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The **Times** *Steeplechase*

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Friday, March 16, 2012

Rise & Shine

New season dawns for jump racing

INSIDE: 2012 Previews • Detailed Horse Rosters • Pick Six Entry Form

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here&there... in Steeplechasing



Lydia A. Williams

Lip Service. Timber champion Bon Caddo snags a carrot from a friend during some down time at Belmont Farm. The My Lady's Manor and Virginia Gold Cup winner has also been known to walk into the tack room to say hello.

Worth Repeating

"She's neurotic, but that's my job."

Jockey Richard Boucher, describing a maiden filly

"Make sure you don't pick me. Not even for third."

Trainer Brienne Slater about ST's habit of picking Tax Ruling when he loses and not picking him when he wins

"My hero."

Description for Triple Dip on Jimmy Day's horse roster (written by wife Emily)

"I'm exhausted. They're not."

Trainer Janet Elliot, on how her string was doing two weeks before Aiken

"Wherever Paddy (Young) wants to ride him."

Trainer Jack Fisher, on where Delta Park was running this spring

"It sold out faster than either one of us can run a marathon."

Ryan Clancy to his uncle, after failing to sign up in time for the Marine Corps Marathon

"He's an improving 11-year-old."

Owner/trainer Karen Gray of Cuse, winner of three races in 2011

"I've got a couple who might make the transition — if I get to work on them."

Trainer Chuck Lawrence when asked if he had any jumpers

"Arrrgggghhhh. From the curmudgeon who still doesn't have a computer at home."

Longtime Steeplechase Times reader Kent McKeever on ST's new publishing schedule (sorry)

"Very lively — and that's putting it mildly."

Jockey's mother Hazel Rafter, on what young Carl was like as a child

"The hunt is meeting here today, they say 150 cyclists are going to come through after noon, I've had one loose horse, the Steeplechase Times is here and it's only 8:30. Can you tell him to call me back in a little bit?"

Assistant trainer Jim Bergen, into his telephone, on a typically busy morning at trainer Jonathan Sheppard's barn

"It's Disney training — you've got to use your imagination."

Bergen, on the varied gallops, tracks and jogging paths available at Sheppard's

"The good news for him was he had a partner in that horse, me."

Trainer and co-owner Jack Fisher, about canceling a \$250,000 charter flight to England for Henry Stern's timber great Saluter in the 1990s

"He's in training, I see him out and about."

Maryland horseman Bruce Fenwick, on trainer Ann Stewart's somewhat mysterious timber horse Incomplete

"We couldn't afford the van ride for him so he stayed."

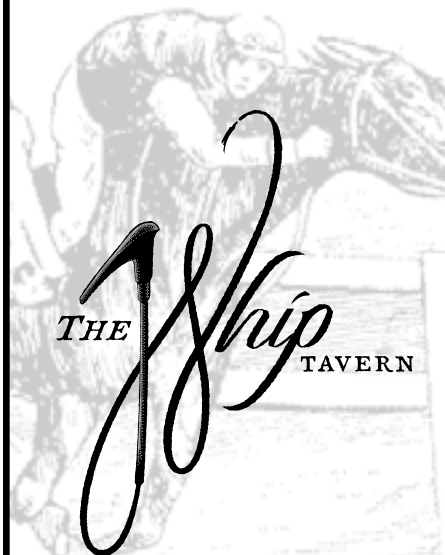
Jonathan Sheppard on Dugan, the trainer's only steeplechaser in Camden

Names of the Month

Trappe D'Or: The 3-year-old is owned and was bred by Bruce Smart, who lives on Trappe Road.

Noel T: Eldon Farm's 4-year-old filly, a winner at Charles Town in February, honors the memory legendary horseman Noel Twyman.

GALLOP POLL



Steeplechase devotees prefer The Whip by overwhelming margins.

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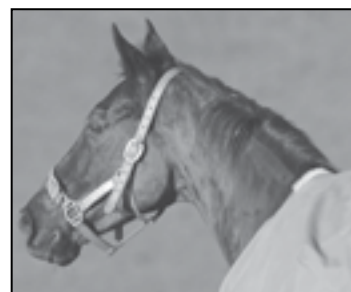
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Entries

What's Happening and Where To Find It

Here's your newspaper. We turn the calendar to 19 years with the first edition of 2012. As usual, she was a little reluctant to load but it's all good now. Forty pages of news, stories, previews, lists and so on to get you started for the 2012 steeplechase season. The point-to-points are already off and running with Aiken kicking off the NSA calendar March 24.



PAGES 8-12

Stakes, Well Done

Black Jack Blues, Tax Ruling, Decoy Daddy, Arcadius, Divine Fortune are all back for another season. Slip Away awaits the autumn. We catch up with them and some new shooters in the sport's elite division. On the distaff side, Sweet Shani returns for her final season.



PAGES 14-17

Lumber Men

The timber veterans return to the fields with lofty goals – the Maryland Hunt Cup, the Virginia Gold Cup or someplace else – for spring. Bon Caddo and Private Attack, 1-2 in 2011, show the way.



PAGES 18-20

Gone, Not Forgotten

Obituaries. Steeplechasing says goodbye to several legends including Mignon Smith, Henry Stern, Skip Cochran, Michael O'Brien and timber great Buck Jakes.



PAGE 24

Day Planner

A complete spring calendar with NSA and point-to-points from now until June.



PAGES 26-34

Listing

We scoured the barns, checked with the office, studied the overnights and came up with a slew of names for your short lists in 2012. Find your favorites and make sure you play the Pick Six (see page 38).

The Steeplechase Times

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*Subject to change

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On the Cover

Camden's Springdale looks stately in this early morning training shot on the training track.

Photo by
Jamey Price



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– Richard Valentine, NSF board member
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Champion Black Jack Blues brings an unbeaten American record into 2012.

Lydia A. Williams

Act Two

After record-setting 2011 season, Naylor, Delozier aim for an encore

J.W. Delozier paused a beat and thought about the question: Is it a tough act to follow?

"I'm not worried about it, we'll take it one weekend at a time and we'll give them all a chance," the trainer said. "Everybody is doing well. We've had a mild winter. It's great to have so many nice horses."

Delozier took a private training job with Irv Naylor in September and turned it into a fall season which included six wins in 21 starts and pushed Naylor to an NSA record \$719,725 in seasonal earnings.

The 2012 string includes 2011 Eclipse Award winner Black Jack Blues, championship finalist Decoy Daddy, novice champion Lake Placid, recent European addition Nearby and a host of promising maidens. Like all trainers who stayed north, the Maryland-based squad enjoyed a mild winter and should arrive in form for the spring.

Black Jack Blues blazed into the country last fall, winning the restricted Dot Smithwick at Virginia Fall and dominating the year's best field in the Grand National at Far Hills. Delozier scratched the Irish-bred from the Colonial Cup in November due to a cough, then watched his charge win the Eclipse Award as champion steeplechaser in January. Black Jack Blues will start his season at the Carolina Cup March 31, bidding to remain unbeaten in his new home.

"Last fall, we might have had a problem if I had run him before I knew he got sick. I had to scratch," Delozier said. "It was just bad timing. He's 100 percent now, put on some more muscle, gotten bigger. He went through a lot to

STAKES DIVISION PREVIEW

get here last fall and he had a long campaign last year, when you look at it. The break has done him some good. You should see him quite a few times."

Delozier and Naylor briefly considered a start in Japan's rich Nakayama Grand Jump in April, but opted to pass in favor of a spring campaign here – commencing in the Carolina Cup and including the Iroquois in May.

"I think you'll see Black Jack Blues there," Delozier said. "It's the only Grade I of the spring and he did win the Eclipse Award. I'm not scared of the 3 miles at all with him. It should be a showdown with Tax Ruling."

Delozier could have two for the Carolina Cup as Nearby joins the stable from England. The 8-year-old has won five times over hurdles and was trained in his home country by Rebecca Curtis, who trained Black Jack Blues. Nearby has already run twice this year, checking in 12th of 14 (under Ross Geraghty) at Cheltenham in January and fifth behind the classy Binocular at Wincanton in February. Curtis recently had a winner at the Cheltenham Festival with Tea-forthree.

Decoy Daddy gets his fourth trainer in less than two years, moving to Delozier's yard for the 2012 season after racing in Ireland with Tony Mullins and making American starts for Desmond Fogarty in 2010 and Tom Foley in 2011. A second stringer in Naylor's barn only, the chestnut Irish import owns four American stakes wins and

See **PREVIEW** page 8 ►

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will be heard from later in the spring.
Lake Placid will compete in the novice division once again, and is aiming for Atlanta, though he's also still eligible for starter allowance races.
Delozer purchased Plattsburgh, a half-brother to Lake Placid, who will see action in maiden hurdle races. The son of Bernardini won twice on the flat in England. The Naylor maiden division also includes Black Quartz, third for Curtis over hurdles in England and third for Delozer at the Colonial Cup last year.

— Joe Clancy

Slater targets Iroquois triple play with Naylor veteran Tax Ruling

A year ago, Brianne Slater knew Tax Ruling like the rest of us knew Tax Ruling.
Big, tough son of Dynaformer, winner of the 2010 Iroquois, distance specialist, steady jumper, future timber horse, owned by Irv Naylor, trained by Desmond Fogarty.
A year later, Slater knows Tax Ruling as her own. Last spring, Naylor fired Fogarty and dispersed his string of horses to several trainers. Slater was handed Tax Ruling.
Gulp.
Slater didn't hesitate, sending out Tax Ruling to win a flat race at Fairfax Point-to-Point and wheeling him back to defend his Iroquois title. The Phipps-bred 8-year-old snapped a four-race losing streak by outstaying Horse of the Year Slip Away. Slater got a check for \$9,000 and some relief, but, still this wasn't her Tax Ruling. She spit-polished him, organized it, but the canvas already had paint on it, she just touched it up.
Put away for the summer, Tax Ruling came back



Tod Marks

Tax Ruling eyes a third consecutive victory in the Grade I Iroquois for the powerful Irv Naylor stable.

for a fall campaign, one that Slater was in full control of – win or lose – this was her project, her signature in the bottom corner.
Gulp.
Tax Ruling failed to show up for the Grand National, pulling up a mile behind Naylor's Black Jack Blues who led all the way to push his U.S. record to 2-for-2. Slater regrouped and sent Tax Ruling to the Colonial Cup where he routed 10 rivals (Black Jack Blues stayed home) for his second Grade I score of the year.

