

Year 18 • No. 26

Thursday, August 30, 2018

The *Saratoga*

# Special

Saratoga's Daily Racing Newspaper since 2001



## Grand Slam

Opry roars home in With Anticipation

ENTRIES & HANDICAPPING  
CASSE LIVE IN P.G. JOHNSON  
WOODBINE HORSE WINS MONDAY





# NEW G1 WINNER

**MARLEY'S FREEDOM** wins the  
**G1 Ballerina S. at Saratoga**

2018

10

STAKES WINNERS

13.58%

STAKES HORSES

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YEARLING AVERAGE

\*stats as of 8/26

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# here&there...at Saratoga

## BY THE NUMBERS

**1:** Flat tire on the ambulance by the three-quarter pole Wednesday morning.

**12:** Canada geese flying over the main-track infield at 9:06 Wednesday morning.

**18:** Canada geese flying over the main-track infield at 9:13 Wednesday morning.

## LICENSE PLATES OF THE DAY

**SARATGA**, New Hampshire.

**CURLIN**, Massachusetts.

**2BNTOGA**, New York.

**2THEG8**, New York.

## T-SHIRT SLOGANS OF THE DAY

Del Mar Strong.

If you met my family, you'd understand.

## MUSICAL INTERLUDE OF THE DAY

NYRA sound guy John Getzler blazed the National Anthem on guitar before Wednesday's card. Sounded great.

## NAMES OF THE DAY

**Hieroglyphics, sixth race.** The 4-year-old gelding is by Pionerof The Nile.

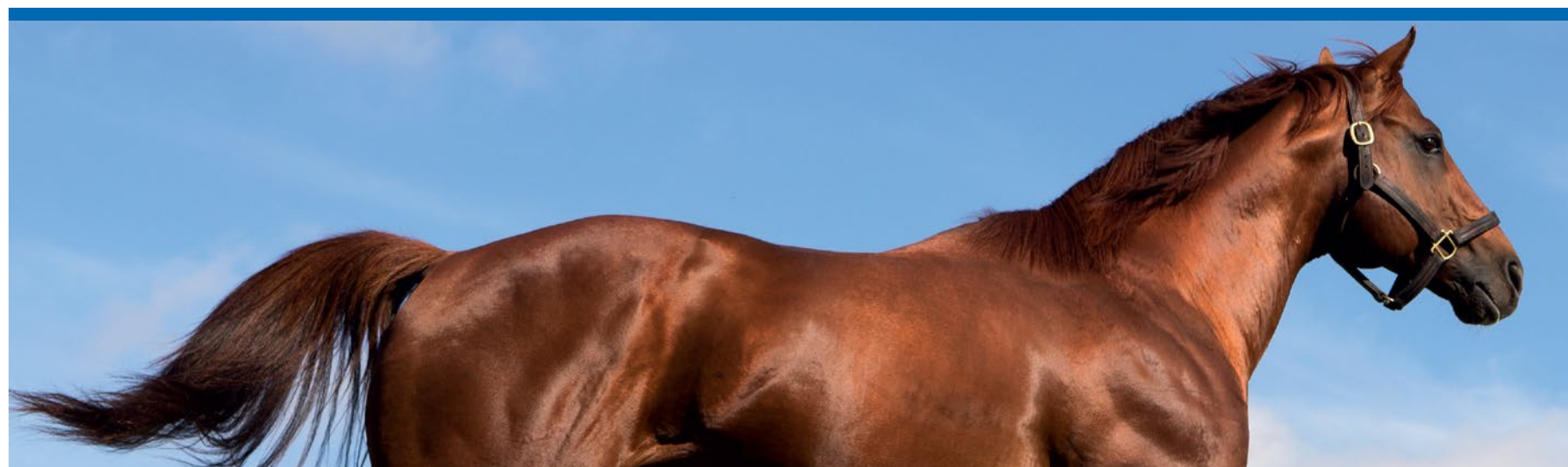
**Bustin Hoffman, seventh race.** Maybe we're punchy, but we laughed at this one – a 2-year-old Bustin Stones colt out of Wallingford.



**Soaring Tale.** Trainer Bill Mott makes a point – a big point – for an audience at the Oklahoma Training Track. Editor's Note: This was taken Aug. 23, and had nothing to do with the stretch run of the Personal Ensign. Connie Bush

**Risp, seventh race.** One for baseball fans. Mary Sullivan and Tom Bush are hoping the 2-year-old colt is a runner in scoring position in his career debut.

**Dogtag, ninth race.** LNJ Foxwoods' 2-year-old homebred filly is by War Front out of Diamond Necklace. In honor of John McCain, she'll probably win.



**Street cred** The Kentucky Oaks, Arkansas Derby and King's Bishop. Only Tapit, Curlin and Malibu Moon top **Street Boss's** three three-year-old dirt G1 winners in the past five years. **More than Medaglia d'Oro, Scat Daddy, Quality Road, Pioneerof the Nile and Uncle Mo.**



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## here&there...at Saratoga

### WORTH REPEATING

"Say hi to all."

**Nancy the Paper Lady**

"I can't live without your paper."

**Hatsational's Roger Locks**

"Here's the main reason for global warming right there, no more trees."

**Christophe Clement pointing to The Special's golf carts packed with Travers Day editions**

"One of the best things about Saratoga."

**Trainer Jeremiah Englehart holding a copy of the Travers Day edition**

"If the real Gal Gadot was here I might be inclined to go over and look at her."

**Horseman looking at Wonder Gadot on the cover of The Special Saturday morning (we won't name names on this one)**

"If I wore a red jacket like that, somebody would throw me their keys and tell me not to scratch it."

**Tony Jaccino on his ability (or lack thereof) to pull off the Saratoga Walk Of Fame jacket**

"The leaves change just as the last Brook Ledge vans leave."

**Dr. Luis Castro, on life in Saratoga in September and October**

"He didn't want normal."

**Trainer Bill Mott while discussing Allen Jerkens' eclectic group of employees**

"Just keep doing it my way and don't listen to what people tell you. That was him."

**Trainer Dale Romans, on advice he got from Allen Jerkens**



Portfolio Management

Lee Thomas ©

*Mating that produced Kentucky Derby G1 and Travers G1 winner,*

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**AUDIBLE (G1, \$1,082,920)**

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**HOLIDAY DISGUISE (G3, \$481,650)**

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## QUOTE OF THE DAY

"They're all watching from Woodbine because as soon as we won, my phone was like, ding, ding, ding, ding."  
**Chiefswood Stable's Stacey Krembil after Woodbine shipper Rose's Vision won Monday's Better Talk Now Stakes**



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## Maryland, My Maryland Country Life Farm



Tod Marks

### MY NAME IS MONTE CRISTA.

I just won the \$100,000 Riskaverse Stakes for Country Life Farm and their nine happy partners – Colleen Akehurst, Tony Dale, Dave Heim, Kevin McGill, Dave Johnson, Chip Reed, Phyllis Soboczenski, Pat Thompson and Debi Tucker. Everybody threw in \$3,000 and they each own 10%. Country Life has been bringing new faces to racing and breeding for 85 years. I'm proud to carry the orange and blue silks to a Saratoga stakes win.



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## here&there...at Saratoga

### WORTH REPEATING

"We don't put them on the plane unless they're good to go."

**Jimmy Barnes, assistant to Hall of Famer Bob Baffert, after winning Saturday's Grade 1 Personal Ensign with Abel Tasman and Grade 1 Ballerina with Marley's Freedom**

"When he was coming down the stretch, I got all my grandkids, everybody's jumping up and down and screaming and yelling. It was the best, literally the best."

**Owner Bob Baron on watching Promises Fulfilled win the Grade 1 H. Allen Jerkens Stakes Saturday, his first Grade 1 at The Spa**

"My colleagues are giving me a hard time for thinking it's cool there are three generations of white bridles in here."

**NYRA regulatory veterinarian Dr. Jennifer Durenberger in the paddock before Saturday's Travers. The white bridles belonged to D. Wayne Lukas (Bravazo), Todd Pletcher (Vino Rosso) and Jonathan Thomas (Catholic Boy, who didn't run in one but still won)**

"Thanks for all the laughs and great times, I wouldn't want to spend 40 days locked in an old feed store with anyone else."

**The Special's Shayna Tiller in a thank you card to Sean, Joe and Tom**

"Maybe this guy jump-started the barn; that's what we need."

**Trainer Rick Schosberg, who shares a barn with Travers-winning trainer Jonathan Thomas**

"How's the sleep deprivation?"

**Trainer John Kimmel to one of The Special's fill-in paperboys Sunday morning**

"I've gotten the Grade 3, the Grade 2 and the Grade 1. I should probably hang it up now."

**Trainer Chuck Lawrence, after winning Saturday's Sword Dancer with Glorious Empire**

"It's better than the alternative...not being in the Travers."

**Jonathan Thomas while dealing with his nerves before the Travers**

"It was surprising, it had never happened before and it hasn't happened again. I don't know why. It could have been an absolute blessing in disguise."

**Thomas, about Catholic Boy bleeding in the Florida Derby**

"Not a bother on him."

**Assistant trainer T. J. Comerford, walking Travers runner Mendelssohn Sunday morning**

"Don't get me wrong, I was home watching the draw and I said, 'Wow, the 11, I don't want the 11.' But you can't control it, you have to study and you have to go with the flow."

**Jockey Javier Castellano about Catholic Boy's outside post position in the Travers**

"He was one of the few people in the world who truly wanted everybody to do good. He never hated on anybody. He didn't have that emotion."

**Trainer Dale Romans, about Allen Jerkens**



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# The Top 10

The Special keeps up with a list of the meet's best – performances, achievements, feats of wonder. We'll update it daily, or try to anyway. **Bold means they're new.**

- 1 Imperial Hint. Vanderbilt July 28. Special, small sprinter won Grade 1 with speed, style, simplicity. And we wrote about him 18 months ago.
- 2 Diversify. Whitney Aug. 4. Best older horse on grounds breaks on top and rips it up – winning in hand and stretching streak to three.
- 3 Abel Tasman-Elate II. Personal Ensign Aug. 25. The 2018 tilt was as good as 2017 slugfest. Cant wait for Round Three.
- 4 Catholic Boy. Travers Aug. 25. He's a Grade 1 winner on turf and dirt. As a fan said on the way out, who's 3YO champ if he wins 2 or 3 more?
- 5 Voodoo Song. Fourstardave Aug. 11. Turf star finally earned a Special cover with a Grade 1 triumph and a 5-for-5 mark at the track.
- 6 Glorious Empire. Ex-claimer captures 2 graded turf stakes for Matt Schera & trainer Chuck Lawrence. Breeders' Cup Turf here he comes.
- 7 Promises Fulfilled. 3YO sprinter won Amsterdam and Jerkens sprint stakes to establish himself as the division leader for Dale Romans.
- 8 Monomoy Girl. C.C.A. Oaks July 22. Queen of the meet back in Kentucky. Her lady in waiting Eskimo Kisses steamrolled Alabama field.
- 9 Whitmore. Forego Aug. 25. The 5YO sprint star gets 11th win of career in Travers Day G1 for trainer Ron Moquett.
- 10 Weekend Hideaway. John Morrissey July 26. Who you callin' old? He won the N.Y.-bred stakes for the second time – four years after the first one.

