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Special



Spring Ahead

Rushing Fall catches Mean Mary in Diana thriller



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Tod Marks

Stretttch Run. Lead Guitar (7) emerges late to win Thursday's eighth race.

here&there...in racing

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NAMES OF THE DAY

She's A Black Belt, sixth race Wednesday. The 4-year-old filly, who races for Jay Em Ess Stable, is out of Karate Gal.

Blowout, eighth race Wednesday. Peter Brant's English-bred is out of Beauty Parlour.

Height, fourth race Thursday. The 3-year-old colt, who races for Jump Sucker Stable, Claiborne Farm and Adele Dilschneider, is out of Ascent.

Dirty, fifth race Thursday. The 5-year-old, a stakes winner at Laurel Park last year, is out of Martini.

Mosienko, sixth race Thursday. This one is for hockey fans. The son of Hat Trick is named for Bill Mosienko, a Ukrainian Canadian who played 14 seasons for the Chicago Black Hawks in the 1940s and 1950s. In 1952 against the New York Rangers, he scored three goals in 21 seconds – the fastest hat trick in NHL history.

BY THE NUMBERS

9: Horses who have won two races at the meet – Cross Border, In Front, Foxtail, Pete's Play Call, Winning Factor, Snap Decision, Control Group, Leaveuwithasmile and Macho Jack.

14: Wins (and winners) at the meet for Into Mischief, Saratoga's leading sire of 2020 (through Aug. 25) according to some haphazard but dutiful math by The Special. The top 10:

Stallion	2020 Spa Wins
Into Mischief	14
Hard Spun	8
More Than Ready	8
Central Banker	6
Maclean's Music	6
American Pharoah	5
Cairo Prince	5
City Zip	5
Freud	5
Summer Front	5
Uncle Mo	5

WORTH REPEATING

"There's a lot of ups and downs in this sport. Yesterday was shockingly, surprisingly disappointing. I still don't understand why. It was kind of a weird day, a weird turf course maybe. You just have to just draw a line through that kind of stuff, stick to your plan, stick to your process."

Trainer Chad Brown, blanked with four runners in the Fourstardave Saturday but a winner of the Diana Sunday with Rushing Fall

"Steady as she goes."

Trainer Todd Pletcher, when asked how things were going

"It's the first time in 44 years I haven't been to Del Mar and the first time in 23 years I haven't been to Saratoga."

Bloodstock agent David Ingordo, on the effects of Covid-19

"Well, I don't even get to do it remotely, so . . ."

Bloodstock agent Davant Latham, after The Special's Joe Clancy said he was doing Saratoga remotely

"You speak for thousands."

Owner Paul Saylor after reading Sean Clancy's Cup of Coffee column titled "Missing It"

The Saratoga Special

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Look Out, Kentucky. Alabama winner Swiss Skydiver leans into a gallop on the Oklahoma training track last week. The Oaks is next. Tod Marks

The Chief

"Political Force worked a good mile before the Woodward. It's different if they haven't been out in two months, then you do a little more with them. If they're running every three weeks, it's different. Some horses do the same if you work them hard or don't work them hard, they just overcome it. You never know if you're doing it right, all you can do is try to do the best you can. He just went in 36 and 2, from the quarter pole to the mile pole, they always go a little faster on the straightaway. We've done all we can do."

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



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Tod Marks

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WORTH REPEATING

"I'm here and I miss all of that."

The Special's Tom Law after reading "Missing It"

"A happy hour for Charlie Baker and Andre Worrie. Three in a row."

Finger Lakes announcer after the trainer and jockey won three Tuesday (and, yes, we're watching Finger Lakes on Tuesday)

"I can't blame you."

Trainer Steve Klesaris to The Special's Sean Clancy, when hearing he hadn't gone to Saratoga this summer

"I didn't realize you needed to bring a jacket. I froze to death. You couldn't buy a jacket. I found a Miami Dolphins sweatshirt at a sporting goods store, there was one left. I dived on it like it was a loose football in the end zone on Super Bowl Sunday."

Klesaris on his first visit to Saratoga in 1987

"The 'I miss...' article was filled of course with people and places and events that in my annual two-week (for 17 years before '20) stay i cannot identify, but boy do I really miss the Spaaaaaaaaa (as Tom Durkin could only say to start the day). Thanks for the chance to subscribe and giving me some connection."

Reader Ken Stewart

"It's been a tough year for everybody. We haven't won a race yet but we've had a couple of seconds a couple of fifths. If we don't win a race, we don't win a race, but it felt like it was the right thing to do to come for the meet."

Trainer Rodolphe Brisset, who could get off the duck in Thursday's Smart And Fancy

"Can we do it a second time?"

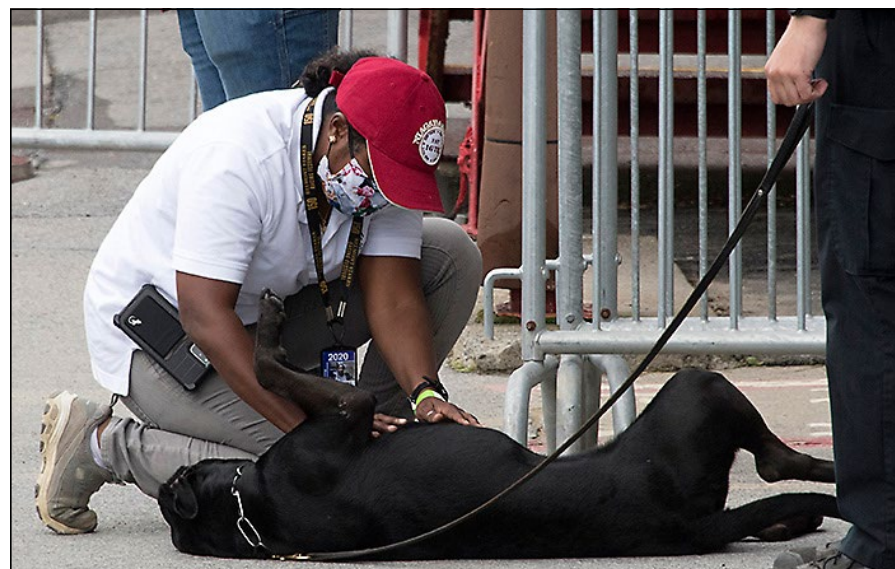
Trainer Bruce Brown, requesting another (for luck) Fasig-Tipton Stable Tour before Sunday's finale

"Now it's early, don't forget when ballots come due. I'll have to start a Twitter campaign and make sure you guys are all on it."

Bob Edwards on Rushing Fall and a possible Eclipse Award after she improved to 3-for-3 in the Diana

"I'm too short-handed; gave too many the day off today."

Trainer Ray Handal, leading a horse to the Oklahoma for a late breeze Monday morning



Susie Raisher

Dog's Life. Moe the police dog gets some love between races.



POSTCARD TO SARATOGA

Dear Saratoga,

My favorite thing to read in The Special is The Chief. Sorry Sean, Cup of Coffee is second by a length. Seeing the picture of epic Allen Jerkens on his pony, thinking about his voice, telling those stories and his words of wisdom about his horses. That's what our game is all about. Horses and people, not bottom lines and stock prices. If you don't take care of the horses, there are no people. Google Barnum and Bailey and see if that doesn't sound familiar.

Enough of that. Life is as good (Mark Hennig) as it can be. It's better than the alternative.

Can't wait to go to Lexington for the September sales. See lots of old friends and maybe make some new ones. Mask and all. I can't get enough of Tiz The Law pictures. That face, those smart confident eyes. I will always miss the smell of Saratoga. The hay and straw smell different there for some reason. Either you know or you don't know.

With everything going on in the world today, I try to do things that make me happy and grateful for all the experiences I've had in this game that I love and miss.

Nothing does that for me, especially now, like reading The Saratoga Special. Brings me back every time. Thank you. Best money I have spent in a long time.

Kentucky-bred John Fahey III, a nine-year employee for Ford Motor Co., was featured in Cup of Coffee when he won his first race at Saratoga with Fort Apache Star in 2008.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"I had plenty of confidence turning for home. I knew I could go by."

Jockey Javier Castellano on Diana winner Rushing Fall, who edged Mean Mary by a neck



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With Ray Handal

From the small page to the big page. While the above statement isn't really true – the Fasig-Tipton Stable Tour of course runs on the same sized pages of every edition of The Saratoga Special – it's a long-running quote first said by Ray Handal a few years ago and one we remind him of every summer.

Handal made his first Stable Tour appearance in our traditional final edition tribute to the "Little Guys" that focuses on smaller, lesser-known or up-and-coming horsemen in 2016. He graduated to his own in 2017 and makes it four straight in 2020 in the midst of another strong Saratoga meet.

"We started out on fire and have cooled off a little bit," Handal said, aboard one of the members of his string who trained at Clare Court Monday morning. "We'll hopefully make some noise here at the end."

Handal's barn, bedded down in what's become his usual spot inside Horse Haven on the Oklahoma Training Track, sent out its first winner the second day of the meet and produced five wins by Aug. 5. He heads into today's card – Day 30 – with six wins, two seconds and two thirds from 28 starts and purses of \$244,030. He sends out one runner Thursday and Friday – along with others entered at Presque Isle Downs and Monmouth Park before the weekend – with a chance to make it a career-best seven wins at Saratoga.

The Saratoga string, a far cry from the four-member contingent he had bedded down in a barn at the harness track when we came calling in 2016, features stakes runners Celtic Striker, I'llhandalthe cash, stakes-bound 2-year-olds Irish Constitution and Rossa Veloce, inexperienced babies and old veterans.

"Twenty horses to run here the next few weeks," Handal said. "I have 35 horses so it's more than half the stable."

He went through the string, starting at the end with the males and finishing with the females, with The Special's Tom Law.

Celtic Striker: Imperial Racing's 3-year-old Congrats colt won a Parx optional in early February and earned stakes starts in next four tries, including a win in two-horse Easy Goer June



25 at Belmont and a fourth in the Grade 3 Peter Pan here Opening Day. A three-time winner, he's headed to the Grade 2 Jim Dandy closing weekend. "He's been running in the nice 3-year-old races this year, maybe just a cut below the elites. He won the Easy Goer, scratched down, but he ran a big race that day. He's getting better. The big thing with him was mental. Mentally he wasn't all there. Physically he's always been gorgeous, had all the right parts and breezed like a good horse. Every start this year as a 3-year-old he's getting more racey and into it. He's still kind of a clown, you see him playing here. He breezed yesterday for the Jim Dandy and I think we're going to get Joel (Rosario) for him, which will be nice. Obviously Manny (Franco) is booked for the Derby. Lovely horse and I'm really excited about him. In the spring we were stuck in a spot with Covid where we didn't have much option. I said let's go to the Matt Winn, then they changed it, gave it Derby points and it came up tough. Maxfield and Pneumatic. He hung in there. That's one thing I love about him, even when he gets passed he still digs in and tries. He's been very consistent. I really like training on this track for seven weeks. He ran here opening weekend and runs back closing weekend. I think it's a big advantage training on this track and having that race going that distance and going at it again. Speed has been good on this track so his tactics will help him."