There is pressure training for Naylor's often-changing stable and Slater felt it. Winning the Colonial Cup offered a sliver of air to the boiling pot.
“With Tax Ruling, it was like, ‘You won the Iroquois but it was off of Desmond's training.’ Nobody said that, but I know that's how it was, I only had the horse a month, so it was nice to win a race that was on me,” Slater said. “Going into the Iroquois, I didn't

See *PREVIEW* page 10 ►

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Preview —

■ Continued from page 8

have to get him fit, just keep him happy, I was just ticking him over. Going into the Colonial Cup, if he didn't run well, I couldn't blame anybody else, it was all me. It's still amazing, such a cool feeling to win a race like that."

With a string of five jumpers stabled off Wilson Road in Unionville, Pa., Slater knows there is only one big horse and, as of March 9, the big horse sat squarely on target.

His schedule aimed for flat races at Warrenton and Fairfax Point-to-Points and another swing at the Iroquois.

"He's great, sharper than ever," Slater said. "Every once in a while, I get this brave idea that I'm going to ride him so I rode him yesterday and came back and said, 'I'm never riding this horse again.' He gets to be a little too much, he likes to buck, he roots, he's pretty intimidating when he gets like that."

Slater might be intimidated riding him but she hasn't shown any weakness in training him.

Tax Ruling stayed with Slater and her husband James after the Colonial Cup, went home to Naylor's farm for a few weeks before returning to the Slater's at the end of December.

Slater was nerve-wracked to see him depart, ecstatic to see him return and comfortable in designing a plan that would take him from his first day of road work through an attempt at winning his third consecutive Iroquois.

"Everybody who has seen him thinks he looks fitter than usual, he's one of those horses who carries a lot of conditioning," Slater said. "Last year, it was like, 'Here's Tax Ruling, have him ready for the Iroquois.' It's definitely better to have him the whole time, you know the ins and outs of him. You know a little bit more about him, what you can do and what you can't do."

Slater has learned that Tax Ruling will tip his hand when things are good and fold his hand when things are bad. He makes you train him correctly, as opposed to some horses who don't respond to anything.

If Tax Ruling is going through the motions, she's missing something.

Looking back on it, Tax Ruling was dull going into the Grand National and sharp going into the Colonial Cup. Easier said than done sometimes, but that's the key to him.

"He's easy to train but at the same time, he's tricky because he's got to be happy, if he's not feeling it, you're not doing it right, he's got to go out there dragging you, bucking and playing, if he's not doing that, something's wrong, you need to change it up, fix it," Slater said. "The main thing with him is keeping him happy. Lonesome Nun, for instance, she is who she is, she's the same horse every day, no matter what you do with her, but with him, you can get him happy, if he's bucking and squealing, you know you're doing all right."

So far, he's bucking and squealing.

— Sean Clancy



Nolan Clancy
My Prospect City (left, Frank Steall), Slice Of Gold (center, Sarah Thomas) and Italian Wedding (Alex McKee) pause before a gallop at Jonathan Sheppard's barn.

Sheppard stable spends winter in Pennsylvania

Trainer Jonathan Sheppard left nearly all of his steeplechasers in Pennsylvania for the winter, using 24 stalls added to the training barn last year and lucking into some mild conditions.

Though he's not planning a huge early campaign, Sheppard won't be behind schedule because of weather.

"The people that stayed north should be ahead of schedule now compared to some years," he said. "It used to take horses a race or two to get fit and they'd reach their peak later. It gives the northern horses an advantage later in the year. It seems like what Tom Voss does a lot, and his horses end up ready for Saratoga and the summer. I'm not sure he plans it that way, just the way it happens."

Stakes players Divine Fortune and Arcadius lead the way and must be respected.

See **PREVIEW** page 12 ►

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Preview —
■ Continued from page 10

They finished second and third behind Tax Ruling in the Colonial Cup in November. The Iroquois is the chief goal for 2012, though either could turn up earlier as a prep for the big Grade I. Divine Fortune excels at Saratoga and has won the last two runnings for the A.P. Smithwick Memorial for owner Bill Pape. Hudson River Farm's Arcadius missed the first half of 2011 and will be better for the action he saw last fall. "They're our two best horses," said Sheppard. "They had a good winter."

Exercise rider Keri Brion oversaw the bulk of the steeplechase string for Sheppard, whose South Carolina base at Springdale Race Course was occupied by flat horses this year. Brion likes what she's seen from the Pennsylvania string, which includes other stakes competitors Nationbuilder, Sermon Of Love, Italian Wedding and a few other veterans.

Across Route 926 from the training barn at Sheppard's, longtime assistant Jim Bergen runs another string for Sheppard. The group includes most of the farm's fillies/mares, plus a few others headed to steeplechase and flat starts this year. Sweet Shani, champion filly/mare of 2011, leads the pack and knows it.

"She rules the roost," Bergen said of the New Zealand-bred.

Sheppard will enjoy Mary Ann Houghland's mare for one more season as she will be retired at the end of 2012 due to the NSA age limit of 12.

"She's a nice old mare, great to be around," said the trainer. "I don't like the rule, but this will be her last year. They could have said 'After the age of 12, we MAY refuse an entry' or something to that effect. I won't take a stand and I know what they're trying to do, but it seems like they've locked themselves into something."

Sweet Shani won twice in 2011 – at the Iroquois and at Far Hills and enters 2012 with more than \$300,000 in career jump earnings (in Australia and the United



Defending champion filly or mare Sweet Shani returns at age 12 for trainer Jonathan Sheppard.

States). Sheppard has the two big ones circled again. She just had her second workout of the off-season and "went rather well" as Sheppard put it.

— Joe Clancy

Slip Away waits for fall as Voss aims to defend training crown

Defending champion trainer Tom Voss has decided to wait on 2010 champion Slip Away.

The 10-time winner made two starts in 2011, finishing second in the Iroquois and fourth in the A. P. Smithwick before injuring a ligament behind his knee while training at Saratoga.

Owned by Ken and Sarah Ramsey, Slip Away will aim at a fall campaign.

"We had a conversation with the owner, should we bring him back now for the Iroquois or bring him back in the summer for the fall. He hemmed and hawed and finally decided that he's going to just run in the fall. Just didn't seem like any point to get him ready for one race in the spring, because I know what's going to happen then, he'll want to run him in the summer. It makes sense for the horse."

A distance and hunt meet specialist, Slip Away finished second in the Grand National and won the Colonial Cup on the way to the Eclipse Award for the 2010 season. Last year's season ended early, but the gray son of Skip Away will aim for Grade I tries in the Grand National and Colonial Cup this fall.

"He's turned out. He scans perfect," Voss said. "The ligament behind his knee ruptured a little bit. He's fine. The best shot for him is the fall. It's a long year."

Voss downplayed his chances of defending his training crown.

"The good horses I'm going to wait until Saratoga, there will be a lot of money up there. Dynaski had colic surgery twice, hopefully he'll come back for Saratoga. I don't know what else is out there but I guess they'll show up somewhere. We've had a good winter, but we don't have much, just a bunch of horses, same old ones, tried to buy a bunch of horses but none of them passed the vet. We'll see what happens."

— Sean Clancy



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Photo by Douglas Lees

Early Returns

Timber horses gear up for traditional big tests

BY JOE CLANCY

When the Maryland Hunt Cup created an early nomination process for 2012, the idea was to spur a bit of interest and get horsemen thinking of the world's most important timber race a bit earlier than usual.

Consider it a sound decision.

At closing, 23 horses filled the early nomination box at the NSA – headed by 2011 race winner Private Attack and 2011 overall timber champion Bon Caddo. The group also includes 2010 Hunt Cup winner Twill Do, multiple timber champion Bubble Economy and a host of other classy individuals (see page 17 for the complete list).

The race, to be run April 28, likely won't produce a match-up of Bon Caddo and Private Attack, who finished 1-2 in the timber standings last season. While the latter appears headed to Glyndon to defend, the former will most likely stick to the 2011 schedule of a start at My Lady's Manor April 14 and then the Virginia Gold Cup May 5.



Lydia A. Williams

Virginia Gold Cup winner Bon Caddo gets some practice at Bruce Fenwick's farm in Maryland.

Bon Caddo won both races in 2011 and is ideally suited to the 4-mile Gold Cup course at Great Meadow.

"We nominated to the Hunt Cup, but I still think he's a better horse in the Gold Cup," said Bruce Fenwick, who assists Dawn Williams in Bon Caddo's training. "He's good right now, really good and on schedule. He worked twice on the hill at Andre Brew-

ster's. We'll probably start out at Piedmont (point-to-point) March 24 and then go the Manor."

Bon Caddo is without a jockey at the moment as Blair Wyatt does not plan to ride this year. Next in line Jody Petty is committed to riding for trainer Sanna Hendriks. Chris Read is the likely partner for the

See *TIMBER* page 17 ►



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Forest Bell (William Russell, Simon Hobson)

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STEEPLECHASE HORSE OF THE YEAR

Decoy Daddy (Irv Naylor)

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2012 VSA Spring Schedule

March 17 (540) 219-1400	Warrenton Point-to-Point Airlie Race Course, Warrenton
March 24 (540) 592-7100	Piedmont Point-to-Point Salem Course, Upperville
March 25 (434) 531-2443	Bull Run Point-to-Point Brandywine Park, Culpeper
April 1 (540) 687-5552	Orange County Point-to-Point Locust Hill Farm, Middleburg
April 7 (540) 364-4573	Old Dominion Point-to-Point Ben Venue Farm, Ben Venue
April 15 (703) 777-8480	Loudoun Hunt Point-to-Point Oatlands, Leesburg
April 21 (540) 687-6545	Middleburg Spring Races Glenwood Park, Middleburg
April 22 (540) 687-0611	Fairfax Hunt Point-to-Point Morven Park, Leesburg
April 28 (434) 293-9501	Foxfield Spring Race Meet Foxfield Race Course, Charlottesville
April 29 (540) 687-6069	Middleburg Hunt Point-to-Point Glenwood Park, Middleburg
May 5 (540) 347-2612	Virginia Gold Cup Race Meet Great Meadow, The Plains
June 2 (804) 994-2800	Strawberry Hill Races Colonial Downs, New Kent

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Virginia-owned Horse of the Year Demonstrative

Tod Marks 2

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2011 — Oh What a Year!

Eclipse Award Winner

Black Jack Blues

Novice Champion

Lake Placid

Eclipse Award Finalists

*Tax Ruling
Decoy Daddy*

NSA Owner Championship

*16 steeplechase wins
New earnings record*

Black Jack Blues



2011 NSA Leading Owner
Irvin S. Naylor

*Best of luck to all
in the 2012 season*

See you at the races

**Thanks to the team who
helped make it all happen,
and here's to an encore in 2012.**

Photo by Tod Marks

Timber —

■ Continued from page 14

defending timber champion, who won \$73,500 in 2011.

