

A full-page background photograph of a rider on a white horse in a snowy field. The rider is wearing a green beanie, sunglasses, and a dark jacket, leaning forward in a racing posture. The horse is white with some grey speckling and is wearing a yellow saddle pad. The background shows a snowy landscape with bare trees and a wooden fence.

The *Times* Steeplechase

Complimentary

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making STRIDES

*Steeplechasers gear up
for 2009 season*

INSIDE

- ◆ Good Night Shirt aims for 3rd title
- ◆ Individual horse lists by division
- ◆ Queen's Cup returns to schedule

88th RUNNING



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Photo by Tod Marks



News & Notes from around the circuit

for Starters

Youngs get Younger

Jump jockey Paddy Young and his wife, Leslie, welcomed a daughter into their family with the birth of Saoirse Reese Young Jan. 14. She weighed in at 9 pounds, 7 ounces and was 22 inches long. And, for the Irish-challenged, Saoirse means Freedom in Gaelic and is pronounced “Seer Sha.”

Worth Repeating

Leslie Young: “I know it’s difficult – blame it on Paddy, he picked it. I picked Reese.”

Reporter: “Is Preemptive Strike ageless?”

Trainer Sanna Hendriks: “I hope so.”

“What a nudge Good Night Shirt is – geez. Like a young boy who keeps pulling the little girls’ pigtails.”

Photographer Lydia Williams, who spent a morning with Good Night Shirt in his field

“Well, I haven’t made any money.”

Owner Bob Kinsley, on how the world of steeplechase ownership was treating him

“It’s been cold for us – well, cold for anyone.”

Aiken Steeplechase employee Mia Brasco, on the South Carolina weather

“Reminds you of home, doesn’t it?”

Mid-Atlantic Thoroughbred magazine’s Barrie Reightler, on life spent “scrambling around” in the world of publishing

“It is fun to get ready and think about competing. That being said, the last few fences in the Grand National sometimes interrupt a good night’s sleep.”

Amateur jockey Charlie Fenwick III, about what’s on his mind in March

“She’s like a gorilla with a headache. She’s ready to run.”

Kate Dalton on Miss Crown’s impending first start

“My kids don’t know Bobby Jones is a golf course; they think it’s a place to go sledding.”

Atlanta Steeplechase director Jean Bird, on winter-weather activities in Atlanta

Take A Number

3,560,000 Total purses (in English pounds) for the four days of racing at the Cheltenham Festival in England.

600,000,000 Total betting handle (in English pounds) for the four days of racing at the Cheltenham Festival in England.

220,000 Pints of Guinness sold during the four days of racing at the Cheltenham Festival in England.

1 American-based horse to place in the Cheltenham Gold Cup. Soothsayer finished second to Ten Up in the 1975 edition, three years after winning the Colonial Cup. Owned by Montpelier, he returned to finish third in the 1975 Colonial Cup.

‘Love’ for Guelph

Two-time filly/mare champion Guelph was bred to Love Of Money, who stands at Northview Stallion Station’s Pennsylvania division.

The Odds Are

ST oddsmaker Richard Hutchinson analyzed the NSA trainer and jockey races and came up with the following. Best of luck with your local bookmaker or at Vegas. . .

Trainers	Jockeys
Jack Fisher*9-5	Xavier Aizpuru*2-1
Tom Voss5-2	Padge Whelan3-1
Jonathan Sheppard3-1	Paddy Young4-1
Doug Fout7-1	Jody Petty9-2
Sanna Hendriks7-1	Danielle Hodsdon8-1
Kathy McKenna25-1	Willie Dowling14-1
Lilith Boucher30-1	Robbie Walsh20-1
Jimmy Day30-1	*-Defending champ



DOG GONE. Iris preps for the Virginia Gold Cup, or some other challenge, under the watchful eyes of Caroline Fout.

Douglas Lees

Timeform Memory Lane

Pennsylvania breeder Phil Fanning called the office to see if we wanted some books. He was cleaning house and had decades of Timeform racing books from England. Being huge history nuts and/or packrats (depending how you look at it) we said yes. Mr. Fanning drove down from Unionville, found us on the second or third try and pulled into our lot with a Jeep Cherokee full of treasure.

A little like the NSA yearbook, Timeform books are published each year and chronicle a season of flat or jump racing in England through biographies (short for everyday horses, much longer for the stars) on every horse that started. The little, thick, hardcover books provide fabulous detail.

The “Chasers and Hurdlers 1986-87” version even devotes nearly two pages to American champion Flatterer, who finished second in the 1987 Champion Hurdle at Cheltenham.

... He ran a superb race at Cheltenham. Neither the distance nor the obstacles, both unfamiliar, seemed to weigh against him at all: he was able to keep up from the start jumping fluently, and though See You Then threatened to swamp him going to the last he rallied well and, if anything, was beginning to close on the winner at the line.

... There are probably 10 times as many jumpers in training in Britain as in the States. Even so, America has produced a number of fine jumpers over the years, several of whom have shown top-class form when campaigned in Britain, and it can be seen from Flatterer’s record that he is a worthy successor to the

likes of Tingle Creek, Soothsayer and Inkslinger, and also therefore to American champion jumpers of the past. Flatterer was voted his fourth Eclipse Award in a row in 1986 as Champion Steeplechaser. The year marked his fourth win in a row – an overwhelming one by 17 lengths – in the Colonial Cup, a race won by both Soothsayer and Inkslinger in their day and still one of the most important events in the calendar if not the most valuable.

... In the parade at Cheltenham Flatterer was overshadowed by some of his opponents: while a useful sort he is sparsely made, not the textbook example of the weight-carrying jumper. His main assets are clear enough in the form-book – outstanding versatility and consistency. He is effective at 2 miles to 3 miles-plus in the best company, jumps every type of obstacle put in front of him fluently, acts on any track and seems to act on any going.

... At 8, the full story has still to be revealed but it doesn’t take a clairvoyant to forecast another Colonial Cup and a first Breeders’ Cup for him. At 9, will it be the Champion Hurdle? We hope his sporting connections give him another crack, for the race will be the richer for his presence.

Alas, Flatterer didn’t run past his 8-year-old season, done in by a troubling tendon, and never did get that Breeders’ Cup or another crack at Cheltenham. None of that diminished his reputation, however, and he’s still the yardstick for American jumpers. The writer recognized it, and gave him a fitting tribute.

Thanks, Timeform. And Mr. Fanning.

Entries

What's Happening and Where To Find It

Here's your newspaper. We debated asking Aiken to postpone a week so we could procrastinate a bit longer, but alas we regrouped and decided to start the season along with everyone else. And what a season it could be: The champ is back with eyes on a three-peat, the timber division is as stout as the Maryland Hunt Cup's 13th fence and the youngsters are casting a dirty glance at the word "novice." In addition, we recap the exploits of our friends across the pond in Cheltenham, get you caught up on the comings and goings and give a feel-good story the attention it deserves.



PAGE 6-8

High Stakes

Good Night Shirt is back, and though he casts a daunting shadow over the rest of the division, there are some fresh faces and familiar names eager to knock him off. Plus a quick look at the novices, timber horses and fillies/mares.



PAGES 10-16

Calling All Horses

From the unraced maiden to the legendary champ, we've opened stall doors, peered into shedrows and tapped every phone line to give you a complete and comprehensive horse roster. There's no excuse now, Pick Six players.



PAGES 22-23

Have T-Square, Will Travel

Irishman Desmond Fogarty traded in a civil engineering degree to become one of the circuit's best young trainers. Take a closer look at his story and how he's quickly made a name for himself in the U.S.



PAGES 26-28

From Cheltenham, With Love

Sean shook off his jetlag in time to pen a recap of the greatest steeplechase race meet in the world. The aura of Cheltenham comes right to your doorstep.



PAGES 30-31

Open Arms

Allie Conrad provides an inspiration to anyone ever connected with a Thoroughbred, serving as an executive director for an organization that helps place retiring racehorses in the right hands.

The *Steeplechase*
Times

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On the Cover

Working hard despite an early March snowstorm, first-year steeplechaser Giant Strides pulls jockey Padge Whelan up a hill at Tom Voss' Atlanta Hall Farm in Monkton, Md.

**Photo by
Lydia Williams**



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photo by Bob Keller

SPRING 2009

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For complete conditions for the Series and individual races, as well as for point updates, visit www.marylandsteeplechasing.org

A New Look

The schedule's altered for spring, but The Shirt remains the same

BY JOE CLANCY

Jack Fisher needed just three words to address Good Night Shirt's 2009 agenda, and with them he threw down the gauntlet to any other steeplechase stakes horses out there.

"Camden, Middleburg, Iroquois."

Champion in 2007 and 2008, Good Night Shirt rides into 2009 with eyes on becoming the first steeplechaser to sweep three consecutive Eclipse Awards since Flatterer rung up four from 1983-86. Owned by Sonny Via, the champion will take a slightly different path this spring thanks to the scrapping of the Royal Chase and a date/condition change to the Georgia Cup.

Good Night Shirt made his seasonal debut in the former (at Keeneland) in 2007 and the latter (at Atlanta) in 2008. They aren't available this time around, so Fisher will aim for the \$75,000 Carolina First Carolina Cup (now an open Grade II stakes) March 28 at Springdale Race Course in Camden, S.C.

After that, Fisher penciled in the \$60,000 Temple Gwathmey (also a newly open Grade II) April 18 at Glenwood Park in Middleburg, Va., and

SPRING STEEPLECHASE PREVIEW

then the \$150,000, Grade I Iroquois at Nashville, Tenn., May 9.

Though it's all subject to some change.

"I won't run him in a handicap and now I realize that Middleburg is a handicap," Fisher said March 11. "It's not fair to run him where he will have to give away tons of weight and there are other options."