American Gentleman: Florida-bred 2-year-old American Pharoah colt finished fifth in turf maiden July 26 and sixth in Travers Day maiden on the dirt behind Mutasaabeg for owners Madaket Stables, West Paces Racing, Cutair Racing and Handal. "I guess I got hung up in the numbers and stuff too much and ran him on the grass first time out. He was just average on it so I said, 'Let me wheel him back,' there was a dirt race a week and a half later. He broke much sharper, was in front, went fast and probably ran into Todd Pletcher's best 2-year-old colt. He ran by him like he was standing still at the quarter pole, so he maybe got a little discouraged. But I got my

Tod Marks
**Trainer Ray Handal accompanies
2-year-old American Gentleman
in the paddock at Saratoga Aug. 8.**

question answered. I definitely think he's a dirt horse. He came out of the blocks sharp and was running well. I messed up running on the grass first time out then coming back so quick. They have a race for him Closing Day. I'll breeze him this weekend, if he does it the right way and it looks like the tank is back full we'll go ahead and push forward.

What about the white markings on his left leg? "It looks like somebody spray painted his leg, it's pretty cool. I wish they would have named him like Banksy, the spray painter. There was a horse named Banksy but I was thinking something like Banksy's Masterpiece or something like that. It's really neat. I bought him and thought it was neat."

The Big S: A veteran of the Stable Tour, 4-year-old by Jimmy Creed colt appeared last year between fifth in Grade 2 Amsterdam and eighth in Grade 1 H. Allen Jerkens. He ran two more times after that, off the board in both, before going to the shelf for Madaket, Cutair, Dark Horse Racing Stable and Randall Manor Racing. "He's been around for a while. He started to tail off in his form at the end of the year so I turned him out. Brought him back, he had a couple minor setbacks and turned him out again. He came back here and has been breezing really consistently and breezing fast every week. I breezed him (Sunday) with the filly that is going to run in the Spinaway (Irish Constitution). More for her, because he goes fast when he goes on the rail but I wanted her to have some stiff competition two weeks out. All going really well. He's a gorgeous son of Jimmy Creed that Sol Kumin named after his son, Sam, that's his nickname, The Big S. He's one of those horses that's my hype horse that's never taken it to the next level. I'm hoping all the physical issues are behind us now and we can move forward. He's been plagued by little nicks and nags, nothing serious just stuff you need time off for. I'm excited about getting him back out there. Closing Day in the 1x."

Ian Glass: Claimed two back in early October for \$50,000 by Adelphi Racing Club, Cutair and Dark Horse, 4-year-old Hard Spun gelding finished third in first off claim June 14 at Belmont before winning here Aug. 1 in \$35,000 non-winners of three lifetime going 1 mile on grass. He's won three of 13 and earned \$118,800. "Joel laid down a really sweet ride on him, got to the front on the inner, slowed it down and had enough in the tank to hold them off late. He bounced out of the race in good shape and we're going to run him next Sunday in a 25. Natural progression. We want to stay aggressive, try to get to the winner's circle for a new group we put together, Adelphi Racing Club. It's Jordan Zotts, he was with Randall Manor,

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Stable Tour —

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Brian Hahn, who was with Dark Horse Racing and Matt Cutair, with Cutair Racing. We put this group together, they're all like three bros. I trained for them all individually and thought, 'These guys all seem like they'd mesh well together.' So I put them together and they've been toying with the idea of doing a syndicate type of thing. We're going to buy some horses in September and take the game to the next level, but this horse and Unrelenting Force are their first claims. It's been pretty successful, we've had maybe four or five starts, two wins, a second and a third. To keep winning here at Saratoga is always a good thing."

Unrelenting Force: Fourth in 9-furlong state-bred allowance Sunday after breaking his maiden going 6 1/2 furlongs July 30 for a \$40,000 tag. Adelphi and Cutair claimed the \$65,000 buy from the 2019 Fasig-Tipton Midlantic May sale in mid-January. "He's going to get some time off. I probably ran him back too soon off his win. He won the maiden 40 sprinting. I actually had him entered in a maiden special going long but the race didn't go, they only had two horses and they had the maiden 40 sprinting and said, 'You know what, let's get a W, let's get aggressive.' Same thing with this group, the Adelphi group, they're a new group, a young group and we want to have Ws, especially here. And runners. The 1x the other day was only like 24 days after he won and ran a big race in what was his first race off a four-month layoff. He bounced. I ran him back too quick and stretching him out there were things working against him. Probably trainer error. It happens."

Jack The Cat: John and Michael Dorian's 4-year-old Courageous Cat gelding finished third and second in allowance races for Handal since being transferred from Kent Sweezey, with whom he won once and placed three times in five starts this winter at Tampa Bay Downs. Breezed 3 furlongs on the Oklahoma Sunday in :37.57, his third work in Saratoga. "He's been knocking on the door in the 1x. Kent told me to just hold on to him, he belongs up here. A little bit of a goofy horse so we do a lot of paddock schooling and running him out of his stall helps, we don't have to ship from New Jersey. Kent realized that. He

helps me and I help him. We work together, have a couple mutual clients. Most of the time it's him helping me with clients. I'm sure there will come a time when I get a Florida-bred that needs to go to Tampa or something. He's a great horseman and a great trainer, wins a lot of races wherever he goes. We had the horse in the other day, he had a little skin funk on the back of his leg so we had to scratch him. We plan on running closing weekend here. He's right there."

Kabob: Magic Carpet Racing's 3-year-old Overanalyze gelding put barn on the board on Day 2, winning his second start in state-bred maiden claimer. "We lit up the board, 19-1. Everybody asked me if I liked the horse going into the race. I did like him. He was breezing well but he's just kind of a compact, smaller horse. But he's fast. I thought the 7 was too far. He got a perfect ride by Dylan Davis that day. He sat right off. Got the live cover. Broke running, sat right in the pocket, one horse on his outside and when the one horse backed up, he pulled out right when they switched leads, he got the seam and the slip. Just kicked clear. Couldn't draw it up better on the board. He'll run back, again at 7 in a never won two for 16. Even though he won I still think it's a little bit of a question mark, that distance. It's going to be tough. He looks like a true sprinter. I'd almost rather go 5 1/2 with him than 7. But we play the hand we're dealt."

Binkster: Dead-heated for third with T Loves A Fight behind Stan The Man and My Boy Tate in the Tale Of The Cat Stakes Aug. 20, 5-year-old New York-bred Bluegrass Cat gelding finished second in open allowance July 18 for Dark Horse and Taste of Victory Stables. He's won five of 22 and earned \$264,916 in his career. "You know Binkster, been a solid claim. We claimed him two years ago (for \$25,000, July 12, 2018 at Belmont). He's been as good a claim as I've made. It's a bit unfortunate, I was trying to get him in a 1x. He's been knocking on the door in that. He was second to that beast of Asmussen's, Yaupon. I couldn't get the race to go, they asked me if I'd jump in the stake. Hopefully we'll be back at Belmont, let him refill the tank and be ready to rock and roll first race in that book. He's such a cool horse. He tries so hard every time. I think he's been in the tour twice. That's pretty cool."

I'llhandalthe cash: Allowance winner here last summer, she won the License Fee two starts back July 3 at Belmont before a sixth in the Caress Stakes Aug. 1. Owned by VinLaur Racing Stables, Dark Horse and Taste of Victory, 4-year-old Point Of Entry filly has won three of 10 and earned \$175,732. "She's been doing great. She had an injury after her first race (Sept. 15, 2018), something she needed time off for. A tiny little stress fracture in a tibia. It was 90 days, then we brought her back and since she's been rock solid. She was just too fast for own good as a 2-year-old. She's

Continued On Page 8



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Stable Tour —

■ Continued from page 7

a big girl, a big stout filly. It was cool getting that stakes win. Last time out in the Caress it was a weird trip, she had speed on her outside and she wanted to drop back, take herself out of it and then when Jose (Ortiz) asked her for her run she was a little more one-paced than she had been. I've been keeping her sprinting honestly to keep her away from Chad (Brown). The long filly races he just has that division locked up, obviously he just won his fifth Diana, that kind of tells you. Every single stakes race for fillies going more than 6 furlongs he has a horse in there. I'm going to take her to Kentucky Downs, there's a half-million-dollar race going 6 1/2 (Grade 3 Spendthrift Farm Ladies Sprint Sept. 12). She'll be OK, maybe a bit better going further. I don't think she wants to go a mile-and-a-quarter, but a mile, seven-eighths, 6 1/2 on an uphill finish will hit her right between the eyes. She's doing as well as she's ever done. I haven't run there but I know it's a testing track so I'm picking up her training. We've been running her in these short sprints to keep her on the fresh side, wanting her to be sharp. Like I've always done, tailor fitting the training to her. Longer, deeper gallops, a little more work in her breezes, letting her gallop out a longer distance to get ready for that big race. It will be a huge deal if she can get that done. That would be almost a target spot. I'm excited."

Irish Constitution: Perrine Time Thoroughbreds' and West Paces Racing's 2-year-old Constitution filly won debut over New York-breds July 24, winning 5 1/2-furlong maiden by a nose in 1:05.02. "West Paces Racing, it's their first year owning horses. This was their second runner at Saratoga and struck gold, got the W here and looks like she's going to be a

nice filly. She's really growing up, showing a lot more balance. She had a lot of balance but since she's been here she's really popped. We won going 5 1/2. She wants to go a little further, the Constitutions seem to, so the Spinaway at seven-eighths is a really great spot for her. I know they have the Seeking The Ante, but with her pedigree I think it will really help her page out if she can get a piece of it.

Have you run in a Grade 1 before? "I have, with a horse named Still Krz, who I claimed. He was second favorite (in the 2018 Vosburgh at Belmont), hopped at the start and didn't run any good that day. I haven't had a horse that was a legit contender since."

But you think she is? "I do. I think highly of her. I've won that race galloping and working as an assistant to Tony Dutrow (twice). So Many Ways, I galloped her every day for Tony here from this barn (in 2012). She was like three stalls down, I remember it like it was yesterday. Pretty neat. She definitely seems like that cut of cloth. I'm excited. A lot of upside."

Stella Mars: New York-bred Point Of Entry filly cost \$70,000 at last year's Fasig-Tipton Kentucky October yearling sale. Shows five breezes on her worktab, including half in :52.29 on the Oklahoma turf Sunday. "She's getting ready to make her debut middle of next week, going to run in a New York-bred, two-turn grass race. Two-turn grass is tough but she breezed on the grass with l'llhandalthe cash (Sunday). I bought her at a sale because she reminded me so much of that filly. She's



Trainer Ray Handal.

Tod Marks

grown up a ton here. She's named after the school I went to in Jamaica. It's actually Stella Maris but in Jamaica you'd say Stella Mars. Stella Maris was taken, so we'll go with how it sounds."