Private Attack nearly caught Bon Caddo for the timber crown last year, riding big paydays in the Grand National and Hunt Cup to \$65,300 in earnings for Sportsman's Hall and trainer Alicia Murphy. The nearly black 13-year-old was among the names in the Foxhall Farm team race under Mark Beecher.

Arcadia Stable's Bubble Economy missed 2011 while recuperating from a tendon injury and tries to pad his \$434,000 bankroll. The three-time champion was among the Hunt Cup nominees, but has shown an affinity for the Gold Cup with two wins and a second in that stakes. Stablemate Delta Park won the New Jersey Hunt Cup last season and is back for more.

Bob Kinsley's Incomplete won the 2011 International Gold Cup and turned in strong efforts in the Grand National and New Jersey Hunt Cup for trainer Ann Stewart. The veteran was not among the Hunt Cup nominees, but is in training and would be tough to handle in a variety of spots.

Virginia-based Aero came to life as a timber horse last year and turned up in the entries for Warrenton Point-to-Point March 17. Trained by Doug Fout for All Griffin, Aero would seem to be a Virginia Gold Cup contender.

Trainer Sanna Hendriks will return with South Monarch, who won the 2010 Manor and chased Bon Caddo home in last year's version.

Early nominations to the Maryland Hunt Cup timber stakes, to be run April 28 at Glyn-don, Md.:

Horse	Owner	Trainer
And The Eagle Flies	Jean Class	Billy Meister
Battle Op	Northwoods Stable	Lilli Kurtinecz
Bon Caddo	Merriemfield Farm	Dawn Williams
Brands Hatch	Kick On Stable	Teddy Mulligan
Bubble Economy	Arcadia Stable	Jack Fisher
Delta Park	Arcadia Stable	Jack Fisher
Fort Henry	Joe Davies	Blythe Davies
Foyle	Merriemfield Farm	Dawn Williams
Haddix	Armata Stable	Kathy Neilson
Hold Your Fire	The Fields Stable	Tom Voss
Justpourit	Lucy Stable	Richard Valentine
Major Malibu	Ann Stern	Jack Fisher
Monte Bianco	Mrs. Arthur Arundel	Jack Fisher
More Fascination	Rosbrian Farm	Tara Elmore
Private Attack	Sportsman's Hall	Alicia Murphy
Professor Maxwell	Jacqueline Ohrstrom	Richard Valentine
Prospectors Strike	Jeremy Batoff	Jack Fisher
Scuba Steve	Perry Bolton	Kathy Neilson
Shiny Emblem	Arcadia Stable	Jack Fisher
Twill Do	Lucy Goelet	Billy Meister
Vinnie Boy	Adair Bonsal Stifel	Jack Fisher
Voler Bar Nuit	Jean Class	Billy Meister
Volle Nolle	Northwoods Stable	Lilli Kurtinecz

Trainer Richard Valentine's timber string includes quality players Professor Maxwell, Justpourit and Radio Flyer.

NOTES: Though the situation is typically fluid, jockey availability could affect timber horses as — in addition to Wyatt — amateurs Blythe Miller Davies and Charlie Fenwick III are supposedly not riding this spring.

Maryland Hunt Cup Early Nominations

Classifieds

For Sale

Timber Horse/Foxhunter/
Campaigner: Brands' Hatch.

11-year-old gelding. A.P. Indy-Watch Out by Mr. Prospector. Second in International Gold Cup Steeplechase in 2011. Hunted with Piedmont this season. In training now for spring point-to-points and NSA timber races. Sound. Good hunter. Call Dan Haney at (571) 286-6245.

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Stern got into racing on somewhat of a lark. He had attended the Strawberry Hill Races in Richmond for years. He

Stern's first horse, Caronee, won in 1991 and the hook was set. Stern's horses – running in his wife Ann's name – went on to earn just shy of \$2 million in American steeplechase races. Four-time timber champion Saluter led the way with \$429,489, not including a \$100,000 bonus and English purse money for winning the short-lived World Timber Championship of the Virginia Gold Cup and Marlborough Cup in Britain. Saluter dominated timber racing during his career, which lasted from 1993-2000, but was especially good in the Gold Cup. He won the 4-mile race

Stern was born in 1923 in Richmond and graduated from Dartmouth College. He served in the Navy during World War II and joined his family's millinery business, The Kaufman Company. Later, with partner Dave Arenstein, he launched the development business. In addition to racing, Stern was involved with hunting, fishing and golf, Labrador retriever trials, topiary, bonsai, Chinese export porcelain and

For more on Henry Stern, see column on page 36.

See **OBITUARIES** page 20 ►

Obituaries —

■ Continued from page 18

new business. Despite his career with one of the country's leading developers, Cochran championed land preservation and helped found the Land Preservation Trust (which created the Shawan Downs steeplechase course and equestrian facility) and the Maryland Association for Wildlife Conservation.

Mr. Cochran foxhunted regularly with Green Spring Valley Hounds and lived in Reisterstown with his wife Evelyn (Jeep) Cochran.

In addition to the horses and the outdoors, Mr. Cochran served on the board of Garrison Forest School in Baltimore County and was a senior warden of St. John's Church in Reisterstown, Md.

Former jockey Michael O'Brien

Former champion jump jockey Michael O'Brien died in Ireland late last year at age 68.

O'Brien rode regularly for trainer Jonathan Sheppard in the 1970s and was champion jockey in 1972. He rode such standouts as Athenian Idol, Cafe Prince and Wustenchf among others.

O'Brien was paralyzed in a fall at the 1974 Carolina Cup, and became a trainer. He won the Mackeson Gold Cup and Hennessy Gold Cup with Bright Highway in 1980. He trained three winners of the Irish Grand National – King Spruce, Vanton and Glebe Lad – and won races at the Cheltenham Festival and other big English and Irish meets. He retired as a trainer in 2009.

His brother Leo also rode on the NSA circuit and is a trainer in New York.



Mignon Smith

Tod Marks

Remembering Mignon Smith

Richard and Lilith Boucher began working with Mignon Smith's Mede Cahaba Stable nearly 20 years ago. It started out with a horse or two, retreats and after-thoughts, it evolved into a brigade of homebreds who wound up winning big races – 3-year-old stakes and novice stakes especially. Mede Cahaba finished fifth in the owner standings in 2011 while Lilith finished tied for sixth in the trainer standings and Richard cracked the top five on the jockey table.

Smith died this winter. For now, the stable will continue with the likes of two-time novice stakes winner Complete Zen, Class Brahms and Class Indian leading the way.

Steeplechase Times caught up with Richard Boucher about Smith's legacy.

I met her when I first came to America, working for Patti Miller 20 years ago, she used to come up to Vince Dugan's and she would give me riding lessons on how to sit over the top of them over a fence. When Lilith and I branched out on our own, she always wanted me to ride but it seemed like there was always a conflict, we always had a maiden and all hers were maidens.

She sent us two horses, that was about 18 years ago and we were together ever since, we went from two horses, to 15 to 25, I think we had 30 at one point, she's been a big part of our growing stages, if it wasn't for her, we would have been struggling a lot. She was always up to try new technology, treadmills, things they were doing at New Bolton, she was always game to try anything new that might make a difference, grass growing machines, she was quite amazing really.

All of us learned together, we were young and keen, she had other people working for her, we were like, 'Sure, we'll try it, we've got nothing to lose, we might have something to gain.' The breeding she did with her own style. Her stallion, Class Secret, might have held her up some, she was so hoping that horse would produce something but he never really did. He got hurt and had to be put down, she started breeding to outside stallions and improved her stock.

She had bred all the mares to him, the new ones were too related so she couldn't breed to him, they had gone full circle. Then it seemed like the better bred ones came out and started running better.

It's a total change. It's hard, you're always waiting for the phone to ring, she was pretty abrupt on the phone. If you couldn't give her a good answer, she would just hang up on you. Then call back two hours later. It was no arguing, she liked it done her way and that was that.

To not have that person behind you is hard, now we're flying out in the wide open, hopefully we can carry on and have some luck, I'm hoping there will be the same interest. The amount of time and interest she put into the Virginia-breds and Colonial Downs, she was always on them about this and about that. She was willing to donate her money to help it.

It was all her own ideas on breeding, she didn't have any agents or anybody selling her anything, she had the true homebreds. Lilith worked hard, after the family of generations, you get to figure out what the problems are and different ways to treat different problems. In the early days, we were getting the throwbacks from everybody else, they had already gone through the mill. It worked better when we got them as yearlings, 2-year-olds, she would listen to us, like with the 2-year-olds, instead of pushing, pushing, pushing, 'let's send this one back to the farm at Red Oak, let it grow up and come back as a 3-year-old, to mature and get over some niggling problems.' That's the thing we did with a lot of the 3-year-olds, we'd break them in, they're big and gangly, they'll jump some logs and rolls, then get thrown out again and don't do anything during the 2-year-old winter time, just eat and grow, hopefully.

It was a shame last fall we couldn't grab a couple more winners to keep her in the top 3, she had never been in that sort of situation. I'm glad she did have some success and did win some stakes for her mares, they were a force to be reckoned with after a while.

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Black Jack Blues wins Eclipse Award as champ

British import Black Jack Blues secured the Eclipse Award for champion steeplechase horse in 2011. Owned by Irv Naylor, trained by J.W. Delozier and ridden by Ross Geraghty, the Irish-bred son of Definite Article won the Dot Smithwick and the Grand National in an undefeated American fall campaign. Black Jack Blues bested an all-Naylor Eclipse nominee card, downing Colonial Cup winner Tax Ruling and Noel Laing winner Decoy Daddy. The official vote tally (first-place votes only) went Black Jack Blues 137, Tax Ruling 80. Four horses received one first-place vote each and 27 voters abstained.

STEEPLECHASE NEWS

Saratoga to host fall meet

Racing fans get a bonus from Saratoga Race Course and steeplechasing in 2012 with the inaugural Steeplechase Festival at Saratoga, a day of racing and activities set for Saturday, Sept. 15. Proceeds from the first annual Steeplechase Festival at Saratoga will benefit local and equine charities. The New York Racing Association and National Steeplechase Association will team up for this event, which is planned to include steeplechase and flat racing. In addition, Saratoga's famed infield will be accessible for the first time in more than 30 years, for sponsor and entertainment activities under corporate tents providing an exclusive, intimate view of the races.

The Steeplechase Festival at Saratoga will present at least five races, four of them over hurdles and carrying purses totaling \$100,000. The feature race will be the \$50,000 Saratoga Steeplechase Cup. In addition to the thrill of the non-pari-mutuel races, other festivities will include music, equine exhibitions and shows, a 5K walk/run on the famous Saratoga Race Course, celebrities, an authentic barbecue along with other food selections, special carriage rides on the dirt race track, vendor village, and much more. As is the tradition at the Spa, a free giveaway is planned for all paid admissions. The Steeplechase Festival at Saratoga will wrap up a busy summer of world-class horse racing in Saratoga Springs.