Assigned highweight of 168 pounds on NSA handicapper Bill Gallo's 2008 theoretical handicap, Good Night Shirt would probably carry at least that and give away plenty to the Gwathmey field. The Carolina Cup's allowance conditions mean the champion would carry 158 with sliding concessions to horses based on past performance. The Iroquois, which Good Night Shirt won in 2007 and 2008, is weight-for-age.

Beyond weight, Fisher worries about one horse – the speedy, bold-jumping, ever-dangerous Preemptive Strike. He nearly upset Good Night Shirt in the Colonial Cup last fall and would be a difficult foe, especially in the Carolina Cup.



Lydia Williams

Two-time champion Good Night Shirt enjoys the snow during his winter vacation.

"He's my biggest threat," said Fisher. "He ran a great race last fall, and he's a good enough horse to make you think. He's better over the Cup fences and he's even tougher at the shorter distance. I don't worry about a lot of things, but he's one of them."

Preemptive Strike will make plenty of people (and horses) worry. The 11-year-old always makes his presence felt thanks to a running style that leaves finesse back at the barn. Ideally suited to the bigger fences and the sprawling

layout at Springdale, the Polaris Stable charge won the 2004 Carolina Cup and placed third in the 2005 running (the last time the race was run as an open stakes). His Colonial Cup mark includes seconds in 2004 and 2008.

"I don't think the 2 1/4 or 2 3/4 miles makes much difference, it's the fences and the big, galloping course which he likes," said Sanna Hendriks, who welcomed the horse to her barn in 2007. "The race last fall was the best race

See **SPRING** page 7 ►



The Willowdale Steeplechase

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Photography by Jim Grafton

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Spring —

■ Continued from page 6

he ran for us, but I can't say I've got a distinct reason why he did that. I'm not sure we're going to be able to beat Good Night Shirt this time either, but I hope we can give him another tussle."

If the two horses clash in Carolina, Fisher may bring along a few friends to keep Preemptive Strike occupied up front. Stakes winners Rare Bush and Paradise's Boss could accompany their more-accomplished stablemate on the ride down from Maryland, though both have other options (such as Aiken's Southern Bank & Trust Imperial Cup March 21. Ann Stern's Paradise's Boss missed 2008 with leg troubles, but was good enough to win two stakes and place third in the Royal Chase in 2007. The 9-year-old fits Aiken's restricted conditions and would be difficult to catch there.

Another familiar face returns from a layoff as Grade I winner Mixed Up dusts off his Grade I form. The Bill Pape/Jonathan Sheppard homebred raced just twice over jumps in 2008 (a third behind Good Night Shirt at Atlanta and a dull fourth in the Marcellus Frost at Nashville) before being shelved for the season when an injury flared at Saratoga. Now 10, he counts eight wins to go with his \$450,000 in jump earnings and was among the Aiken nominations.

Sally Radcliffe's Best Attack, third to Good Night Shirt and Preemptive Strike in the Colonial Cup last year, also eyes a return to Camden for the Carolina Cup. The stakes veteran stayed in good company in 2008 (losing four times to Good Night Shirt), but could surprise the top two for trainer Bruce Miller.

Peggy Steinman's Dark Equation jumped up and won the Grade I New York Turf Writers Cup at Saratoga last summer, and seeks a return to that form for trainer Doug Fout. Recently named the Pennsylvania-bred steeplechase champion, the 8-year-old eyes the Gwathmey and a potential shot at Good Night Shirt.

Fox Ridge Farm's Planets Aligned won last year's Gwathmey, when the race was part of the novice program, and could get a chance to repeat for trainer Tom Voss. The Gwathmey field could swell to include Grade I novice winner Swagger Stick along with several others — especially if Good Night Shirt stays away.

Just like 2008, the onus falls on the challengers to do something about



Tod Marks

Spy In The Sky (Liam McVicar) rates a long look in the novice division.

Good Night Shirt. The powerful chestnut, voted Maryland-bred Horse of the Year in addition to his steeplechase title, has simply done more than the others. The 8-year-old rides a six-race winning streak dating to November 2007 and brings \$934,493 in career earnings (third on the all-time list) into the season. He trails second-place Lonesome Glory by just \$31,316 and is \$375,611 behind McDynamo.

Novices Ready to Rise

Technically, every horse that broke its maiden last year is a novice, but most of the attention will go only a few directions as the first- and second-year stars battle in a reconfigured schedule that now includes stakes at Palm Beach (\$50,000) April 4, Atlanta (\$75,000) April 25 and Radnor (\$75,000) May 16.

Randleston Farm's Spy In The Sky won twice and placed in an open stakes last season for trainer Jimmy Day.

He rates a spot near the top of the spring division — for now. The chestnut announced his readiness with a flat win at the Blue Ridge Point-to-Point March 7 and could make his first start in the allowance hurdle on the Carolina Cup card, though Day pinpointed Radnor's National Hunt Cup as the main spring goal.

See **SPRING** page 8 ►



It's Eby In The Stretch

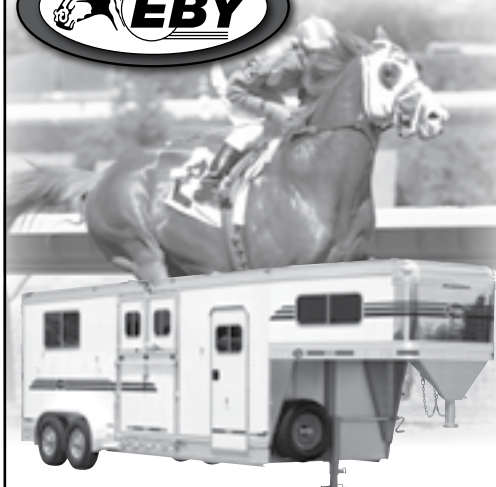
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Planets Aligned charges up the hill while training at Tom Voss' farm.

Lydia Williams

Spring —

■ Continued from page 7

"He's a really versatile horse, he should have won on the flat at Colonial before his big run in the Smithwick (fourth)," said Day. "He showed last year that he can run big against open-company horses, too. We have a lot of options with him and we'll just try and take our time and not rush him too much."

Calvin Houghland's Torino Luge blazed to a victory in his American debut at Palm Beach late last year. If that was an indication, the Australian-bred 6-year-old will be a factor for trainer Doug Fout this spring with a return to Florida on the agenda. Bill Pape's The Price Of Love took the 2008 first-year championship (thanks mainly to a pair of stakes scores at Saratoga) for trainer Jonathan Sheppard and returns for another round before heading to open company.

Class Real Rock and Class Bopper can expand their budding careers for Mede Cahaba Stable and trainer Lilith Boucher. Each 3-year-old won a stakes last year, but face stiffer tests this time around.

"Knock on wood, they had a nice little winter vacation," said Boucher. "They've been jogging in the woods, and cantering, and they'll probably both go with a prep race on the flat at the Carolina Cup and then we'll decide what to do from there."

Boucher has options — including a return to the flat — with both horses and will proceed with caution while not trying to overface her youngsters.

"We're excited — you can't not be excited," she said. "But it's all going to shape up with what kind of horses go where. We're not ruling out (Atlanta or Palm Beach), but I'm not anxious to run against the best right away."

Always competitive, the category swells with each week and could see stars emerge from any number of areas including a host of 2008 maiden winners.

Two Routes for Timber

Virginia or Maryland?

Discussion always turns to two races when it comes to spring timber horses. Of course, there are other fixtures (Nashville and Radnor are nice stops, too), but the big names aim for the Maryland Hunt Cup or Virginia Gold Cup. Both carry \$75,000 purses and 4-mile distances, but attract vastly different horses.

Maryland first. The April 25 classic should lure the usual competitive field seeking to join the greats. Last year's winner Askim returns for trainer Ann Stewart and can retire the trophy for owner Irv Naylor. Runner-up Coal Dust also headlines among the returnees for Armata Stable and Tom Voss. Blair Wyatt, who won the race with Bug River in 2004, will get back in the saddle. Mr. Liberator (third in 2008) and The Bruce (the 2007 race winner) are also on the Hunt Cup path.

Sportsmans Hall's Private Attack won the 2008 Grand National, but scratched from the Hunt Cup the morning of the race. Trainer Alicia Murphy brings the 10-year-old back for another go and he must be considered despite his relative inexperience. In addition to Askim, four-time Hunt Cup winner Stewart has the talented Incomplete at work for owner

Bob Kinsley. A winner the past two years, Incomplete may test the stakes ranks in 2009. Tennessee-based Woodmont could ship east to give Maryland a try for trainer Ted Thompson.

Despite a purse decrease from its six-figure perch of 2007 and 2008, the Virginia Gold Cup will probably attract more names with stalwarts Bubble Economy, Salmo, Move West and Erin Go Bragh aiming in that direction. Irish Prince, Seeyouattheevent, Shady Valley and South Monarch could also play at Great Meadow.

The maiden ranks will be flush, with Grade II hurdle winner Orison showing the way along with News Flash, More Fascination, King Hoss and Hey Doctor making the conversion.

Distaff Doings

Though two-time champion Guelph retired and Peapack winner Class Shadow will miss 2009, there are several candidates ready to rise into the upper reaches of the filly/mare division. Orchid Princess, the 2006 champion, retired to life as a broodmare, but failed to get in foal and owner/trainer Linda Klein put the 11-year-old back in training.

"She got back to me in the latter half of the season, after spending a few months at New Bolton Center, so it was too late to make the fall races," Klein said. "I just decided to freshen her up and point to 2009 and I think it's worked out well. The year off did her a lot of good because she was a tired and unhappy horse. Now she's sound and happy and all business."

It showed at the Little Everglades Point-to-Point, when Orchid Princess easily defeated three male rivals in her first start since 2007.