Mun Luv: The first horse in the ring at last year's Fasig-Tipton Kentucky July yearling sale, filly by Munnings out of the Grade 3-placed Saarland mare Qualia cost Cutair Racing \$110,000. The half-sister to stakes-placed \$208,363-earner Xanthique breezed a half on the Oklahoma turf Sunday in :51.66, her fourth workout in Saratoga after three breezes downstate. "Really nice. A little green out there still but seems ultra-talented. We'll see how she does, going to run her in a 5 1/2 on the grass and go from there. She might need one just being a little green. But if she breaks well and is up there it wouldn't surprise me if she was right there at the finish. There's a lot of speed there, she's really fast."

Rossa Veloce: A \$12,000 buy at last year's Fasig-Tipton Kentucky October sale, 2-year-old Girolamo filly won her debut Aug. 5 in 5 1/2-furlong state-bred maiden special weight on the turf. "I own half of her. She won really impressively. Might be one of the fastest 2-year-olds out there. She ran a 77 Beyer, 13 on the sheets. New York-bred. I was going to pinhook her, had her at Raul Reyes farm in Ocala, Kings Equine, and he was like, 'Ray, I love this filly but the stallion, you're not go-

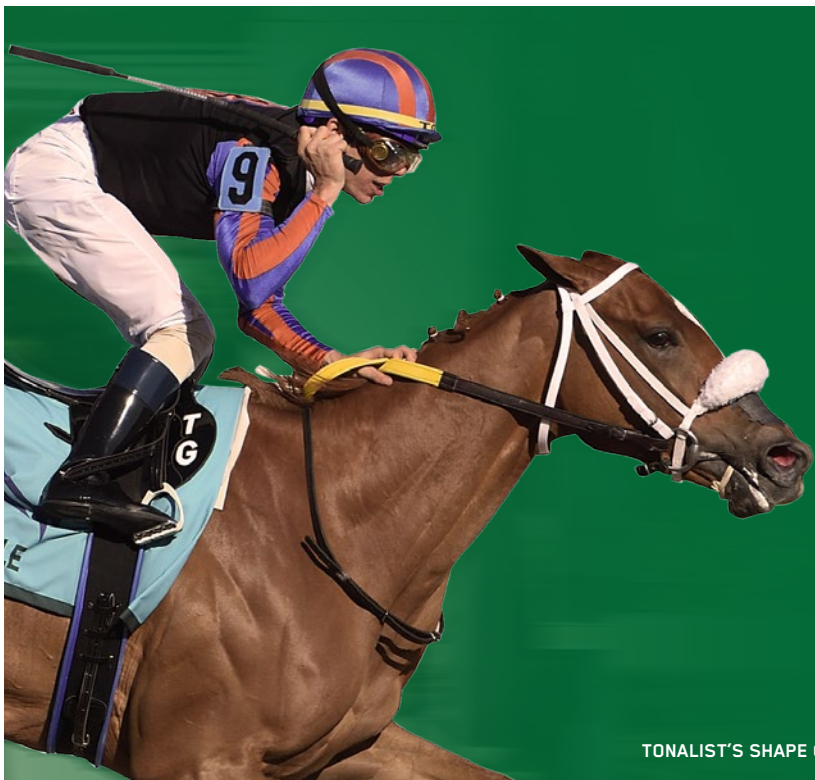
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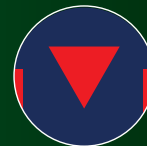
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Stable Tour —

■ Continued from page 8

ing to get any money for her.' He said he had one like her that was breezing like her and he struggled to get \$30,000. I go check on the babies a couple times a month in the winter, and I was thinking I didn't want anything less than 60 for her. I bought her for 12 but I felt like she was nice from the very beginning. She was training like a good thing, her and Irish Constitution, they're right there. I was actually going to run her for 50 first time out but she was breezing so fast I told my partner Tim McCoy from Blue Streak Racing, 'Man, if she won and got claimed for 50 I still think we'd be selling ourselves short, this filly is fast.' He said whatever I wanted to do. So we waited for the second book, got a New York-bred maiden special and she lit it up. That was a pretty salty race. Jorge Abreu liked his horse, the Summer Front that ran second (Summer Brew). We're running her in the Seeking The Ante (Sept. 4). She's going to be tough in there. She does everything right. So quiet, you wouldn't even know she's in the barn. Such an easy keeper. Legs, not a pimple on them, does everything in the morning the right way. I'm pumped."

Kemba: The barn's most recent winner, 3-year-old Hard Spun filly won maiden claimer Aug. 7 and runs back in Friday's second race, a starter allowance on the grass. Owned by C T R Stables, Pasquale Hudson, Anthony Amarosa, Katherine Merritt and Handal, she's 1-for-7 with three thirds and \$53,585 earned. "She won for us here in the maiden 75 and is back in. Doing well. Really taking to the turf. I ran her on the dirt, she had breezed OK on it and then I was coming to the end of the winter and thought we weren't getting where we wanted to be. She was a head-scratcher for me. Bred for the dirt but I thought, 'Let's just try her on the grass and see what happens.' She ran a bang-up third at Belmont at like 90-1. Like I said earlier I was trying to avoid Chad and ran in the maiden 75. We only paid 40 for her. I owned a piece of her, too, and thought if somebody takes her that's fine. But she ran big. This is much deeper water, got an outside post on the grass which is much tougher to get over and work out a trip. She's doing as well as a horse could do. It's funny, she's taken it to another level. I ran her all that time at 2 and early 3 and she stayed the same physically. Since I ran her in that grass race she blossomed. It's weird. Almost like they can't get to the bottom. They get tired, never take it to another level. Since she's been on the grass she just keeps getting better. The only question for me is the short rest. Not many other options, we're not running at Belmont for a while. It's either this on three weeks' rest or you're waiting a month and a half, two months, for a grass horse. The starter, they changed it, too. It used to be a 1x starter now it's a never-won-two-life starter. It fits her condition, just whether the tank is filled up or not."

Timely Tradition: Bush Racing Stable's veteran mare won three in a row for her new connections after being claimed for \$25,000 in late January at Aqueduct. She won for \$25,000 tag against state-breds March 15 at Aqueduct, an open starter allowance May 2 at Oaklawn and New York-bred optional June 27 at Belmont. Finished fourth in 6 1/2-furlong open allowance Aug. 9. "She's been really good to us. Claimed her in the wintertime for Bush. It was the only horse I have for them. I need to work on that. ... She whistled at Oaklawn but it took a lot out of her. She came back and had dropped off, lost some muscle mass behind, was skinny. The owner has been great, whatever I want to do I can do. We gave her six, seven weeks, maybe more, try her in the New York-bred 2x, she whistled again under a hand ride against a good group. The other day was the toughest 1x I've seen here in New York. I thought she was a little in over her head. She was training well but there were some good young horses that will be stakes horses in there. She impressed me. ... Made like a six-wide move and she was absolutely rolling, got beat about 3 lengths for the whole thing. Without getting shuffled back she probably wins against a really good group. I'm going to run her back here in the 1x at the end. This is the best she's come out of a race. Usually she's very drawn up, skinny, loses muscle because she puts so much into every run. For some reason up here it didn't happen. Training super."

Kansas Kis: Perrine Thoroughbreds' 3-year-old Constitution filly finished second in the Busher Invitational in early March to earn a trip to Hot Springs for the Grade 3 Fantasy at Oaklawn. She finished 12th there before a fourth in a Belmont allowance June 11. "I gave her some time off. The tank needed to get filled up. She had a long campaign. All winter long. She went from here first time out last August and she didn't stop running until the Belmont meet. She ran nine times. We sent her to Patty Hogan's, turned her out, let her be a horse and she just came back to Belmont. We'll look for an allowance, get her feet wet and get her back running then get her back to stakes company after that."

Just Read It: A \$70,000 buy in July, 2-year-old Constitution filly turned in a half-mile breeze Aug. 16 on the Oklahoma turf in :49.78. "She's got all the right parts. Gorgeous. Feel like I stole her for 70."

Dealing Justice: Purchased by Zilla Racing and Oracle Bloodstock for \$80,000 at Fasig-Tipton Midlantic 2-year-olds in training sale in June, Commissioner filly is back at Belmont waiting to get serious. "She's for Zilla and Perrine. She looks like an Oaks filly, two turns, long distance and has that speed and size to keep it going."

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Rise Up

Rushing Fall edges Mean Mary for another Grade 1 turf victory



Rushing Fall and Mean Mary battle late in Sunday's Diana.

Dave Harmon

BY TOM LAW

Bob Edwards walked through the clubhouse on his way to the paddock bar for some bubbly – perhaps a better libation than what he joked about having postrace – right about the time Graham Motion went searching for a trash can.

The contrasts came after Rushing Fall, racing for Edwards' e Five Racing Thoroughbreds, edged the Motion-trained Mean Mary in the race of the 2020 Saratoga Race Course meeting to date. Rushing Fall won the Grade 1 Diana by a neck over Mean Mary in a sharp 1:45.88 over the firm but still drying out inner turf course, the winner's second Grade 1 score of 2020 and trainer Chad Brown's fifth consecutive victory in the stakes for fillies and mares.

"To win at Saratoga is tough, to win the Diana in a Grade 1 against this field is impressive," Edwards said. "She's a special horse for the family. As you know my wife is a Saratogian, she was born here . . . so for the family that's not here back at

DIANA STAKES RECAP

the house, sucking back some Coronas, this is a big deal for them."

Edwards equated his own giddy feelings to being somewhat like "sitting in my bathroom stealing whip cream and doing nitrous shots, all hopped up and super happy" after Rushing Fall ran her record to 11-for-14 with two seconds and earnings of \$2,553,000.

The owner was pretty excited, but will save the whip cream for ice cream sundaes.

The 5-year-old More Than Ready mare also won Grade 1 stakes at 2, 3 and 4, including the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies Turf in 2017 at Del Mar and back-to-back editions of Keeneland's Jenny Wiley in 2019 and 2020.

The only thing missing on her resume is an Eclipse Award and with a 3-for-3 record in 2020 Rushing Fall is the likely leader in the division. Ed-

wards, who campaigned champion Good Magic, isn't ready to collect the hardware but likes to be in the conversation.

"That would be unbelievable and thanks if you guys vote for me, thanks," he said. "Rushing Fall, if you want me to write in the ballot that would be spectacular.

"Everybody would love to win an Eclipse Award, that's a special occasion for a special horse. She's done everything right for us. You see the company she's in now with Lady Eli, Beholder, some of these spectacular racehorses way before my time, but to be in that company, to have a horse in that company and be in business for five, six years is really something special."

Rushing Fall's special performance under Javier Castellano, who called her "one of the best fillies I've rode in my life," spelled another Diana disappointment for Motion.

Continued On Page 13

Diana —

■ Continued from page 12

Motion found a spot toward the west end on the clubhouse porch to watch the Diana, where he entered Mean Mary and Secret Message to make a third of the field attempting to win his first after an almost unbelievable string of close calls. He lost one of the two when Secret Message reared at the start, almost hit her head, and unseated Irad Ortiz Jr. before being scratched.