The season kicks-off with the Open House, the NYRA-sponsored Sunday afternoon of racing and activities for community members on Sunday, July 15. A committee of community leaders, including the Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce and the Saratoga Convention and Tourism Bureau, is at work planning the details of this inaugural Steeplechase Festival at Saratoga. The event will include one-of-a-kind sponsorships and entertainment opportunities, plus the festival's charitable beneficiaries will be announced in the very near future. A website, promotional and sponsorship opportunities brochures will be developed over the coming months with all the important information about this new and unique celebration. In addition, there is a pre-event party being planned for the evening of Friday, Sept. 14 to be held at the National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame. For information, contact Barry Potoker at (518) 366-0946 or bpotoker@nycap.rr.com or Bob Giordano at (518) 527-1496 or giordanorj@aol.com.

Strawberry Hill card set for June at Colonial Downs

The Strawberry Hill Races, long a mid-spring tradition on the NSA calendar, moved its 2012 racing date to June 2 and will be run in conjunction with opening day at Colonial Downs racetrack in New Kent, Va. The racing day features five steeplechase races, headed by the \$50,000 Zeke Ferguson Memorial stakes and several flat races. Pari-mutuel wagering will be conducted and all races are sanctioned by the Virginia Racing Commission.

Morven Park closes gate

The Morven Park Races, run in October for 32 years, were shelved by the Westmoreland Davis Memorial Foundation in a decision made late last year. The move was "financial" according to reports and part of an overall new plan for the property near Leesburg, Va. The plan includes trail systems, easier access, sports/recreation fields and other equestrian facilities besides steeplechasing.

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Memories

Md. Hunt Cup hero Buck Jakes dies at 24

BY JOE CLANCY

Two-time Maryland Hunt Cup winner Buck Jakes – whose racing career included victories on the flat, over hurdles and over timber – was put down Jan. 4 after a bout with colic. The gray son of Turkoman was 24 and had been a foxhunter and much-loved retiree in Maryland since his racing career ended in 2000.

"You don't have a clue how much they mean until they end up going away," said Charlie Fenwick Jr., who trained the Kentucky-bred and cared for him in retirement. "He had been part of the family for 20 years. His racing career was a wonderful time and it was the same way after he retired. He always sort of stood out. If he was out in the field, you saw Jake first. He had a way of carrying his head, he was special."

Buck Jakes won 18 of his 77 lifetime starts. The first came at Arlington Park in 1990 and he broke his maiden at Keeneland that fall. Three subsequent flat victories came through 1992, when he was sold as a steeplechase prospect. Racing for the Arcadia Stable partnership of Andre Brewster, Skip Cochran and Ike Iglehart, Buck Jakes won twice over hurdles but hinted at timber potential.

"He wasn't fast enough to win a 2-mile hurdle race and jump well," Fenwick said. "When you slowed it down, his jumping became bulletproof and he became braver and more courageous."

Over the longer distances and more demanding fences, he thrived – winning his first two in 1993 and

adding two stakes the next season.

Fenwick aimed high and headed for the storied Hunt Cup in 1995. Buck Jakes, with Anne Moran aboard, not only won but set a course record in edging Florida Law by a nose in one of the historic race's great stretch battles. Buck Jakes added the International Gold Cup and Pennsylvania Hunt Cup that fall – handing eventual timber champion Saluter his only defeat of the year in the former.

Buck Jakes added another Pennsylvania Hunt Cup in 1996, which led to a 1997 campaign that included just two American starts – wins in the Grand National and Maryland Hunt Cup. Buck Jakes went to England with hopes on an attempt at the fabled Grand National at Aintree, a la Fenwick's former charge Ben Nevis II (who used American success as a springboard to an upset score, and worldwide acclaim, in the 1980 race). It wasn't meant to be as Buck Jakes did not adapt to English racing, never beating a horse in four tries over chase fences in 1997 and 1998. He returned to win a third timber Grand National in April 1998, but lost his final 10 starts. Retired in 2000, he left racing with \$321,318 in career earnings – more than \$258,000 of it over fences.

"We took him to England and it didn't work," Fenwick said. "He got ulcers there and I don't know if he didn't like the feed or wasn't comfortable with something but didn't like any part of it over there. He would have loved the Aintree course though. I think you would have seen even more of that courage and bravery if he got there the way he needed to."



Douglas Lees
Buck Jakes (Anne Moran) touches down over a fence in the International Gold Cup.

Buck Jakes was ridden regularly up until the last six months of his life, by Fenwick, his wife Sherry, his children Charlie III, Beth and Emily and others in the hunting field or simply on the farm. Teenager Connor Hankin (born after Buck Jakes started racing) even used the old gray horse to get a feel for steeplechase racing.

"When you're active for as long as he was, as a racehorse and in retirement, you cross a lot of paths," said Fenwick. "Jake had a lot of friends. People fell in love with the horse."

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2012 Spring Steeplechase Schedule

See www.nationalsteeplechase.com for updates

March 24 Aiken Spring Aiken, SC. www.aikensteeplechase.com	May 6 Winterthur Wilmington, Del. www.winterthur.org	April 1 Brandywine West Chester, Pa. www.dvapt.com
March 31 Carolina Cup Camden, SC. www.carolina-cup.org	May 12 Iroquois Nashville, Tenn. www.mysteeplechase.com	April 1 Orange County Middleburg, Va. www.centralentryoffice.com
April 7 Stoneybrook Raeford, NC. www.carolinahorsepark.com	May 13 Willowdale Kennett Square, Pa. www.willowdale.org	April 7 Elkridge-Harford Monkton, Md. www.marylandsteeplehasing.com
April 14 Atlanta Kingston, Ga. www.atlantasteeplechase.org	May 19 Radnor Malvern, Pa. www.radnorhunraces.org	April 7 Old Dominion Ben Venue, Va. www.centralentryoffice.com
April 14 My Lady's Manor Monkton, Md. www.marylandsteeplechasing.com	May 20 High Hope Lexington, Ky. www.highhopesteeplechase.com	April 15 Loudoun Leesburg, Va. www.centralentryoffice.com
April 21 Block House Tryon, N.C. www.trhcevents.org	May 26 Fair Hill Fair Hill, Md. www.fairhillraces.org	April 22 Fair Hill Fair Hill, Md. www.dvapt.com
April 21 Grand National Butler, Md. www.marylandsteeplechasing.com	June 2 Strawberry Hill Colonial Downs. New Kent, Va. www.colonialdowns.com	April 22 Fairfax Leesburg, Va. www.centralentryoffice.com
April 21 Middleburg Spring Middleburg, Va. www.middleburgspringraces.com		April 29 Maryland Junior Hunt Cup Shawan Downs, Md. www.marylandsteeplehasing.com
April 28 Foxfield Spring Charlottesville, Va. www.foxfieldraces.com	March 24 Piedmont Upperville, Va. www.centralentryoffice.com	April 29 Middleburg Middleburg, Va. www.centralentryoffice.com
April 28 Maryland Hunt Cup Glyndon, Md. www.marylandsteeplechasing.com	March 25 Bull Run Culpeper, Va. www.centralentryoffice.com	May 5 Howard County Brookeville, Md. www.marylandsteeplehasing.com
April 28 Queen's Cup Mineral Springs, N.C. www.queenscup.org	March 25 Cheshire Unionville, Pa. www.dvapt.com	May 20 Potomac Seneca, Md. www.marylandsteeplehasing.com
May 5 Virginia Gold Cup The Plains, Va. www.vagoldcup.com	March 31 Green Spring Shawan Downs, Md. www.marylandsteeplehasing.com	

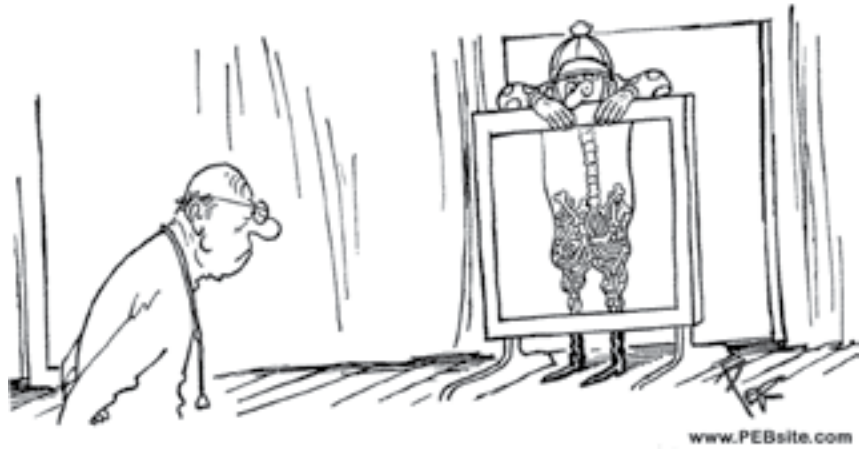
Point-to-Points



Steeplechase photo wins Eclipse

A photo from the A.P. Smithwick Memorial at Saratoga this summer won the Eclipse Award for photography in the 2011 contest presented by the National Thoroughbred Racing Association, Daily Racing Form and the National Turf Writers and Broadcasters. Photographer Bob Mayberger of Albany, N.Y., took the winner photo, a panoramic of Thoroughbreds jumping over a fence during the Grade II steeplechase stakes Aug. 4. The photo appeared on the Sports Illustrated Snapshot web site that same day. his is the first Eclipse Award for Mayberger, 58, a staff photographer for Eclipse Sportswire. Work by Mayberger and others at Eclipse regularly appears in Steeplechase Times.

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The List Servers

Here they are. Not quite every horse in training but a pretty good sampling from Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, South Carolina and so on. See you at the races. Obviously, horses can and will switch divisions but we’ve done our best to shake out a strong selection and present them in some sort of order based on relative ability and/or promise.

Use the rosters to help decide who’s on your Pick Six team (see page 38) and make sure you get your entry form in by the deadline.

HURDLE STAKES HORSES

Black Jack Blues

Irv Naylor J.W. Delozier
Champion, undefeated in the USA

Tax Ruling

Irv Naylor Brianne Slater
Two point-to-points, three-peat Iroquois?