"I thought she could beat those horses," Klein said, "but I was not expecting to see her do it that easily, as she ran off of basically two works. Now she can be as good as she ever was. This was a good spot to get her started and we'll look at Stoneybrook next with Nashville as the main spring goal."

Sherry Fenwick's Confined turned heads in 2008, her first season over hurdles, with a 15-length maiden romp at Shawan Downs. The Jonathan Sheppard trainee followed that with a solid third in the Peapack and ended with a fourth in the Crown Royal.

After breaking her maiden at Atlanta, Jellyberry waged a season-long battle with Guelph and Class Shadow. Bruce Miller's charge raced in all four distaff stakes in 2008 and finished fourth or better in each for Sally Radcliffe.

Lair missed 2008 with an injury, but the 7-year-old Mimi Voss homebred can be tough. She put things together in the fall of 2007, notching a maiden win and three consecutive quality stakes starts, including a victory in the Crown Royal, for trainer Tom Voss.

Sweet Shani is on the comeback trail after missing much of 2008. When the Sheppard trainee races, it's usually on a big stage; of her eight U.S. starts, the last seven have been in graded races against open company — where the New Zealand import has more than held her own. Runner-up to McDynamo in the 2007 Grand National, she got necked out by stablemate Sovereign Duty in the Royal Chase last April and finished third to Good Night Shirt in the Iroquois in May, her last start before being sidelined.

*With additional reporting
by Brian Nadeau and Jamie Santo.*

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NSA Standings

2008 FINAL TOP 10

Jockeys (Races Won)

	Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Money	Win%
Xavier Aizpuru.....	83	22	13	11	\$527,777	.27
Padge Whelan.....	52	14	14	6	491,478	.27
Jody Petty.....	65	14	11	9	326,125	.22
Matt McCarron.....	86	14	8	8	396,512	.16
Willie Dowling.....	56	13	6	12	768,743	.23
Paddy Young.....	99	11	16	14	323,440	.11
Danielle Hodsdon.....	73	10	13	13	456,295	.14
Robbie Walsh.....	88	9	5	11	351,118	.10
Carl Rafter.....	62	7	3	11	232,983	.11
Richard Boucher.....	42	6	6	6	174,272	.14

Trainers (Races Won)

	Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Money	Win%
Jack Fisher.....	122	26	12	21	\$1,156,907	.21
Tom Voss.....	97	25	23	9	742,778	.26
Jonathan Sheppard.....	92	16	18	17	742,996	.17
Sanna Hendriks.....	57	15	15	6	330,300	.26
Doug Fout.....	107	12	12	13	440,802	.11
Lilith Boucher.....	31	7	3	6	170,068	.23
Kathy McKenna.....	68	7	1	13	112,950	.10
Desmond Fogarty.....	41	5	13	6	185,450	.12
Bruce Miller.....	34	5	4	4	207,813	.15
Mike Berryman.....	37	5	0	4	81,560	.14

Owners (Money Won)

	Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Money	Win%
Sonny Via.....	7	5	0	0	\$487,020	.71
Calvin Houghland.....	48	9	6	8	361,928	.19
Bill Pape.....	25	5	5	4	241,364	.20
Irv Naylor.....	51	6	14	7	239,050	.12
Augustin Stable.....	31	10	5	4	197,650	.32
Gil Johnston.....	38	4	4	5	176,544	.11
Alnoff Stable.....	8	2	5	0	168,138	.25
Arcadia Stable.....	32	6	3	8	165,500	.19
Peggy Steinman.....	12	2	3	2	142,056	.17
The Fields Stable.....	10	5	1	0	136,024	.50

Horses (Money Won)

	Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Money	Win%
Good Night Shirt.....	5	5	0	0	\$485,520	1.00
Be Certain.....	8	2	5	0	168,138	.25
Dr. Bloomer.....	8	2	1	2	125,550	.25
Dark Equation.....	6	1	1	1	124,356	.17
Guelph.....	6	4	1	0	123,424	.67
The Price Of Love.....	7	3	1	2	122,792	.43
Swagger Stick.....	10	1	3	1	116,344	.10
Sovereign Duty.....	2	2	0	0	114,075	1.00
Bubble Economy.....	8	3	0	2	110,250	.38
Class Shadow.....	7	3	2	1	88,068	.43

2009 NSA Spring Schedule

Saturday, March 21.....Aiken Spring Aiken, S.C. www.aikensteeplechase.com	Saturday, April 25.....Foxfield Spring Charlottesville, Va. www.foxfieldraces.com
Saturday, March 28.....Carolina Cup Camden, S.C. www.carolina-cup.org	Saturday, April 25.....Maryland Hunt Cup Glyndon, Md. www.marylandsteeplechasing.com
Saturday, April 4.....Stoneybrook Raeford, N.C. www.carolinahorsepark.com	Saturday, April 25.....Queen's Cup Mineral Springs, N.C. www.queenscup.org
Saturday, April 4.....Palm Beach Wellington, Fla. www.palmbeachsteeplechase.com	Saturday, May 2.....Virginia Gold Cup The Plains, Va. www.vagoldcup.com
Saturday, April 11.....My Lady's Manor Monkton, Md. www.marylandsteeplechasing.com	Sunday, May 3.....Winterthur Winterthur, Del. www.winterthur.org
Saturday, April 11.....Strawberry Hill New Kent, Va. www.strawberryhillraces.com	Saturday, May 9.....Iroquois Nashville, Tenn. www.iroquoissteeplechase.org
Saturday, April 18.....Block House Tryon, N.C. www.trhcevents.com	Sunday, May 10.....Willowdale Kennett Square, Pa. www.willowdale.org
Saturday, April 18.....Grand National Butler, Md. www.marylandsteeplechasing.com	Saturday, May 16.....Radnor Hunt Races Malvern, Pa. www.radnorhunts.com
Saturday, April 18.....Middleburg Spring Middleburg, Va. www.middleburgspringraces.com	Sunday, May 17.....High Hope Lexington, Ky. www.highhopesteeplechase.com
Saturday, April 25.....Atlanta Kingston, Ga. www.atlantasteeplechase.org	Saturday, May 23.....Fair Hill Fair Hill, Md. www.fairhillraces.org

See www.nationalsteeplechase.com for updates.

The MARYLAND HUNT CUP



Worthington Farms • Glyndon, MD
Gates Open 1 P.M. • Post Time 4 P.M.

The world's oldest and most important timber race!

4 Miles • 22 Fences
Amateur Jockeys • \$75,000 Purse

PARKING RESERVATIONS

General Parking (\$35/car) may be purchased after April 1 at: Butler Store, Valley Motors, Wine Merchant, Dogwood Tack, The Filling Station at Shawan, and Unionville Saddle Shop • Patron Parking (\$100/car) & General Parking may be purchased on the internet at www.marylandhuntcup.com or send check to Maryland Hunt Cup Association, P.O. Box 2342, Westminster, MD 21158. Advance Reservations Only. No Sales or Parking Available on Race Day.

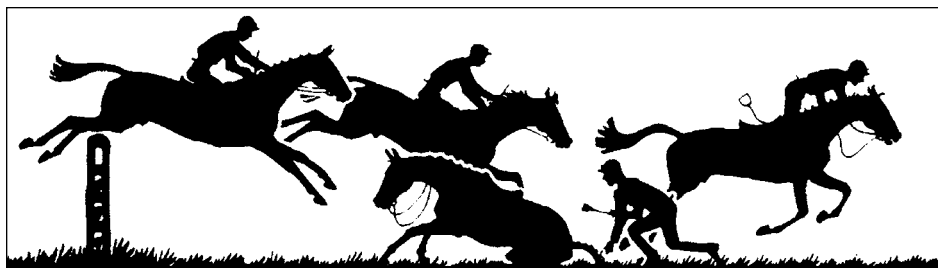
No Food Available for Purchase — Bring a Picnic.
NSA horsemen and member badges good for General Admission only.

Photo by Douglas Lees



Tod Marks

Preemptive Strike goes back to work in the open stakes division.



MY LADY'S MANOR STEEPLECHASE RACES

SATURDAY, APRIL 11
To Benefit Ladew Topiary Gardens

Located on Jarrettsville Pike
(MD 146) at Pocock Road

Gates Open 10:00 a.m.
Hunt Relays 11:00 a.m.
First Race 1:30 p.m.

Rain or Shine

General Parking \$50 and Family
Parking \$70 available at the gate
or purchase through www.marylandsteeplechasing.com. Parking
passes are also available through
Ladew Gardens (410) 557-9570 or
www.LadewGardens.com



THE 99TH MY LADY'S MANOR
Timber Stakes – Purse \$30,000

THE 85TH JOHN RUSH STREETT MEMORIAL
Amateur Maiden Timber – Purse \$15,000

THE 8TH JOHN D. SCHAPIRO MEMORIAL
Amateur Highweight Timber – Purse \$5,000

THE 3RD YOICKS CUP
Foxhunter Timber – Trophy

**THE MARYLAND GOVERNOR'S CUP
INTER-HUNT CHALLENGE**
Hunt Team Relay Races



Making a list, checking it twice

Like Santa Claus, only in March, the *Steeplechase Times* team makes a list each year. We make phone calls, send e-mails, ask questions, check point-to-point entries, follow people around, respond to hints and generally try to snoop out any active steeplechaser. While it's impossible to find them all, we then divide them into categories and get them ready in time for this first edition.

We aim to help you know who is running, without boring you or forcing you to read a million-word article that mentions them all. So here it is, the annual ST horse list. May they all run swiftly and come home safely.