Mean Mary flew the flag for the Fair Hill team and took the lead from the start under Luis Saez, setting honest early fractions without any encouragement. Shortening up from races at 12, 11 and 10 furlongs in her three starts this season – all wins in graded stakes – Mean Mary flew through splits of :23.60, :48.38 and 1:11.90 chased by Rushing Fall, Call Me Love, Starship Jubilee and Sistercharlie.

Rushing Fall closed the gap to a half-length around the far turn but Mean Mary still led into the stretch, past the eighth pole and the mile



Dave Harmon

Mean Mary shows the way early in the Diana.

split in 1:34.30. Rushing Fall gained a slight edge just inside the sixteenth pole and it proved to be just enough at the finish. The first two were 2 3/4 lengths clear of Sistercharlie, the 2018 champion turf female who had Starship Jubilee by 1 1/4 lengths.

Mean Mary joined Motion's Diana runner-ups Ultra Brat (2018), Quidu-

ra (2017), Aruna (2011), Shared Account (2010), Sweet Talker (2006) and two others – Secret Message (fourth in 2019) and Miss Temple City (fourth in 2016).

"It's the story of my life in this race," Motion said immediately after, walking back to the paddock to check on Secret Message before talking with

Luis Saez about his near gate-to-wire winning trip on Mean Mary. Twenty minutes later, walking to his car, the song stayed the same.

"That was the worst," Motion said.

Brown won his sixth Diana and fifth straight, adding Rushing Fall's

Continued On Page 14

HE WON CALIFORNIA'S
BEST RACES AT 2 & 3.

	FrontRunner-G1	Santa Anita Derby-G1
2018	Game Winner	Justify
2017	Bolt d'Oro	GORMLEY
2016	GORMLEY	Exaggerator
2015	Nyquist	Dortmund
2014	American Pharoah	California Chrome

GORMLEY

FIRST YEARLINGS AT KEE SEPT & F-T SELECTED

SPENDTHRIFT

Diana —

■ Continued from page 13

name to Sistercharlie in 2018 and 2019, Lady Eli in 2017, Dacita in 2016 and Zagora in 2011.

He almost didn't get the chance, at least not with Rushing Fall.

Rushing Fall started her 4-year-old campaign in 2019 with back-to-back victories in the Grade 1 Jenny Wiley and Grade 1 Just A Game at Belmont Park. She then came up short as the favorite to her stablemate Sistercharlie in the Diana and her lone non-top-three finish in the Grade 1 First Lady at Keeneland. Rushing Fall didn't run again until early June, when racing returned to New York following the shutdown from the coronavirus and won the Grade 3 Beau-gay on Belmont's Opening Day card.

"She knows how to win; she's a remarkable horse," Brown said. "This is a horse that has won Grade 1s in four straight years. This is very rare company to do this. She's a horse of a lifetime for anybody – for a trainer, for an owner, for racing.

A \$320,000 purchase by Mike Ryan for Edwards at the 2016 Fasig-Tipton Saratoga select yearling sale, Rushing Fall could have joined e Five's brood-



Dave Harmon

Rushing Fall and Javier Castellano return with another Grade 1 win.

mare band or gone through the sales ring – where she'd likely bring a huge price – at Kentucky's fall breeding stock sales at Fasig-Tipton or Keeneland.

"We're very fortunate that Bob Edwards and his family put her back in training. Her last race of the year last year was not good, she's worth a lot of money, they could easily have sold her or bred her.

They gave her the time off and we sent her down to Stonestreet in Ocala, which we've been doing every winter, they do a fantastic job and then my team got a hold of her and took it from there. They executed like they always have, and the filly really came through. She's special."

Brown said Rushing Fall, who improved to 3-for-4 at 9 furlongs, would target the 1 3/16-mile Breeders' Cup Filly and Mare Turf at Keeneland Nov. 7. An earlier return to Keeneland, where she's 4-for-5 on the turf, could also be in the cards for the Grade 1 First Lady during FallStars Weekend Oct. 3.

- Shortleaf Stable's homebred Caldee improved off a fifth in her dirt debut to win Sunday's opener going 1 1/16 miles on the grass. Trained by Brad Cox, the daughter of More Than Ready won by 6 3/4 lengths under Javier Castellano.

- John Toscano Jr. sent out his first winner of the meet when Pete's Play Call scored a mild upset in the seventh, a 6-furlong optional on the main track. Luis Saez rode the 7-year-old Munnings gelding, who improved to 4-for-4 at Saratoga in his first start off a \$40,000 claim and back in for \$62,500. Pete's Play Call won by a nose over Mount Travers in 1:09.86 with Free Enterprise a head back in third.

Nyqu1st

Gretzky The Great takes the Soaring Free Stakes at Woodbine in a fast time. He's the first Stakes winner among the first juveniles by undefeated Champion two-year-old and Kentucky Derby winner **NYQUIST**



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SEPTEMBER
YEARLING SALE

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13 – FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

All-Star Outing

Halladay fends off defending champ Got Stormy in Grade 1



Chelsea Durand/NYRA

Halladay (gray) holds off Got Stormy in the stretch of Saturday's Fourstardave.

BY TERRY HILL

Trainer Todd Pletcher can read a Daily Racing Form as well as anyone, and coming into the Grade 1 Fourstardave Handicap he could see his entry Halladay looked like the clear speed in the race. He also had a jockey with a well-deserved reputation for success with frontrunners.

The strategy was obvious.

"It was our plan going in, establishing the lead and then getting him to settle. It worked," said Pletcher. However while reading the Form he couldn't have missed the fact that the course record for the Fourstardave distance was held by the mare Got Stormy, who set it in last year's edition. She was back trying for a repeat this year.

"Yes, when she came at us at about the three-sixteenths pole I thought it was going to be very close at the end," Pletcher said. "But he had something left and he kind of kicked it up a notch. We knew he'd be at his best; we could see it in the mornings

FOURSTARDAVE HANDICAP RECAP

in training. That and he's learned how to relax on the lead. That's a big difference between last year and this for him."

Halladay's winning jockey Luis Saez, who came into Saturday having won seven races the previous two days, said, "I was totally confident; I could feel it. He was real comfortable in the second quarter and then in the stretch when he could feel the competition coming he opened up a little.

"The hardest part was getting the lead. It's a little soft out there and when he shoved off at the start, he slipped or sunk into the turf a bit. But by the second jump he was good."

The 4-year-old son of War Front out of the Tapit mare Hightap actually broke fourth but after the first furlong of the 1-mile race he'd already taken a clear lead.

He made it last, getting splits of :23.85 and :47.19 to start, covering 6 furlongs in 1:10.15 and turning aside Got Stormy's challenge to win by 1 1/4 lengths. Casa Creed wound up third.

The final time for the race, on a turf course rated good, was 1:33.32, or 1.32 seconds off Got Stormy's record.

Got Stormy finished second and her regular rider, Tyler Gafflione, was pleased with the effort. After winning \$1,139,100 and finishing in the money in all eight of her races last year with four victories, the 5-year-old mare started this year 0-for-4.

"We couldn't get by the winner," said Gafflione, "but it's great to see her back in form. It's a real step in the right direction."

Agent Steve Young bought Halladay for \$225,000 at Keeneland September in 2017, early in the sale's opening session as Hip 22. His dam won

Continued On Page 18

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CHURCHILL DOWNS

2020 Derby Week & September Meet Stakes Schedule

SEPTEMBER 1 - SEPTEMBER 27

THE CHAMPIONS DAY MARATHON OVERNIGHT STAKES

Runs Tues., Sept. 1
\$115,000
Three Years Old & Up

Closes Aug. 15
(No nomination fee)
1 1/2 Miles, Dirt

UNBRIDLED SIDNEY

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"

Runs Thurs., Sept. 3
\$200,000
Fillies, Two Years Old

Closes Aug. 15
(\$200 nomination fee)
1 Mile, Dirt

OPENING VERSE OVERNIGHT STAKES

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)

Runs Fri., Sept. 4
\$1,250,000
Second closing
Fillies, Three Years Old

Closes Aug. 15
(\$500 nomination fee)
1 1/8 Miles, Dirt

EDGEWOOD (GII)

Runs Fri., Sept. 4
\$300,000
Fillies, Three Year Olds

Closes Aug. 15
(\$300 nomination fee)
1 Mile, Turf

EIGHT BELLES (GII)

Runs Fri., Sept. 4
\$300,000
Fillies, Three Year Olds

Closes Aug. 15
(\$300 nomination fee)
7 Furlongs, Dirt

LA TROIENNE (GI)

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)

Runs Fri., Sept. 4
\$400,000
Four Year Olds & Up

Closes Aug. 15
(\$300 nomination fee)
1 1/16 Mile, Dirt

TWIN SPIRES TURF SPRINT (GII)

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)

Runs Sat., Sept. 5
\$1,000,000
Second Closing
Four Year Olds & Up

Closes Aug. 15
(\$500 nomination fee)
1 1/8 Miles, Turf

IROQUOIS (GIII)

"WIN AND YOU'RE IN BREEDERS' CUP JUVENILE DIVISION"

Runs Sat., Sept. 5
\$200,000
Two Year Olds

Closes Aug. 15
(\$200 nomination fee)
1 Mile, Dirt

PAT DAY MILE (GII)

Runs Sat., Sept. 5
\$500,000
Three Year Olds

Closes Aug. 15
(\$300 nomination fee)
1 Mile, Dirt

DERBY CITY DISTAFF (GI)

Runs Sat., Sept. 5
\$500,000
Fillies & Mares,
Four Year Olds & Up

Closes Aug. 15
(\$300 nomination fee)
7 Furlongs, Dirt

AMERICAN TURF (GII)

Runs Sat., Sept. 5
\$500,000
Three Year Olds

Closes Aug. 15
(\$300 nomination fee)
1 1/16 Miles, Turf

LONGINES CHURCHILL DISTAFF TURF MILE (GII)

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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Halladay and Luis Saez reach the finish of the Fourstardave.



Dave Harmon

Fourstardave —

Continued from page 16

the Iowa Oaks and Dogwood Stakes, both Grade 3, in 2009 and had produced winning full-siblings to Halladay in War Of Ideas and Tap Of War.

Bred by Winchell Thoroughbreds and Gainesway Thoroughbreds, Halladay finished third in his only two dirt starts, at Saratoga in 2018, and has won half his 12 turf tries.

A real mystery in the race was the non-performance of the Chad Brown contingent. Brown, arguably the country's leading turf trainer over the last few years, had four entries in the race, including the first two choices in the betting with Uni and Raging Bull. The Brown horses finished fifth through eighth, with none being a factor at any point in the running.

Uni, last year's champion turf female and Breeder's Cup Mile winner, was the beaten favorite in the Fourstardave for the second year in a row, finishing seventh this year to go with her third last year.

At any other racetrack in America, the mention of the horse Fourstardave would probably elicit a response something like "Fourstar-Who?" But here, the horse is a part of the folklore of the meet and earned the title "The Sultan of Saratoga."

