garnered six entries and one standout. Make Mischief beat state-bred foes in her debut at Belmont June 18. The daughter of Into Mischief, a \$285,000 purchase down East Avenue, came back to finish second in the Grade 3 Schuylerville and Grade 2 Adirondack. Beaten a long way both times, the Mark Casse trainee will relish the class relief and should be odds on for Joel Rosario, who lingers in third behind the Ortiz brothers for the jockey title.

Rossa Veloce broke her maiden at the meet for Ray Handal. Infringe-

**Continued On Page 28**



Tod Marks

**Make Mischief goes in a New York-bred stakes after placing in two graded stakes.**

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## Preview —

### ■ Continued from page 27

ment won her debut at Belmont for Mark Hennig. Samborella finished third in her debut for Jeremiah Englehart. Summer Brew just missed to Rossa Veloce in her only start for Jorge Abreu. Queen Arella beat open company in a Gulfstream maiden in May but wound up beaten 17  $\frac{3}{4}$  lengths in the Schuylerville for Roderick Rodriguez.

The Albany goes as the third race and attracted six 3-year-olds at the taxing distance of 9 furlongs on the main track.

Chestertown should relish the return to state-bred competition after finishing sixth in the Grade 3 Peter Pan for Steve Asmussen. Jose Ortiz takes the call on the contender.

Microsecond returns to the dirt after breaking his maiden on the turf for Todd Pletcher.

Millionaire Fifty Five towers above six rivals in the Yaddo. Owned by Peter Brant and trained by Chad Brown, the daughter of Get Stormy rides a three-race win streak into the Yaddo. Jose Ortiz replaces Javier Castellano who has 26 booked rides at Churchill this week.

Brown also entered War Canoe, second in the Dayatthespa July 29. Irad Ortiz Jr. takes the call on the eight-time winner.

Clement offers Wegetsdamunnys and Classic Lady, 1-3 in the Dayatthespa.

Eight juveniles aim at the Funny Cide, the seventh race on the card. The 6  $\frac{1}{2}$ -furlong dash offers a respite from two state-bred winners who tried the Grade 2 Saratoga Special.

Market Alert won his debut with ease at Belmont for Jim Ryerson but came back and finished seventh behind Jackie's Warrior in the Saratoga Special. Ryerson adds blinkers to the chestnut gelding, owned and bred by WellSpring Stable.

Hold The Salsa shocked six rivals in a state-bred maiden at Belmont July 12 but came back and finished ninth in the Special. Richard Lugovich bred, owns and trains the son of Hold Me Back.

Phil Gleaves tries the turf-to-dirt angle with Thin White Duke. Winless in four starts, the son of Dominus has hit the board in each start, including a

tough loss by a neck on the turf Aug. 13. Joel Rosario takes over for Franco. The dark bay gelding drew the outside post.

"We had him on the dirt early on in the spring and then he had two bang-up races on the grass. In the fall, all of the stakes for 2-year-old New York-breds are on the dirt, two at Finger Lakes and two at Belmont Park," Gleaves said. "Our idea is to find out how we fit with these better 2-year-old New York-breds on the dirt. To see if those stakes are something we want to look at. It's an experiment. If he runs big, we'll be thrilled and we can utilize one or two of those stakes. If he doesn't run as well as we hope, we'll revert back to the turf. I see a big change in him physically, he's just become a real man as compared to what he was like in May."

The Fleet Indian stretches seven 3-year-old fillies to 9 furlongs in the 10th race.

Jeremiah Englehart sends out Makingcents, third against open allowance foes earlier in the meet, and Critical Value, winner of the Bouwerie going 7 furlongs at Belmont in June.

Danny Gargan reverts Ice Princess to the New York-bred division after trying the Grade 3 Fantasy with the daughter of Palace Malice. Undefeated in three starts against restricted rivals, the gray filly entices Irad Ortiz Jr.

James Bond tries to keep his strong meet rolling with Rinaldi in the West Point, the 11th race on the card. The son of Posse beat state-bred allowance foes at Saratoga July 30 and gets Luis Saez for a return ride. The 4-year-old owns three wins, a second and a third in six starts.

Clement could add another notch to his impressive Saratoga 2020 belt with Therapist. The son of Freud ran hard to finish second in a deep allowance race earlier in the meet. A winner of seven stakes and \$550,345, the 5-year-old gelding will be ridden by Irad Ortiz Jr. for the sixth consecutive time.

Dot Matrix takes the longest plunge in the West Point. The 10-time winner exits six consecutive open stakes starts. The 7-year-old most recently finished sixth in the Grade 2 Bowling Green. Jose Lezcano, quietly in the midst of another productive

**Continued On Page 29**



# Preview —

## ■ Continued from page 28

meet, rides for Brad Cox.