OPEN STAKES DIVISION

Be Certain

Alnoff Stable • Tom Voss
Novice champ points to summer return

Baby League

Bill Pape • Jonathan Sheppard
Fine second in Far Hills novice off bench

Best Attack

Sally Radcliffe • Bruce Miller
Stakes vet could be ready for Carolina Cup

Dark Equation

Peggy Steinman • Doug Fout
Turf Writers star to try Gwathmey, Iroquois

Dr. Bloomer

Calvin Houghland • Jonathan Sheppard
Could resurface in Carolina Cup

Four Schools

Jacqueline Ohrstrom • Richard Valentine
Ferguson winner eyes Camden starter

Gliding

Irv Naylor • Doug Fout
On road back from Japan with new owner

Good Night Shirt

Sonny Via • Jack Fisher
Starts title defense in Carolina Cup

High Action

Carl Barnes • Doug Fout
Smithwick winner hopes for Spa return

Hip Hop

John Griggs • John Griggs
Could prove dangerous in Imperial Cup

Isti Bee

Maggie Bryant • Doug Fout
Kiwi-bred could try bigs in Carolina Cup

Kilbride Rd

Betsy Mead • Doug Fout
Only jumped once since his 2006 novice title

Look At Him

Bill Pape • Jonathan Sheppard
Late spring return for Spa winner

Mixed Up

Bill Pape • Jonathan Sheppard
Multiple Grade I winner on road back

Ouinipohja

Horses First Racing • Tom Voss
Good Euro hurdle form in 2006-07

Paradise's Boss

Ann Stern • Jack Fisher
Classy veteran is back and aiming high

Planets Aligned

Fox Ridge Farm • Tom Voss
Looks good in snow gallop photos

Preemptive Strike

Polaris Stable • Sanna Hendriks
Speedball aiming for Camden, again

Rare Bush

Sheila Williams • Jack Fisher
Appleton winner pointing to Imperial Cup

Red Letter Day

Greg Hawkins • Janet Elliot
Third in Lonesome Glory; allowance eligible

Salford City

Fergus Galvin • Gordon Elliott
Wexford, Aintree, Punchestown, Saratoga?

Sermon Of Love

Calvin Houghland • Jonathan Sheppard
Big second to The Shirt in Lonesome Glory

Slip Away

Ken Ramsey • Tom Voss
Claiming star won five in '08; may step up

Sovereign Duty

Hudson River Farms • Jonathan Sheppard
Royal Chase winner on the comeback trail

Swagger Stick

Gil Johnston • Jack Fisher
Foxbrook champ aims at Gwathmey

Triple Dip

Joseph Henderson • Jimmy Day
Noel Laing winner likes distance



Tod Marks

Dr. Bloomer won two stakes in 2008.

NOVICE HURDLERS

Bee Charmer

Whitewood Stable • Richard Valentine
Promising debut in 2008; Palm Beach?

Class Bopper

Mede Cahaba Stable • Lilith Boucher
2008 star "hand bigger, 200 pounds wider"

Class Real Rock

Mede Cahaba Stable • Lilith Boucher
3YO champ to mix hurdles, maiden flats

Cuse

Karen Gray • Karen Gray
Hard-knocker always gives good effort

Dictina's Boy

Riverdee Stable/Tom Miscannon • Tom Voss
Impressive Callaway maiden winner

Dubai Sunday

Irv Naylor • Desmond Fogarty
Looked good in maiden win at Colonial Cup

Dynaski

Armata Stable • Tom Voss
Spa novice winner looks for summer return

Fogcutter

Fox Ridge Farm • Tom Voss
Colonial winner should see action in April

Hold Your Fire

The Fields Stable • Tom Voss
Long-striding half-brother to Guelph

Mecklenburg

Anne Haynes • Mike Berryman
Speed makes him dangerous

Monsieur Henri

Little Everglades Racing • Janet Elliot
Camden flat and then Stoneybrook?

Normandy Tower

Normandy Farm • Jonathan Sheppard
Impressed in High Hope maiden score

Orebanks

Peggy Steinman • Doug Fout
3-year-old winner looks to step up

Ponce

Maggie Bryant • Doug Fout
Kiwi-bred had brutal trip in U.S. debut

Rainbows For Luck

Greg Bentley • Paul Rowland
Canadian-bred broke maiden at Ky. Downs

Right Hand Red

Ivy Hill Stable • Alicia Murphy
Stoneybrook perhaps

Seeking No More

Arcadia Stable • Jack Fisher
Finally broke through at Palm Beach

Spy In The Sky

Randleston Farm • Jimmy Day
National Hunt Cup goal, but cranking early

Sunshine Numbers

Sue Sensor • Arch Kingsley
Tuned up with easy win at Little Everglades

Tax Ruling

Irv Naylor • Desmond Fogarty
Fine second last fall at Great Meadow

Terpsichorean

Bright Brook Farm • Jonathan Sheppard
May start season in Block House allowance

The Price Of Love

Bill Pape • Jonathan Sheppard
On target for Palm Beach

Torino Luge

Calvin Houghland • Doug Fout
Aussie aired in U.S. debut; Palm Beach?



Tod Marks

Hold Your Fire moves up the ranks.



Tod Marks

Torino Luge could have a big novice year for owner Calvin Houghland.

WEDNESDAY IS RACE NIGHT

AT

ZAGAT
RATED



Best English Pub



POST TIME IS 5 O'CLOCK WITH REPLAYS THROUGH THE EVENING

MARCH 11
LITTLE EVERGLADES

MARCH 25
AIKEN

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TIMBER HORSES

Across The Sky

Holbrook Hollow Farm • Jack Fisher
Switches barns

Albert's Crossing

Irv Naylor • Billy Meister
Talented fellow spent two years on shelf

Armed Brat

Don Cochran • Paddy Neilson
Maiden with foxhunting miles

Askim

Irv Naylor • Ann Stewart
Seeking another Maryland Hunt Cup

Baron Von Ruckus

Ben Swope • Ben Swope
Gave owner/trainer/rider first win last year

Battle Op

Northwoods Stable • Regina Welsh
Third in both starts last spring

Brimson

Never Better Stable • Chip Miller
Decent try in Int'l Gold Cup last year

Bubble Economy

Arcadia Stable • Jack Fisher
Two-time timber titlist goes for hat trick

Bug Eyed Willy

Lucy Goelet • Billy Meister
Half to MHC winner Bug River has talent

Coal Dust

Armata Stable • Tom Voss
Maryland Hunt Cup runner-up seeks rematch

Delta Park

Arcadia Stable • Jack Fisher
Busy fellow tried hurdles nine times in 2008

Dig This Hoss

Jubilee Stable • Ted Thompson
Two-time hurdle winner a timber debutante

Erin Go Bragh

Maggie Bryant • Doug Fout
New owner aiming for Virginia Gold Cup

Fort Henry

Joe Davies • Blythe Miller Davies
Irish-bred ran once in 2008

Gather No Moss

Buck Kisor • Mike Berryman
Veteran shifts attention to timber

G'Day G'Day

Maggie Bryant • Doug Fout
Hurdle winner at Strawberry Hill last year

Gigger

Kinross Farm • Neil Morris
Claimed at Open House with timber in mind

Haddix

Perry Bolton • Kathy McKenna
Beat Move West by 23 at My Lady's Manor

He's A Conniver

Calvin Houghland • Jonathan Sheppard
Rare timber winner for barn last year

Hey Doctor

Kinross Farm • Neil Morris
Took timber debut at Blue Ridge March 7

Hot Springs

Irv Naylor • Desmond Fogarty
My Lady's Manor winner on shelf until fall

Incomplete

Robert Kinsley • Ann Stewart
Two races, two wins in last two years

Irish Laddie

Irv Naylor • Desmond Fogarty
Pointing to allowance at Grand National

Irish Prince

Augustin Stable • Sanna Hendriks
2007 champ to begin at My Lady's Manor

J. Alfred Prufrock

Conrad Somers • Conrad Somers
Schooling at Phillip Dutton's all winter

Kilbreena

Irv Naylor • Brianne Slater
Second to South Monarch at Fair Hill

King Hoss

The Fields Stable • Tom Voss
Son of El Prado to try the lumber

King Lear

Huganir & Russell • Blythe Miller Davies
Bound for Virginia Gold Cup

Major Malibu

Ann Stern • Jack Fisher
5-year-old won at Open House in 2008

Matinicus Rock

Keystone Thoroughbreds • Todd McKenna
Starting off at Howard County

Michele Marieschi

Anna Stable • Richard Valentine
Part of George Hundt's heavyweight string

Mon Villez

Calvin Houghland • Bruce Miller
Three-time Noel Laing winner starts anew

More Fascination

Silverton Hill • Leslie Young
Big-time flat owners won at point-to-point

Move West

Augustin Stable • Sanna Hendriks
Pa. Hunt Cup winner seeks Va. Gold Cup

Mr Liberator

Daniel Baker • Billy Meister
Third in last year's Maryland Hunt Cup

Music To My Ears

Anna Stable • Richard Valentine
Plays in George Hundt's heavyweight band



Douglas Lees

G'Day G'Day works on his timber jumping at trainer Doug Fout's farm.