All Together

Williams/Brewster Jack Fisher
Tough as they get, aiming at Camden

Demonstrative

Jacqueline Ohrstrom Richard Valentine
Tough, aiming at Queen’s Cup Novice

Slip Away

Ken and Sarah Ramsey Tom Voss
Champion missed most of 2011, aiming for fall

Organisateur

Irv Naylor J.W. Delozier
Second in Grand National, break should help

Decoy Daddy

Irv Naylor J.W. Delozier
Good when spotted the right way

Arcadius

Hudson River Farm Jonathan Sheppard
Still capable, especially with races under belt

Divine Fortune

Bill Pape Jonathan Sheppard
Veteran will win something big somewhere

Country Cousin

Oakwood Stable Julie Gomena
2-for-3 in 2011 stakes, off since summer

Lake Placid

Irv Naylor J.W. Delozier
Mercurial, still eligible for starters, novices

Italian Wedding

Jonathan Sheppard Jonathan Sheppard
Overachiever will earn checks along the way

Nationbuilder

Mary Ann Houghland Jonathan Sheppard
Stayer will probably return to Nashville

Class Zen

Mede Cahaba Stable Lilith Boucher
Another returning for tilt at Saratoga

Left Unsaid

The Fields Stable Tom Voss
Close in only start in 2011, Saratoga-bound

Nearby

Irv Naylor J.W. Delozier
English winner of five following in big footsteps

Mabou

Drawing Away Stable David Jacobson
Back from the farm, galloping at Aqueduct

Sermon Of Love

Bill Pape Jonathan Sheppard
Still around after all these years

Dalucci

Cherry Knoll Farm Janet Elliot
Veteran on comeback treadmill

Rainiero

Augustin Stable Richard Valentine
Undefeated last fall, starters or stakes

Class Bopper

Rod Moorhead Lilith Boucher
Off since 2010 Grand National, Saratoga-bound

Dynaski

Armata Stable Tom Voss
Talented, albeit fragile; summer

Spy In The Sky

Jim Carter Jimmy Day
Tough veteran winless since 2010

Pierrot Lunaire

Mary Ann Houghland Bruce Miller
Still trying to recapture Iroquois form



Decoy Daddy looks for more in 2012.

ALLOWANCE HURDLE HORSES

Port Morsbey

Augustin Stable Jonathan Sheppard
Finished year strong, developing right way

History Boy

Timber Bay Farm Jonathan Sheppard
Potent if he can reproduce Far Hills run

Wanganui

The Fields Stable Tom Voss
Champion 3-year-old, room to grow

Royal Rossi

Hudson River Jonathan Sheppard
Awesome at Saratoga, improvement expected

Gustavian

Hickory Tree Leslie Young
Promising and talented, could have big year

Saint Dynaformer

Kinross Farm Neil Morris
Certainly room to improve from maiden win

Here Comes Art

Carrington Stable Arch Kingsley
Stoic veteran runs sparingly, summer

Baltic Shore

High Hope Stable Arch Kingsley
Nearly got the money in Saratoga

Parker’s Project

Hudson River Jonathan Sheppard
Upset sharp field at Saratoga last summer

Sergeant Karakorum

Jonathan Sheppard Jonathan Sheppard
Overachiever won his last start in 2011

Royal Fling Shot

Maggie Bryant Jonathan Sheppard
Finished 2011 with a win at Callaway

Imperial Gin

Irv Naylor J.W. Delozier
Upset winner at Far Hills

Inti

Meritage Racing Cyril Murphy
Can’t fault what he’s done so far

Call You In Ten

Peggy Steinman Doug Fout
One of our favorites, missed most of 2011

Winning Vow

Maggie Bryant Neil Morris
Slowly came around last year

Enchanted Circle

Maggie Bryant Neil Morris
Broke maiden late in fall, chance to improve

Tizsilk

Elizabeth Murray Tom Voss
Clinched title for trainer last year

Cornhusker

Armata Stable Tom Voss
Burst on scene, retreated in summer/fall

Ballet Boy

Cashel Stable Tom Voss
Another capable novice for deep barn

Wild For Gold

Gene Weymouth Janet Elliot
Trainer’s “favorite” horse, miles on the clock

Wantan

Jubilee Stable Ted Thompson
Looked great when winning at Fair Hill 2010

Birthday Beau

Michele Sanger Michele Sanger
Two-time winner, missed 2011

Class Skip

Mede Cahaba Stable Lilith Boucher
Won Gladstone in 2010, missed 2011

Class Indian

Mede Cahaba Stable Lilith Boucher
Broke maiden at Radnor, bound for Aiken

Union Army

Irv Naylor J.W. Delozier
Useful in right spots

Class Brahms

Mede Cahaba Stable Lilith Boucher
Won debut at 3, should improve



Orebanks (left) flies a fence in his point-to-point win at Thornton Hill.

Orebanks

Peggy Steinman Doug Fout
Won at point-to-point already

Brave Prospect

Woodslane Farm Jack Fisher
Nine starts, one win, in 2011

Air Maggy

Maggie Bryant Jonathan Sheppard
Kicking around allowance division

Time Off

Hudson River Jonathan Sheppard
Time off (sorry) between Atlanta win, Aiken return

On The Corner

Ivy Hill Stable Alicia Murphy
Won maiden claimer in fall

Dr. Wheat

Bill Riddle Danielle Hodsdon
One win, third trainer, prepping in Camden

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CLAIMING/STARTER HURDLE HORSES

Humdinger
Michael Smith Neil Morris
Versatile and productive in 2011

Dugan
Bill Pape Jonathan Sheppard
Reliable dual-purpose veteran, Aiken?

Lead Us Not
Bill Pape Jonathan Sheppard
Stakes performer will relish class relief

The Price Of Love
Bill Pape Jonathan Sheppard
Seems like he's been around forever

Red Letter Day
Greg Hawkins Janet Elliot
Veteran has struggled to regain best form

Ground Frost
Tom Voss Tom Voss
Capable in right spot

Northern Bay
Estate of Cary Jackson Todd Wyatt
Comes off bench, wins, back to bench . . .

Cuse
Karen Gray Karen Gray
Tough as they come, especially at distance tests

Its A School Night
Kinross Farm Neil Morris
Won restricted Virginia Fall maiden

Black Bag
Dominick Falini Leslie Young
Runaway winner of maiden claimer in fall

Last Noble
Noble Stable Neil Morris
Won maiden claimer, prepping at point-to-points

Moving Violation
Laura Shull Britt Graham
Looking for conditioned claimer

New Mambo
Bruce Smart Jimmy Day
Broke maiden for tag at Colonial in summer

Chestermite
Silverton Hill Leslie Young
Summer return for Montpelier 2010 winner

One Sea
Randy Rouse Randy Rouse
Champion VSA hurdle horse of 2011

Triton Light
Zoe Valvo Zoe Valvo
Won open hurdle at Blue Ridge



Triton Light looked good at Blue Ridge Point-to-Point for owner/trainer Zoe Valvo. Douglas Lees

Final Straw
Teddy Mulligan Teddy Mulligan
0-for-9 since breaking maiden in 2010

Fogcutter
Indian Run Farm Eva Smithwick
Been active at early point-to-points

Mischief
Annie Yeager Don Yovanovich
Veteran refreshed with role at pt-to-pts

Flight Movie
Marilyn Ketts Lilith Boucher
Broke maiden at Foxfield 2010, off since

FILLY/MARE HURDLERS

Sweet Shani
Mary Ann Houghland Jonathan Sheppard
The grande dame of steeplechasing

Well Fashioned
Maggie Bryant Doug Fout
Stakes winner at 4, should improve at 5

Maggie Neary
Cherry Knoll Farm Janet Elliot
Awesome debut win at Gowran Park

Ptarmigan
Maggie Bryant Doug Fout
Champ in 2010, shelf in 2011

Opera Heroine
Arcadia Stable Jack Fisher
Does her best running on flat track

The Manner Born
Bill Pape Jonathan Sheppard
One of these days . . .

Pensy
Merriefield Farm Jazz Napravnik
Burst on scene early, aiming for summer

Green Velvet
Jennifer Pitts Jazz Napravnik
You'll know she's in any race, aiming for fall

Beating The Odds
Bill Pape Jonathan Sheppard
Still has profile of class contender

Lonesome Nun
Irv Naylor Brianne Slater
Count on her to hit the board

Cubist
Jonathan Sheppard Jonathan Sheppard
2nd, 3rd and 4th over hurdles thus far

Bretton Woods
Michalisin/Dalton Kate Dalton
Another stakes filly for proven team?

Simple Cat
Flying Horse Farm Jazz Napravnik
Another reclamation project from trainer?

Rockmani
Celtic Venture Stable Charles McCann
Winner at Thornton Hill

Euro Power
Octararo Stable Bruce Miller
4-year-old with family cred

Cat Feathers
Kate Dalton Kate Dalton
Surprised in maiden claimer in fall

Oh Sweet Angel
Richard Sanders Lilith Boucher
Two wins on flat for owner/breeder

American Crossing
Marilyn Ketts Lilith Boucher
Two wins on flat, fifth at Charleston fall

Quiet Flaine
Maggie Bryant Doug Fout
Nothing yet in couple of jump tries

Dance Raven Dance
Caroline Sankey Caroline Sankey
Made NSA debut at Great Meadow in fall

Maya Charli
Kingfisher Farm Jack Fisher
Break since Saratoga, needs to improve

Za Za Zu
Irv Naylor J.W. Delozier
0-for-13, flat and jumps



Ptarmigan tries to find her championship form of 2010. Tod Marks

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MAIDEN HURDLE HORSES

Ice Bear
Augustin Stable..... Richard Valentine
Second Camden fall, aiming for Camden spring

Brother Sy
Armata Stable Todd Wyatt
7-year-old, close in three fall tries

Double Doors
Hickory Tree Leslie Young
Missed three years, two seconds in fall

Black Quartz
Irv Naylor J.W. Delozier
Promising, troubled debut at Camden in fall

Dahoud
Gill Johnston Jack Fisher
Grade II placed, Elkhorn at Keeneland first

Memorial Maniac
Irv Naylor Brianne Slater
Stakes winner on flat, made two starts in fall

En Fuego
Gill Johnston Jack Fisher
Flat form puts him near top of list

Almarmooq
Irv Naylor Kathy Neilson
Four starts, two thirds, in five weeks in fall

Witor
Charlie Noell/Charlie Fenwick Jr Todd Wyatt
German-bred won twice for Graham Motion

Tropic Sea
Bill Pape Jonathan Sheppard
Talented on flat, privately purchased, look out

Eagle Poise
Riverdee Stable Anne Clancy
Grade III winner on flat

Ahgogo
Fox Ridge Farm Tom Voss
Another in purple/white migration, summer

Artic Cry
The Fields Stable Tom Voss
Second Grade II flat, just one start in 2011