The son of the undistinguished, but regally bred stallion Compliance (by Northern Dancer out of a Buckpasser mare), Fourstardave started

an even 100 times, winning 21 for \$1,636,737 in earnings for Richard Bomze and trainer Leo O'Brien. But it was at Saratoga that the New York-bred became a legend. For eight consecutive years the hard-working gelding won at least one race at the Spa. He raced in the Grade 3 Daryl's Joy Stakes five times, winning it twice and finishing second twice.

On the track, and in the fans' hearts, he owned the Saratoga meet. So after he retired in 1996, the Daryl's Joy Stakes was changed to the Fourstardave Handicap and has since been upgraded to its Grade 1 status. In perhaps an even higher honor, the track's first floor grandstand bar was named the Fourstardave Saratoga Bar.

After his death in 2002, Fourstardave was buried in Clare Court on the backstretch of the main track. Only two other horses have been so honored.

For Pletcher, winning the Fourstardave marked the 23rd consecutive year the trainer has captured a Grade 1 stakes.

For Halladay, who won for the sixth time in 14 starts, the victory not only bumped his lifetime earnings to \$517,485 but also earned him a "Win-and-You're-In" spot in Breeders' Cup Mile at Keeneland Race Course Nov. 7. On his way there, he may start in the \$750,000 Shadwell Turf Mile, also at Keeneland.

"We haven't made a decision, but the distance, the surface and the date all look about right," Pletcher said.

BY PAUL HALLORAN

Connor Harrell was a standout baseball player at Vanderbilt who played in the Detroit Tigers system for four years. Though he never crossed paths with Roy Halladay, a phenomenal pitcher for the Blue Jays and Phillies, Harrell admired the Hall of Famer's accomplishments and his reputation for giving back to the communities in which he played.

When it came time to name the horse Harrell Ventures bought as a yearling in 2017, Connor and his father, Curtis, decided to honor the career and legacy of the pitcher, who died Nov. 7, 2017 when the plane he was flying crashed in the Gulf of Mexico off the coast of Florida. Thus, the son of War Front would be called Halladay.

"I have a baseball background and everyone I talked to said he was a really good guy. To have a career like that, he deserved to have a horse named for him," said Connor Harrell, who manages the family racing operation.

When he was with Toronto, Roy Halladay had a private box at SkyDome (now the Rogers Centre) to which he invited patients of the Hospital for Sick Children. He started the Halladay Family Foundation to benefit children's charities, hunger relief and animal rescue, and he was nominated for the Roberto Clemente Award for outstanding citizenship several times.

Curtis Harrell admitted that the racing partnership, which also includes his wife, Elizabeth, son,

Ace horse Halladay makes pitch for Harrells

Clay, and daughter, Hannah, hoped Halladay the horse would remind people of Halladay the pitcher.

"Roy was an incredibly competitive, talented, aggressive athlete," said Curtis, also a pilot. "Those are the kind of character traits you would love to see in a racehorse."

That's what was on display in Saturday's Grade 1 Fourstardave Handicap at Saratoga, when the equine Halladay put up a performance on par with the human Halladay's perfect game for the Phillies May 29, 2010. The Todd Pletcher trainee led at every call in easily defeating an all-star field that featured five Grade/Group 1 winners. Among them were the 2019 Fourstardave winner, an Eclipse Award winner and a four-horse phalanx from trainer Chad Brown's barn.

Halladay entered the Fourstardave with five wins, but his only stakes scores came in ungraded races in Florida late last year and this spring. His \$297,485 in lifetime earnings were a little more than 10 percent of favorite Uni's nearly \$2.4 million.

"Saturday was pretty amazing," said Connor Harrell, who knows the feeling of excelling on the biggest stage, having hit a home run for Vanderbilt in the 2011 College World Series and being named to the All-Tournament Team. "This was the closest (feeling) to that."

"We were very excited," Curtis Harrell said, ad-

mitting that it would have been even better to witness it in person. "We do enjoy being there, that's why we do it. We're in this business to race. We're not breeders and we don't own a farm in Kentucky. Our joy comes from being part of the racing environment."

While the Fourstardave victory marked the first graded stakes win for Harrell Ventures, the Harrells owned a 75-percent share of the Alto Racing partnership that campaigned 2015 Florida Derby winner and Kentucky Derby and Belmont Stakes runner Materiality. Credit for the family's involvement in racing goes to Curtis' late father, Eddie, who ran claimers at Ruidoso Downs long before there were any dreams of graded stakes wins.

"We had more success than we deserved," Curtis said. "We have had a taste of running in some big races."

As part of the Breeders' Cup Challenge Series, the Fourstardave is an appetizer for the main course that is the Breeders' Cup Mile, to be run at Keeneland the first weekend in November.

"It's such an exciting situation," Curtis Harrell said. "This was a 'Win and You're In' for the Breeders' Cup Mile and we are looking forward to that."

Connor Harrell, a 4-year starter at Vanderbilt and seventh-round draft pick of the Tigers in 2013, hopes Halladay brings his best stuff again.

"It's going to be a fun fall," he said.



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BY SEAN CLANCY

Steve Klesaris, once a regular on the Saratoga beat, makes a rare appearance this summer with Buy Land And See in the featured Mahony Stakes Wednesday. Carded as the seventh race on the nine-race card, the turf sprint stakes for 3-year-olds, runs at 4:12 p.m.

Owned and bred by Joseph Imbesi, Buy Land And See has won three in a row since finishing third in his debut here last summer. The Pennsylvania-bred son of Cairo Prince broke his maiden at Parx in September, won the Awad Stakes at Belmont Park in October before being sidelined with the

WEEK 7 PREVIEW

coronavirus when he arrived at Gulfstream Park for a winter campaign. Yes, the coronavirus.

“Ran a high fever, ended up with pneumonia, colitis. It was a mess. It was a hell of an ordeal. My staff was there around the clock, veterinary care was there around the clock, we had specialists come in from the universities and they diagnosed him with coronavirus,” Klesaris said. “We didn’t even know what coronavirus was at this time, it was the first week

Continued On Page 21



Tod Marks

Buy Land And See rides a three-race winning streak into Wednesday’s Mahony Stakes.

One Horse

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



SEPTEMBER

SUN. 13 - FRI. 25

OCEAN TERRACE, 2001

Davant Latham, Fog City Stable

“He was selling day one at Keeneland so he was there for four days. The first day he comes out, he’s twisting on the end of the shank, won’t walk straight, won’t stand, won’t do anything he’s supposed to do. I’m like, ‘Forget him, I just don’t like him if he won’t do that.’ I send him one more time, and in the middle of all that he dropped his head and gave three good strides. Perfect. Just what you want. Then he went right back to not listening. I was like, ‘I like that. I’ll come back.’ Every day I went back, he just got stronger and better. He stood, he posed, he had that faraway gaze in his eyes. Just a statue. Big stride, boom. The sign of a balanced horse is when they stop, they’re set. You don’t have to push them back or make them step forward. And that was him. He’d walk the right way and stop the right way every time. I was so glad he gave me those three strides in my first view, because I was about to walk away from him.

“He certainly taught me a lesson because I almost crossed him off the list and I really would have made a mistake. He’s one of my all-time favorite horses. He just got stronger. He was out there, he walked but he never saw you. You were insignificant. He was a very talented horse that I don’t think we ever saw the best of on the racetrack.”

For Fog City and trainer Bob Hess, Ocean Terrace won his first three starts including the 2003 El Camino Real Derby (over Ten Most Wanted among others) before being injured in the Lexington Stakes and retiring to stud. Among his progeny are four champions in Chile, including Casablanca Smile and Matter Of Time.

Preview —

■ Continued from page 20

in December. Then you started seeing it on the news and we were like, ‘Wow, that’s what the horse had.’ You know how it evolved from there. The poor horse is looking at you like, ‘Please help me.’ ”

Buy Land And See spent two months at Gulfstream before being turned out on a farm in Ocala and rejoining Klesaris’ Delaware Park-based string this spring.

“You think you’ve seen it all. How long have we been doing this?” Klesaris said. “We were unclear what kind of repercussions were going to follow. I remember his first breeze, I had my ear over the rail, ‘How is he breathing? How is he handling this?’ Little by little, everything seemed normal, but you don’t know until you get back to the races.”

So far so good. In his return, Buy Land And See toyed with seven state-bred allowance victims, going 7 ½ furlongs in 1:33.84, a decent time but well off his course record of 1:30.03 set in his maiden win last fall.

“It was a good race to come back, certainly he’s going against a better group this time,” Klesaris said. “We still don’t really know where we’re at, we feel like he’s himself and he’s going to be the horse we always thought he would be, he’s still got to go out and prove that. I’m looking forward to it.”

Linda Rice, in the midst of a strong meet, tries to win her second stakes at the meet with favorite Turned Aside. Owned and bred by Paul Pompa Jr., the son of American

Pharoah dominated the Grade 3 Quick Call July 24. Jose Lezcano takes the return assignment.


Wesley Ward sends out second-choice Maven. Fresh off an allowance win at Keeneland in July, the son of American Pharoah attracts Irad Ortiz Jr. for owner Richard Ravin. A debut winner at Aqueduct in April last spring, he came back to win the Group 3 Prix du Bois at Chantilly and finished sixth in the Group 3 Molecomb Stakes at Goodwood July 31 to end his juvenile season. Maven prepped for this with a half-mile breeze in :50.77 over the Oklahoma turf.

Stakes winner Flap Jack, meet winner Competitive Spirit, New York-bred Power Up Paynter, stakes winner Old Chestnut, Grade 3 stakes winner Island Commish, two-time stakes winner Cajun Casanova and French-bred two-time stakes winner Jack And Noah round out the deep field.


Todd Pletcher and Chad Brown enter week seven tied atop the standings with 22 wins apiece. Early leader Christophe Clement lurks in third with 18. Brown has four entries Wednesday, 8-5 favorite Checksandbalances in the fifth, 9-5 favorite Blowout and 5-2 Catch A Bid in the eighth and 4-1 first-time starter Admaa. Pletcher entered one, 2-1 favorite Cap De Creus in the third. Clement has three, including 5-2 favorite Snicket in the second, 5-2 second choice Coilean Bawn in the third and 6-1 Dial Me Up in the ninth.

Wednesday’s card opens with the eighth hurdle race of the season. Jonathan Sheppard marches out A Silent Player and French Light for owner Irv Naylor. A Silent Player won his career debut at Colonial Downs while

Continued On Page 22



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

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Preview —

■ Continued from page 21

French Light finished second in his first two starts and graduated with an impressive score at Colonial Downs. Sheppard trails Jack Fisher by two wins in the trainers' standings while Naylor is a distant second behind Bruton Street-US in a clinched owner's race.

Thursday

The Smart And Fancy highlights Thursday's card. One of six turf races scheduled on the nine-race card, the \$85,000 turf sprint attracted eight fillies and mares including Australian import Victory Kingdom. Owned and bred by Team Valor, the daughter of Animal Kingdom owns one win from 11 starts down under and makes her first start since finishing fourth, beaten a head, in the Grade 3 Le Pine Summoned Stakes at Sandown in November.