**On the bubble:** Cape Angel, Farrell, Mucho, CatherintheGreat, Arch Kingsley winning two over jumps, the 145 Beyer put up by the rain, Barclay Tagg's double, Jeremiah Englehart, Dave Donk and Phil Serpe climbing the leaderboard, New York-breds in open stakes, Sandy's Slew (Happy Retirement), Endorsed and Code Of Honor, Rushing Fall, Ricky Hendriks and Ross Geraghty sweeping the jumps Aug. 22-23, Sistercharlie, John Hertler, Kharafa, Tricky Escape, Mike Smith and Bob Baffert winning two on Travers Day.

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## The Chief... Day 26

*"They would always be kidding with themselves, one time they were all laughing, I said 'What the hell's everybody laughing at?' They said, 'You put Lassies out there with Jimmy Harris to be the night watchmen, they're not speaking to each other. I had sent Beau Purple out to Chicago. I said, 'Why didn't they say something before?' I got out there, and they were talking to each other. We had some guys, Cold Cut. Paycheck. Hard Times, Shorty Diggs, Boon. One thing about them guys, when they'd see somebody not doing something, they would jump in and do it. Every one of those horses won. We had some characters, it was so much fun, everything was a laugh. Then everything changed. The world changes. People say this game ain't what it used to be. What is? You think the rest of the world is the same as it were. In fact, this game probably hasn't changed as much as a lot of things."*

– Trainer Allen Jerkens, 1929-2015



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Tod Marks



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## with Phil Serpe

Warm weather? Stress? Not a problem for Phil Serpe. He lets those things roll off when he's in Saratoga, more specifically when he's in the courtyard in front of his barn on the middle of the Saratoga backstretch.

The area is known as Blue Heaven and there's a sign hung high on the telephone pole to prove it.

Serpe and his longtime partner, assistant and exercise rider Lisa Bartkowski relish the time there and anyone else fortunate to do the same won't struggle with the name.

"Look, it's the toughest place in the world to win a race, it just is, but it's also the greatest place in the world to be and to train a horse," Serpe said Monday morning, finished with his training on the main track and waiting for turf works at the Oklahoma. "I love this, the more pressure the better for me. I love our barn. This whole thing is just the best for me. For all of us."

The barn houses the likes of stakes competitors Weekend Hideaway, Lady Joan and Goodbye Brockley, along with a collection of 2-year-olds, allowance and claiming horses. Serpe, a resident of Barn 22 for 22 years by his best guess, is in the midst of another strong meet at Saratoga with four wins, six seconds and six thirds from 35 starts. He's hoping for a few more before heading back downstate.

Serpe went through most of the Saratoga string before turf training Monday with The Special's Tom Law.

**Land Mine:** Chester and Mary Broman's homebred 4-year-old Mineshaft filly finished second in the Saratoga Dew Aug. 17, coming up a half-length short after a second in allowance company July 26. She's entered for the main track only in Saturday's Glens Falls. "She started with us winning here the day before the meet ended last year, she won an off-the-turf race. She won two out of her three next starts after that and of course me being the genius that I am had to run her on the turf one time. It's the Barclay Tagg in me. She was narrowly beaten in the Saratoga Dew here, she ran great and it was unfortunate because we tried to get a race into her down at Belmont and it just didn't fill. That would have helped. She broke in a tangle and went to her knees, that didn't help either."



Trainer Phil Serpe and assistant Lisa Bartkowski (right) have won four at the meet.

**Life Time Citizen:** WellSpring Stables' 3-year-old Proud Citizen filly breezed twice on the Oklahoma grass and is close to returning for her first start since winning an optional claimer at Gulfstream Park Dec. 20. "She's getting ready to start, she's a two-other-than turf sprinter. We're excited about her. Possibly here the last week or opening week at Belmont."

**Out Of Orbit:** The 3-year-old filly finished second in Wednesday's seventh race, after a third and a second in her two other starts at the meet. "She is one of Mr. Broman's homebreds by Malibu Moon. At first we thought she was going to be a real nice filly then we were a little disappointed in some of her starts but she's progressively come back around. We're hoping the best for her."

**Fixed Point:** WellSpring Stable's 3-year-old Midshipman colt crashed the party in the finale Aug. 23, winning at nearly 13-1. He'd been off since being claimed for \$40,000 at Gulfstream Park March 1. "The big horse. We claimed him, had to do a little overhaul work on him and he came through last week. It's funny, in the last year or two, seemed like we lit up the board with one. He was the one this year. We're very excited because he ran well and he ran like a horse that is going to improve and go places."

**Weekend Hideaway:** Purchased for \$40,000 at the Flying Zee dispersal at Fasig-Tipton in 2011, the multiple stakes winner pressed the pace and finished third in tough allowance Monday for Red and Black Stable. Earner of more than \$1.1 million won the John Morrissey July 26 for his ninth stakes victory (13th overall) in 49 starts. "The big man. You know he loves Saratoga. Whatever he does is all right with me as long as he comes back good. Winning the Morrissey means a lot to us. There's a lot of nice horses around here, lots. We just

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watched future champions run Saturday, whatever, but you get these horses now and then like Weekend Hideaway, I've had a few periodically through the years. They just do things for people and he's that kind of horse."

**Goodbye Brockley:** Hilly Fields Stable's homebred 3-year-old Cosmonaut filly won the Statue of Liberty division of the New York Stallion Series Aug. 9. She returned to the worktab Aug. 20 and breezed 5 furlongs on the grass Monday in 1:05.69. "She eked it out on a turf course I think she was struggling with after all the rain. She's going to run here Sunday, probably just an allowance race."

**Lady Joan:** Goodbye Brockley's older half-sister made three starts at the meet, including a second in the Yaddo Stakes Aug. 24. "What can you say about her? She just tries and tries and tries. I was worried about her coming from her 3 and 4-year-old year, whether she would improve or not. It was questionable. Her Beyer numbers weren't quite where they needed to be and now they just keep getting better and better. She has three starts at this meet, a win, a second and a third. We're happy with her."

**Kandinsky:** Sterling Racing went to \$300,000 to buy son of Scat Daddy at the 2016 Fasig-Tipton Saratoga sale of selected yearlings. He's unraced with six works at Saratoga, including a half on the Oklahoma grass in :49.34 Monday. "Unfortunately it doesn't look like he'll get to start here, he got delayed because of the rain. He's a nice big colt, just about ready to run but we're running out of time. We started training for Sterling Racing last fall. They had some horses we needed to move along, we bought three 2-year-olds, plus one they bred. We're excited about the future for them."

**Chasindamoney:** Duffryn Run Farm's 3-year-old Freud colt, a \$72,000 buy at the 2016 Fasig-Tipton Saratoga New York-bred sale, started his career with Linda Rice before moving to Serpe's barn this year. He finished third in a state-bred maiden June 7. He's entered in Thursday's 10th race going 6 1/2 furlongs on the dirt. Serpe would prefer turf. "Unfortunately he would be 6-5 in a maiden New York-bred special weight going 5 1/2 on the turf but they haven't been able to fill the race the whole meet. Book 1 the race didn't go, Book 2 the race didn't go, Book 3 the race didn't go. A maiden New York-bred 5 1/2 on the turf, you'd think there would be 20 in there. I don't know what's going on."

**State Of War:** Unraced 2-year-old cost Sterling Racing \$190,000 at Fasig-Tipton Midlantic May sale. He's breezed three times at Saratoga, including a half on the main track in









Tod Marks

Chocolate Kisses seeks her second win of the meet in today's P.G. Johnson.

# Sweet Chance

## Casse looks to shed losing skid with 2YO filly Chocolate Kisses

BY TOM LAW

P.G. JOHNSON STAKES PREVIEW

Mark Casse won't let the losses – even Wonder Gadot's last-place finish in the Travers – ruin his mood in the waning days of the Saratoga meet.

"I'm a lot stronger," Casse told a small group of reporters while he watched training from the backstretch of the main track. "They say what doesn't kill you makes you stronger. So I'm a hell of a lot stronger than I was five days ago."

Casse laughed as he spoke those words, which he repeated from a similar conversation about an hour before. He's not about to call it quits or pack up the stable just yet and will look to add another win with Chocolate Kisses in today's \$100,000 P.G. Johnson Stakes.

Chocolate Kisses gave Casse his second win of the meet, taking a 1 1/16-mile turf maiden two days after Catherinethegreat provided the barn's first victory in the Grade 3 Schuylerville Opening Day. Even though 42 losses followed the 2-year-old Candy Ride filly's victory, Casse prefers to look at the big picture.

"She's the last horse I won with," Casse said. "We won two the first three days and have been in a drought since. But horses ran well in some big races, too. We were second in the Sanford (Strike Silver), second in the Jim Dandy (Flameaway) and third in the

**Continued On Page 12**

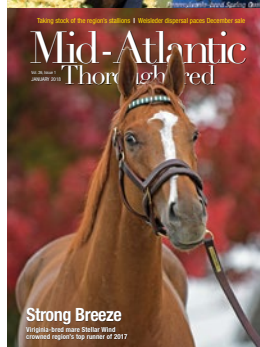
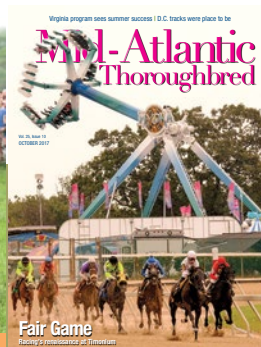
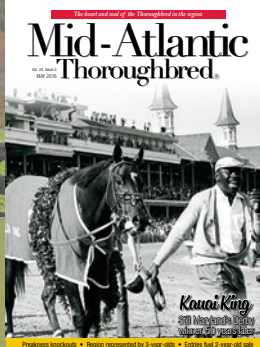
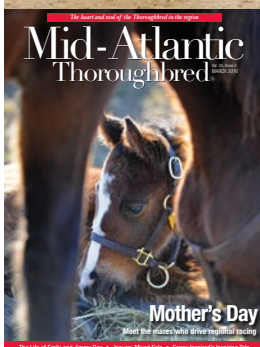
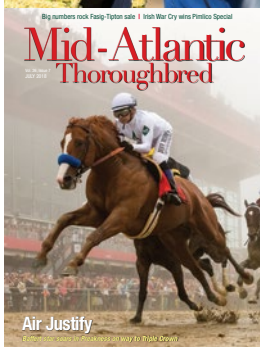
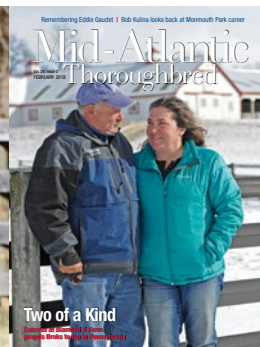
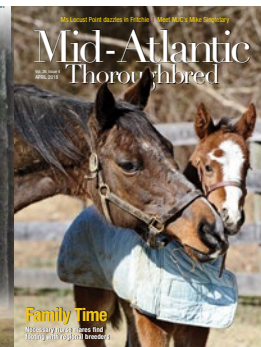
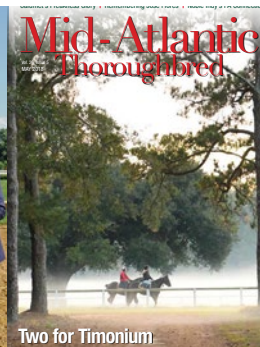
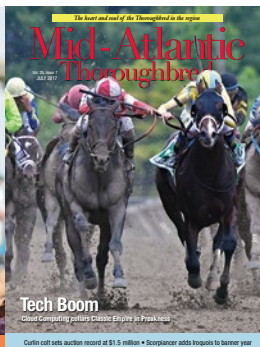
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## Looking for another good read?