Share Out
Gill Johnston Todd Wyatt
Son of Empire Maker won on Laurel turf

El Season
Bill Pape Jonathan Sheppard
Fifth in debut at Camden in fall

Darkwatch
Silverton Hill Leslie Young
Decent in 3-year-old races last fall

Canaveral
Greg Hawkins Janet Elliot
Talented import, flat first

Go For Porter
Daniel Doane Kevin Boniface
Looked polished schooling on the farm

Gawaarib
Jacqueline Ohrstrom..... Richard Valentine
Decent effort at Camden, Aiken-bound

Nadal
Hudson River Jonathan Sheppard
Aptly named son of Grand Slam, one win on flat

Total Command
Bill Pape Jonathan Sheppard
Son of Sadler's Wells cost 20,000 gns at Tatts

Sovietspi
Mulligan Racing Teddy Mulligan
New Zealand-bred, second at Spa Open House

Grand Pride
Woodslane Stable Jack Fisher
Off since finishing third at Fair Hill

Sillium
Augustin Stable..... Richard Valentine
Son of Saint Liam, two wins on flat

Bundestag
Michael Smith Jimmy Day
Three seconds on flat in 2011

Bonded
Bruce Smart Jimmy Day
Irish-bred due to make debut over hurdles

Duc De Savoie
Jim Carter Jimmy Day
Three runs over hurdles in Ireland

Tizallaboutme
High Hope Stable Arch Kingsley
Flat winner at Colonial Downs last year

Manacor
Daybreak Stable Jimmy Day
Cost 6,000 gns at Tatts, 2nd at Blue Ridge

Alfarabi
Bon Nouvel Chasers..... Julie Gomena
Third at Montpelier in fall, prepping in Aiken

Bodie Island
Elkstone Group Jonathan Sheppard
Big, scopy, some flat talent, the sleeper

El Crespo
Sonny Via Jack Fisher
Won Grade III on flat in '09, long drought since

Brace
Kinross Farm..... Neil Morris
Flat style should suit, winter should help

Armstrong Mill
Peggy Steinman Doug Fout
Shelved since promising start

Saint Nicholas
Noble Stable..... Neil Morris
Two-time flat winner, purchased from Live Oak

Classic Bridges
Maggie Bryant..... Neil Morris
Seems like he should be out of maiden ranks



Lydia A. Williams

En Fuego brings solid flat form into jump racing for Jack Fisher.

Rugged Rascal
Michael Moran Jack Fisher
Crazy talent, aims for debut

Kasari
Peggy Steinman Doug Fout
French import by Cape Cross with one flat win

Plattsburgh
Irv Naylor J.W. Delozier
Lake Placid's kid brother by Bernardini

Autumn Riches
Randleston Farm Jimmy Day
Knock, knock, knock on . . .

Popplestone
Sheila Williams Jack Fisher
Close in four starts on flat

Virsito
Williams/Brewster Jack Fisher
Son of Dynaformer from Goldberg pipeline

Researcher
Kinross Farm..... Neil Morris
High-profile veteran, unproven over jumps

Hulako
Kinross Farm..... Neil Morris
By the right horse, Dynaformer

Out Of The Ghetto
Maggie Bryant..... Doug Fout
Newcomer by Empire Maker

Professor Plum
Rosbrian Farm Tara Elmore
Big, raw type, rare hurdler for timber outfit

Dancing David
Otter Racing Neil Morris
Big purchase from Keeneland November

Twojohnsandajack
Rock Ford Stable Julie Gomena
Big, tough-looking son of Malibu Moon

Extraextraordinary
Clorevia Farm Doug Fout
Giant's Causeway 5YO with two flat wins

Crow's Nest
Ivy Dell Farm Britt Graham
8-year-old won seven on flat, including stakes

Alburj
Gill Johnston Janet Elliot
Won training flat race before bench

Ed's Big Bet
Jubilee Stable..... Ted Thompson
Second at Callaway in 2011 finale

Upper Afleet
Fox Ridge Farm Tom Voss
5-year-old half-brother to Upper Gulch

Alajmal
Greg Hawkins Janet Elliot
Won a training flat race last spring

Bruno Frigerio
Julie Braswell Jonathan Sheppard
Made debut at Camden last fall, decent third

My Prospect City
Maggie Bryant..... Jonathan Sheppard
One win from five starts on flat

Sharif Al Medina
Sharon Sheppard Neil Morris
Nothing in two starts since conversion

Seven In Heaven
Jonathan Sheppard Jonathan Sheppard
Strapping son of Pleasant Tap, three wins on flat

Tiger Jacques
Bright Brook Farm..... Jonathan Sheppard
Half to Spa winner Terpsichorean, one win flat

Bluegrass Chat
Silverton Hill Leslie Young
Two-time winner following pattern

MAIDEN HURDLE HORSES

Mr. Universo
Blue Lotus Racing Leslie Young
Classy 8-year-old, won three races in Brazil

Mr. Starr's Report
Woodslane Farm Jack Fisher
Ned Evans-bred, claimed for \$25,000 at Spa

Double Eagle
Clorevia Farm Neil Morris
Sixth in lone hurdle start last summer

Paul's Ace
Edition Farm Janet Elliot
Two wins at Gulfstream in first career

Alwaary
Merriefield Farm Jazz Napravnik
21,000 gns in fall, fifth hurdle debut at Taunton

Part One
Blue Lotus Racing Leslie Young
4-year-old with one start on flat

Diceman
Anthony Malatino Leslie Young
NY-bred 4-year-old, one win on flat

Bannockburn
Bruce Gibbs Bruce Gibbs
Kin to Flat Top, flat runs under belt

Embezzle
Debra Kachel Ricky Hendriks
4-year-old by Sadler's Wells

Salinja
Debra Kachel Ricky Hendriks
Veteran could pick up a maiden claimer

Vision Seeker
Wendy Hendriks Ricky Hendriks
Two-time winner on flat

Jungle Chief
Alicia Murphy Alicia Murphy
3-for-25 on flat, trainer has done it before



Jamey Price

Tizallaboutme preps for his steeplechase debut with a gallop at Camden.

Smokey Top
John Griggs Dave Washer
Pulled up at Aiken Fall

Great Britain
Randy Rouse..... Randy Rouse
By Pleasant Tap, little in flat career

Hishi Soar
Randy Rouse..... Randy Rouse
Second in restricted maiden in fall

Cadre
Bonita Farm..... Kevin Boniface
"Kevin's baby," according to family

Noll Wallop
Roger O'Byrne..... Tom Voss
Irish-bred, could hit the jump scene

Slice Of Gold
Adena Springs..... Jonathan Sheppard
Made debut at Camden for high-profile owner

Wingo Star
Pieces of 8/Bonita Kevin Boniface
Two wins on flat, schooling, maybe later

My Kingdom Come
Kingfisher Farm..... Jack Fisher
By Smart Strike, won 1 3/8-miler on turf

Battalion
Kingfisher Farm..... Jack Fisher
4-year-old by Smart Strike, unraced

Three Hundred
Andre Brewster Jack Fisher
10th in only career start on flat

Mister Dean
PenWood Jumpers..... Brianne Slater
Son of Devil His Due, four wins on flat

E Z Mac
David Hill..... Jazz Napravnik
Registered 45 starts on flat



Lydia A. Williams

A brother to Lake Placid, Plattsburgh turns to steeplechasing for Irv Naylor and J.W. Delozier.

Habana
Kirkwood Stable..... Tom Voss
0-for-6 on flat, by the great Dynaformer

Written Approval
Move Up Stable..... Kathy Neilson
Brother to 2-time winner Quiet Approval

Tabitha's Monarch
Move Up Stable..... Kathy Neilson
Chadds Ford-bred, one win on flat

Monteagle
Gill Johnston Jack Fisher
Sprinted to turf win at Spa in 2011

Schoolhouse Woods
Kinross Farm..... Neil Morris
Maiden claimer should graduate

Arrakis
Over Creek Farm Julie Gomena
Three wins on flat, bred for it

Sneaky Louis
Betsy Mead Doug Fout
Homebred off since 2010

Sneaky Louis
John Tease Todd Wyatt
Maryland-bred, 1-for-17 on flat

Puller
Charlie Fenwick Jr./Charlie Noell Todd Wyatt
Maiden in eight starts on flat

Golly Day
Estate of Cary Jackson Todd Wyatt
Missed all of 2011

Forgotten Man
Betsy Mead Doug Fout
One career start, at Far Hills in fall

Labonte
Rose Marie Bogley Teddy Mulligan
A.P. Indy, out of Dynaformer mare

Run Up The Score
Karen Gray Karen Gray
Michigan-bred won five on flat

Rock Gold
Karen Gray Karen Gray
8-year-old won \$200,000 on flat

Saguaro Moon
Bill Riddle..... Leslie Young
6-year-old homebred, unraced on flat

Snobby Scamp
J.B. Secor Brianne Slater
Homebred, four seconds, three thirds on flat

Bet A Buck
Maggie Bryant..... Neil Morris
Eight-year-old won stakes in 2007

Cherokee Speed
Michael Smith Neil Morris
Prettiest horse in steeplechasing

Abraham Lincoln
Tuatha De Danann Stable Richard Valentine
Traveled the world, veteran of 35 starts on flat

Camden Wood
Mrs. Maxwell Wood Janet Elliot
One start at Monmouth, 2010

Will Kane
Mimi Voss Tom Voss
Unraced homebred, family unproven

Roguish
Cindy Polk Teddy Mulligan
0-for-3 thus far

Jake's Mandate
Rose Marie Bogley Teddy Mulligan
Nothing yet in couple of tries

Osage
Mulligan Racing Teddy Mulligan
Fifth in maiden claimer at Stoneybrook

TIMBER HORSES

Bon Caddo
Merriefield Farm..... Dawn Williams
Trying to repeat stellar spring from last year

Private Attack
Sportsman's Hall..... Alicia Murphy
Maryland Hunt Cup winner set to defend

Incomplete
Bob KinsleyAnn Stewart
International Gold Cup winner, boot tough

G'day G'day
Maggie Bryant.....Doug Fout
PA Hunt Cup winner last year, room to improve

Aero
Al Griffin.....Doug Fout
Little wrong since conversion, steps up

Delta Park
Arcadia Stable Jack Fisher
Underappreciated winner of NJ Hunt Cup

Bubble Economy
Arcadia Stable Jack Fisher
Play it again . . . champ

South Monarch
Morning Star Stable Sanna Hendriks
Won six of last 11 including Manor

Hot Rize
Karen Gray Karen Gray
Upset at Camden, could improve after two starts

Triple Dip
Smith/Daybreak Jimmy Day
Slogged out dire win at Nashville

He's A Conniver
EMO Stable Don Yovanovich
Another season, another trainer

Moonsox
Bulle Rock FarmKevin Boniface
Cool horse, getting better all the time

Hold Your Fire
The Fields Stable Tom Voss
Big, talented, fragile

Haddix
Armata Stable Katherine Neilson
Oldtimer, usually good for a win

Twill Do
Lucy Goelet Billy Meister
2010 Hunt Cup hero returns for more

More Fascination
Rosbrian Farm Tara Elmore
One start '09, two starts in '11, second in Manor



Lydia A. Williams

Delta Park tunes up for a timber stakes try this spring.