Native Mark

Jack Griswold • Paddy Neilson
Two point-to-point wins in 2008

N J Devil

Irv Naylor • Desmond Fogarty
Seeks maiden score after year on ice

News Flash

Robert Kinsley • Tom Voss
Hit board in six of nine maiden hurdles

Orison

EMO Stables • Doug Fout
Won 2007 Carolina Cup, February timber test

Patriot's Path

Irv Naylor • Desmond Fogarty
Path heads toward My Lady's Manor

Private Attack

Sportsmans Hall • Alicia Murphy
Plans point to Maryland Hunt Cup

Professor Maxwell

Lucy Stable • Richard Valentine
Heavyweight stalwart tried stakes last fall

Prospector's Strike

Long Ball Stable • Jack Fisher
Four-time flat winner to make NSA debut

Radio Flyer

Augustin Stable • Sanna Hendriks
2007 timber win only race of 8YO's career

Royal's Quest

Jean Class • Billy Meister
Should run at My Lady's Manor

Salmo

Irv Naylor • Desmond Fogarty
13YO seeks another Virginia Gold Cup

Scuba Steve

Perry Bolton • Kathy McKenna
Steeplethons are his bag

Seeyouattheevent

Nick Arundel • Jack Fisher
Last seen winning '07 International Gold Cup

Shady Valley

Anne Haynes • Mike Berryman
Nice allowance win at Pa. Hunt Cup

Shiny Emblem

Arcadia Stable • Jack Fisher
Scored at Callaway after tough-luck spring

Skiperoo

Greenlawn Stable • Sanna Hendriks
Idle since hurdle try in 2006 for Dogwood

South Monarch

Augustin Stable • Sanna Hendriks
Riding a three-race win streak

Straight Gin

Whitewood & Kim Zito • Richard Valentine
2002 Preakness vet will ease into season

Tacloban

Rosbrian Farm • Tara Dowling
Second to Rochester at Winterthur

Takin Inventory

Michele Durbin • Todd Wyatt
Owner/rider type for heavyweight division

TIMBER HORSES

The Bruce

Stewart Strawbridge • Sanna Hendriks
Seeking a second Maryland Hunt Cup

The Other Me

Don Cochran • Paddy Neilson
Scored at Virginia Fall in 2008

Toughkenamon

Armata Stable • Kathy McKenna
Could start in maiden at My Lady's Manor



Twill Do scored at Genesee in 2008.

Tod Marks

Twill Do

Lucy Goelet • Billy Meister
Won Genesee maiden, eyes Grand National

Uppercut

Gum Tree Stable • Larry Ensor
Amateur horse could step up

Vinnie Boy

Adair Bonsal Stifel • Blythe Miller Davies
Aiming for Maryland Hunt Cup

Voler Bar Nuit

Jean Class • Billy Meister
Owns one career start, well-liked by barn

Volle Nolle

Northwoods Stable • Regina Welsh
Lightly raced 11-year-old returns

Westbound Road

Lucy Stable • Richard Valentine
12YO the newest member of Team Hundt

Western Fling

Strawbridge & Crestview • Kathy McKenna
Genesee Hunt Cup winner a threat on lead

Won Wild Bird

Anne Haynes • Mike Berryman
Mare has experience taking on timber boys

Woodmont

Jubilee Stable • Ted Thompson
Stakes vet has Maryland Hunt Cup in mind

The place to prep

Mecklenburg

used Orange County
as a tuneup for a
\$25,000 win in 2008.



Tod Marks photo

Orange County Point-to-Point

Locust Hill Farm • Middleburg, VA

Sunday, March 29 (Post Time 1 p.m.)

Pairs race on Saturday, March 28 at 9 a.m.

Flat Races • Hurdle Races • Timber Races • Foxhunters Timber

Parking: (540) 687-3529 • Racing: (703) 727-2357

Wendi Wilson

Nelson Gunnell, Chairman/Clerk of Course

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FDIC

E.O.E.



Douglas Lees

Trainer Doug Fout's steeplechasers put in some miles on the sand this winter.



35th Annual Marlborough Hunt Races

at Roedown in Davidsonville, Maryland

Sunday, April 5 (post time at noon)

Maiden/Open Flat – 1 mile

Maiden Hurdle – 2 miles

Novice/Open Timber – 3 miles

Amateur Flat – 2 miles

Foxhunters Relay Flat – 3 miles

Pony Race – Junior Horse Race

Marlborough helped NSA stars Good Night Shirt, Best Attack, and Allimac get ready in 2008.

Horsemen's Information: 410-798-5040

General Info/Tickets: 410-798-8275

www.marlboroughhuntraces.com

MAIDEN HURLERS

Aero

Eldon Farm • Doug Fout
Showed solid flat form last summer

Amador

Sharon Sheppard • Alicia Murphy
Surprise comeback from tendon injury

Area Limits

Over Creek Farm • Julie Gomena
Should be ready by late spring

Atrium

Whitewood Stable • Richard Valentine
Third to Rainiero, The Price Of Love in '07

Best Alibi

Irv Naylor • Desmond Fogarty
Won Group II stakes on flat for Godolphin

Best Name

Irv Naylor • Desmond Fogarty
Also via Godolphin; second in French Derby

Bethpage Black

Margaret Littleton • Julie Gomena
Three-time NYRA flat winner eyes Aiken

Better Be Ready

Clorevia Farm • Eddie Graham
Half-brother to Better Talk Now

Bismarck

Wendy Hendriks • Ricky Hendriks
Newcomer by Victory Gallop

Blue Rider

Clarke Ohrstrom • Richard Valentine
Son of A.P. Indy joined barn in December

Brainy Benny

Red Stripe Stable • Tom Voss
Belmont allowance winner with talent

Bullet Dancer

Bruce Smart • Jimmy Day
Solid third at Great Meadow last May

Cahill's Touch

Mike Prentiss • Doug Fout
Stakes-placed on flat; nears hurdle debut

Celtic Heritage

Nina Gardner • Lizzie Merryman
Pennsylvania-bred eyes Philly

Class Bop

Mede Cahaba Stable • Lilith Boucher
Faced older in all three jump starts at 3

Class Care

Mede Cahaba Stable • Lilith Boucher
Tested hurdles at Aiken last spring

Class Crash

Star Ten Stable • Lilith Boucher
4-year-old enjoyed going long on flat

Class Deputy

Mede Cahaba Stable • Lilith Boucher
May look to timber for elusive maiden win

Class Disco

Mede Cahaba Stable • Lilith Boucher
Class Bopper's older half-brother

Commodore Bob

Nick Arundel • Jack Fisher
Ran well in two hurdle outings last fall

Country Cousin

Oakwood Stable • Julie Gomena
Fourth at Colonial Downs; could see Camden

Coupe De Ville

Eldon Farm • Doug Fout
Still in there swinging; Palm Beach possible

Decisive Play

Timber Bay Farm • Jonathan Sheppard
Maiden claimer at Atlanta on agenda

Devil's Preacher

Gregg Ryan • Julie Gomena
Top prospect points to Middleburg

Diamond Fever

Randleston Farm • Jimmy Day
Stakes winner on flat is well-liked

Duck Hunt

Matthew Klein • Jimmy Day
Talented and due for a little luck

Dugan

Bill Pape • Jonathan Sheppard
Ex-Augustin horse heads to Aiken

Eagle Beagle

Barracuda Stable • Ricky Hendriks
Rookie hurdler by Lemon Drop Kid

El Viaje

Sondra Bender • Tom Voss
Son of El Prado won three on the flat

English Dancer

Buck Kisor • Mike Berryman
Set to improve on first hurdle season

Flight Briefing

Augustin Stable • Sanna Hendriks
Philly Park flat winner

Freeboard

Ann Stern • Jack Fisher
Nice win in \$20,000 flat at Great Meadow

Gatarnation

Hamilton Farm • Kathy McKenna
Two-time winner on flat

Giant Strides

Robert Kinsley • Tom Voss
Son of Giant's Causeway exciting prospect

Global Genius

Whitewood Stable • Richard Valentine
Son of Galileo raced in England, California

Ground Frost

Alnoff Stable • Tom Voss
Belmont Park turf winner for Bobby Frankel

MAIDEN HURLERS

Heir Apparent

Buck Kisor • Mike Berryman
Group I flat winner in native South Africa

Henry's Hero

Daybreak Stables • Jimmy Day
Pleasant surprise in morning

High Approval

Coppertree Farm • Tom Voss
Dad High Chaparral a two-time turf champ

Highcrest

Wolver Hill Farm • Ricky Hendriks
Training flat win at Pa. Hunt Cup

Honolua Storm

Edie Dixon • Jack Fisher
Flashed promise before missing all of 2008

Honour Emblem

Memory Lane Farm • Mike Berryman
Three thirds from five jump starts

Imperial Way

Henry Rathbun • Tom Voss
Solid third in Gladstone

Indy Run

EMO Stable • Doug Fout
Son of A.P. Indy won twice on flat

It's My Choice

Gil Johnston • Fenneka Bentley
New Zealand-bred from Graham Motion

Johann Star

Mike Berryman • Mike Berryman
Son of Johannesburg won at Colonial Downs

Judith's Fancy

Arcadia Stable • Jack Fisher
Sire Thunder Gulch a successful NSA sire

Left Unsaid

The Fields Stable • Tom Voss
Son of Dynaformer brings solid flat form

Love Palace

Jubilee Stable • Ted Thompson
On comeback trail after missing 2008

Mabou

Ken Ramsey • Tom Voss
Three-time winner on flat

Mischief

Trillium Stable • Tom Voss
Son of With Approval should make spring

Mister Twine

Willow Oak Stables • Todd Wyatt
Collected three wins on Mid-Atlantic circuit

Most Bossest

Todd Wyatt • Todd Wyatt
Returns after year on shelf

National Guard

Jacqueline Ohrstrom • Richard Valentine
4-year-old could eventually test timber

Nationbuilder

Calvin Houghland • Jonathan Sheppard
Targets Palm Beach maiden

Nolan's Cat

Ken Ramsey • Tom Voss
Third in Belmont Stakes; 'nuff said

Northern Bay

Cary Jackson • Doug Fout
Won over hurdles at Blue Ridge

Ogden Dunes

Silverton Hill • Leslie Young
Half-brother to champ Stevie Wonderboy

Organizer

Majesty Stud • Paul Rowland
Winner of NYRA's \$250,000 Empire Classic

Piney Mountain

Peggy Steinman • Doug Fout
Ran well in brief flat career

Pleasant Top

Sonny Via • Jack Fisher
Should improve after 3-year-old experience

Praise Me

Maggie Bryant • Doug Fout
Trio of 3-year-old tries should help

Quick Now

EMO Stable • Ernie Oare
Second at Va. Fall; fourth at Palm Beach

Rubicon

Ken Ramsey • Tom Voss
Son of Dynaformer won three times on flat

Serene Harbor

Nina Gardner • Lizzie Merryman
Stakes-placed on flat; nearing hurdle debut

Silent Vow

Laura Shull • Janet Elliot
Pointing to Aiken maiden claimer

So Amazing

Randleston Farm • Jimmy Day
Looking to Aiken

Society Milliner

Randleston Farm • Jimmy Day
Son of Sadler's Wells set to improve

Star For Tina

Clovevia Farm • Eddie Graham
Won turf maiden at Aqueduct in '07

Strategic Vission

Clovevia Farm • Eddie Graham
Second to jump stakes winner Seer on flat

Suite G

John Griggs • John Griggs
Gets to work early at Aiken

Tap The Keys

Marilyn Ketts • Lilith Boucher
Half-brother to Cherokeeinthehills

The Editor

Leslie Young, Dominik Falini • Leslie Young
Son of Mr. Greeley has started only once