*Our September issue is now available on line or at the Saratoga Special office*

More entertaining stories from those familiar *Saratoga Special* faces, Joe and Sean Clancy, and Tom Law. This issue boasts a big feature on Good Magic's Haskell victory and another on Elate's Delaware Handicap. Then find out how the Center for Maryland Agriculture and Farm Park is repurposing Thoroughbreds to help heal humans suffering from PTSD.



Plus meet visionary physician Brian Rizen who tends to fallen jockeys and any other racetrack worker seeking medical care. And you know no one will tell their stories like *Mid-Atlantic Thoroughbred*. The issue is available online at [MidAtlanticTB.com](http://MidAtlanticTB.com). Just join the Club and get the digital edition free! And enjoy the good read!

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# P.G. Johnson —

■ Continued from page 10

Hall of Fame (Ride A Comet)."

Casse's record is 2-for-54 going into today's card but sports 11 seconds and nine thirds, putting his in-the-money strike rate at 41 percent.

"You don't see us run in any of the claiming races," Casse said. "We might have one or two, maybe a starter, but we come and play, we run in the big races. And my percentage couldn't have been too good to start off with, we ran three in the Schuyler-ville. So you kill yourself there."

Chocolate Kisses is the 7-2 second choice on the morning line for the 1 1/16-mile P. G. Johnson, run in memory of the Hall of Fame trainer who won at least one race at Saratoga from 1962 to 2003 and sent out Volponi to a monster upset in the 2002 Breeders' Cup Classic.

Owned by Debby Oxley and a \$410,000 purchase at last year's Fasig-Tipton Saratoga sale of selected yearlings, Chocolate Kisses also owns the distinction of being the only member of the field with a victory at Saratoga. Three of the 11 fillies entered for the turf — Dogtag, Global Exchange and Varenka — are maidens while the others bring vic-

tories at Ellis Park, Belmont Park, Delaware Park, Presque Isle Downs and Listowel in Ireland.

The Listowel winner is Mintd, a daughter of Olympic Glory purchased privately by Madaket Stables and Bradley Thoroughbreds from owner/trainer Willie McCreery after her runner-up finish in the Coolmore Pride of Dubai Tipperary Stakes at Tipperary racecourse July 5. She's the 5-2 favorite on the morning line for the meet's leading trainer and jockey, Chad Brown and Irad Ortiz Jr., respectively.

"I guess the unknown will be Chad's filly from Europe," Casse said. "We'll have to see how well she runs."

Chocolate Kisses ran well in her maiden victory, stalking the early pace of stablemate Toy Moon before taking the lead at the end of the far turn. She cleared Toy Moon and held off a late run from Aunt Ashley to win by a length in 1:44.27. The victory came a month after Chocolate Kisses finished second in an off-the-turf maiden race going 5 1/2 furlongs on a sloppy track at Churchill Downs.

"She's really done well since her race up here," Casse said. "She's grown up. She went from being a little girl to becoming a woman. It's a tough post, but I think there will be a scratch or two."

If the race stays on the grass — which is likely with only a chance of morning thunderstorms today — Chocolate Kisses will move in at least two spots from her No. 10 draw. Adirondack Stakes third Guacamole drew post 3 but is entered main track only. Global Exchange will also scratch after

suffering a hind ankle injury that required surgery Tuesday at Rood and Riddle Saratoga.

"Just a freak thing," said Jimmy Toner, who trains Global Exchange for Mike Ryan. "This place will get you. It will humble anybody, that's for sure. Usually you come up here early, try to win, take a breather and feel like you're in good shape. If you don't win you just try and get out of here in one piece. That's the way it usually is here."

The field could decrease further if Miss Technicity, a winner in her debut going 6 furlongs on the turf at Belmont July 6, ships to Kentucky Downs for Saturday's \$400,000 Exacta Systems Juvenile Fillies Stakes.

Dogtag, a daughter of War Front owned by LNJ Foxwoods, finished third via disqualification in a 7-furlong off-the-turf maiden race here Aug. 5 for Chad Brown. Road Tiger broke her maiden in her second start, and first on the grass, at Ellis July 7 for trainer Ken McPeck. O'Malley ships in from Michael Stidham's base at Fair Hill off a victory in a 7 1/2-furlong turf maiden at Delaware Aug. 8.

The other two entered for the grass are Chasing The Kitty, a daughter of Kitten's Joy who walloped maidens by 10 1/2 lengths going a mile on Presque Isle Downs' synthetic track for trainer Adam Rice July 25; and Varenka, third in a 5 1/2-furlong turf maiden at Laurel July 20 for Graham Motion.

Cassies Dreamer, claimed by trainer Barclay Tagg for \$50,000 out of a victory going 5 1/2 furlongs Aug. 3, is also entered for the main track only and is entered in Saturday's Spinaway Stakes.

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<b>Bert Allen Stakes</b>	VA bred or sired, Three years and up, One mile and one eighth miles on turf	<b>\$75,000</b>
<b>Brookemeade Stakes</b>	VA bred or sired, Fillies and mares, Three years and up, One and one eighth miles on turf	<b>\$75,000</b>
<b>Punch Line Stakes</b> <i>(non-black type)</i>	VA bred or sired, Three years and up, 5.5 furlongs on turf	<b>\$75,000</b>
<b>Oakley Stakes</b>	VA bred or sired, Fillies and mares, Three years and up, 5.5 furlongs on turf	<b>\$75,000</b>
<b>Jamestown Stakes</b>	VA bred, sired or certified, Two year olds, 5.5 furlongs on turf <i>(Certified horses draw in if there are less than six VA bred or sired entered)</i>	<b>\$75,000</b>

Nominations close September 13th  
Contact the Racing Office at Laurel for more information (800.638.1859)



Virginia Thoroughbred Association  
250 West Main Street, Suite 100, Charlottesville, VA 22902  
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Thursday, August 30.

**1ST (1:00PM). \$50,000, CLM \$25,000, 3 YO'S & UP, F & M , 6 1/2F**

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Pic 5, Daily Double				
1	2	Cats Halo	D. Davis	G. Sciacca 6-1
1a	3	Scripted	L. Reyes	G. Sciacca 6-1
2	1	Timely Tradition	J. Ortiz	R. D'Alessandro 3-1
3	4	Satin Sheets	D. Cohen	G. Gullo 2-1
4	5	Gypsy Jo	M. Franco	R. Violette, Jr. 8-1
5	6	Unrepented	M. Luzzi	C. Englehart 5-1
6	7	My Won Love	I. Ortiz, Jr.	R. Rodriguez 5-2

**2ND (1:33PM). \$85,000, MSW, 3 YO'S & UP, 1M (INNER TURF)**

Exacta, Quinella, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Pic 4, Daily Double				
1	5	Frontier Market	I. Ortiz, Jr.	C. Brown 6-5
1a	8	Strategic Outlook	J. Rosario	C. Brown 6-5
2	1	Bail Out	J. Castellano	C. McGaughey III 12-1
3	MTO	Apollo's Leap	Rider TBA	P. Bauer 8-1
4	3	Leinster	D. Cohen	D. Lukas 15-1
5	4	Mead Hall	K. Carmouche	G. Thompson 20-1
6	6	Chantry Flats	M. Franco	M. Nevin 10-1
7	MTO	Raising the Flag	R. Santana, Jr.	S. Asmussen 5-2
8	9	Carom	J. Ortiz	R. Ribardo 8-1
9	10	Azzedine (FR)	J. Lezcano	N. Chatterpaul 20-1
10	11	End of Spirits	L. Saez	B. Lynch 6-1
11	12	Argonne	D. Davis	H. Bond 3-1
12	MTO	Illudere	I. Ortiz, Jr.	J. Jerkens 7-5
13	MTO	Rucksack	TBA	N. Zito 12-1

**3RD (2:06PM). \$75,000, CLM \$62,500, 3 YO, F , 1 1/16M (TURF)**

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Daily Double				
1	1	Naples Legacy	J. Ortiz	M. Maker 10-1
2	2	Theodosia	D. Davis	G. DiPrima 10-1
3	3	Fast Track Kathern	M. Franco	M. Nevin 9-5
4	4	Bramble Queen	J. Lezcano	M. Dini 4-1
5	5	Radiant Beauty	I. Ortiz, Jr.	R. Rodriguez 9-2
6	6	Matty's Magnum	J. Velazquez	D. Donk 3-1
7	7	Romantic Babe	E. Cancel	D. Donk 8-1

**4TH (2:40PM). \$67,000, CLM \$50,000, 3 YO, 6 1/2F**

Exacta, Quinella, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Daily Double				
1	1	What a Catch	J. Velazquez	T. Pletcher 5-2
2	2	Taruca	M. Luzzi	W. Catalano 10-1
3	3	Zombie	R. Santana, Jr.	R. Moquett 4-1
4	4	Grandpa Knows Best	D. Davis	K. McPeek 8-1
5	5	Devine Entry	I. Ortiz, Jr.	L. Rice 7-2
6	6	Stoney Bennett	M. Franco	L. Rice 8-5