The trainer's race has gotten as tight as parking on Broadway. Well, parking on Broadway before 2020.

Chad Brown and Todd Pletcher are tied at the top with 26 wins apiece with Christophe Clement (19) and Mike Maker (18) at least within shouting distance with six days to go.

Brown has two entries Wednesday. Voting Agreement, 7-5, drops from a fifth against allowance foes into a \$40,000 claimer in the sixth. Junkanoo, 3-1, third in the same spot earlier at the meet, runs in the seventh. Pletcher entered Bad Beat Brian, 4-1, second by a bad-beat nose earlier in the meet, in the seventh. Unrighteous, 3-5, is a main track only entry in the seventh while Cowtown, 10-1, represents if it's on the turf. Pletcher entered maiden, Winfromwithin, 4-1, for his turf debut in the With Anticipation.

Thursday could be the swing day.

Brown peppered the entry box with horses in five races. Compliant, 7-5, makes his first start for a claiming

price in the opener. Long Term Thinking, 1-1, plummets to the \$20,000 level in the second. Tiltingatwindmills, 9-2, has a shot in the seventh. Brown unveils Irish-bred Miss Teheran, 3-1, and French-bred Orglandes, 7-2, in the ninth. First-time starters, Red Light Race, 8-1, and Counterparty Risk, 2-1, loom large in the finale. Pletcher countered in four races Thursday. He entered Union Gables, 5-2, and Con Lima, 7-5, as main-track only entries in the third, the P.G. Johnson. Mendham, 6-1, makes her debut in a New York-bred maiden for 2-year-olds in the fifth. In the seventh, the Repole entry Kitten By The Sea, 7-2, breaks from the rail and Team Win, 7-2, breaks from the outside. In the finale, Apurate, 12-1, switches back to the turf.

Friday, Brown made two entries in one race. Millionaire Fifty Five and War Canoe, second in the De La Rose earlier in the meet, look ominous in the Yaddo. Pletcher peppered the entry box with Microsecond going back to the dirt in the Albany, Freewheeler looking strong in the ninth, maiden Micromillion going back to the dirt in the Fleet Indian and Blewitt wheeling back in 13 days in the West Point (perhaps looking for rain).



Tod Marks

Dot Matrix exits the Bowling Green for Friday's West Point.

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*Selling*

**KEENELAND**

**SEPTEMBER**

**BOOK 2**

*Wednesday,*

*Sept 16*

**BOOK 3**

*Friday,*

*Sept 18*

**BOOK 4**

*Sunday,*

*Sept 20*

**BOOK 5**

*Tuesday,*

*Sept 22*

**BOOK 6**

*Thursday,*

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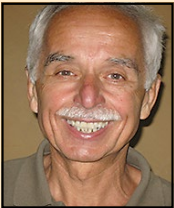





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Saratoga Race Course – Wednesday, September 2

the Power grid	 <b>John Shapazian</b>	 <b>Tom Law</b>	 <b>Charles Bedard</b>	 <b>Rob Whitlock</b>
Race #				
1	Sheppard entry Bodes Well Noah And The Ark	Iranistan Bodes Well New Member	Sheppard entry Maccabee Bodes Well	New Member Maccabee Bodes Well
2	Madam Deputy Buffet Hey It's Tati	Hey It's Tati Madam Deputy Buffet	Madam Deputy Hey It's Tati Empress Luciana	Madam Deputy Buffet Vinda Machine
3	Nashville Democratic Values Searing Chase	Nashville Searing Chase Breithorn	Nashville Breithorn Searing Chase	Nashville Breithorn Searing Chase
4	Malthael Megacity Twelfth Labour	Twelfth Labour Rejected Again Bad Beat Brian	Twelfth Labour Malthael Megacity	Bad Beat Brian Twelfth Labour Malthael
5	Ringgood Brunate Royal Suspect	Brunate Royal Suspect Ringgood	Brunate Lorenzen Royal Suspect	I Prowl Alone Brunate Royal Suspect
6	Voting Agreement Mo Me Mo My Corey Scores	Saratoga Love Voting Agreement Corey Scores	Saratoga Love Doll Voting Agreement	Voting Agreement Mo Me Mo My Corey Scores
7	Junkanoo Tide Of The Sea Mini P	Unrighteous Tide Of The Sea Gauguin	Unrighteous Succeedandsurpass Cowtown	Tide Of The Sea Junkanoo Succeedandsurpass
8	Control Group Our Last Buck Yankee Division	Our Last Buck Freaky Styley Control Group	Control Group Evaluator Our Last Buck	Control Group Our Last Buck Freaky Styley
9	American Monarch Blame The Booze Fire At Will	American Monarch Blame The Booze Nathan Detroit	American Monarch Blame The Booze Zippy Baby	American Monarch Fire At Will Winfromwithin
10	Bricco Justintimeforwine Money In The Bank	Bricco Selfmade Diannesimpazible	Bricco Spiritual King Justintimeforwine	Selfmade Bricco Nightspot
2020 Records	<b>116/340</b>	<b>103/340</b>	<b>94/340</b>	<b>82/340</b>