Victory Kingdom broke her maiden going 6 furlongs at Sandown in January. She hit the board in two graded stakes in her next two starts going 6 furlongs and 7 furlongs before trying a mile in the Grade 3 Alexandra Stakes. Freshened for several months, she returned to post six solid efforts from 5 ½ to 7 ½ furlongs before coming here. She spent time at WinStar Farm before joining Rodolphe Brisset's string about seven weeks ago, breezing four times at Keeneland, including a sprightly 5 fur-



Tod Marks

Trainer Rodolphe Brisset wants you to pay attention to Victory Kingdom in Thursday's Smart And Fancy.

longs in :59.60 August 18. The bay 5-year-old mare breaks from the outside for jockey Luis Saez.

"She breezes so good I was thinking about running her on the dirt but I don't want to try to outsmart it, she's run on the turf all of our life and has run well," Brisset said. "We are supposed to get some rain, if it came off, I won't mind, I promise you that. To me, she doesn't look like an Australian

horse, she looks like a proper American horse. She's a big, scopey mare who is light on her feet."

Brisset adds blinkers and Lasix for the 5 ½ turf test.

"The form doesn't show it, but she's run in blinkers and cheek pieces. I've watched her replays and studied what she was wearing," Brisset said. "The way she's been acting in the morning we thought the blinkers could help. I was on her last week with the blinkers, she worked pretty well so we decided to go for it."

Rose Flower shortens from a sixth in the Grade 3 Intercontinental for Clement and third-leading jockey Joel Rosario. The German-bred 4-year-old has placed in two New York stakes going 6 furlongs for Athlone Racing.

Twin Creeks Stable's Peaceful returns to Saratoga after wiring six allowance foes July 24. Trained by Mike Stidham and ridden by Tyler Gaffalione, the daughter of Declaration Of War makes her seventh career start and second stakes start. She finished fourth in last year's Christecat at Belmont Park.

Stakes winners Introduced, Saratoga Treasure, Getmotherarose and stakes-placed A Great Time and Miss Gossip add salt to the broth.

A heady three-other-than-turf allowance buoys the early part of the card Thursday. Seismic Wave makes his first non-stakes start since breaking his maiden at Gulfstream Park in February, 2019. Owned and bred by

Continued On Page 23

KIP ELSER'S KIRKWOOD STABLES TWO-YEAR-OLDS TO GO



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Preview —

■ Continued from page 22

te Farm and trained by Bill Mott, the son of Tapit won the Cutler Bay Stakes at Gulfstream in his start after that maiden and won the English Channel Stakes at Belmont in October. The chestnut ridgling finished fifth, beaten 5 lengths in the Grade 2 Bernard Baruch earlier in the meet. Jose Ortiz, chasing his brother, Irad, for championship honors, takes the call from the inside post.

Brown entered three for Thursday. The defending champ unleashes 9-5 favorite All Others Follow in the second, throws Poker-third Value Proposition, 3-2, at Seismic Wave in the third and adds blinkers on 8-5 Judicial Restraint in the third. Pletcher counters with 2-1 Prairie Wings, second in each of her four starts thus far, in the second and 7-5 favorite Texas Swing, third in the Tampa Bay Derby, and One Eyed Jack, 5-1, in the eighth. Clement rolls out 4-1 Rose Flower in the Smart And Fancy and Saratoga Love, third earlier in the meet, at 8-1 in the ninth.

Friday

The Lake George kicks off the graded stakes barrage Friday.

Sweet Melania makes her first start of the Saratoga meet in the 1-mile turf

stakes for 3-year-old fillies. Owned by Robert and Lawana Low and trained by Todd Pletcher, the daughter of American Pharoah has made just one start this year, a front-running score in the Grade 3 Wonder Again at Belmont Park June 20.

“We were expecting a little bit of a later start, the original plan was to get her ready for Keeneland and that obviously fell through,” Pletcher said. “We got delayed until the race at Belmont. Then we had a minor setback after that race, it was more of an illness than a setback. When we saw we weren’t going to make the Saratoga Oaks, this became the next target.”

Sweet Melania broke her maiden in her turf debut here last summer, came back to miss by a neck in the P.G. Johnson. She walloped 13 rivals in the Grade 2 Jessamine at Keeneland before concluding her season with a third in the Grade 1 Breeders’ Cup Juvenile Fillies Turf. The chestnut filly, a \$600,000 Keeneland purchase, returned to the work tab after the Wonder Again with three breezes on the training track at Belmont before oiling the pan with a half-mile move over the Oklahoma turf in :48.72.

“She breezed really, really well. I loved the way she finished. She’s one of those that it’s very obvious when you put her on the turf how much better she is than she is on the dirt. You can see her acceleration is completely different,” Pletcher said.

Saratoga Leaders

TRAINERS	1ST
Chad Brown	22
Todd Pletcher	22
Christophe Clement	18
Mike Maker	16
Linda Rice	13
Rudy Rodriguez	11
Steve Asmussen	10
Jim Bond	10
Bill Mott	8
Shug McGaughey	7
Wesley Ward	7
Jorge Abreu	6
Brad Cox	6
David Donk	6
Ray Handal	6
Orlando Noda	6

Rob Atras	4
Bruce Brown	4
Jeremiah Englehart	4
Jack Fisher	4
Danny Gargan	4

JOCKEYS	1ST
Irak Ortiz Jr.	44
Jose Ortiz	42
Joel Rosario	37
Luis Saez	24
Javier Castellano	23
Tyler Gaffalione	20
Manny Franco	15
Jose Lezcano	15
John Velazquez	13
Junior Alvarado	12
Ricardo Santana Jr.	10
Dylan Davis	9

“She’s a pretty straightforward filly to train, she enjoys her job and is pretty uncomplicated.”

Sweet Melania breaks from the rail for Jose Ortiz.

The \$100,000 stakes closed with 34 nominations and attracted 11 entries.

Micheline exits a sixth in the Grade 3 Regret for Godolphin and Mike Stidham. The daughter of Bernardini won the Honey Ryder in her previous

start. She breaks from post 2 for Joel Rosario.

Cat’s Pajamas won two in a row this spring before finishing fifth in the Grade 2 Lake Placid earlier in the meet. Trained by Graham Motion for Larkin Armstrong and breeder Jack Swain III, the daughter of Street Sense has the return call from John Velazquez.

Continued On Page 24




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Preview —

■ Continued from page 23

Selflessly chased Sweet Melania in the Wonder Again, fading to fifth, 11 ¼ lengths behind the winner. Owned by Klaravich Stable and trained by Brown, the daughter of More Than Ready won the Grade 2 Miss Grillo and finished fifth in the Breeders' Cup last year. Irad Ortiz Jr. takes the call from Javier Castellano, who is serving a three-day suspension for a ride on Value Engineering earlier in the meet.

Bricks in the rest of the wall include Witez, Velvet Crush, My Sassy Sarah, Windtracer, Sugar Fix, American Giant and main-track only entrant Miss Peppina.

The New York Stallion Times Square Division kicks off Friday's card. The \$100,000 dirt sprint enticed five entries. Chowda tries to make it three in a row for Eddie Fs Racing and trainer Gary Sciacca. Captain Bombastic exits a strong fourth in the Grade 1 Allen Jerkens for Team Hanley and Jeremiah Englehart, who also sends out Sisu Racing's Ariesberg from his Finger Lakes base. Slash Gordon makes his return after winning his debut in March for Michelle Nevin and Little Red Feather Racing. Dream Bigger seeks his fourth win for Repole Stable and Rudy Rodriguez.

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Tod Marks

Sweet Melania looms large in Friday's featured Lake George.

Friday, Brown entered three, Pletcher volleyed with three and Clement swings with two.

As for the title, Pletcher knows the score.

"We need some 2-year-olds to step up now. We are a little behind schedule with a lot of our 2-year-olds, but he should have some ready for these closing maiden races. That's what it's going to come down to, I don't know if we quite have the volume that Chad has so we need to bat a high percentage and we need our 2-year-olds to come out running," Pletcher said. "We've had a few who are breezing pretty well. Fifth Risk won first out over the weekend, it's encouraging when you see some of them run well that the rest of them who they're training against are going to match up. But you know what it's like here, you can have a good one ready and run into the Breeders' Cup winner and have one that's OK and land in a good spot. You just don't know."

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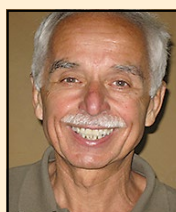
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**Tom
Law**



**Charles
Bedard**



**Rob
Whitlock**

Race #

1	Sheppard entry Brianbakescookies Critical Data	Prayer Hope Critical Data French Light	Sheppard entry Brianbakescookies Critical Data	Sheppard entry Tomgarrow Brianbakescookies
2	Munnings Muse Impazible Donna Snicket	Snicket Munnings Muse Bankers Daughter	Munnings Muse Bankers Daughter Snicket	Snicket Munnings Muse Bankers Daughter
3	Whatdoesasharksay Setting The Mood Quiet Dignity	Cape de Creus Quiet Dignity Coilean Bawn	Cap de Creus Quiet Dignity Coilean Bawn	Setting The Mood Whatdoesasharksay Quiet Dignity
4	Katies Courage Who Knows What Tiz Splendid News	Tiz Splendid News Joquar Dressy	Dash To The Top Who Knows What Tiz Splendid News	Bold Article Tiz Splendid News Katies Courage
5	Kitten's Romance Checksandbalances We Five	Checksandbalances Kitten's Romance Giggle Factor	Checksandbalances Kitten's Romance Karley O	Kitten's Romance Checksandbalances We Five
6	Assume Grudge Charlotte Webley	Assume Grudge She's A Black Belt	Assume Charlotte Webley Left Leaning Lucy	Assume Grudge Classy Sadie
7	Turned Aside Jack And Noah Sky Of Hook	Maven Buy Land And See Turned Aside	Turned Aside Jack And Noah Old Chestnut	Maven Buy Land And See Turned Aside
8	Blowout Clara Peeters Molto Bella	Blowout Sweet Bye And Bye Clara Peeters	Catch A Bid Sweet Bye And Bye Clara Peeters	Clara Peeters Sweet Bye And Bye Catch A Bid
9	Back Channel Admaa Dial Me Up	Let Them Eat Cake Bastet American Goddess	Back Channel Thrill Bombshell	Thrill Let Them Eat Cake Dial Me Up
2020 Records	98/291	90/291	79/291	69/291

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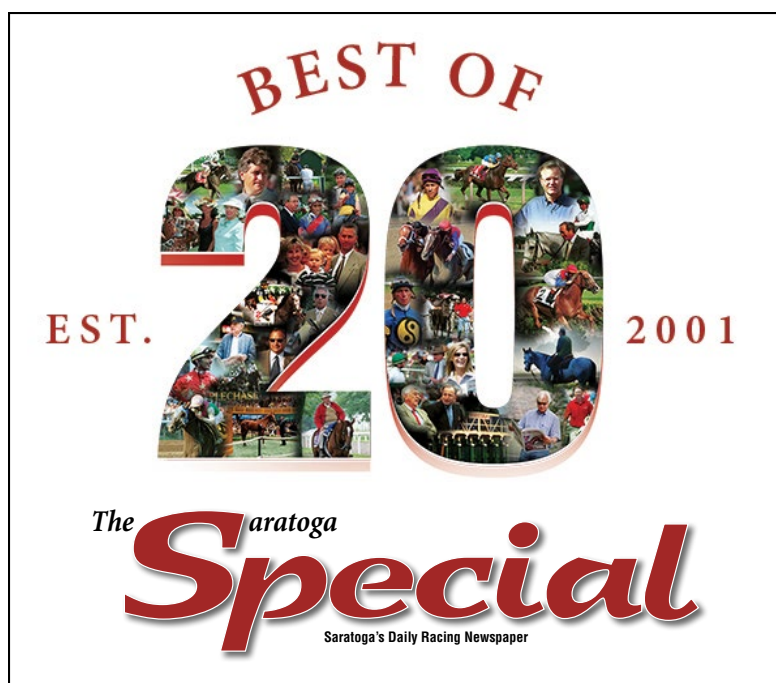
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Founded in 2001, *The Saratoga Special* has covered plenty of great horses and people and we'll bring you some highlights during our 20th season.