**5TH (3:14PM). \$45,000, MCL \$40,000, 3 YO'S & UP, F & M , 5 1/2F (TURF)**

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Pic 6, Daily Double				
1	10	Ma Mo	D. Cohen	B. Levine 15-1
1a	AE	Lets Dance Some Mo	J. Alvarado	W. Mott 15-1
2	1	Reconsider It	J. Rosario	J. Sweezey 9-2
3	2	Fiveinthemorning	J. Castellano	J. Abreu 6-1
4	3	Ed S Queen	L. Reyes	E. Maver, Jr. 50-1
5	4	Smart Throb	R. Maragh	A. Rawles 10-1
6	5	Gotcha Gabin	M. Franco	M. Nevin 12-1
7	6	Paz the Wine	J. Ortiz	H. Motion 7-2
8	7	Bid You Adieu	M. Luzzi	C. Englehart 12-1
9	8	Truly Courageous	J. Lezcano	G. Contessa 4-1
10	9	Youth Gone Wild	A. Lezcano	R. Ubillo 15-1
11	11	Missbigtimes	I. Ortiz, Jr.	J. Englehart 8-1
12	12	Frosty Linz	D. Davis	D. Schettino 20-1
13	AE	Quietly Quick	J. Rosario	C. Clement 5-1
14	AE	Andretta	J. Ortiz	H. Bond 3-1

**6TH (3:48PM). \$50,000, CLM \$25,000, 3 YO'S & UP, 1M (INNER TURF)**

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Pic 5, Daily Double				
1	1	Barhanpour (FR)	J. Lezcano	J. Fisher 20-1
2	2	Poshsky	D. Davis	G. Contessa 15-1
3	3	Captain Dixie	R. Powell	G. Galligan 30-1
4	4	Altar Boy	R. Santana, Jr.	R. Rodriguez 8-1
5	5	Bow Tie Affair	J. Alvarado	P. Reynolds 15-1
6	6	Your Only Man	J. Castellano	T. Pletcher 7-2
7	7	Sycamore Lane	D. Cohen	B. Cox 6-1
8	8	Orpheus (ARG)	H. Diaz, Jr.	O. Barrera, III 30-1
9	9	Hieroglyphics	I. Ortiz, Jr.	L. Rice 9-2
10	10	Nileator	J. Ortiz	E. Kenneally 6-1
11	11	Zefiro	M. Franco	J. Abreu 8-1
12	12	Neoclassic	L. Saez	P. Reynolds 6-1
13	AE	Aire Bueno (CHI)	J. Rosario	G. Contessa 15-1
14	MTO	Hardly a Secret	L. Saez	J. Terranova II 5-2
15	MTO	Bad Student	D. Cohen	G. Gullo 7-5

**7TH (4:24PM). \$75,000, MSW, 2 YO, 5 1/2F**

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Pic 4, Daily Double				
1	1	Wild Boar	J. Lezcano	J. Kimmel 12-1
2	2	Grammi Dance	J. Ortiz	R. Violette, Jr. 3-1
3	3	True Gold	J. Rosario	C. Baker 5-1
4	4	Honorable Hero	J. Alvarado	G. Contessa 20-1
5	5	Poppy's Destiny	I. Ortiz, Jr.	L. Rice 9-2
6	6	Mister Muy Bien	R. Santana, Jr.	R. Rodriguez 6-1
7	7	Prince of New York	D. Cohen	J. Englehart 5-1
8	8	Tapit Tango	L. Saez	R. Rodriguez 8-1
9	9	Risp	J. Castellano	T. Bush 10-1
10	10	Six Brothers	K. Carmouche	G. Sciacca 20-1
11	AE	Riken	M. Franco	D. Donk 12-1
12	AE	Quick Charge	J. Bravo	P. Pugh 10-1
13	AE	Bustin Hoffman	K. Gomez	O. Figgins, III 10-1

**8TH (5:02PM). \$77,000, ALW, 3 YO'S & UP, F & M , 5 1/2F (TURF)**

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Daily Double				
1	6	Lulu's Pom Pom	I. Ortiz, Jr.	C. Clement 4-1
1a	AE	Saratoga Treasure	J. Lezcano	J. Ryerson 4-1
2	1	Merlins Muse	M. Franco	D. Donk 12-1
3	2	Citizen Matzo	D. Cohen	R. Lerman 15-1
4	3	Tiffanys Freud	L. Reyes	L. O'Brien 30-1
5	4	Scorpion Bowl	J. Alvarado	L. Rice 8-1
6	5	Wantagh Queen	J. Lezcano	M. Dini 12-1
7	7	Birthday Gift	R. Maragh	P. Kelly 30-1
8	8	Baronet	R. Santana, Jr.	R. Rodriguez 12-1
9	9	Elegant Jem	J. Ortiz	J. Englehart 10-1
10	10	Spa Treatment	L. Saez	T. Albertrani 5-1
11	11	Forever Daisy	E. Cancel	D. Donk 15-1
12	12	Stonefactor	K. Carmouche	M. Dilger 7-2
13	AE	Hannah's Smile	M. Franco	M. Nevin 9-5
14	AE	Ohmygollymsmolly	J. Baez	C. Nunn 30-1
15	MTO	Tough Old Bird	J. Ortiz	B. Levine 9-2

**9TH (5:40PM). \$100,000, STK - THE P. G. JOHNSON, 2 YO, F , 1 1/16M (INNER TURF)**

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Daily Double				
1	1	Dogtag	J. Castellano	C. Brown 6-1
2	2	Road Tiger	R. Santana, Jr.	K. McPeek 10-1
3	MTO	Guacamole	Rider TBA	T. Pletcher 2-1
4	4	Miss Technicality	J. Rosario	C. Clement 4-1
5	5	O'Malley	J. Bravo	M. Stidham 15-1
6	6	Global Exchange	J. Alvarado	J. Toner 8-1
7	7	Mintd (IRE)	I. Ortiz, Jr.	C. Brown 5-2
8	8	Chasing the Kitty	K. Carmouche	A. Rice 8-1
9	9	Varenka	J. Velazquez	H. Motion 15-1
10	10	Chocolate Kisses	J. Ortiz	M. Casse 7-2
11	MTO	Cassies Dreamer	J. Alvarado	B. Tagg 3-1





# SARATOGA ENTRIES

10TH (6:17PM). \$75,000, MSW, 3 YO'S & UP, 6 1/2F

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta

1	5	Light the Posse	M. Luzzi	C. Baker	4-1
1a	9	Ready to Escape	J. Rosario	C. Baker	4-1
2	1	Dark Ops	J. Ortiz	J. Englehart	8-1
3	2	Triton's Song	J. Bravo	C. Englehart	15-1
4	3	Unsullied	J. Lezcano	P. Quick	30-1
5	4	Wild Road	J. Leparoux	D. Stewart	10-1
6	6	Legion Storm	J. Alvarado	K. McLaughlin	8-1
7	7	Suas	I. Ortiz, Jr.	R. Rodriguez	7-2
8	8	Lem Me Tel Ya	K. Carmouche	B. Levine	15-1
9	10	San Juan Diego	E. Cancel	R. Moquett	10-1
10	11	Bourbon N Rye	J. Castellano	M. Hennig	10-1
11	12	Santo Antonio	R. Santana, Jr.	R. Rodriguez	10-1
12	13	Chasindamoney	L. Saez	P. Serpe	15-1
13	14	Tenency	M. Franco	C. Englehart	15-1

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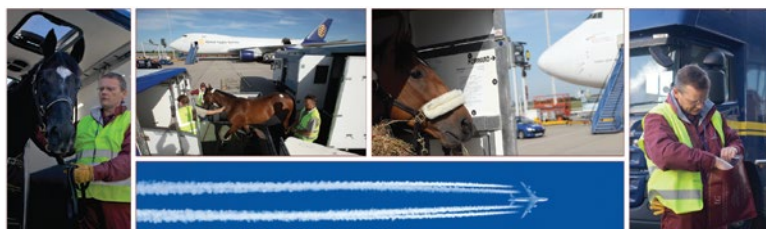
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# WINNER'S CIRCLE BEER

the <b>Power</b> grid					
Race #	<b>John Shapazian</b>	<b>Charles Bedard</b>	<b>Tom Law</b>	<b>Donald Phillips</b>	<b>Michael Venezia</b>
1	Timely Tradition Satin Sheets My Won Love	My Won Love Timely Tradition Satin Sheets	Satin Sheets My Won Love Unrepented	Unrepented Satin Sheets My Won Love	Timely Tradition Satin Sheets My Won Love
2	Illudere Brown entry Argonne	Brown entry End Of Spirits Argonne	Brown entry Bail Out Argonne	Brown entry Argonne Rucksack	Frontier Market Carom Argonne
3	Fast Track Kathern Radiant Beauty Bramble Queen	Bramble Queen Radiant Beauty Matty's Magnum	Fast Track Kathern Bramble Queen Radiant Beauty	Theodosia Fast Track Kathern Matty's Magnum	Matty's Magnum Bramble Queen Theodosia
4	Stoney Bennett Zombie Devine Entry	Stoney Bennett Devine Entry Zombie	Stoney Bennett What A Catch Zombie	Stoney Bennett Devine Entry What A Catch	Zombie What A Catch Stoney Bennett
5	Paz The Wine Missbigtimes Gotcha Gabin	Andretta Paz The Wine Reconsider It	Andretta Truly Courageous Paz The Wine	Reconsider It Truly Courageous Paz The Wine	Missbigtimes Fiveinthemorning Paz The Wine
6	Bad Student Sycamore Lane Your Only Man	Bad Student Hieroglyphics Your Only Man	Sycamore Lane Your Only Man Hieroglyphics	Your Only Man Sycamore Lane Neoclassic	Your Only Man Sycamore Lane Zefiro
7	Grammi Dance Poppy's Destiny True Gold	Grammi Dance True Gold Poppy's Destiny	Grammi Dance Poppy's Destiny Mister Muy Bien	Poppy's Destiny Tapit Tango Prince Of New York	True Gold Grammi Dance Prince Of New York
8	Hannah's Smile Stonefactor Scorpion Bowl	Hannah's Smile Generazio entry Stonefactor	Generazio entry Stonefactor Spa Treatment	Generazio entry Stonefactor Spa Treatment	Hannah's Smile Elegant Jem Scorpion Bowl
9	Guacamole Dogtag Mintd	Mintd Miss Technicality Chocolate Kisses	Chocolate Kisses Mintd O'Malley	Chocolate Kisses Road Tiger O'Malley	Chocolate Kisses Miss Technicality Dogtag
10	Legion Storm Suas Dark Ops	Baker entry Bourbon N Rye Suas	Suas Light The Posse San Juan Diego	Suas Baker entry San Juan Diego	Santo Antonio Ready To Escape Suas
2018 Records	<b>97/349</b>	<b>84/349</b>	<b>81/349</b>	<b>62/349</b>	<b>50/253*</b>

## Guest Handicapper

Today's guest handicapper is Michael Venezia, son of the late jockey Mike Venezia and an owner who lives in Saratoga Springs and Boca Raton. He's a former partner at the equity firm Schonfeld Securities who now works in private wealth management. Sunday, Jack Clancy picked one winner.

- The guest win total does not include Monday or Wednesday, when only The Special's regular handicappers picks appear at thisishorseracing.com.