Tracy Arm

Clovevia Farm • Bruce Miller
Look for him in spring maiden claimer

Treasure Map

Riverdee Stable & Miscannon • Jack Fisher
Full-brother to Grade I winner Winchester



Douglas Lees

Maiden hurdler Freeboard

Tricky Me

Sonny Via • Jack Fisher
Son of Unbridled's Song and Mystic Lady

Twister Crossing

Greycross Stable • Sanna Hendriks
Ready for hurdle debut

Ufa

Chadds Ford Stable • Kathy McKenna
Owner campaigned '70s great Leaping Frog

Vine Hill

Whitewood Stable • Richard Valentine
Homebred out of Gr. I winner Mossflower

What A Prize

Cary Jackson • Alicia Murphy
Goes for new barn after throat operation

Whistling Deputy

Ann Stern • Jack Fisher
Third in training flat in 2007

Whycocomagh

Kinross Farm • Neil Morris
Point-to-point hurdle winner in 2008

You The Man

Bill Fawcett • Todd Wyatt
Flat winner eyes hurdle debut



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FILLY/MARE HURDLERS

Analyze

Flying Horse Farm • Jazz Napravnik
Mare won maiden claimer at Middleburg

Class Miner

Mede Cahaba Stable • Lilith Boucher
Plans for hurdle debut at Camden

Class Tie

Mede Cahaba Stable • Lilith Boucher
4-year-old daughter of Black Tie Affair

Cold Snap

Nina Gardner • Lizzie Merryman
Western Expression miss owns 4 flat wins

Confined

Sherry Fenwick • Jonathan Sheppard
Could be major player in division

Diva Maria

Arcadia Stable • Jack Fisher
Solid second vs. boys in Woolfe Memorial

Dynaskill

Sally Radcliffe • Bruce Miller
May make it to Camden

Farah T Salute

Flying Horse Farm • Jazz Napravnik
Beat the boys at Warrenton Point-to-Point

Jellyberry

Sally Radcliffe • Bruce Miller
Poised for breakout season

Lair

Mimi Voss • Tom Voss
2007 Crown Royal champ sidelined in 2008

Miss Crown

Kate Dalton • Kate Dalton
Talented 4-year-old to see action early

Moon Dolly

Mark Dodson • Tom Voss
English-bred points for Camden maiden

Orchid Princess

Linda Klein • Linda Klein
2006 champ returns to action

Perkedinthesand

Gil Johnston • Jack Fisher
Close third to Guelph in Crown Royal

Prettypmarsh

Sheila Williams • Jack Fisher
Homebred makes transistion to hurdles

Rahy Bird

Lilith Boucher • Lilith Boucher
Unraced half-sister to Rowdy Irishman

River Kwai

Hamilton Farm • Kathy McKenna
Notched eight wins on flat; start whistling

Roseland

Daniel Geitner • Dave Washer
Scored at Palm Beach last fall

Straight To Court

Over Creek Farm • Julie Gomena
To Camden maiden via Virginia

Swallow Creek

Tria Pell Dove • Julie Gomena
Second in maiden claimer at Montpelier

Sweet Shani

Calvin Houghland • Jonathan Sheppard
Talented lady scheduled for fall return



Lydia Williams

Stakes winner Lair returns to action for trainer Tom Voss in the filly/mare division.

Teak

The Fields Stable • Tom Voss
4-year-old rookie is Guelph's half-sister

Wolf Shadow

Peter Jay • Todd Wyatt
Won maiden claimer at Montpelier

ASSORTED HURDLERS

Belknap County

Gregg Ryan • Julie Gomena
Veteran heads to Aiken allowance

Bounding Cat

Janet Elliot • Janet Elliot
Ready for claimer at Aiken

Bow Strada

Calvin Houghland • Bruce Miller
12-year-old keeps running strong

Charismic American

Athene Noctura Stable • Allison Fullmer
Flashed talent in Colonial Downs upset

Chivite

Calvin Houghland • Bruce Miller
Missed 2008; catching comeback train

Cradle Will Rock

Jonathan Sheppard • Jonathan Sheppard
Several spring options, including starters

C R's Deputy

Barracuda Stable • Ricky Hendriks
Former 3YO champion eyes return

Dalucci

Justin Carthy • Janet Elliot
Could start at Stoneybrook or Camden

Duke Of Earl

Ann Stern • Jack Fisher
Crafty claimer always runs his race

Dynantonia

Gregg Ryan • Julie Gomena
Targeting amateur highweight at Nashville

Fantorini

Sonny Via • Jack Fisher
Won maiden at '07 Colonial Cup, missed '08

Free Admission

Bill Pape • Jonathan Sheppard
Two-time winner fills all the roles

Lead Us Not

Bill Pape • Jonathan Sheppard
First and second in two starts last year

London Grove

Nina Gardner • Lizzie Merryman
Eyes late spring or summer return

Mark The Shark

Kingfisher Farm • Jack Fisher
High Hope winner has a few tricks up sleeve

Motel Affair

Blackwood Stable • Tom Voss
Five-time winner returns for top barn

One Sea

Randy Rouse • Randy Rouse
Pointing to Middleburg allowance

Pals Pride

Little Bay Racing Stable • Kevin Pallister
Veteran won twice last year

Pleasant Pick

High Hope Stable • Arch Kingsley
Veteran can surprise on best

Prancing Cat

Maggie Bryant • Doug Fout
Aiming for early start



Tod Marks

Bounding Cat heads to 2009 off a win at Montpelier last fall.

Rainiero

Augustin Stable • Sanna Hendriks
Talented Chilean on schedule for return

Second Approval

Brianne Slater • Brianne Slater
Bound for Stoneybrook

Socca Beat

EMO Stable • Ernie Oare
Stoneybrook maiden winner in 2007

Sound Blaster

Bear Creek Stable • Jack Fisher
Needs to get started – literally

Swimming River

Long Lane Farm • Paul Rowland
Two-time winner took on all kinds in 2008

Underbidder

Timber Bay Farm • Jonathan Sheppard
Has faced all kinds since '04 Gladstone win

Waracha

Mimi Voss • Tom Voss
Out of a full-sister to John's Call

When The Saints

Kinross Farm • Neil Morris
Won lone hurdle start back in 2007

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Sheila and Jack*



Neena Ewing

Queen's Cup returns to NSA

BY JOE CLANCY

Prices, Torsilieri come to agreement for 2009

Four National Steeplechase Association meets on a single day? Or three NSA meets and one non-NSA meet on a single day?

Pick your favorite.

In the interests of moving forward and working together, new NSA president Guy Torsilieri and Queen's Cup organizers Bill and Carrington Price chose the former. Run without NSA sanction in 2008, the Queen's Cup returns this year but has company as Atlanta, Foxfield and the Maryland Hunt Cup share the April 25 date.

In a decision made last year, while the Queen's Cup was off the NSA calendar, Atlanta moves to the new spot from the second weekend of April to ease local event competition.

Torsilieri calls it a crowded schedule he can live with. He also calls it progress.

"It's good that we have the Queen's Cup back," he said. "It's going to be interesting to see how the meets perform on the same day. Hopefully, they'll all be successful. The race conditions have been written so that all three meets have an equal shot of attracting horses and that's the best we can do."

The need for a solution to the problems created with the exit of the Queen's Cup and Little Everglades hung over the NSA last year and became a big part of Torsilieri's first few months as president. He and others talked about making progress on the sport's issues by bringing back the meets. They saw a chance if the meets returned and worked from "within the tent" rather than outside it.

The metaphor is Torsilieri's and he went to great lengths to encourage the meets' return. Little Everglades declined, Queen's Cup accepted.



Tod Marks

The Queen's Cup meet returns to the NSA circuit in 2009.

"To Guy's credit, he was clearly trying to bring everybody together and he's told us we have our date as long as we want our date," said Bill Price. "We came back because it was the best thing for us, and for the sport, for now. To Guy's credit, we were going to run no matter what and it's better to have us under the same tent than not. Progress has a chance from here."

That being said, the Prices both said they would re-evaluate the decision to return after the 2009 season.

In January, the NSA board approved restrictions designed to tighten sanction. The limits would have considered the Queen's Cup and Little Everglades races for conditions and weight penalties and may have prevented horses that started at the two meets from running at pari-mutuel tracks. Designed to protect horsemen and tighten the meaning of sanction, the policy never took effect.

First, the Queen's Cup agreed to return. Second, Little Everglades lowered its purses, eliminated use of a photo-finish camera and did not identify horses via tattoo numbers.

Combined, the factors enabled the NSA to abandon the limits.