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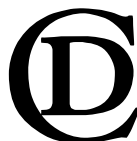
#### *The Tax Free Shopping Distaff*

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#### *The New Castle*

For Three Year Olds and Upward • Six Furlongs

Also closing September 12, 2020 is **The DTHA Governor's Day Stake** and **The George Rosenberger Memorial**. Both stakes are restricted to horses which have started at Delaware Park in 2020 (stake races excluded). A \$50,000 purse bonus will be added to these two stakes for Delaware Certified eligible horses that run and finish 1st thru 5th. Purse total will be \$125,000 for DCTP horses.



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# The TOP 10

Performances of the Meet  
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## OSCAR PERFORMANCE



The Saratoga Special keeps up with the meet's best performances.

1. **Win Win Win:** Wild, wild, wild rally, rally, rally in Grade 1 Forego.  
— Bred by Live Oak Stud
2. **Tiz The Law:** Belmont? Check. Travers? Check. Next stop, Derby.
3. **Gamine:** California-based 3YO filly left no doubt in Test.
4. **Serengeti Empress:** Fought like a lioness in Ballerina triumph.
5. **Rushing Fall:** Diana winner was gutsy in stretch battle.
6. **Vexatious:** Vanquished champ in Grade 1 Personal Ensign.
7. **Halladay:** Made fastball stand up against strong Fourstardave field.
8. **Improbable:** Beat quality group in Grade 1 Whitney.
9. **Volatile:** Speedster made it look easy in Vanderbilt.
10. **Swiss Skydiver:** 3YO filly got her G1 in Alabama; look out Ky.

### And the Oscar goes to...

The breeder of the horse with the **Top Performance of 2020** receives a FREE 2021 breeding season to Oscar Performance. Good luck to all, and keep an eye out for quality weanlings this fall.



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The new Race Day Gallery of the National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame.

Brien Bouyea

# Hall Pass

## Enhanced, improved racing museum set to reopen

BY MARY EDDY

This has been a year of change amid unforeseen circumstances. A year of new normals, new routines and new ways of going about daily life. However, long before the unwelcomed changes brought on by a global pandemic, the National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame had been planning a major positive change in 2020 after more than two years of development and renovations.

Visitors to the museum in past years likely remember a Hall of Fame featuring physical plaques and a large video screen, along with mannequins in display cases around the room adorning the silks of inducted members. Now, the space has been transformed into a 360-degree immersive film experience profiling the journey just 1 percent of industry participants take to get to the Hall of Fame.

"We've been trying to become more cutting-edge and more innovative and thinking outside the box to do something a little different that people hadn't seen before," said Brien Bouyea, the museum's Hall of Fame and Communications Director. "We wanted the museum to be more interactive and more modern."

The new film, titled "What It Takes: Journey to the Hall of Fame," is an emotional 16-minute piece that is projected onto special screens in the middle of the room with panoramic scenes along the top perimeter of the walls. With a stirring soundtrack and a sound system that immerses viewers into the scenes before them, the museum's goal is to connect with even the most novice of fans to create a deeper appreciation of the sport.

"We didn't want it to be just about 'Oh here's a pretty horse, here's a jockey.' We wanted it to tell a story," said Bouyea. "We focused on the Hall of Fame, what that journey is like, the difficulties and the sacrifices."

"We think this is something that can turn a casual fan or somebody just learning about the sport to become more interested and learn more about the game. You want to do something that everyone will appreciate."

The setup of the Hall of Fame also allows for a new experience with each visit.

The images seen in panoramic view provide a different angle and element of production on each wall so that

**Continued On Page 33**



# Museum —

## ■ Continued from page 32

patrons will be able to see something new with every viewing.

Along with the film experience, visitors can now interact with large touch screens along the walls of the theater to access inductee plaques, biographies, and more than 2,100 photos and 100 videos.

Bouyea explained that multiple factors influenced the idea to go digital, including visitor feedback and the unique challenges that the sport presents. “We wanted the museum to be more interactive, more modern. We loved the Hall of Fame plaques we had here and we loved the space, but it felt a little dated.”

“Trainers and jockeys, after they have been inducted, their careers can go on for many years. For example, Mike Smith gets inducted in 2003 and his plaque mentions nothing about Zenyatta, nothing about winning a Triple Crown. With these interactives now, we can update it in real time and every few months. Our plan is to give these (digital plaques) regular updates.”