**Top Guest Handicapper for 2018:** Patrick McGoey with five wins.

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# Singing Along

## Opry charges home in 2YO turf stakes

BY TOM LAW

Everett Dobson and Ed Gaylord partnered on many horses over their three decades of friendship, some good, some bad, yet their association waned a bit in recent years.

Dobson, the managing partner of the Oklahoma City Thunder of the NBA with a passion for racing, wanted to keep his friend involved and hatched a plan almost a year ago to the day of Wednesday's Grade 3 With Anticipation Stakes at Saratoga Race Course.

"He and I have been friends since we were in our 20s and we're not in our 20s anymore," Dobson said with a laugh Wednesday. "We've been friends for 30-plus years, we've owned racehorses together, we've owned mares together but we haven't done a lot together in the last few years.

"I was talking to Ed last year about this time, going into the Keeneland September sale, and said, 'What do you think about buying just one more horse together?'"

Gaylord, whose family enjoyed a long association with the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville and remains a majority shareholder in the publicly traded company, agreed and the two men set an amount they were looking to spend at the September sale.

Gatewood Bell, who operates Cromwell Bloodstock in Lexington, found a colt by multiple Group



Tod Marks

Opry (far right) was way back early in the With Anticipation.

1 winner Declaration Of War that was slated to sell midway through the sixth session of the sale. They bought the colt for \$180,000, toward the top end of the session's most expensive lots and significantly more expensive than the day's average price.

"We got lucky and got the right one apparently," Dobson said Wednesday, moments after the subsequently named Opry overcame a slow start to break his maiden in the \$150,000 turf stakes for 2-year-olds.

Dobson and trainer Todd Pletcher, who also saddled Azar to a maiden-breaking win in the 2015 With Anticipation, didn't feel lucky watching the start of this year's edition.

Opry hopped slightly at the break and veered a bit to the right, spotting the field a few lengths past the finish the first time. Javier Castellano, who won his sixth Travers last weekend aboard last year's With Anticipation winner Catholic Boy, an-

gled Opry from the inside part of the turf course to the two-path as Joyful Heart set the pace ahead of the Pletcher-trained Seanow and 6-5 favorite Somelikeithotbrown heading around the first turn.

Opry raced 7 1/2 lengths back through the opening quarter in :23.29 and 6 1/2 back through the half in :47.91.

"He broke a bit slow out of the gate, but he didn't panic," Castellano said. "This was his second start and first time on the grass. I wanted to let him figure it out by himself a little. Todd told me in the paddock that he really liked this horse and the way he's worked on the grass. After the break, we were really able to get comfortable."

Joyful Heart still led entering the far turn with Seanow and Somelikeithotbrown still chasing. Joyful Heart still led turning for home as Somelikeithot-

**Continued On Page 19**

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Tod Marks

Opry (left) streaks to the finish with a maiden-breaking stakes win.

## With Anticipation —

■ Continued from page 18

brown continued his run after going three-wide around the far turn.

Castellano angled Opry about eight paths off the inside – probably on a part of the turf not too chewed up after this year's rainy meet – and mixed a few crosses with a couple right-handed cracks of the whip. Opry rolled past the field in a flash and increased his margin on the group approaching the finish. Somelikeithot-brown held second, 2 1/4 lengths in front of Joyful Heart with Swamp Rat fourth in the field of six.

Opry won over the firm turf in 1:42 to give Pletcher his seventh win in the With Anticipation and Castellano his third.

"It made me nervous when he broke like that," Pletcher said walking down from his box. "I told Javier he would break better second time than he did the first time."

Opry broke slow in his debut, an off-the-turf 7-furlong maiden race Aug. 11. He still managed to finish third, losing by just a half-length.

Pletcher entered Opry for the first time in a 1 1/16-mile turf maiden on the Whitney Day card but wound up on the also-eligible list.

That race came off the turf and while Opry could have drawn into the race, Pletcher opted to wait for another spot.

The race came up again a week later and wound up being moved to the main track.

"The horse had trained well enough on the dirt so I wasn't concerned, I actually thought he might win an off-the-turf type race," Pletcher said. "A couple of his turf breezes were pretty impressive and we felt like he was a little better on the grass."

"I told Mr. Dobson after (the Aug. 11 race), 'Look, if this horse trains OK, I'm going to look at running him back in the With Anticipation. I've won it with a maiden before, I think he's good enough to do it if things go well.' Then he trained the way we'd hoped he would after (the first race)."



Tod Marks

Former Mets pitcher Bob Ojeda (left) presents the With Anticipation trophy to jockey Javier Castellano, owner Everett Dobson and trainer Todd Pletcher (right).



# Congratulations

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## REALM

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# Hot Spa card a mixed bag

## Brown doubles to get to 36 wins

Wednesday's 35th day of the 2018 Saratoga Race Course season felt like many from the summer – hot and steamy, with plenty of action thanks to 10 solid races, a two-day carryover in the Pick Six and a strong guitar-solo National Anthem performance by NYRA sound man John Getzler in the winner's circle to start things off.

On the track, the big names got their wins but so did a few others.

Leading trainer Chad Brown doubled, taking the fourth with Prognostication and fifth with More Mischief. The former led a 1-2 finish for owners Klaravich Stable and Bill Lawrence as Financial System finished second in the 1 1/16-mile starter allowance on the inner turf. Brereton Jones bred the winner, who won a \$40,000 maiden claimer last fall at Belmont and added a waiver claimer here Aug. 11. Brown has 36 wins, four short of the record he and Todd Pletcher share.

Pletcher won the featured With Anticipation with late-running 2-year-old Opry. Joe Sharp and Kiaran McLaughlin each picked up his eighth win of the meet while Robert Falcione Jr. collected his second and Mike Miceli won the finale to get on the board at the meet. Rick Violette (three wins at the meet), and Linda Rice (seven) also saddled Wednesday's winners while jump trainer Jack Fisher teamed up with jockey Willie McCarthy for their second wins at the meet.

Leading jockey Irad Ortiz Jr. merely singled, but is running off with the championship at 46 wins to 35 for Javier Castellano, who doubled on the card. Luis Saez delivered a riding triple in the third (for Sharp), eighth (for McLaughlin) and 10th (for Miceli) to get to 29 wins at the meet.

The big pick six carryover helped the pool grow to more than \$1.7 million with a winning ticket worth \$53,157.

### WEDNESDAY RACING RECAP

- Tom Caldronery thought about getting out of the business when his friend, former employee and partner in racehorses and breeding prospects passed away unexpectedly in March 2013.

Caldronery later reconsidered and wound up buying a French Deputy mare Tres Chaud from the late Ian Mulholland's wife Kristin with hopes of carrying on his friend's legacy with a small breeding operation. Caldronery, who breeds and races in the name TLC Thoroughbreds, sold a few foals out of Tres Chaud and kept the Freud filly Tres Charmant when she failed to meet her reserve on a \$27,000 bid at the 2014 Fasig-Tipton Saratoga fall mixed sale.

Tres Charmant broke her maiden last August, giving Caldronery his first win at Saratoga, and provided a second when she took the sixth. Trained by Linda Rice, Tres Charmant won the \$40,000 claimer for fillies and mares going 5 1/2 furlongs on the turf by 1 3/4 lengths under Jose Lezcano.

"I still own the mare, she's at Bill Johnson's place Stonegate Farm up in Fort Edward," said Caldronery. "Bill and Ian were best buddies. He and I both were hit like a ton of bricks when he passed. Big time."

"So much so that I almost got out. Flatterywillgetyou (winner of the 2016 Bouwerie Stakes for Rice and a finalist for champion New York-bred 3-year-old filly that season) was the last horse we sold. That was as a weanling and that got Ian's wife out of all the horses. And I was almost out, too. I was down to one broodmare but decided to stay in. Now I've got three broodmares and three others in partnership with Bill at Stonegate."

Tres Charmant bounced back from a sixth in an off-the-turf 5 1/2-furlong



Tod Marks

**Tres Charmant heads for the finish in Wednesday's sixth race.**

claimer Aug. 5. She'd never raced on the main track in five prior starts.

"We tried her on the dirt and it did not go well," Rice said. "I was relieved to get her back to the winner's circle after that. Sometimes that'll take a race out of them, but fortunately she rebounded well enough to get back to the winner's circle."

– **Tom Law and David Woods**

- The Caretaker survived the steam bath that was Saratoga Wednesday and picked up his third straight win in the eighth, a far cry from his 2018 debut at Aqueduct when exposed for a relatively cheap claiming price.

"He's gotten good. He's come a long way. I'm glad we didn't lose him for the quarter that day," said Kiaran McLaughlin, who trains the 4-year-old Speightstown homebred for Chester and Mary Broman. "He's just improved a lot and my team has done a great job. We're very happy. It's great to win for Chester and Mary Broman, they're great breeders and owners here in New York."

The Caretaker, who held off a late run from stakes winner Aveenu Malcainu to win the 7-furlong optional claimer for state-breds, started his 2018 season for that \$25,000 claiming price Jan. 25. He finished second that day and competed exclusively in

allowance or starter allowance events in seven subsequent starts leading up to Wednesday.

The Caretaker won a 7-furlong starter at Belmont July 12 and an off-the-turf 5 1/2-furlong allowance at Saratoga Aug. 4 prior to his latest victory. Luis Saez rode The Caretaker in his last three starts and was back aboard Wednesday.

"Luis rides him very well," McLaughlin said. "Luis is doing well and the horse is doing really well."

The victory was McLaughlin's eighth of the meet and he hopes to add at least one more.

"We've had a great meet," he said. "I'd like to finish it up with a Prioress win with Dream Pauline on Sunday, that would be great."

– **Tom Law**

- Mike Miceli figured a state-bred maiden turf sprint would be exactly what Whiskey Run would need to break his maiden and give the trainer his first win at Saratoga since 2014. Unfortunately he could never find one that would fill, so he changed gears and Whiskey Run found the winner's circle.

"I've been trying to run him 5 1/2, but we never could get a race," Mice-

**Continued On Page 21**



# Wednesday —

■ Continued from page 20

li said. “Finally I just decided to put him in going long. And he delivered.”

Whiskey Run took the finale for High Over Stables and Miceli, taking the lead from the start and holding off The Sheik Of Araby by a half-length under Luis Saez.

The 4-year-old Utopia gelding hadn’t been out since a fourth in a 6-furlong maiden turf race June 7, an effort that came about a month after he finished second in a similar race at 100-1 odds.

Miceli, a former jockey who won 653 races and a trainer since 1988, last won at Saratoga when Coast Of Sangria took a \$25,000 claiming race July 30, 2014. Whiskey Run improved his 2018 Saratoga record to a win, a second and two thirds from eight starts.

“I won one up here a few years ago,” Miceli said. “I always try to knock out at least one a year.”

— Tom Law

• Willie McCarthy walked back to the jocks’ room after Wednesday’s opener and shook his head.