Professor Maxwell
Jacqueline Ohrstrom..... Richard Valentine
MHC again, do you still hold out hope?

Major Malibu
Kingfisher Farm..... Jack Fisher
Away since 2010, aiming at Hunt Cup

Radio Flyer
Augustin Stable..... Richard Valentine
Capable, six starts in five years, Nashville

Four Schools
Jacqueline Ohrstrom..... Richard Valentine
Won timber debut at Callaway

Justpourit
Lucy Stable Richard Valentine
Second at Radnor, Hunt Cup bound

Arch Hero
Bolton/Voss..... Tom Voss
Foxfield maiden winner, off board since

Elusive Prince
Irv Naylor Kathy Neilson
Upset maiden at Virginia Fall

Fieldview
Irv Naylor Kathy Neilson
Good one to use in bottom of triples

Scuba Steve
Armata Stable Kathy Neilson
Not the most reliable, but capable

The Rail
Rosbrian Farm Tara Elmore
Won at Winterthur last spring

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Fond Of A Drop
Anna Stable..... Richard Valentine
Heavyweight/amateur, winless since 2010

Shady Valley
Karen Gray Karen Gray
13-year-old been away since 2009

Music To My Ears
Anna Stable..... Richard Valentine
Still going after all these years...Rokeby Bowl

Shiny Emblem
Brewster/Williams Jack Fisher
Away since 2010, aiming at Hunt Cup

Monte Bianco
Kingfisher Farm..... Jack Fisher
Away since 2008, aiming at Hunt Cup

Prospectors Strike
Jeremy Batoff..... Jack Fisher
Went 15 fences in Hunt Cup last year, tries again

Sand Box Rules
Kinross Farm..... Neil Morris
Still plying trade, missed 2011

Woodmont
Mary Motion Neil Morris
Veteran hasn't missed a check since 2007

Belarion
Anthony MalatinoLeslie Young
Looking for an allowance timber

Rainbows For Luck
Greg BentleyEddie Graham
Always in with a chance on best effort

Thermostat
Morning Star Stable Ricky Hendriks
Veteran hasn't missed a check since 2005

Won Wild Bird
Pink Ribbon Racing Regina Welsh
Trouble starting lately

ST Bulletin Board

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MAIDEN TIMBER HORSES

Torlundy
Silverton Hill Leslie Young
Stakes winner over hurdles, converts

Straight To It
Williams/Brewster Jack Fisher
Dabbled in hurdle stakes, new direction

Grinding Speed
Michael Wharton Alicia Murphy
Decent hurdle form, could like move to timber

Guts For Garters
Foxy Stable Sanna Hendriks
Irish import, once cost 215,000 Euros

Hope For Us All
Arcadia Stable Jack Fisher
Always looked like a timber horse

Foyle
Merrifield Farm Dawn Williams
Point-to-point winner with big jump

Battle Op
Northwoods Stable Lilli Kurtinecz
Multiple point-to-point winner

Mecklenburg
Rosbrian Farm Tara Elmore
Two seconds last spring with Karen Gray

Vine Hill
Whitewood Stable Richard Valentine
Aiming for maiden at Manor

John Wyatt
Bob Kinsley Tom Voss
Hurdle career was a bust

Hidden Trail
The Fields Stable Tom Voss
Long time, no see

Imperial Way
Merrifield Farm Tom Voss
Another talented, lightly raced prospect

Faction
Irv Naylor Kathy Neilson
Hunting all winter, lots still to prove

Farndale
Mimi Voss Tom Voss
House horse gets career switch

Sgt. Bart
William Marlow Jazz Napravnik
Couple of thirds, bound to break maiden

Monstaleur
Jalin Stable Jazz Napravnik
Just missed at Virginia Fall

You And I
Farmwick Stable Neil Morris
Irish-bred yet to break out

Atrium
Margaret Littleton Julie Gomena
Off since 2010, veteran switches trainers



Lydia A. Williams

Officially a maiden, potential Maryland Hunt Cup starter Foyle showcases his jumping form during a recent schooling session.

Garryowen Star
Rosbrian Farm Tara Elmore
Steady chaser in Ireland

Red Ghost
Shawna Trout/Shawmark Farm .. Julie Gomena
Second over hurdles at High Hope

Nondo
Sportsman's Hall Alicia Murphy
Couple of hurdle runs for MHC connections

Class Real Rock
Jubilee Stable Ted Thompson
Third in High Hope timber last spring

Dealer Beware
Maggie Bryant Doug Fout
Opened with a win at Thornton Hill

Dance Faster
River Bend Stable Leslie Young
Hurdle winner, purchased from Ricky Hendriks

Vinnie Boy
Adair Bonsal Stifel Jack Fisher
Been away since 2010, new trainer

Dynaway
Armata Stable Todd Wyatt
11-year-old veteran with back class

Cannon's Call
Stifel/Bonsal Jack Fisher
Maiden timber, done little so far

Lion's Double
Woodslane Stable Jack Fisher
Been away since 2010

Liverpool Gloves
Mulligan Racing Teddy Mulligan
Aiming for maiden timber and steeplethons

The Editor
Kick On Stable Teddy Mulligan
Veteran won at Blue Ridge

Katie's Prince
Tuatha De Danann Stable Richard Valentine
Still needs to prove it, point-to-point first

It's A G Man
Edward Hartman Regina Welsh
Little on flat, little over hurdles

Great Halo
Reed/Move Up Kathy Neilson
Been around the hurdle block

Monsooned Malabar
Sally Reed Kathy Neilson
Nothing yet in four starts over jumps

Mojave Moose
Peter Jay Todd Wyatt
One start over hurdles, 2010

Embarrassed
Armata Stable Kathy Neilson
Third owner, third career

Serene Harbor
Nina Gardner Todd McKenna
Veteran stakes winner on flat, new game

Let's Presume
Maggie Bryant Doug Fout
One start over hurdles in 2010

Buchanan —

■ Continued from page 35

said ‘my dad’s going to kill me.’ They were all very polite, like, ‘nice horse,’ but I had seen him fall apart,” Buchanan said. “Now, they are besides themselves. Pete put a lot of work into him, he’s been a little project for Pete, I give him a lot of credit.”

Buchanan knows she’s swimming upstream, buying American horses to go racing in Europe but so far, so good.

“He’s rugged and tough, that’s what I liked about him. When I bought Grey Mountain and told people what I did, they laughed at me, ‘Are you crazy?’ ” Buchanan said. “I equate it, if you go to Newmarket and buy a horse with a little bit of form, you’re spending easily 100 sterling, you can get the same horse here, as long as you know they’re pretty sound, they’re not bad bleeders and you know your source. You’ve got to know your source.”

— Sean Clancy

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Work, play make winners

Ten horses in a field. They bite, kick, run, play, sleep, eat, then they go to work.

The scene at trainer Jonathan Sheppard’s Pennsylvania farm includes a group turnout in the infield of a 5-furlong wood-chip training track. Every morning, Arcadius, Divine Fortune, Sermon Of Love, Nation-builder, Sgt. Karakorum, Air Maggy and others spend an hour or so in the field.

“It keeps them so happy, they’re such happy horses,” said Sheppard assistant Keri Brion “You can see a difference in them. Some mornings, they go out and just pick grass. Other mornings, they’re tearing around the field.”

After recess, they train – hard.

Like all northern-based steeplechasers, Sheppard’s horses jog roads and bridle paths to start, then advance to galloping either on that track surrounding their playground, a straw ring or any of the multitude of turf strips and hills around the Unionville area.

Sheppard’s horses utilize “Hannum’s Hill” for proper workouts. Named after the legendary master of the Cheshire Foxhounds, Nancy Hannum, the gallop is a good 2 miles – Lamborntown Road across Routes 926 and 842 to West Road – from Sheppard’s farm.

The horses jog the distance, which includes roads, bridle paths and trails through the woods and fields. Then they get to work. Hannum’s Hill is a mile long and gets tackled – up, not down – once in a horse’s first work back from a layoff.

“The first part of the hill is pretty steep so we let them bust off, then let them do it how they’re comfortable,” said Brion. “They all do it differently. Nation-builder tanks up there with me, Lead Us Not Brian (Crowley) has to kick. They’re pretty tired by the time



Nolan Clancy

The action in the fields can be as exciting as on the gallops at Jonathan Sheppard’s farm

they get to the top.”

Later in their training program, horses will do the hill twice; they power up the first time like normal, walk back to the bottom and do the hill again. Either way, they jog the 2 miles home which makes each set last an hour or more and cover six miles or so.

“You can get them fit a lot of different ways, but this is the way we do it,” said Brion, who said 14 horses did the hill twice March 12. “Everybody is a little bit different, but the goal is the same.”

Steeplechase season.

— Joe Clancy

Keeneland purchase rising through English novice ranks for Buchanans

American horses are on drugs. American horses are bred for speed. American horses are used up. American horses are inferior. American horses can’t handle soft turf. American horses can’t get the trip.

Meet Tap Night.

Irish-bred, British-versed, American-based Jane Buchanan has reversed the migration.

She bought American-bred Tap Night for \$26,000 at Keeneland November 2010 and sent the son of Pleasant Tap to her brother Peter Buchanan, who rides for Lucinda Russell in Scotland and has moonlighted for Tom Voss in America.

Bred by Ned Evans, Tap Night improved his record to three wins from six starts by winning the Grade II Totepool Premier Kelso Hurdle March 3. Owned by Jane, trained by Russell and ridden by Peter, Tap Night is now rated 132 over hurdles and could take his chances at big novice hurdle stakes at Aintree, Fairyhouse or Punchestown this spring.

Buchanan, who manages Starlight Stable in America, saw Tap Night at Keeneland and jumped at the chance of buying the half-brother to Grade II winner Tap Day. She had purchased Gray Mountain, a half-brother to Grade I winner Honey Ryder and won four races with him at Perth and Kelso. He bowed his tendon in June.

“Specifically, we needed a replacement for Gray Mountain, he could have been anything but he bowed. We decided, ‘let’s get another.’ I went shop-

ping, half-heartedly, he popped up on the line,” Buchanan said. “He was totally cool, he was all colt, he had run two weeks before, he walked out, snorting, he was the real deal, scopy, all-man. He’s quirky, a pretty boy, we roughened him up a bit.”