The Hall of Fame is just one part of the changes at the museum, which now features several other new areas and a renovated gift shop. Among the new exhibits is the Race Day Gallery, which patrons will pass through on their way to the Hall of Fame theater.

The Race Day Gallery highlights the most important areas of the racetrack that are key parts of a typical race day.

“It’s called the Race Day Gallery because we wanted to have aspects of your experience at the track. So we have the paddock, the track, and the winner’s circle. We have race day equipment like saddles, goggles and boots. We have a mural done by Greg Montgomery, the artist who does the Travers artwork every year.”

At the opposite end of the Race Day Gallery is the Call the Race booth, an interactive experience where visitors will have the chance to try their hand at calling famous races in the sport’s history.

Guests will be provided with past performances of the race they have selected to call and step into the booth where a monitor shows the race. They then have the option to enter an email

address to keep a copy of their new race call.

Up a small flight of stairs to the left of the Call the Race booth is the new Jockey Club Gallery, profiling The Jockey Club’s role in horse racing and the history of the organization.

“There will be two interactive (stations) and you’ll get to see a lot of foal papers and baby photos of horses like Secretariat, and other things that haven’t been seen before,” Bouyea said.

Besides the new features and renovations, the museum’s returning exhibits have been refreshed with thorough cleaning, new paint and polished floors. Women in Racing, an exhibit featuring Hall of Fame inductees and prominent women of the industry, was due to close in December but has been extended for another year.

Originally scheduled to reopen to the public on July 16, the museum lost 10 weeks of construction time due to the Covid-19 pandemic health restrictions.

While the lost time did cause the project to fall behind schedule and a new opening date had to be selected, Bouyea says that he is hopeful attendance will be high and that a grand opening could happen next summer.

“We thought Labor Day weekend would be good, we could open the day of the Kentucky Derby. We wish we could have a grand thing for the fans this summer, but we’ll do a soft opening and we can have more celebrations next year.”

The National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame reopens to the public Saturday, Sept. 5 and will be open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., with capacity limited to 24 guests every two hours.

Tickets are available online and at the museum, though reservations are strongly recommended.

As for what this new Hall of Fame means for the future of the museum, Bouyea hopes that an interactive experience will keep fans coming back for years to come.

“Saratoga has been a destination for people to come to in the summertime and we want people to come here all year,” Bouyea said. “People go to Cooperstown year-round and we want them to come here too. I think we’ve taken things to a new level. If you can’t get excited about Thoroughbred racing from this, then we’re probably never going to get you.”

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# guestcolumn

BY PAUL HALLORAN

## Big Jim

Larry Collmus was one race into his announcing career at Suffolk Downs when it became crystal clear to him that he would have to earn the respect of the New England racing community, a task made appreciably more challenging considering whom he was replacing.

It was New Year's Day 1992 and Suffolk had reopened after a two-year hiatus. Collmus, brought in by general manager Lou Raffetto, called Larry Of Florida's win in the opener, then went downstairs to the press box to grab a bite to eat.

"I didn't know anybody and they didn't know me," Collmus said Sunday from the Del Mar announcer's booth. "I heard Ed Duckworth (longtime Providence Journal racing writer) say, 'All change is bad.' I thought that was a great line, so I introduced myself right away."

It's not that the diehards at the East Boston oval had anything against Collmus, and why would they? He was a 25-year-old kid coming in from Golden Gate Fields looking to advance his burgeoning career. The problem was that the decision to not bring back Jim Hannon to the booth was unpopular in these parts to say the least.

Hannon – who died Aug. 28 at age 92 – was one of us. He was born and raised in Winchester – 10 miles from the track – and had been calling races in New England for almost 40 years. A larger-than-life character with the voice to match, "Big Jim" was a fan favorite. There was no better feeling than to have your horse in the lead in deep stretch and hear Hannon proclaim "you can put a ring around" him. You were cashing.

It had to be awkward for Collmus to move into Hannon's booth, even if it had been uninhabited for two years. To complicate matters, Hannon, who couldn't fathom working anywhere but the racetrack, stayed around as a mutuel clerk, giving him ample opportunity to second-guess his successor in real time.



Former Suffolk Downs announcer Jim Hannon died last week at age 92.

But that was not Jim Hannon's style. Make no mistake, he was plenty hurt that his two-decade run as the voice of Suffolk had come to an end, but not only did he resist the temptation to take it out on Collmus, he afforded the new kid all the professional courtesy anyone could hope for.

"We got along great," said Collmus, who filled in for Trevor Denman at Del Mar this summer. "He was so classy with me. I loved listening to his old

stories. Jim was a great guy to me and he didn't have to be, and I really appreciate that."