"After many discussions with Little Everglades, their desire to be left alone as a point-to-point became clear," said Torsilieri. "They made a couple of decisions that allowed us to change our minds, made us change our minds. It's still not perfect, but we spent a tremendous amount of time on this and came to a decision. We can live with that decision."

Price made it clear that the proposed NSA restrictions had nothing to do with his meet's return.

"If anything, they made it harder for us to come back; it angered us," he said. "They eventually did the right thing leaving Little Everglades alone. They need to focus on growing the sport, not bludgeoning a race meet that doesn't want to come back into sanction."

Torsilieri still sees problems with race meets that run without the NSA yet try to offer the benefits of sanction – including substantial purses – but will work on the solutions another day.

"Point-to-points are clearly a vital part of steeplechasing, but for the most part, they don't have purses at all and then we have this," he said. "We're not trying to stifle point-to-points, but where is that line? What is a point-to-point, what is a non-sanctioned race meet? What is too substantial a purse?"

Torsilieri and the NSA see a need to address those questions to strengthen the meaning of sanction, to

See **QUEEN'S CUP** page 21 ►

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Queen's Cup —

■ Continued from page 19

ensure an honest product, to maintain a level playing field for participants.

"We still have issues to deal with that pertain to what do you do with a non-sanctioned race meet with significant purses," Torsilieri said. "It's not an easy answer, but we're where we are and we're going to move forward. We just wanted to put those issues behind us and start improving our sport. We have a great little industry here, a great, little, boutique industry and we should be working together to improve it."

For Price, that means better service and a new direction from the NSA. The specifics of this disagreement have been talked about in a variety of forums for more than a year, but Price found a way to sum up his opinions.

"We started all this because we weren't satisfied with the NSA's management," he said. "The NSA had lost touch with its customer and didn't look at the race meet or the owner as a customer. We don't just come with the package. Nothing works without a successful race meet with purse money and nothing works without an owner who puts up money to have a horse. The NSA looks at a small group as the customer, but there

are more of them out there than the few biggest race meets and the few biggest owners or trainers."

In the past 12 months, the NSA has hired a chief executive officer (Lou Raffetto) and changed its board of directors election rules, though Price would like to see more.

"The difference between an outstanding organization and a rotten organization is the little things,"

Price said. "I don't think they've been attentive to the little things. They've been attentive to the big owners, the big meets, the big trainers and a few big people on the board. But if the NSA focuses on the little things and keeps its mind open for ideas, it can grow and be healthy and I sense from Guy that he's much more open, that he wants to hear new ideas and wants to try new ideas. I never got that from anybody prior to him walking in the door as president."

Beyond the Big One

Though the Queen's Cup and Little Everglades dominated conversation, thought, effort and opinion for more than a year, they aren't the only stories. Torsilieri hopes to see steeplechasing move into new areas and pointed to a few themes.

- The racetrack race meet model. A la Strawberry Hill at Colonial Downs and the Saratoga Open House at Saratoga Race Course, the NSA will pursue additional opportunities along the theme — Monmouth Park perhaps. As always, new race meets will also be part of the plan (Tanglewood, Charleston, etc.) but they often assume their own pace.

- Wagering. It may be a long way off, but the concept of NSA racing as a pari-mutuel signal looms on the horizon. Along those lines, the streaming video concept tested at the final two stops of 2008 will be expanded.

- Learning curve. The flat-racing world stands as a pool of potential horses and owners. Promoting more crossover fits on any agenda.

- Continuing education. The NSA's successful program for training stewards and other officials will continue. Torsilieri sat in on the 2009 stewards seminar and called the system "a real highlight" in what the NSA does.

Regardless, Torsilieri will continue the theme of his first few months on the volunteer job.

"I've been listening to everybody, everybody," said the president, an owner and co-chairman of the Far Hills Races. "After that, I discuss it with our executive team and we try to make the best decision

that's best for the sport. If you do that, you're going to make 90 to 95 percent of the people happy and that's what I'm going to try to do."

News and Notes

- To help address the need for steeplechase jockeys on the busy April 25 weekend, the Queen's Cup will help fund travel expenses for visiting European jockeys for the day.

- All National Fences in use at NSA meets will have a 10-inch white strip at the bottom of the takeoff roll to create a ground line as a visual aid for horses and jockeys.

- Atlanta's move to late April helps the meet deal with local conflicts from The Masters golf tournament and spring break for area college students. The schedule change warranted a switch in conditions for the featured Georgia Cup, now a novice stakes. Other stakes changes include the Carolina Cup and the Temple Gwathmey (both open stakes once again).

- The Queen's Cup will continue testing new fence materials with Fornells plastic being used in the brush portion of a fence on the meet's timber course.

- Economic changes seem relatively minor on the NSA circuit, thus far, though the Virginia Gold Cup trimmed its purse from \$100,000 to \$75,000 and Middleburg decreased the value of the Gwathmey from \$75,000 to \$60,000.

"Our (corporate) tent sales are definitely down, but our sponsorship really hasn't been too bad," said Jean Bird, race director at Atlanta. "We've lost some of our bank sponsors and we lost one of our biggest sponsors in Beaulieu of America (a carpet manufacturer). We are excited about the new date, because now we don't compete with anything. It should make a difference."

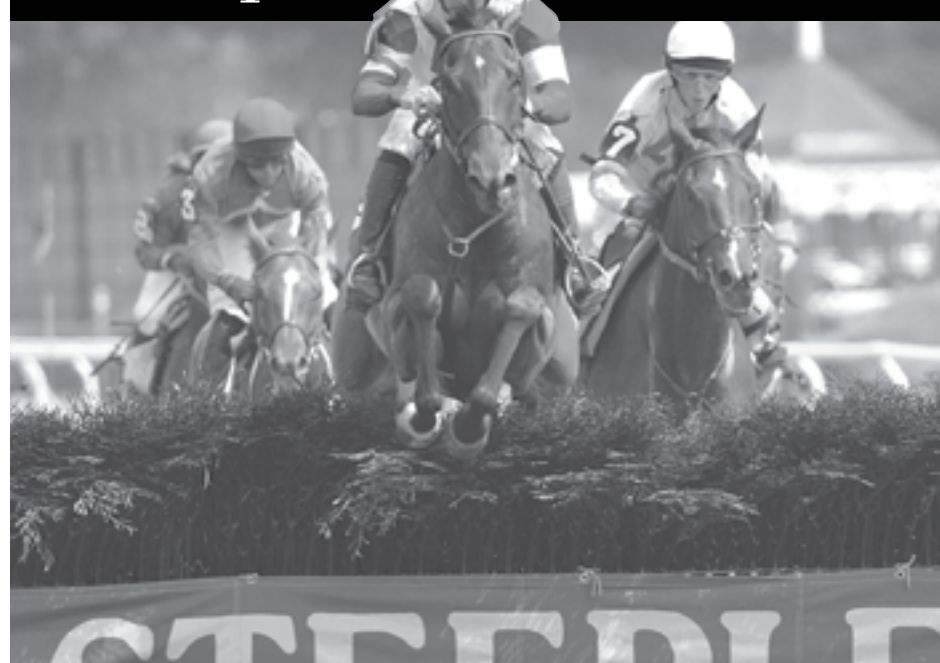


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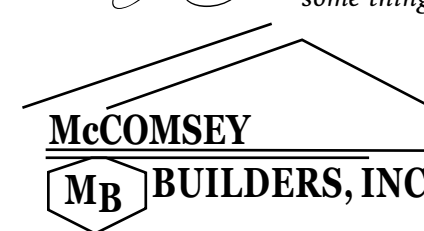
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Master Planner

Ex-engineer Fogarty builds training career

BY BRIAN NADEAU

Scan a trainer's résumé, and "hotwalker," "amateur jockey" and "top assistant" appear as frequently as Terrible Towels at Heinz Field. But "civil-engineering degree?" Well, it's on Desmond Fogarty's C.V.

The 35-year-old Irishman traded in a briefcase and an office for a tack bag and a shedrow as a private trainer for owner Irv Naylor, and now stands as one of the brightest young conditioners on the circuit.

Fogarty grew up in County Tipperary, and began galloping horses at a young age. He always enjoyed riding, but his career path led elsewhere. At least at first.

"I didn't grow up as part of a horse family, riding in races or anything like that. It was more of a hobby and I did a lot of pleasure riding while I was younger," Fogarty said. "It wasn't until after I got my degree in engineering that I decided to come to the United States to see how the other half lives, so to speak."

Fogarty traded the green grass of Ireland for the bluegrass of Kentucky in 2002, and spent his first six months in the States galloping horses at the racetrack for several outfits. That initial stint was short-lived, however, and Fogarty ventured west to San Francisco. For the next year and a half he put his engineering de-



Trainer Desmond Fogarty (right) and Allimac found the winner's circle twice in 2008.

Tod Marks

gree to use in the construction industry. But the lure of the races is much like the lighthouses that sprinkle the shoreline of San Francisco Bay – you can drift miles and miles away but their presence always beckons on the horizon.

"I was doing some career building in San Francisco, working for my neighbor's pipeline company, but still I was trying to stay involved with the horses. I was

heading into work at about 9 a.m., but during the early morning I was still getting on some horses and galloping them for some friends," Fogarty said. "I started to get the itch to get back into it because I missed it. My longterm plan has always been to resume my engineering career, but there's really been no turning back since I made the switch."