Castrated and freshened in America, Tap Night arrived with Buchanan’s father in County Down, Northern Ireland on Valentine’s Day 2011. Taught to jump quickly, he made three starts at Perth in the summer, finishing second twice and third once before being put away for a proper winter campaign. He’s undefeated in three starts since, taking novice hurdle races at Carlisle, Newcastle and Kelso. In the latter, he wore down favorite Captain Conan over a trip that was considered too short and over ground that was considered too firm. The Buchanans opted against taking him to Cheltenham where he had an entry in the Coral Cup.

“We are going to take our time with him and do right by him,” Jane Buchanan said.

Trained by Tony Dutrow in America, Tap Night broke his maiden at Delaware Park and won for a \$25,000 tag at Belmont Park in 2010. With a career mark of 2-for-11, he wasn’t cutting it in Evans’ expansive program but was a natural for Buchanan’s boutique program.

“We gelded him in Kentucky, he fell apart on us, his top line wasted away. I

See **BUCHANAN** page 34 ►

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TIMES EDITORIAL

Turning another page in history

In 1994, Nancy Kerrigan was clubbed on the knee; Bill Clinton was President; Schindler's List won best picture at the Oscars; O.J. Simpson and Al Cowlings drove a white Bronco while the world watched; San Francisco hosted a conference to discuss the commercial potential of the Internet; Justin Bieber was born; gas sold for \$1.11 a gallon; Warm Spell was champion steeplechaser; Holy Bull was Thoroughbred racing's Horse of the Year; Google was . . . well, you couldn't even look it up back then.

And this crazy little newspaper was born in a basement in Newark, Del. The house is still there, our mother owns it and rents it out. Like lots of good ideas, Steeplechase Times started on a lark, a dare, a whim. We planned to publish through the spring season, then think about it. This is our 19th year.

Nearly two decades have brought tremendous change, as that first paragraph suggests. The newspaper has changed with it, bending, adding, subtracting, trying, sorting, working. This year brings another path, one that we hope ensures the future of Steeplechase Times with a cut to six print editions and a shift in editorial coverage. We'll no longer focus as strictly on the results and hard news you can get via the Internet (which indeed had commercial potential), a text or a phone call from the race course. In print, we'll deliver a variation on the theme – more details, more features, more behind-the-scenes moments from the sport of Thoroughbred racing over jumps. We'll leave the “dog bites man” facts to the web, Twitter, Facebook, texts from your friends.

This edition does not look much different than any other Season Preview, but you'll see some changes as we roll out future versions – two more this spring and three in the fall. The change solidifies the print publication, creates a longer shelf life for advertisers and delivers a better read for readers. It's a challenge, like any small business, but one we expect to tackle with our usual mix of quality writing and deadline urgency on subjects you can't really get anywhere else.

Online at st-publishing.com, we'll keep you up to date with weekend recaps and previews, regular upkeep of the Pick Six game and so on. Check back early and often.

We've also taken on a new project in the Mid-Atlantic Thoroughbred magazine. If you get it, you'll notice our bylines and – hopefully – our touch. The historic monthly traces its origins to the 1930s (when it was called The Maryland Horse) and we're proud to be a part for the team. You can learn a little more at midatlantictb.com.

Nobody knew where any of this would go back in 1994. Sean was a steeplechase jockey. Joe was a sports writer at a daily newspaper. Nancy Kerrigan was trying to make the Olympics. People were trying to figure out if they could make money via the Internet.

Nineteen years later, here we are and here is Steeplechase Times – still plugging away, still publishing, still trying to convey the magic of a Thoroughbred racing at speed over fences.

Thanks for being there.



Misty Morn. Maryland Hunt Cup winner Private Attack (left, Mark Beecher) and On The Corner (Alicia Murphy) return from a morning workout in Maryland.

Mr. Stern

Owner relished his time in steeplechasing

An escape. A diversion. An outlet.

Really, that's all, steeplechasing was ever meant to be, at least for owners who have real lives, real worries, real stresses. Don't do it for the money, do it for the craic.

Steeplechasing is recreation. Sure, be competitive, but keep the perspective. For trainers, jockeys, assistants, it's different, they're too close – blood, sweat and tears changes it. But for owners, it's meant to be sport. The day your horse runs is a free day, nothing else matters.

There is a reason it's played on the weekends.

Nobody knew this better than Henry Stern.

The longtime owner from Richmond, Va., died this winter at 88.

Owners can be sticky (full disclosure, I could make anybody sticky when I was riding) but not Stern. I rode Saluter once, while Fisher served a suspension, in the timber feature at Middleburg. It was his prep for the Virginia Gold Cup, he would have been 1-10 to win. There was no pressure from Stern. He never – and I

The Inside Rail

By Sean Clancy

mean never – had a critical or condescending word to say about a horse, a ride, a rider. A gentle smile and a word of encouragement, that's about all. I loved pulling on his and his wife Ann's fluorescent green and pink silks (the pair that came to my knees) knowing there was one job at hand – ride the horse, not coddle an owner.

Stern started with one goal in steeplechasing: Win the Deep Run Hunt Cup, Strawberry Hill's annual timber feature. Stern told his young trainer about his goal. “That I can do,” Jack Fisher said.

Stern and Fisher accomplished that one in 1991 with Caronee, six Virginia Gold Cups for good measure. Paradise's Boss won nine races, Darn Tipalarm See **INSIDE** page 37 ►

Letter to the Editor

Regarding your December 9, 2011 editorial in Steeplechase Times, I have some thoughts. First, the NSA Board has nothing to do with nor influence over the NSA nominating committee. The committee is entirely independent. For those who are upset because we did not have an election (in 2011), I am truly sorry, but don't blame the NSA, blame me as Chairman of the Nominating Committee. The NSA Board had absolutely nothing to do with it. I will explain below just why the Nominating Committee came to what it felt under the circumstances was in the best interest of our sport.

The NSA election process approved by the Board of August 7, 2008 states: “In years when the Chairman of the Race Chairman's Committee automatically gets a seat on the Board, the Nominating Committee shall place up to six names to be voted upon for the four open seats on the board. In the other two years, the Committee shall place up to seven names on the ballot for the five available seats.” You will note that the process says, “up to six names” and “up to seven names,” not six names or seven names. This leaves it to the discretion of the Nominating Committee as to how many names to put up for nomination.

Because this was a year that the chairman of the Race Chairman's Committee automatically gets a seat on the board, it meant that the committee had four seats to fill. Three incumbent members of the NSA Board were automatically up for re-election: The President, the Vice President and a Board Member who is Chairman of one of the largest race meets. If the three of them were nominated, it meant the Committee only needed one more nominee to fill the fourth and last seat. We felt that Pat Butterfield, the Chairman of the Foxfield Race Meet was most deserving of that seat. He is a man who loves steeplechasing, puts on two race meets a year and also has time to be MFH of the Farmington Hunt Club. Due to an

oversight by last year's Chairman of the Nominating Committee (who was me), no resumes were sent out regarding the nominees on the ballot. Because of that oversight, it was felt that Pat Butterfield, who was up for election, was not as well known to the voters as the others. Three of which were incumbents and two were ex-board members. Since only about 45 percent of the eligible voters vote in the election, it takes a very few votes cast by a small group of dissidents to defeat any nominee, including our sitting President. The Nominating Committee felt that steeplechasing could ill afford that possibility at this time, hence, the decision to name four nominees for four seats and no more. If people want to call it the “old boys network” at work, then so be it. But the committee, after much mind searching, felt it did the right thing.

I am sure, unless the Board changes its policy, that (in 2012) there will be an election. In the meantime, we should all feel happy with how steeplechasing is going and with the make-up of the present 15-person NSA Board; all 15 are either owners, trainers, or race-meet chairmen. Plus, one is the President of SOTA and another the Chairman of the Race Chairman's Committee. If you think about it, the NSA Board is actually the Racing Commission of Steeplechasing. It makes all the rules, regulations and issues all licenses for our sport. I can think of no state that elects its Racing Commission members. I believe they are all appointed. Aren't we NSA members fortunate to have as much input as we do regarding who serves on the Board? For those who are upset because we did not have an election this year, again I say I am sorry. But as they say in sports when your favorite team loses, “Wait 'til next year!”

Austin A. Brown, Chairman
NSA 2011 Nominating Committee

Inside —

■ Continued from page 36

won another nine, South Of Java won over hurdles and timber. Stern's horses earned nearly \$2 million along the way.

Goodbye, Mr. Stern. Goodbye loyalty. Stern never had another trainer, employing and enjoying Fisher for his entire steeplechase career.

“I owe everything to Mr. Stern,” Fisher said. “He never had a bad word, there was only one horse he told me I couldn't buy and that was Bubble Economy, ever since then he was like, ‘I let that one get away.’ I knew he wasn't doing that well and even this fall, he wanted me to go buy him more more horses. He was a great supporter of our sport and he had a great time.”

Like he read the owner's manual.

The Sterns owned timber icon, Saluter, supporting him and Fisher to win 21 races (a record), including six consecutive runnings of the Gold Cup. Talk about a free day. Stern, who was 88, visited Saluter at Fisher's farm this winter. Just to see him one more time.

When you're riding races, you lose perspective (actually, you don't lose it, you never had it) you don't think about anything beyond the flags. Your world is 11 hurdles, 2 miles, 10 rivals. I never asked Stern where he went to school (Dartmouth), what he did with his life (served in the Navy in World War II) or why he played the game (he just liked it) or stopped and thought about the money he put it in my pocket (lots).

Lately, the old guard has taken mighty hits to its ranks; we've lost Stern, Mignon Smith, Nick Arundel, Cary Jackson, Skip Cochran . . . owners who loved the game. All different, all supporters.

“I went to Mr. Cochran's funeral and his son got up and said he would call his dad after the weekend and ask his



Henry Stern

Douglas Lees

dad how the horses ran,” Fisher said. “He said they never ran bad, he would always have an excuse, the ground was too soft, too firm . . . but they never ran bad. I thought that was great. Mr. Stern was the same way.”

Fisher co-owned Saluter with the Sterns. The 4-mile specialist ran in the Sterns' silks, the Sterns got the checks, the trophies. Saluter collected six small gold cups and retired the big one.

“I said to him I wanted the little Virginia Gold Cups, ‘When you die, I want them left to me.’ He said OK. I said something to his son Sidney at the funeral and Sidney's like, ‘I don't know about that,’ ” Fisher said. “Sidney called me up after and said, ‘You won't believe it but there were only three requests in my dad's will. One was the five Virginia Gold Cups go to you. The great big Virginia Gold Cup goes to me. And the Timber World Championship goes to his sister.’ It shows it meant a lot to him.”

He meant a lot to us.

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