Collmus was reminded of Hannon's popularity when he struck up a conversation with someone in the elevator at the Del Mar Hilton a few weeks ago. When Collmus told the guy he used to work at Suffolk Downs, he was immediately asked if he knew Jim Hannon.

"Even so far away from Boston, they know Big Jim," he said.

Early in his tenure at Suffolk, Collmus had to win over the jaded Boston crowd. He predictably heard "You're no Jim Hannon" more than once, and Collmus had a disarming reply. "You're right, I'm not," Collmus would say. "We're not at all alike. He's Big Jim and I'm Little Larry."

Chip Tuttle can relate.

"We fielded questions on a regular basis on why Jim wasn't calling the races," said Tuttle, the PR director at Suffolk Downs from 1992-97. "He had a great following. People were loyal to him. It's hard to imagine anyone enjoying being around the race-track as much as Jim."

By the end of his 16-year run, Collmus had gained the respect and admiration of the locals, savvy enough to realize he is one of the best in the business. That doesn't mean he would want to run against Hannon in a local election.

"There was only one Big Jim," Collmus said, with a level of respect that reveals as much about him as the object of his admiration.

Hannon got his first full-time announcing job at Scarborough Downs in Maine in 1954. He called races in at least four of the New England states, as well as Delaware, Ohio, West Virginia and Maryland. He also worked the Massachusetts fair circuit.

Hannon had a strong work ethic and rarely missed a day, but Tom Chace, who manned the bet-

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# Hannon —

■ Continued from page 34

ting machine in the Suffolk Downs press box for more than 20 years, recalled one time when he absolutely couldn't make it and was pinch-hit for by someone whose name may ring a bell.

"Jim's son was getting married, so John Imbriale filled in for him," said Chace, who once got the better of Hannon in a press box precursor to "The Biggest Loser" – no surprise to anyone who ever tried to show more speed than Big Jim in getting to the front of the buffet line.

All announcers have their signature calls: Tom Durkin's Rachel Alexandra Woodward, Collmus' American Pharoah Belmont, Trevor Denman's Zenyatta Breeders' Cup. For Hannon, it was the 1987 Massachusetts Handicap, when Chris McCarron and Waquoit nosed out Angel Cordero Jr. and Broad Brush after an epic stretch duel.

Just before his voice uncharacteristically cracked at the finish, Hannon labeled it a "ding-dong battle to the wire." See and hear for yourself at [youtube.com/watch?v=ba-2ZhgmwFQSearch](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ba-2ZhgmwFQSearch)

"We had half of Dorchester there and a large contingent of the McCarron family," McCarron said Tuesday. "I was pinching myself, thinking this is too good to be true, but it happened."

To Hannon's credit, you would never know by listening to the call that he was pulling for the horse with the local connections – owner Joe Federico, trainer Guido Federico and McCarron.

"Jim had the uncanny ability to paint a picture," McCarron said. "He could describe what was going on in real time. And he had the perfect voice for it."

Other than Hannon's Instant Classic call, the 1987 MassCap was noteworthy for the caliber of the equine and human athletes that took part. Skip Trial and Creme Fraiche were part of a field that combined for 17 Grade 1 wins. Randy Romero, who rode Skip Trial, made it three future Hall of Fame jockeys in the field.

"Big Jim harkened back to a day when the announcer called the races just for the people at the track, in a straightforward, accurate manner, with a lot of local color," said T.D. Thornton, who replaced Collmus as Suffolk's announcer. "He defined his era."

Hannon retired from punching tickets at Suffolk in 2017 at age 89. He loved it when a customer would recognize his voice and invariably remind him of how truly great he was at his job.

"Jim was one in a million," said Jessica Paquette, who led the track's marketing efforts and served as paddock analyst. "The love he had for the racetrack and for the sport was so admirable. He would light up when you asked him about a horse or a race he called. He loved to take a stroll down memory lane."

Paquette was thrilled to play a role in the track's honoring Hannon in 2008 – and having him call a few races for old times – the day before he was inducted into the New England Turf Writers Association Hall of Fame.

I'm proud to have cast a vote supporting his enshrinement.

While the end of live racing in these parts – thanks to the Massachusetts Gaming Commission choosing a Vegas conglomerate over a local racetrack for a casino license – engendered feelings of anger and frustration, losing Jim Hannon hurts on a much more personal level, mainly due to the sad realization that there will never be another like him.



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Some wind up with nicknames. Fargo. Benny Boy, Darby Dan. Mr. President. Rich. Valvotron. David F. Woods. Billy Blaze. Vish. Lin-Zay.

Others are known around the office by their last names. Tiller. Martin. McDonough. Dugas. Spivey.

And then those that we just do the normal thing and call them by their first names. Gabby. Kristin. Michael. Madison.