Ten years ago, we wrote about the Lake George – a turf stakes for 3-year-old fillies that back then came up in late July. In 2020, when everything is different remember, the stakes headlines a late-August Friday card. In 2010, Perfect Shirl came in from Canada and won the Grade 2 for owner/breeder Chuck Fipke and trainer Roger Attfield. As a half-sister to major winners Lady Shakespeare and Shakespeare, she drew plenty of attention and lived up to it.

Little did anyone know what would come. Perfect Shirl went on to win the 2011 Breeders' Cup Filly and Mare Turf and earn \$1,390,729. She's also the dam of Shirl's Speight – a late-arriving Kentucky Derby contender for Fipke and Attfield. The colt is undefeated in two starts, both at Woodbine in July, and will meet Tiz The Law and the others at Churchill Downs Sept. 5.

July 29, 2010. Family Matters. Perfect Shirl makes like big sister in stakes. By Sean Clancy.

Sue Lorimer, assistant trainer to Woodbine-based Roger Attfield, walked out of the winner's circle after Perfect Shirl won the Grade 2 Lake George Wednesday and was greeted by a sole reporter.

The interview stalled at, "She must have come with a reputation?"

Lorimer repeated the question.

"A reputation?"

The questioner had to backtrack and restate the question.

"Not reputation, I mean hype and respect, being Lady Shakespeare's sister and all."

A winner of seven races from 12 starts for nearly \$500,000 for Attfield and on her way to a start in the Grade 1 Beverly D. this summer, Lady Shakespeare makes a tough model to emulate.

"They're both very nice, they're not necessarily high-strung, but energetic. They like to get out and train, they don't like messing around," Lorimer said. "She doesn't look a lot like her sister yet, but she was slight as a 2-year-old and 3-year-old, hopefully she'll get a little bigger like her sister did. They're a little bit alike and not the same in the same breath."

On Wednesday in Saratoga, they looked cloned.



Perfect Shirl cracked open a tough edition of the Lake George which attracted a dozen 3-year-old fillies that had combined to win 29 races. Sent off at 9-1, the Chuck Fipke homebred won her third consecutive race and first stakes with a powerful kick that wore down Exclusive Love late. No Explaining closed from 11th to finish third. It was a typical Saratoga turf stakes, the first 10 finishers were separated by 4 lengths. Favorite Strike It Rich, coming off three victories, faded to finish last. Lady Shirl finished the 1 1/6-mile distance in 1:41.28.

Attfield keeps things simple. He sent Lorimer on the road from Woodbine to Saratoga with two fillies for the Lake George. They arrived Monday, trained lightly Tuesday and again Wednesday morning. Attfield assigned Lady Shirl to

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Best Of —

■ Continued from page 26

John Velazquez and No Explaining to Jose Lezcano. The trainer relayed instructions through Lorimer. For Velazquez, they were open ended with only one clause – don't go to the lead.

Velazquez followed the guidelines like he worked for Garmin, putting Lady Shirl in a comfortable spot in sixth, before unleashing her rally to capture the Lake George by three-quarters of a length over Exclusive Love and No Explaining. It was an All-Canada trifecta. If you were following the maple leaf, you would have cashed a \$6,103 ticket. Of course, you had five Canadian shippers to choose from; Crescenda finished fifth, beaten 2 lengths while second choice Bay To Bay never threatened, finishing 10th of 12.

Velazquez, who rode Lady Shakespeare in her most recent victory in the Grade 2 New York Handicap, was impressed with little sister.

"She's very nice, very nice. Nice pickup ride, huh? She was going comfortable the whole way, she broke well, got in the middle of the pack, just left her alone," Velazquez said. "At the half-mile pole, I committed myself to where I wanted to be, at the quarter pole when I pulled her out, she was there, she was game, it was pretty easy, not much instructions, not much anything, she did it all on her own. The assistant said the only thing Roger doesn't want you to do is be on the lead, 'As long as you're not on the lead, you're OK.' That's pretty easy, right?"

Lorimer had done the difficult part.



Dave Harmon

Perfect Shirl, whose son Shirl's Speight eyes the 2020 Kentucky Derby, won at Saratoga in 2010.

She arrived with Attfield's duo Monday, taken them for a jog Tuesday, a lope Wednesday and took Lady Shirl to the gate for her necessary finishing touches.

"We liked the fillies, they've been training well, they ran well in their last starts up at Woodbine, we had to give them a shot," Lorimer said. "Roger said let them sit off the pace and make a run. Perfect Shirl went and schooled in the gate today, she needs to go see the gate and get acquainted with the gate crew. She was perfect. I was very happy with her."

Morning or afternoon, everybody was happy with Lady Shirl. Also a the half-sister to Grade 1

winner and stallion Shakespeare, she continued a prolific run for Attfield and Velazquez.

"Every time he puts me on a horse, it's one, two, three. Every time. On paper it looked like a really salty race, all those fillies in there, she was very good," Velazquez said. "I did my mental homework to see where I wanted to be and who was speed and who wasn't speed, hopefully you get in the right spot and hopefully you get a good trip. It just happened to be a perfect trip, no trouble, no anything like that, when I asked her to do something, she was right on it."



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The major difference, though, are lawn jockeys. I’m able to pass on this valuable information to readers of The Saratoga Special because I own a Fitbit. For those of you who don’t know what I’m talking about, a Fitbit is basically a wristwatch with dictatorial powers. Mine, for instance, orders me to walk 10,000 steps every day.

Wherever I am – New York, Saratoga; it doesn’t matter, the number’s the same – 10,000. So I walk a lot.

In New York you never see a lawn jockey. In Saratoga they’re everywhere. If Saratoga’s lawn jockeys were counted in the census, the state would no doubt gain a couple Electoral College seats in the next election.

The jockey statue business has been especially brisk this year according to Robin Schumacher of Saratoga Jockey Painter.

“I’ve had more orders this year than ever,” Schumacher said. “I don’t know, maybe it’s because people can’t see the jockeys in person, so they want one to look at, in their garden or on their porch.”

For the last eight years Robin has been the official jockey painter for Saratoga Race Course. Each year she paints the silks of the major Saratoga stakes winners on the 18 statues around the clubhouse entrance. A couple of days after the Travers, she could be seen putting Tiz The Law’s Sackatoga Stable colors on the Travers jockey statue.

“It’s kind of sad this year. Usually there are lots of people watching me, maybe the owners drop by, people take pictures, but this year . . .” she said, before brightening back. “Oh well, today’s good practice. I’ve already had five orders for Tiz The Law silks this year; you know, hometown hero and all.”

When, in a Zoom call last week, I mentioned to my daughter-in-law that I was working on this col-

umn she cringed. It’s true that lawn jockeys have a checkered history. Probably the best-known early lawn jockey was called “Jocko.”

Looked at with 2020 hindsight, Jocko was an outrageously racist caricature. Perhaps in an effort to rehabilitate the reputation of the cast iron Stepin Fetchit, a maudlin legend grew up around Jocko,

The story says Jocko represented a real 12-year-old boy who held George Washington’s horses on one side of the Delaware River while the General went off to Trenton to do other things. When the victorious George returned, he found the boy still holding the horses, but he had frozen to death during the night. None of the various attempts to verify the Jocko tale have turned up anything resembling evidence. Jack and the Beanstalk seems more plausible by comparison.

Even a hundred years ago it was realized that it was time for Jocko to go the way of the Washington Redskins. Newer model jockey statues started being made back then and over time the statues have come to no longer represent racism, but rather racing.

Recognizing their value as symbols of horse racing, the National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame features an army of close to 60 statues across the whole Union Avenue expanse of the museum. The display, certainly eye-catching and impressive, is also a fundraising vehicle for the Museum’s endowment fund.

The kernel of this idea came when Hall of Fame and communications director, Brien Bouyea saw the jockey statues that front the famous 21 Club on West 52nd Street in New York and saw the potential.

Riders Up

“The statues are so much a part of the color and tradition of the sport that it just seemed a natural,” said Bouyea. Museum president John Hendrickson and supporter Theresa Behrendt agreed and started fertilizing the idea within the community.

Horse owners contributed to the fund and their stables’ silks were then represented on statues. The statues are the work of Paula Salmiery, a local artist, who had earlier done a jockey statue for the Saratoga restaurant Mama Mia’s (great artichoke francese, by the way). Salmiery’s statue there was admired by Museum development director Cate Masterson and she got in touch.

The result has, in just a few years, become one of Saratoga’s most iconic and photographed sites. And when the museum re-opens later this year many more visitors will be seeing it.

One of the shows the visitors will see inside is the excellent “Women in Racing” exhibition, featuring well-known female trainers, owners, breeders, racing media personalities and jockeys. Yes, that’s right, there have been women jockeys for some time now, and yet have you seen any female jockey statues?

Robin Schumacher, is fixing that. She sometimes tends to shoot from the lip. She did just that in a television interview last year when she was asked about the lack of female representation in her lawn jockey work.

She didn’t flinch.

“I’ll have women jockey statues available next year,” she promised.

Of course then she had to produce. Over the next few months she modified one of her cast aluminum jockey models with epoxy. She then sent it down to her supplier in Mexico and had them create a new female jockey mold.

This year, the 100th anniversary of women’s right to vote, you can now order a female lawn jockey.

“Her braid was modeled after mine, but of course, she’s better looking than I’ll ever be. I have to admit I love her,” Schumacher said.



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BY JOE CLANCY

Looking In

Saratoga observations from afar, because that's all of I've got.

The trainers' race is fun to watch. With 11 race days to go, Chad Brown and Todd Pletcher are tied with 22 wins apiece. Early in the meet, Pletcher said it would take 40 to win. We should have taken the under.