“I would have been so bullish afterwards...” McCarthy said.

Minutes earlier, the Irish-born jump jockey had simply steered Irish-bred Dark Gemini to an easy win in the allowance hurdle. Unfortunately, the 5-year-old bowed his right tendon in the effort. The horse went home in the equine ambulance and McCarthy walked home thinking about what might have been.

“He pulled up lame, not very, very bad but enough for me to not ride him back today, just keep the horse’s best interest into account,” McCarthy said. “Such a shame, I’ve said it before, he’s one of the best horses I’ve ever ridden.”

McCarthy and Dark Gemini improved their hurdle record to two wins from five starts (with three seconds) in the final hurdle race at Saratoga this season. McCarthy parked the former George Weaver trainee in the back of the five-horse field, holding him around five turns and over nine hurdles before allowing the bay gelding to pick it up in the stretch the final time. Sent off favorite, Dark Gemini zipped inside longtime leader Dancin

In The Rain and stalker Ocean Ready to score by a comfortable 5 ¼ lengths for trainer Jack Fisher and owner Serendipity Stable.

“He’s such a talented horse, but very fragile, I was dreaming of the Champion Hurdle at Far Hills all year with this horse. I have full confidence in this him, there’s a change of plan, we have to wait now,” McCarthy said. “So talented, so, so talented. He’s like driving a Ferrari around there, I could have ridden him anywhere and won that race. When you’re traveling like that, it’s like a knife through butter.”

McCarthy rode Dark Gemini with aplomb, using two underhanded smacks after the wings in the stretch and staying low to the wire.

“I like the way you kept him together,” flat jockey Kendrick Carmouche said as McCarthy opened the door to the jocks’ room.

McCarthy thanked Carmouche, then shook his head for the second time.

“Hard to be excited about it,” McCarthy said. “At least it’s...yes, he’ll need some time off. He’s a very talented horse, he can come back for his 6-year-old season and hopefully maybe get to the Champion Hurdle next year.”

— Sean Clancy

## Saratoga Leaders

TRAINERS .....	1ST
Chad Brown .....	36
Todd Pletcher .....	18
Steve Asmussen .....	13
Bill Mott .....	12
Rudy Rodriguez .....	11
Jeremiah Englehart .....	10
Kiaran McLaughlin .....	8
Jason Servis .....	8
Joe Sharp .....	8
Shug McGaughey .....	7
Linda Rice .....	7

JOCKEYS .....	1ST
Irad Ortiz Jr. ....	46
Javier Castellano .....	35
Jose Ortiz .....	34
Manny Franco .....	31
Luis Saez .....	29
Joel Rosario .....	22
Ricardo Santana Jr. ....	22
Junior Alvarado .....	21
John Velazquez .....	20

Through Wednesday



Tod Marks

Dark Gemini (center) jumps early in his win in Wednesday’s first race.

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## SARATOGA RESULTS

Wednesday August 29.

### FIRST \$65,000, ALLOWANCE, 4 YO'S & UP, 2 3/8M

3	Dark Gemini (IRE)	W. McCarthy	\$3.50	\$2.20	\$2.10
6	Dancin in the Rain	B. Dalton		\$2.40	\$2.30
1	Ocean Ready	D. Nagle			\$2.70

B Gelding 2013, by Dark Angel (IRE) - Gemini Diamond (IRE) by Desert King (IRE)

Owner: Serendipity Stables (Griswold). Trainer: Jack Fisher.

Breeder: Mrs Mary Coonan (IRE).

Late Scratches: Last Shani, Go Get the Basil Time: 4:35.49

Exacta (3-6), \$5.90; Superfecta (3-6-1-7), \$2.45; Trifecta (3-6-1), \$7.65

### SECOND \$37,000, MAIDEN CLAIMING \$20,000, 3 YO'S & UP, 6 1/2F

1	Twofer	R. Santana, Jr.	\$14.60	\$7.50	\$6.60
2	Golden Vale	D. Davis		\$7.50	\$4.50
5	Jordy's Ready	L. Saez			\$4.70

B Filly 2015, by Super Saver - Wish It Were by Is It True

Owner: Evans, Lauren and Evans, Ralph M.. Trainer: Rick Violette, Jr..

Breeder: Hart Farm (KY). Late Scratches: Brooklyn Gerty

Claimed: Salt Pond claimed by Windy Lea Farms for \$20,000

Time: 1:18.33

Daily Double (3-1), \$23.60; Exacta (1-2), \$46.25; Quinella (1-2), \$24.80; Superfecta (1-2-5-4), \$358.75; Trifecta (1-2-5), \$87.00; Consolation Double (3-3), \$2.00

### THIRD \$45,000, MAIDEN CLAIMING \$40,000, 3 YO'S & UP, 5 1/2F

5	A Bit of Mischief	L. Saez	\$18.20	\$12.00	\$7.20
9	Appreciate	R. Maragh		\$18.80	\$10.40
2	Sacrifice	J. Rosario			\$5.80

B Filly 2015, by Into Mischief - Trisha by Forest Camp

Owner: Grady, Brad. Trainer: Joe Sharp.

Breeder: Moreau Bloodstock Int'l Inc & Blacktype Bloodstock LLC (FL).

Late Scratches: Miss Vinegar

Claimed: A Bit of Mischief claimed by Looch Racing Stables, Inc. for \$40,000, Sacrifice claimed by R. A. Hill Stable for \$40,000, Anne Dupree claimed by Woodland Farms for \$40,000 Time: 1:02.88

Daily Double (1-5), \$62.00; Exacta (5-9), \$146.50; Superfecta (5-9-2-3), \$485.30; Trifecta (5-9-2), \$584.50; Pic 3 (3-1-5), \$135.25; (3-3-5), \$12.90

### FOURTH \$57,000, STARTERS ALLOW \$50,000, 3 & UP, 1 1/16M

1	Prognostication	J. Castellano	\$2.70	\$2.60	\$2.10
1A	Financial System	J. Ortiz	\$2.70	\$2.60	\$2.10
8	Herecomesyourman	J. Rosario			\$2.90

Dk B/ Br Gelding 2013, by Majesticperfection - Predictress by Vicar

Owner: Klaravich Stables, Inc. and Lawrence, William H..

Trainer: Chad Brown. Breeder: Brereton C. Jones (KY).

Late Scratches: Trustworthy, Slewacandy, Sanavi Time: 1:43.05

Daily Double (5-1), \$13.50; Exacta (1-8), \$4.55; Quinella (1-8), \$3.65; Superfecta (1-8-7-6), \$9.70; Trifecta (1-8-7), \$16.75; Consolation Double (5-9), \$8.60; Pic 3 (1-5-1), \$70.75; (1-5-9), \$46.25

### FIFTH \$75,000, NY-BRED MAIDEN SPECIAL WEIGHT, 2 YO, 6 1/2F

3	More Mischief	J. Ortiz	\$6.60	\$4.60	\$3.60
10	Midnitesalright	M. Franco		\$5.10	\$4.10
7	Mary's Girl	L. Saez			\$5.10

Dk B/ Br Filly 2016, by Into Mischief - Gracilia by Mr. Greeley

Owner: Wise Racing. Trainer: Chad Brown.

Breeder: Anlyn Farms (NY).

Time: 1:19.12

Daily Double (1-3), \$5.00; Exacta (3-10), \$17.60; Superfecta (3-10-7-6), \$27.20; Trifecta (3-10-7), \$61.75; Pic 3 (5-1-3), \$33.25; (5-9-3), \$25.00

### SIXTH \$48,000, CLAIMING \$40,000, 3 YO'S & UP, 5 1/2F

4	Tres Charmant	J. Lezcano	\$9.40	\$4.80	\$2.90
10	Lune Lake	J. Rosario		\$3.90	\$2.90
1A	Jazzy Juder	I. Ortiz, Jr.			\$2.70

Ch Filly 2014, by Freud - Tres Chaud by French Deputy

Owner: TLC Thoroughbreds. Trainer: Linda Rice.

Breeder: TLC Thoroughbreds, LLC (NY).

Late Scratches: Sensible Myth, Louisiana Lady, Elegant Jem, Cetara

Time: 1:02.51

Daily Double (3-4), \$17.50; Exacta (4-10), \$21.90; Superfecta (4-10-1-5), \$19.25; Trifecta (4-10-1), \$25.87; Consolation Double (3-8), \$3.50; Pic 3 (1-3-4), \$32.00; (1-3-8), \$5.00; Pic 4 (5-1/2/5/9-3-4), \$151.50; Pic 5 (1-5-1/2/5/9-3-4), \$1,553.75

### SEVENTH \$77,000, NY-BRED ALLOWANCE, 3 YO'S & UP, 6F

4	Fair Regis	I. Ortiz, Jr.	\$4.30	\$3.00	\$2.20
3	Out of Orbit	M. Franco		\$6.60	\$4.70
7	Starlite Mission	J. Rosario			\$4.70

B Filly 2014, by Bustin Stones - Lake Song by Prime Timber

Owner: Drawing Away Stable. Trainer: Robert Falcone, Jr..

Breeder: John F. Carberry (NY). Time: 1:11.31

Daily Double (4-4), \$11.90; Exacta (4-3), \$13.70; Superfecta (4-3-7-9), \$44.05; Trifecta (4-3-7), \$36.12; Pic 3 (3-4-4), \$47.25; (3-8-4), \$8.10

### EIGHTH \$80,000, NY-BRED AOC \$40,000, 3 YO'S & UP, 7F

4	The Caretaker	L. Saez	\$10.00	\$4.50	\$2.90
9	Aveenu Malcainu	J. Ortiz		\$3.50	\$2.60
11	Stretch's Stone	R. Maragh			\$3.80

Dk B/ Br Colt 2014, by Speightstown - Safety Net by A.P. Indy

Owner: Chester and Mary Broman, Sr.. Trainer: Kiaran McLaughlin.

Breeder: Chester Broman & Mary R. Broman (NY).

Late Scratches: Summer Bourbon, Here Comes Tommy

Claimed: Candid Desire claimed by Dubb, Michael for \$40,000, Wicked Macho claimed by Fazzzone, Edward for \$40,000

Time: 1:23.99

Daily Double (4-4), \$14.20; Exacta (4-9), \$18.80; Superfecta (4-9-11-3), \$31.50; Trifecta (4-9-11), \$35.50; Pic 3 (4-4-4), \$77.75

### NINTH \$150,000, STAKES - WITH ANTICIPATION S., 2 YO, 1 1/16M

8	Opry	J. Castellano	\$9.80	\$3.70	\$3.10
7	Somelikeithotbrown	I. Ortiz, Jr.		\$2.90	\$2.40
2	Joyful Heart	J. Ortiz			\$3.50

Dk B/ Br Colt 2016, by Declaration of War - That Voodoo Youdo by Speightstown Owner: Cheyenne Stables and Gaillardia Racing.