No matter what they're called they all made their mark, one way or another, at least in my eight years assembling, advising, assigning, editing, correcting, guiding, approving, scolding, complimenting, boosting and grounding the interns of The Special.

Everything is different this year – there's that word again – and that's certainly nothing new. We downsized the team significantly for 2020, our 20th season publishing The Special and offering a great opportunity for the young, eager and willing to get a foothold in racing, media or racing media.

What I wouldn't do for a Ryan Martin hopping off the back of the golf cart, American flag shades on and recorder, pad and pen in hand, shouting "Mr. Pletcher, Mr. Pletcher, Mr. Pletcher" as, in a way only he can, Todd Pletcher gives him a wave of the hand and drives off.

What I wouldn't give to send a Gabby Gaudet to track down Manny Azpuru to talk about his latest Florida shipper into the Spa, a young lady and old man, talking horses.

What I wouldn't do for an Annise Montplaisir, aka Fargo, to fumble with her tape recorder before interviewing Preakness-winning trainer Keith Desormeaux on the phone with her boss only about 20 feet away, on her first day.

What I wouldn't give to have a Dan McDonough call to explain he'd just finished an interview with Tom Albertrani but didn't notice that his iPhone voice recorder paused when someone tried to call him, only to be told (by me) that he'd just have to do the interview again.

What I wouldn't give to see a Shayna Tiller come bombing into the office, fresh from a morning of bombing around the backstretch doing interviews and lead off the tale of her day with her signature, "I don't know Tom."

What I wouldn't give to listen to a Brandon Valvo explain the differences between trotters and pacers, Vernon Downs and Batavia Downs, Hambletonian and Elitlopp.

What I wouldn't give to hear a Catherine Galbraith, aka Darby Dan, critique our somewhat strange office routines and traditions.

What I wouldn't give to see Michael Scott plowing through another morning on the backstretch after going strong – really strong – through the night and early morning during sales week.

What I wouldn't give to see Ryan Jones, aka Mr. President (I'm still thinking he'd have a huge chance), show up for a day at the races with clean suit, perfect tie and pocket-square and not a hair out of place.

What I wouldn't do ...

Thankfully we at least have a small team this year, a trio not often seen but a group who stepped up and made their own marks.

Terry Hill, who gained a cult following in 2019 after becoming the first 70-something intern in racing media history, came back for another year. We didn't send him to Galway, Bolton Landing or Stillwater – those stories were awesome by the way – and he brought humor with his "75 and Sunny" columns while spelling this writer on stakes coverage.

Paul Halloran popped his head in the office in 2018 to say he was interested in helping out, pitched in on some racing coverage in 2019, worked on our editions of The 2020 Special this spring and returned for another season. Out of Lynn, Mass., not far from Boston, he wrote stakes previews and recaps and columns and he'll be back for another run at the Saratoga Showcase card and Woodward Day.

Sami Loud joined the fold after impressing in a phone interview in early March before the world shut down. Nearing the end of her 3+1 BS/MBA Program at Quinnipiac University in Connecticut, Sami was looking for an MBA level internship and while we couldn't offer that officially there might not be a company more in need of a marketing plan. She did that and more, helping promote The Special and increase readership of the digital edition by about 200 percent. The plan called for her to handle distribution – long live the print edition! – and marketing and she wound up writing, organizing giveaways, handling social media and working with clients on promotions.

An hour after speaking with Sami, I met Mary Eddy at kru Coffee on Marion Avenue. She got in the door with two cool items on her resume – volunteer/tour guide at Old Friends at Cabin Creek and content contributor/writer for ZooNation.org. She told me about her "racing room" that included articles she'd written and memorabilia and how she was a fan of Cosmonaut and his two best offspring Kreesie and Goodbye Brockley. She liked Funny Cide and Rachel Alexandra, too, but anyone could pull up names like that. Kreesie and Goodbye Brockley, now that person is paying attention.

So there's the team, at least those working on editorial, marketing and distribution. We've been blessed with photography from Tod Marks, Dave Harmon, Susie Raisher and Michael Trombetta Jr.

The interview process for the 2020 team started in February, after a stream of resumes and suggestions from all over the country. After interviewing or communicating with Jack Rubin, Ben Weaver, Jacob Sheppard, Michael Gooley, Harper McVey, Alex Sausville, Christopher Woods, Colin Hawkins, Mary and Sami I was convinced it was the best collection of candidates I'd seen. Whittling it down to the usual four or five would have been a tough task.

But what I wouldn't give...