Foxtail has won two of three starts at the meet. She opened with a \$25,000 claiming win for Danny Gargan July 30 and was claimed. Six days later, she won again – for Mertkan Kantarmaci. The daughter of Mizzen Mast was third Aug. 13.

Non-racing people are running across Saratoga television coverage on the weekends. I've been stopped several times by neighbors and friends with a, "Hey, I saw Saratoga on TV the other day. That's where you normally go, right?" Right. I put them on our email list. Maybe we're making fans.

The Klaravich Stable juggernaut rolls on, pandemic or not. Seth Klarman's stable has won 10 races at the meet – three (or two, depending on how you look at) more than Repole Stable. The latter has seven solo wins, plus one more as a co-owner with Eclipse Thoroughbred Partners. Mike Dubb, by himself and with several partnerships, also has seven wins. Three Diamonds Farm has six wins.

Watching the post parades leave the paddock, I realized I've never been on the "bridge" over the walking path to the 1863 Club.

If you're looking for successful ownership examples, Paul Pompa (four wins from six starts) would be hard to beat. Steeplechase outfit Bruton Street-US has won four of seven.

Back to the trainers' race for a minute, I love the parity. It should be competitive. There shouldn't be domination by one barn or the other. Last year, Brown won 41 races to take the title. Pletcher was



second with 21 and only Steve Asmussen joined them at 15 or more. The year before was an even more lopsided 46-19 and Brown and Pletcher were the only two to win 15. This year, Christophe Clement and Mike Maker have already passed 15 and Linda Rice (13), Rudy Rodriguez (11), Asmussen (10) and Jim Bond (10) are within reach.

Whoever holds the boom mic for the post-race interviews is going to have massive forearms by the end of all this.

John Imbriale is a good announcer. Doesn't get ahead of himself, doesn't try to put on a show, just gets it done. It's a shame there aren't thousands there to hear him live every day.

The Andy Serling-Anthony Stabile banter during Talking Horses would make a good plot for a sitcom. I have no idea how they're doing with their picks. I just watch, listen and laugh.

Back to the trainers' race one more time, Bill Mott has eight wins but leads all trainers with 21 seconds. Twenty-one. Just seems like the percentages are bound to start going in his favor soon. He's also fourth in terms of purse earnings, but ninth by wins.

The Diana is, year after year, a good race. Early in the meet, late in the meet, 2000, 2010, 2020, whenever.

The atmosphere – fans, activity, interest, music, food and so on – counts for something at Saratoga, and you can tell it's not there on television. Can't wait to see it return.

Maggie Wolfendale's post-race reaction to Tiz The Law's Travers win on the television show was so original, so genuine, so 2020. She was awed for all of us who couldn't be there in a year like no other.

This year's speakers' list – virtual or not – at The Jockey Club Round Table on Matters Pertaining to Racing was one of the best ever.

I still can't quite get used to saying the Kentucky Derby is in September, and the Preakness is in October.

In doing short interviews about buying yearlings all summer, I've learned that most people think American racing puts too much stock in veterinary opinions, hot-shot new stallions and fashionable-at-the-moment female pedigrees. Going with your gut seems like the best advice.

Lately I've had several flat-racing people tell me the steeplechase industry – which relies on attendance and sponsorship for most of its purse revenue – needs to rethink its business model. This from a section of the Thoroughbred industry that gets a significant portion of its purses from casino subsidies. Last time I looked, neither is a perfect business model – pandemic or no pandemic. And both need to be addressed.

Tiz The Law looks like he enjoys the racing, the training, the walking to and from the track, all of it. He's light, bouncy, happy. Maybe it's the big white face or something, but there's an air of, "I'm cool. How's your day going?" to him.



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The **SARATOGA** *Special* **20th** SEASON

Publishing Calendar for 2020 season

An online newspaper for the summer racing season at Saratoga Race Course

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
J U L Y					Opening Day 16 ISSUE 1 Schuylerville, Peter Pan	17 Shine Again, De La Rose	18 ISSUE 2 CCA Oaks, Hall of Fame
	19 Lake Placid	20 No Racing	21 No Racing	22 ISSUE 3 Lubash (NYB)	23 Statue of Liberty (NYSS) A.P. Smithwick Steeplechase	24 Quick Call	25 ISSUE 4 A.G. Vanderbilt, Ballston Spa
	26 Bernard Baruch	27 No Racing	28 No Racing	29 ISSUE 5 Dayatthespa (NYB)	30 John Morrissey (NYB)	31 Coronation Cup	1 ISSUE 6 Whitney, Personal Ensign, Allen Jerkens, Bowling Green, Caress
	2 Birdstone	3 No Racing	4 No Racing	5 Summer Colony	6 ISSUE 7 Cab Calloway (NYSS)	7 Saratoga Special	8 ISSUE 8 Travers, Ballerina, Test, Troy, Ways
	9 Alydar	10 No Racing	11 No Racing	12 ISSUE 9 Adirondack	13 Union Avenue (NYB)	14 Perfect Sting	15 ISSUE 10 Saratoga Derby, Alabama
	16 Saratoga Oaks	17 No Racing	18 No Racing	19 ISSUE 11 Bolton Landing	20 Tale Of The Cat N.Y. Turf Writers Cup Steeplechase	21 Skidmore	22 ISSUE 12 Fountainhead
	23 Diana	24 No Racing	25 No Racing	26 ISSUE 13 Mahony	27 Smart And Fancy Times Square (NYSS)	28 Lake George	29 ISSUE 14 Sword Dancer, Forego, Amsterdam, Saranac
	30 Shuvee	31 No Racing	1 No Racing	2 ISSUE 15 With Anticipation	3 P.G. Johnson Park Avenue (NYSS)	4 NY-bred Showcase Albany, Fleet Indian, Funny Cide, Seeking the Ante, West Pt, Yaddo	5 ISSUE 16 Woodward, Prioress, Glens Falls, Jim Dandy Ky. Derby Day
A U G U S T	6 Spinaway, Honorable Miss, Lucky Coin	7 Closing Day Hopeful, Lure	8 No Racing	9	10	11	12 ISSUE 17 Season Wrap-Up
S E P T							

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Calendar for planning purposes only and subject to change.

Family Portrait

There's the photo of my family near the winner's circle on the green slatted grandstand seats on a sunny August afternoon. My brother, Joey, clenched a \$2 win ticket in his hands. My oldest sister, Michele, hovered next to me, making sure I didn't fall off the seat while I looked through Dad's binoculars, backward, of course.

There's another photo from the quarter pole, my brother turned toward the camera in plaid pants, Michele gazed over the rail, my sister Sheila, in a hand-sewn sundress, and I looked under the rail. In the background of the square Kodak print, Secretariat cantered to the start for the Whitney Handicap.

A few minutes later, Secretariat lost. A few months later, we lost Michele.

It's my first memory of Saratoga. A haunting memory of a magical place. If it's actually a memory at all, perhaps it's just a moment conjured from photos stashed in a drawer of a rarely opened bureau in the living room of my parents' house.

That was 1973.

If I had missed a Saratoga before that, no one remembers. If I missed one afterward, no one remembers. Well, Mom does but we're writing a column here...

It's the seventh week of the eight-week meet and I have gradually accepted that it will be the first Saratoga I have missed in my 50 years. I am not alone. After writing "Missing It" last week, readers shared memories of their first trip to Saratoga, their streaks of summers at Saratoga.

Since 1989, I have packed my car with sport coats and ties, tack bag for the first 12 years, laptop ever since and escaped to Saratoga for the whole meet.

First, as an exercise rider for Mickey Preger in the morning and a fledging jump jockey two afternoons a week. That first year, I asked a knockout Greek girl from Alabama for her phone number, tucked it in my pocket like a lottery ticket, called

her from a rowhouse at the University of Delaware a few weeks later and married her 17 years later.

It took me until 1994 to ride a winner and another four years to win a stakes, back when the New York Turf Writers Cup was the featured ninth race on a 10-race card. Fans clapped from three levels of the grand old girl. I felt like I had arrived.

Two years later I rode my last race at Saratoga. Roger Horgan, with a broken collarbone in the hospital bed next to me, pretended he didn't see my tears when the doctor read the X-ray.

The following summer, Joey and I began the odyssey of The Saratoga Special. Somehow, inexplicably, it has become as challenging and rewarding as riding races. I never thought that could happen. This was meant to be a celebration of our 20th season. But, alas, it's 2020 and nothing is as planned, as hoped.

Tom Law lives in the trenches this summer. A Saratoga local, Tom serves as the only full-time member of The Special team in Saratoga this summer.

Upbeat and positive, he has slogged his way through 29 days of a soulless race meet. I can hear the fatigue in his voice.

"Every minute, hour and day in Saratoga this year I'm reminded that it's nothing like the place where I grew up and the place where my interest in racing was born. Mornings aren't all that different than most years, horses go to and from the track, trainers go about their business and golf carts zip around the stable area."

"Then come the reminders – significantly fewer horses in the barns and training every morning, and the ones that are there seemingly carry a handful of saddle towels from the biggest barns. Everyone is masked up and there are barely any other people out and about, owners, families, gamblers, tourists and wannabes – entities that individually can be tiresome but collectively help give the place great

energy every day. Afternoons don't feel like Saratoga afternoons at all, aside from horses in the paddock and the racing. Every day I drive to the track and walk through the gates feeling like maybe it will be different, maybe something will perk up and I'm reminded that it just won't happen in 2020."

"Concession stands are empty, betting windows nonexistent, and disgruntled and joyous horseplayers nowhere to be seen. Television monitors are on but nobody's watching, at least not from where they want to be. Everything else that plays a role in putting on the show – from apron benches to picnic tables down to the wine and champagne glasses that are still sitting on the bar in the second floor of the clubhouse from Closing Day 2019 – sit in their place without purpose. Racing in Saratoga in 2020 feels a lot like that, without purpose, until performances like Swiss Skydiver, Gamine, Improbable, Starship Jubilee, Tiz The Law..."

"The racing part of it all, I find mostly boring or dull this year, and I've never wanted something to be over so soon. At the same time, I enjoy the process of the paper more than ever, especially with all the layers and challenges we have in doing it from three locations with barely any staff and sometimes barely any interesting angles."

Last summer, after the pressure of another deadline had come and gone, Joey, Tom and I opened three Vermont-brewed session IPA beers and raised them to the ceiling of our Fasig-Tipton office on East Avenue.

"You know, we've got to be careful getting so worked up about this, so stressed out, that we don't enjoy it. We've got to work hard, we've got to put everything into it, but we have to enjoy it. When it's all said and done, we'll look back and laugh about that newspaper we wrote for all those crazy summers in Saratoga."

Oh, for one more crazy summer in Saratoga.

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The **Big** Picture

with Tod Marks

Orange is the New Gray. In 2011, Winter Memories won the Lake George (Friday's feature) as part of a standout 3-year-old turf campaign for trainer Jimmy Toner. She put on a show all summer, in the morning and the afternoon. Her daughter Seasons won her debut Aug. 9.