Trainer: Todd Pletcher. Breeder: Crosshaven Bloodstock (KY).

Late Scratches: Unionizer, Lexingtonian, Backtohisroots, Stage Left, Henley's Joy, Yes and Yes. Time: 1:42

Daily Double (4-8), \$35.00; Exacta (8-7), \$13.30; Superfecta (8-7-2-9), \$11.77; Trifecta (8-7-2), \$25.75; Pic 3 (4-4-8), \$69.00; Grand Slam (1/4/10-3/4/7-4/9/11-8), \$9.60

### 10TH \$75,000 MDN SP WGT. 3&UP. NYB. 1 1/16M INNER TURF.

10	Whiskey Run	L. Saez	15.20	8.40	6.10
9	The Sheik of Araby	J. Velazquez		19.40	11.40
1	Constant Knight	R. Maragh			8.10

Ch. g. 4, Utopia-Sydney's Lexington, Outofthebox.

Breeder: McMahon of Saratoga Thoroughbreds (NY).

Owner: High Over Stables. Trainer: Mike Miceli. Time: 1:43.66.

Exacta \$182.75. Trifecta \$1,187.75. Superfecta \$1,495.90.

Double \$54.75. Pick 3 \$312.50. Pick 4 \$533.75. Pick 5 \$4,062.50.

Pick 6 \$53,157. Pick 6 (5 correct) \$397. Consolation Pick 3 \$32.75.

Consolation Double \$4.60.

Paid Attendance 19,626. On-track handle \$2,209,194.68.

All-sources handle \$11,461,292.53.

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# SARATOGA RESULTS PHOTOS

BY TOD MARKS AND DAVE HARMON




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# Simon Says

Canadian-based trainer engineers stakes win with 3YO Rose's Vision

BY SEAN CLANCY

Stuart Simon walked to the bottom of the clubhouse stairs and instead of going left to the winner's circle, the Canadian-based trainer made a short right turn and stopped. And stood.

"Ahh, you just want to soak it all in," he said, moments later. "You want to make sure you're not just dreaming."

Simon wasn't dreaming. Rose's Vision, owned and bred by Chiefswood Stable and trained by Simon, had just won Monday's feature, the Better Talk Now. The 3-year-old colt settled in sixth in the field of nine, rallied on the inside to run down Have At It to win the restricted 3-year-old turf stakes by a neck. Jose Ortiz partnered the Canadian-bred son of Artie Schiller, finishing the mile on the firm inner turf in 1:35.82.

"It's a big thrill, I've only run one other horse here at Saratoga, actually in this race," Simon said, referring to Dragon Bay who finished third but was



Dave Harmon

Better Talk Now's owners Carol and Brent Johnson (left) present the trophy to Team Rose's Vision.



Dave Harmon

Rose's Vision (right) ousts Have At It in Monday's feature, the Better Talk Now Stakes.

disqualified to fifth in 2016. "We've won the English Channel at Belmont, I've won races at Keeneland and Gulfstream but there's no place like Saratoga. It's really, really thrilling. It really is."

Rose's Vision earned his first stakes victory in his 12th career start, securing Simon's ninth win this year and 783rd for his career.

Ortiz roused Rose's Vision for five strides from post 4 before letting the bay colt settle along the hedge in sixth going into the first turn. New Jersey shipper Ceevee led Corot and favorite Strike Power through a quarter mile in :24.17 and a half in :48.49. Have At It found a spot in fourth and Westerland set up just to his inside. Ortiz cocooned Rose's Vision along the rail, inside Westerland and Prioritize. Ortiz's cocoon looked more like a steel cage as Strike Power began to backpedal and the rest of the field cut the corner or swung wide into the stretch. Passing the quarter pole, Rose's Vision slid to second-to-last.

Far from alarmed, Ortiz aimed Rose's Vision outside Strike Power, getting past him nearing the eighth pole. While Ortiz was waiting, Ceevee and Corot tried to hang tough, Have At It kicked and Prioritize circled. Slicing between Strike Power and Ceevee, Rose's Vision accelerated along the rail as Have At It angled toward him. As the fourth choice reached Rose's Vision, he swapped to his left lead for a stride, bobbled slightly, swapped back to his right lead before wrestling a neck advantage over Have At It. Ortiz stood up at the wire, swiped his right hand down Rose's Vision's mane twice and slapped him on the neck, like a high five to a wing-

man. Rose's Vision pricked his ears for the first time since the post parade.

"Things roll off him like nothing, he's got nerves of steel," Simon said. "He goes off by himself in the post parade, Jose had him standing on the outside fence watching the grandstand. He was just looking around, he's a cool customer, he wastes no energy on bad stuff. He just puts it all in the right focus."

Rose's Vision needed his focus after a potentially taxing 2018 campaign. He broke his maiden at Gulfstream Park in February, came right back to win an allowance on the turf at Keeneland in April. From there, he finished sixth in the Grade 3 Marine on Woodbine's synthetic track, second in the Queen's Plate Trial in June and 14th in the 10-furlong Queen's Plate June 30. Simon knew the latter might have been a bridge too far.

"We thought it was probably too far but he ran good enough in the Trial that you've got to try for a million bucks. We thought all along he's a turf miller, maybe a mile and an eighth, that's his game. We got kind of got chasing," Simon said. "You always worry, it was really hot, he ran hard, then give in, you're always concerned, but he did seem to take the race OK. The next morning, he had eaten up, he was perky, he seemed to bounce out of it surprisingly well. We're not really aggressive training in the morning because he's done a lot in the evenings and the afternoons, you just have to tick him along and he'll do the rest."

Unfazed by the Queen's Plate debacle, Rose's Vision returned to the turf with a solid second in the

**Continued On Page 25**



# Better Talk Now —

■ Continued from page 24

Toronto Cup. If he had won that, Simon would have sent him here for the Grade 3 Saranac Saturday. Instead, he was still eligible for the Better Talk Now, restricted to 3-year-olds who had never won a sweepstakes at a mile or over.

"He's an honest little horse when he gets a chance. The only time he's been worse than third on the turf was his first lifetime race, where he got a real tough trip," Simon said. "It's thrilling. We've won big races at a lot of different racetracks, but this is the ultimate place to win. Especially a stake race, it's not like we came here and won a claiming race, it's nice to come and prove you belong with good horses and good people."

Simon has been proving that since starting with a few claimers in Western Canada in 1983. Shortys Lad won a claimer worth \$1,900, Dad's Delivery provided another win nine days later in a maiden claimer worth \$1,600 at Regina. That was Simon's start. From there, he hung a shingle

at Marquis Downs before moving to Stampede Park in 1988. He won at least 20 races from 1990 through 2008.

In 2009, Simon slipped to 19 wins, but it was far from a slip in quality. Before that season, Simon listened to trainers/friends, Loren Richards and Terry Jordan, and a jocks' agent, Danny Williams. They convinced Simon to venture to the bright lights and big city of Woodbine Racetrack in Ontario.

"They went there and they kept saying, 'Stuart, you should come out here, you should come out here,'" Simon said. "Racing out (west) was going backwards and Woodbine was really rolling, still is. It was a big move, like going from Canterbury Downs to New York. We thought we might as well try it, we've made a couple of jumps and it keeps being good to us."

No horse has been as good to Simon as Atlantic Hurricane. Simon claimed her for \$40,000 in 2011. Racing for Simon, Carl Hollick and Brent and Russ McLellan, the Florida-bred won seven races, including three Grade 3 stakes and was voted Canada's champion female sprinter in 2011.



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"I owe most of it to her. She helped get me Chiefswood Stable about seven years ago," Simon said, as he collected his papers from the racing office. "They breed and raise, we just try to progress young horses into being good horses. That's where all of our energy goes. Chiefswood will give

you every chance, any of their horses could turn out to be anything. You hit on the right thing, it could take you anywhere."

Simon turned to his wife, Valerie, and smiled.

"Like here," he said. "Like here."

## Andrew J. Mollica, Esq.

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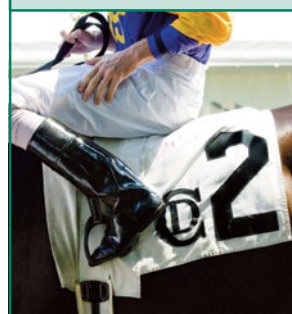
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# One of a Kind

Once a day, or at least it seemed like that much, John Harrell would pick up his phone around mid-morning, punch in 10 numbers, wait a few seconds and call out “Asher” not quite at the top of his lungs but certainly loud enough for anyone within earshot to hear.

The Asher was of course John Asher, who passed away Monday and left a chasm the size of the Grand Canyon in the Thoroughbred industry. John and John were longtime friends, Louisvillians through and through. They loved the Kentucky Derby, Churchill Downs, everything about the Derby city, music, food and so much more.

The memories of those phone calls – 20 years ago when I was starting out on the staff at Thoroughbred Times – came flooding back as news of Asher’s passing came to light. The conversations didn’t last long, Harrell probably picking Asher’s brain about some racing tidbit or sharing a fact he’d uncovered about the Derby during his personal research.

For a few months the name Asher was only that, a name I’d hear or see at the top of Churchill Downs’ barn notes or press releases. I’d see him on the simulcast feed and even sat next to him at the 1996 Breeders’ Cup at Woodbine. Asher worked for WHAS radio in Louisville then, no doubt providing listeners in Louisville the top-tier coverage that earned him five Eclipse Awards before he went to work for Churchill.

We exchanged hellos and idle chit-chat, but didn’t know each other.

That changed in the days leading up to the 1998 Breeders’ Cup at Churchill Downs when John introduced me to John.

“Tom, this is my friend John Asher,” Harrell said one morning in the old Churchill press box. “If you ever need anything, call John, he’s the best.”

Then Harrell flipped the script.

“John, this is Tom Law, you’re going to see a lot of him out here this week and down the road. Tom

started with us a few months ago. He’s from Saratoga.”

The conversation from there went where it often does when the word Saratoga comes up. Asher, a racing man who could appreciate a big event, wanted to know what it was like growing up in Saratoga when the show came to town every summer. To no one’s surprise, John Asher and I became fast friends.

Harrell left Thoroughbred Times a few years later to take a job closer to home and his wife and young daughter and eventually landed his dream spot on the editorial staff at the Louisville Courier-Journal. He passed away suddenly at age 37 in April 2003, right before his favorite time of year, Derby season.

Harrell’s wife asked me to be a pallbearer at his funeral and mentioned that Asher would be one, too. Someone suggested that I should prepare some remarks – a strange concept for a 32-year-old mourning the passing of his 37-year-old friend and colleague. Asher eventually became the point man to deliver Harrell’s eulogy. He proved to be the right man for the job – just as he did for more than 21 years at Churchill Downs – and hit it out of the park with class, sincerity and emotion.