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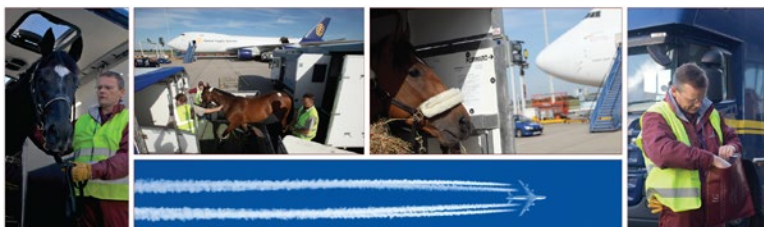
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BY JOE CLANCY

# Real Winner

Farm general manager Bruce Hill was at home, alone because his wife doesn't want to be a jinx, when he sat down to watch Live Oak Stud homebred Win Win Win compete in the Grade 1 Forego at Saratoga Race Course Saturday.

If the 7-furlong stakes, run on a sloppy track in a driving rain, were an amusement-park ride it would have come with legal disclaimers: "not suitable for children . . . may cause undue stress . . . riders with heart conditions should consider the carousel . . ."

Hill withstood every confidence-rattling climb, all the twists and turns, even the high-speed drops.

"I went through a range of emotions," he said Tuesday morning. "From being mad at him for breaking slow, then to being worried that maybe he had injured himself and then just hoping everything was all right. I looked at the floor and quit watching the race and wondered what was going on and then I looked up and thought that horse just tagging the group at the back was him . . . No, that's not him . . . and then he's in the picture, and then it's like he's going to make a huge run and get beat. If he'd just broke anything close to normal he could have won."

Hill even planned conversations he would have with owner Charlotte Weber, trainer Mike Trombetta and farm trainer Joe Ambrosia afterward. They weren't going to be pretty, and they would go something like "OK, there's no more excuses, it's not the jockey's fault, it's not the track's fault, it's not our fault, it's his fault."

And then it was his race. Hopelessly beaten at just about every part of the \$300,000 stakes, Win Win Win rallied from 16 ¼ lengths behind after a half-mile to win by a half-length in a half-way-to-Schuylerville wide, muddy, wet, ridiculous rally.



Hill, Ambrosia, Weber, Trombetta, probably even jockey Javier Castellano couldn't believe what they saw.

"You have all those conversations with yourself, all those thoughts, and the race doesn't last a minute-and-a-half," said Hill with a laugh. "We were quietly optimistic that he was training well and he had a chance to run well. We're not surprised. We've known he had that kind of talent. It's been frustrating that he didn't get a chance to show it."

"Then he wins like that and you don't even get to be excited. Normally you're tired, your throat is scratchy, you're hoarse. I sat there quiet as can be, as quiet as a mouse. I had no emotion left. My balloon was completely empty of air."

Such is the thrill of Thoroughbred racing, and a good horse. Even watching on television from 1,200 miles away in Ocala, Fla. Hill, who has known Win Win Win since he was born went along for the ride. So did the whole Live Oak team. Trombetta and his people in Saratoga. Fans and bettors. Anybody. It was Flutie to Phelan, Greg LeMond's Tour de France comeback, Kris Jenkins draining that three-pointer

for Villanova, all of it – in a horse race. If you left disappointed, even if you wagered on another horse, you missed the plot. The 2020 Forego, the improbability of it all, is why horses race and why people care.

Live Oak foals 15-22 mares a year in Florida, raises them, gets them started, sends them on to trainers. Win Win Win goes way back to Icy Warning, a Maryland-bred purchased by Live Oak as a broodmare at Keeneland November in 1997. Her daughter Devotion Unbridled won four races and, when bred to Smarty Jones, produced Miss Smarty Pants. She won once in three starts in 2011, and joined the broodmare band.

"She could run," said Hill in 2019, before Win Win ran in the Kentucky Derby. "She had some EPM that knocked her back, but she had some ability. We would not go to the sale and buy one like that if somebody said that to us, because you don't know. When we know at the farm a mare really had talent, but we didn't get there for whatever reason, we tend to give them a little chance."

Miss Smarty Pants made the most of it. Her first two foals, both by Congrats, won a single race each. Then came Win Win Win, a nearly black son of Hat Trick, in 2016. He's her last foal. She died giving birth the next year. She'd be pretty proud of her son.

"That wasn't breaking your maiden somewhere in a maiden claimer," Hill said. "That was the Grade 1 Forego at Saratoga with a good group of horses. For him to be able to do that is incredible."

Even if Hill couldn't believe it at first.

"The good reality finally did sink in," he said. "I was proud of him, proud of everybody here, happy for Mrs. Weber and Mike. What a race to watch and be a part of."



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Once a year at Saratoga, I wistfully wish to ride a horse. And, most years, I lament that I didn't ride a horse in Saratoga.

There were three.