We’d talk about our late friend, and many other topics. One of our favorites was running. Asher was a runner and I liked hearing about his progress through the Louisville Triple Crown road races each spring, always trying to convince him to join me in the Derby Festival Half Marathon.

“I’m a little busy for that one,” he’d say, “Maybe one day I’ll join you on the Bourbon Chase.”

It’s sad to think that will never happen, and even more sad to think about Churchill Downs and the Kentucky Derby without John Asher.

What will Louisville be like without its greatest ambassador of all things First Saturday in May? We’ll get a glimpse come October and November when the Breeders’ Cup returns to Churchill Downs, but the full blast won’t come until next April.

One of the best parts of the president’s post of the National Turf Writers And Broadcasters is contacting individuals who will be honored at the organization’s annual awards dinner the Wednesday prior to the Breeders’ Cup. Two calls were at the top of my Monday to-do list – to Mike Smith and Donna Barton Brothers – and both involved Asher.

“What a loss,” said Smith, the Mr. Fitz Award winner for typifying the spirit of racing. “He was such an amazing guy, so smart, so passionate. I just saw him the other day, when we paraded Justify at Churchill Downs. I’m going to miss him; it won’t be the same there without him.”

Brothers, winner of the Jim McKay Award for excellence in broadcasting, couldn’t hide her emotions on the phone or in an email that night.

“It seems fitting that I learned of this honor on the same day – and within the same 60 to 90 minutes – that I learned of John Asher’s passing since he’s really the person who got me started on this path,” she wrote. “After retiring from riding in 1998, spending the winter in New Orleans at Fair Grounds with my husband (Frank Brothers) and dabbling in some minor TV stuff here and there, upon returning to Churchill Downs in the spring of 1999 John asked me if I’d have any interest in assuming his role as paddock handicapper.

“He’d been promoted . . . and would no longer have time to share the role of handicapping with Mike Battaglia. I jumped at the opportunity even though I was not sure I was suited for the role. And then it was while doing the on-air racing analysis with Battaglia that NBC saw my work when they were at Churchill during Derby Week in 2000 . . . Unbeknownst to me they were also looking for an on-track reporter and it’s because of John that I was in the right place at the right time. In any case, I have John Asher to thank for all of this, including this unfathomable honor – and on the day of his passing.”

Rest in peace John Asher. You were the best.



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# Spa Notes

Saturday at Saratoga, trainer Dale Romans won the Grade 1 H. Allen Jerkens Stakes with Promises Fulfilled. The 3-year-old blitzed eight others, won his second graded stakes of the meet, led a 1-2 finish for his trainer and took the lead among the country's 3-year-old sprinters. Afterward, Romans took part in all the official winner's circle stuff – handshakes, congratulations, photos, yadda, yadda, yadda.

Then he did something cool. In the midst of the hubbub he leaned over and spoke to trainer Jimmy Jerkens, who presented the trophy in memory of his father. The two men stepped away from the crowd, with the trophy, and posed for a separate photo – just the two of them.

Pretty classy move.

"He meant a lot to me," Romans said of Allen Jerkens. "My barn was right beside his at Gulfstream and we spent a lot of time socializing over the years and him advising me. Winning that race was extra special for sure."

Romans, 52, first came to Saratoga when he was 26, and was immediately struck by the history of the place – with Jerkens a big part of it.

"I felt like I stepped into a movie," Romans said. "All the people I read about my whole childhood were here and he was one of the biggest. I saw him sitting on the pony. It took me two years to talk to him."

• • •

October 6, 2000. I was covering the jump races at Colonial Downs in Virginia. Dynamite Vic won the first. The second, the Zeke Ferguson Memorial Stakes, attracted nine including stars All Gong, Rowdy Irishman, Ninepins and Pompeyo. Spring Salute freaked and upset everybody with Al Skywalker second and heavy favorite Pompeyo third.

Behind them all, early leader Darn Tipalarm fell hard at the last fence. His jockey, Jonathan Thomas, wound up in the Richmond hospital and I stopped



NYRA Photo/Adam Coglianese

Dale Romans (right) and Jimmy Jerkens.

on my way home to check on him. I've seen plenty of jump jockeys fall, and the typical hospital visit involves a broken collarbone, arm, wrist, something. He or she is hurt, but not incapacitated. The nurses usually allow visitors. You stop in, say hello, tell the jock, "Get better, OK? Can I get you something?"

Once a ride home is organized, it's all pretty normal. Not this time.

The nurses stopped me at the desk and asked where I was going.

"To see Jonathan Thomas, the jockey," I said.

"Are you family?"

"Uh, no, I guess not."

"Nobody can see him except family."

"Is his family here?"

"Not yet, but they're on the way."

Then I realized what they were saying. This was not your typical jump-jockey fall. Nobody unrelated to Jonathan Thomas was getting in to see Jonathan Thomas. He'd suffered a spinal injury, and things were pretty shaky. I took a long walk back to the parking garage, and an even longer drive home.

Thomas won 13 races in his first two seasons – that's a lot for an American jump jockey. Though he rode a handful of more races in 2006, he never won again. Of course, Thomas slowly launched a new

career as a trainer. And Saturday he won the Travers with Catholic Boy. I hope somebody tells the nurses.

• • •

One of my great racing memories will forever be when I stood next to John Asher and watched Lonesome Glory win at Churchill Downs in 1998. John rarely watched a live race then. He was doing pre-race analysis for Churchill in the paddock, and spent the in-between time in his office where he could watch the races on television.

He said he wanted to see a true champion live, so we watched the future Hall of Famer bomb seven others in the Grade 1 Hard Scuffle steeplechase stakes on what I think was closing day of Churchill's spring meet.

Asher was impressed by the horse, proud of him. So was I, but the man was pretty cool too. He did the seemingly impossible – made me appreciate one of Thoroughbred racing's all-time great horses a little bit more.

I also got the feeling that he was simply happy that Churchill got a chance to showcase such a standout horse and that such a standout horse got a chance to grace Churchill with his presence.

Asher was the unofficial/official ambassador between racing fans and all things Kentucky Derby. Officially, he was the vice president of racing communications but there was way more to it than that.

Asher died of a heart attack Monday, at age 62, while vacationing with his family in Florida. The five-time Eclipse Award winner was a giant in our industry. He will be missed for any number of reasons: his work with Churchill Downs, his love of the Western Kentucky Hilltoppers, his musical advice (I know who James McMurtry is because of John), the joy he showed in his family and a love of all things racing.

I hope there's a John Asher Stakes at Churchill someday. Watch it in person if you can.



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# Choice Cuts

The Travers feature, written in the waning hours of a torrid Saturday at Saratoga, finished at 1,613 words. Cutting and pasting, scrapping and accentuating, at one point, I had five ledes and a dozen kickers about Catholic Boy and owner Bob LaPenta, trainer Jonathan Thomas and jockey Javier Castellano. By the end, a writer just has to let it go, hand it to your editor, in my case, it always goes into the capable hands of Joe and Tom. They make it fit, make it better.

In the cold light of Tuesday afternoon, I looked back at the file called, "Travers didn't use." It was 1,115 words. Here's the best of what didn't make it the first time.

Thomas in the paddock before the race: "I love going back to the holding barn in these big races, seeing all the horses, I still wouldn't trade mine. We'll get a position, if someone's going to do something stupid, we can rate. He'll break him away from the pony and warm him up, he can carry it. I don't want to get intimidated by the distance and try to ride to get the trip, which would be completely contrary to what he does best."

Thomas about buying Catholic Boy at Keeneland January in 2016: "It was January, I was by myself, looking for a horse to buy for these guys. He was angular, athletic horse, it was cold, snowy and he just stood, all the other horses were moving around. It was horrible, like it was 10 below. I let him RNA and grabbed the guys and we did the deal in the back ring. I was just buying him, at that time, we weren't training racehorses."

Thomas on Catholic Boy's week of training before the Travers: "I changed up a little bit, knowing he would get the trip. I really kept him fresh the last seven days, we jogged him a lot, cantered a little bit, gave him a paddock school, he didn't gallop over



Tod Marks

three quarters of a mile, just to keep him sharp so he would break."

Thomas about indelible races: "When you're young, they meld. My most vivid race was Ferdinand winning the (Kentucky) Derby, like vivid. Birdstone was my most memorable (Travers). I was trying to ride. I think I was leaving here to go to work for Jack, or maybe I was starting to work for Clement. I watched it from the backside, I got out of my car, I didn't care that it was raining, I remember hearing them come around the turn."

LaPenta on his history with the Travers: "I started coming here when I was 18 or 19. I've seen some great Travers. We've had some ups and downs, we got close with The Cliff's Edge. The most difficult year was when...I would buy some horses in the sale, sell some, pinhook. To this day, I don't know how I did it, whenever I think about it, I say, 'I wasn't drinking that day.' I don't know what happened, I sold Stay Thirsty to Mike Repole. When he ran in the Travers that day (in 2011), that's the only Travers I missed since I'm 18 years old. That was a low. That was a low."

LaPenta on dealing with that low: "It's life, sometimes the harder you fall, the harder it is to get up, but the stronger you are to move forward and that's what I did. What that represents today is what life is all about. This horse is a blue-collar horse that nobody really thought a lot about, what he's got is heart and determination. I've had more horses than I care to admit, but The Cliff's Edge and him, they're two of my greatest horses, ever. And I've had some good ones, War Pass, Dialed In, it's been unbelievable. Keep fighting. Blue collar. My father never made more than \$50 a week. The Lord was good to me. Fought hard. Fought hard. This was not a gift. This was hard work. But in the end, God allowed this to happen. That's why I say, take me to church."

Castellano: "He won a Grade 1 on the grass in New York, then you put him on the dirt and he wins the Travers, can you imagine how good is the horse? You can do anything you want with him, you want to go to the lead, you can go to the lead, you want to take him back, you can take him back. Working him every time built a lot of confidence, you know what you have in your hands, when I warmed him up, I was like, 'This is my track.' Just the way he warmed up, he came out of there, boom, like a rocket. I was in control all the way."

Castellano on six Travers wins: "Bernardini was pushbutton. Fleet Express, he was OK. I won on Stay Thirsty, you had to pedal, you had to pedal, he was not pushbutton, you had to work hard, I think we got lucky, the right place, the right time. Then V. E. Day, I don't know where it came from, I was too far back and got there. Keen Ice, nobody could beat American Pharoah, thinking be third or fourth, we got lucky. This horse, man, he's a good horse. (Knocks wood). Keep your fingers crossed, keep him healthy and you might see anything."

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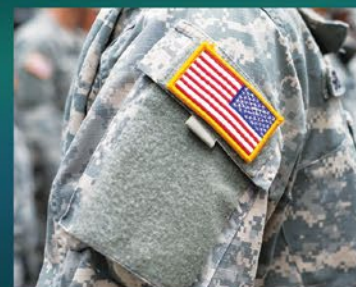


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