Go Mikey Go, thanks to Diana Pikulski of the Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation. She read my lament and saw an opportunity. I scoffed, a day later, the bay gelding was tacked up and ready to go. All I had to do was ride and write about it. Go Mikey Go had made 17 starts the hard way, from Aqueduct to Saratoga, Philadelphia Park to Northampton. He pulled up for a \$3,500 tag as the favorite in his final start at Northampton in 2003. He got out and he knew it. I hurried him, squeezing and tapping my heels against his sides, like we had somewhere to go. He kept breaking into a trot and I'd reel him back to a walk. I had to force myself to accept his speed, his gait, the natural cadence of a horse, instead of the forced careen of the human. After I took a deep breath, we explored Clare Court, Greentree, Horse Haven, just ambling, it was a respite from the routine.

Another time, it was Funny Cide. Yeah, Funny Cide. Thanks to Robin and Barclay, I can say I rode a Derby winner. And, no, I didn't dare squeeze or tap my heels as we strolled across Union Avenue, to the Annex to see Tom Voss and friends. On the way back, we hopped on the main track at the quarter pole, figured I'd jog back to the gap on the backside. The moment he stepped into a jog, you could feel the power. Long since retired, the \$3.5 million earner swelled with every stride, each one a little faster. It took five to realize it and five to stop it as I cajoled him to a walk and that's where we stayed, all the way to the Morning Line Kitchen. Sometimes, you are simply a passenger.

Another time I rode Silceleb, thanks to Seth Gregory. About halfway through the ride, I figured out his name, his color, his approximate age and realized it was the 2-year-old I had galloped for Leroy Jolley in 1991. Bred by Gallaghers Stud, the



son of Phone Trick had retired there and spent his summers with Gregory and Mark Hennig. Western saddle, split reins, two girths I couldn't tighten, it was different but the same. Again, we wandered, ambled, he felt a lot different than the wind-up top I knew from so many years ago.

And now it's Monday morning. Eagle Poise has replaced Go Mikey Go, Funny Cide and Silceleb.

I walk along the back wall and hop on the 14-year-old, allowing him to fade right, away from the riding ring behind the barn. The ring means work, anything else means wander. Retired in 2014, the son of Empire Maker knows there are two choices. Reins dangling, he makes his choice (our choice) and we walk out the gravel drive, across the dirt road and through the hedgerow.

Eagle Poise sees and takes note of workers digging trenches to bury electric lines. He eyes them, watching, making sure they don't move. If they don't move, he won't move. We skirt past them and make a left onto a mowed path. I squeeze for a trot, ask too quickly, too abruptly. He jumps into his cadence, my reins are too long, I slow my posting, offer a whoa, whoa, whoa and he understands, slowing his tempo. We jog to the top of the field and start downhill into soft ground. Eagle Poise slows and walks, naturally intuitively, I don't ask, he just does it.

# Ride Off

We walk along the fenceline, two black Labrador Retrievers mosey from their yard and offer a couple of half-hearted barks. Eagle Poise looks at them like the workers, if you don't move, I won't move. We walk through the woods, skidding over a stone in the path, through an open gate and begin a slower trot up the hill, more dogs, terriers for sure, more yap, luckily they're inside. Eagle Poise flicks his ears, noticing but ignoring, we jog across the back of our neighbor's farm, past the sagging shed with the door hanging from a hinge. Breeders' Cup winner Alphabet Soup grazed in this field, the yellow and brown gates still hang from the broken-down fence. We jog to the far corner, slow to a walk.

The blue on the Blue Ridge Mountains juts through the morning mist. For a moment, I'm in a Munnings painting. For a moment. Birds flutter, a squirrel jumps from the fence to a tree, we both notice. I keep my right middle finger lightly looped in the yoke, an old habit that feels right. We walk past the pond, an egret, or heron, osprey, I'm not a birder, hovers on a post, now it's two saying if you don't move, I won't move. With a choice of going home the way we came or making a left across the refurbished bridge, we make the left. Eagle Poise walks to the bridge and stops. Not a dastardly stop, just a long look. I squeeze, knowing not to kick, pull or yank. He exhales and backs up. I pat him on the neck. He takes a step forward, two, then stops, snorting at the change in color. I sit, wait, cajole. Once, twice, three times, I know he'll traverse it in his own time. Fourth time is the charm.

We walk past two empty barns, past two miniature donkeys, past a barn cat watching from inside a window and out the tree-lined drive. The gate's closed. I want to jump it, man, I want to jump it. Then I remember Eagle Poise was a flat horse. I step off, open the gate, latch the gate, climb on the fence and back in the tack and head home.

What a ride. What a morning.

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# The Big Picture

with Tod Marks

**Crowded House.** The West Point (this year it's part of Friday's Saratoga Showcase Day card for New York-breds) made for tight competition just after the start in 2012. Lubash and Jose Lezcano (white helmet) were in tight here, but drew off to an easy win.