See **FOGARTY** page 23 ►

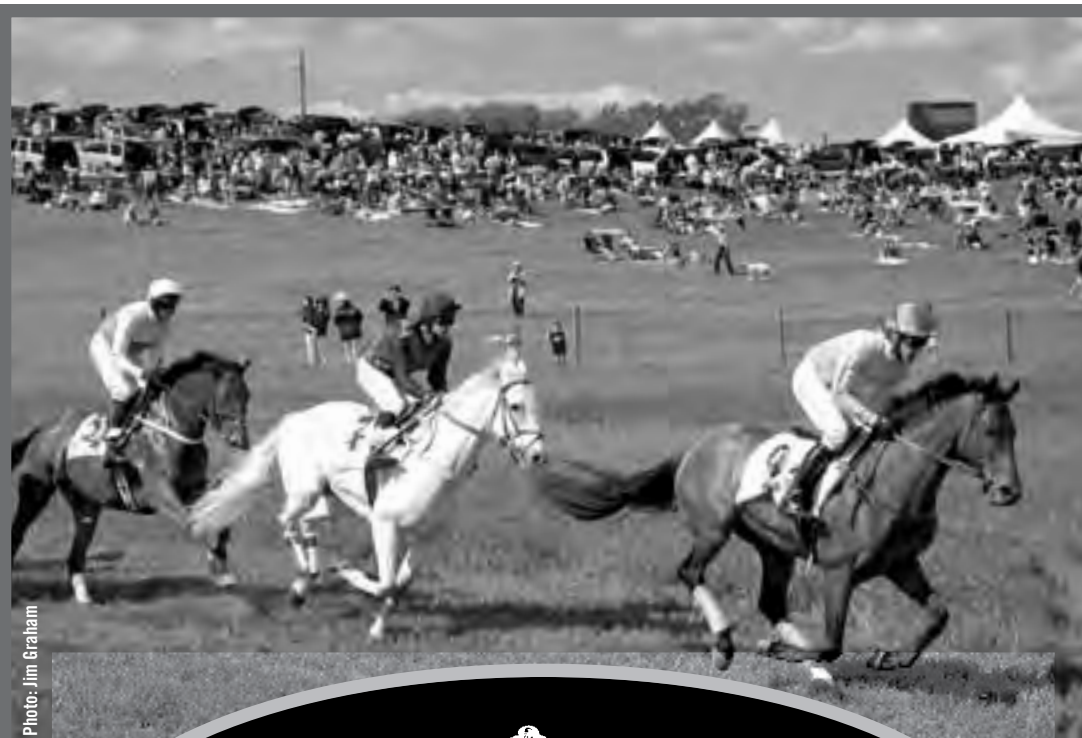


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Fogarty —

■ Continued from page 22

Fogarty returned to Kentucky after his foray in the Bay Area and took a job riding for Bobby Springer in the spring of 2006. A few months later he got his first big break, courtesy of friend and fellow Irishman Tom Foley, who had a few horses in Virginia for owner Irv Naylor.

"Tom's a friend of mine and he was training some horses for Irv at Colonial Downs. I was in Kentucky at the time, riding and galloping horses, and decided to go down and help Tom during the summer," Fogarty said. "So I met Irv and shortly thereafter I took a job at his farm galloping and breaking horses. I took the job with the intent of becoming an amateur rider. I thought that if I could get on a few of his horses in the morning then maybe I'd be able to ride them at the races."

It proved a solid blueprint. Fogarty rode sparingly as an amateur in 2006, finishing well off the board in three races. He got on his first horse for Naylor at Foxfield Fall and guided Hot Springs, trained by Jack Fisher at the time, to a training-flat win.

The next month at Genesee, Hot Springs became the first horse to run in Fogarty's name, finishing second in a timber maiden with the newly minted trainer in the irons. Hot Springs started twice more that fall and the following spring at Winterthur gave Fogarty his first NSA win as a trainer and jockey. Fogarty finished the 2007 season with two wins from 16 starters and headed to 2008 poised to make a major breakthrough.

It didn't take long. Fogarty won his first stakes when Hot Springs was moved up from second in the My Lady's Manor April 12. Allimac followed a week later with a win in the Middleburg Hunt Cup (an open timber), defeating past champions Miles Ahead and Irish Prince who had entered the race a combined 12-for-12 over the lumber. In May Allimac ran away with the Mason Houghland at Nashville. Factor in the Maryland Hunt Cup score by the Ann Stewart-trained

Askim, and Naylor was well on his way to reclaiming the timber title.

"Desmond did a terrific job last spring. There were seven timber stakes (if you include Middleburg) and we won four of them, ran second in two others and the one we didn't run first or second in we didn't have a runner," Naylor said. "You just can't do any better than he did and he's the one responsible for putting me back on top."

Dubai Sunday took a maiden hurdle on the Colonial Cup card, and season's end found Fogarty in the top 10 in wins (five) and earnings (\$185,450) while Naylor finished as the leading timber owner for the fourth time in the last five years.

With stakes veterans Salmo, Patriot's Path and Hot Springs on target for this year's timber stakes, and a burgeoning roster of hurdle horses, Fogarty and Naylor look to climb higher in 2009.

"Irv buys nice horses, and that's important because you have to have them to succeed. We just bought a couple from Godolphin, Best Alibi and Best Name, that won group races in England, and we have them as hurdle prospects," Fogarty says. "There's pressure to succeed training for Irv, but there's always pressure with anything you do. Irv runs this operation like a business and that's what you have to do to succeed. But he also has a lot of fun and it's great to be able to work for him here at the farm (in Maryland) where he can come down and see his horses train and keep a close eye on them. Ever since I signed on it's been great."

Naylor's just as happy with the arrangement.

"Desmond has done a terrific job since he started working for me. I began to realize that Desmond was very bright, very good at organizational skills and very good at working out the matrix to train a horse," Naylor said. "I thought it would be fun to train horses on our farm and Desmond thought it was a good idea and that he was up to it. Desmond inherited a good stable of horses but he also did a great job of cultivating those horses and getting them to run so well."

Engineering at its best.



Tod Marks

Trainer Desmond Fogarty brings a solid cast of horses into 2009.

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Rider Up

Rafter raring to go after leg injury

BY BRIAN NADEAU

Jockey Carl Rafter, who missed the majority of the 2008 fall season after breaking a pair of bones in his right leg, returned to the irons earlier last month and looks forward to a healthy and successful 2009.

Rafter broke his tibia and fibula in a freak accident at the Blue Ridge point-to-point Sept. 20. Aboard Straight To Court in a maiden hurdle, the 31-year-old Englishman fell when a loose horse veered on to the course.

Doctors inserted a rod near Rafter's kneecap as well as a pair of screws above his knee and below his ankle.

Rafter was scheduled to miss up to six months but rehabilitation and a desire to return cut his time off to four months.

"I've been pretty fortunate that things have gone a little quicker than expected, but I'm still pretty sore and it's been tough," Rafter said. "I've been cycling on the bike each day to get fit and I'm coming along. My muscle tone is still not all the way back and I don't have full movement, but it's getting better and better each day."

Prior to his injury Rafter had enjoyed a solid 2009, winning seven races

with purse earnings of \$232,983 (both among the top 10). The success included stakes scores in the Imperial Cup, Zeke Ferguson and Belle Meade.

"I missed riding a lot. It was horrible. I went three months without putting any weight on my leg and it got to the point where I was exhausted just walking across the room," Rafter said. "I really can't wait until Aiken to get the season started. We've been fortunate down here in Virginia, as I know the weather has been pretty cold up north, so, I've been able to get on and school some horses and get back into the flow of things."

Rafter made his return Feb. 21 at the Casanova point-to-point in Virginia, where he rode Harry's Firebolt to a victory on the flat. Though the threat of injury is part of a jockey's job description, Rafter didn't think about it.

"Coming back, there really wasn't any worries or trepidation because it was such a freak accident that it didn't leave me with anything to think about," Rafter said. "There was nothing to worry about in the back of my mind because I knew it wasn't something that happens very often."

Rafter, who made his American debut in 2005, won a career-best 14 races



Tod Marks

Jockey Carl Rafter (aboard Jellyberry at Atlanta last year) returns from a broken leg.

in 2007 to finish tied for third in the standings. For this season, he signed a retainer to ride for trainer Julie Gomena and will also ride several of Kathy McKenna's horses.

Aizpuru goes for three

Xavier Aizpuru notched two wins from 94 starts in his final season as a jump jockey in England. That he enters 2009 seeking a third consecutive NSA riding title is just one measure of how far he's come since arriving in the United States in 2004. Aizpuru won 22 times in 2007 to earn his first championship, and booted home another 22 winners last year to take his second. Now, the 34-year-old Englishman seeks a third consecutive title, something that hasn't been accomplished since John Cushman rattled off four from 1980-1983.

"One or two people have mentioned to me that three in a row hasn't been done for a long time, so I've known about it for a little while. But honestly, it's not something I think about or go out to accomplish," Aizpuru said. "Winning it once was an achievement in itself. Then to do it again was great. Three times in a row? That would be pretty special, and it's an honor even to try for it. But you just have to go out and ride the horses one race at a time, so it won't play on my mind. I've just got to go out there and do my job to the best of my ability and hope the horses keep rolling."

For the past two years the horses have been rolling like a golf balls on the greens of Augusta National. And things don't figure to change any time soon. Aizpuru rides first-call for champion trainer Jack Fisher and starts 2009 with a list of talented and accomplished horses he's looking forward to riding. None more than old friend Paradise's Boss, who carried Aizpuru to his first American stakes victory when the pair took the Meadow Brook at Belmont Park in 2004.

"With him coming back it's very exciting to me. We have a pretty good history together and when he's right he's a really tough horse," Aizpuru said. "It sounds like he'll be back early in

the year, which is fantastic. Right now Good Night Shirt looks unbeatable but just like in sports some day you're going to get beat, so maybe me and the Bossman will be there in the right place at the right time."

Aizpuru finished eight wins clear of the second-place log jam of Padge Whelan, Jody Petty and the since-retired Matt McCarron last year. Both Petty and Whelan, who rides first-call for Tom Voss, missed significant time due to injury and Aizpuru knows things could have been different.

"Obviously if I look at the others, Padge will be tough. He rides for Mr. Voss, and you know he's going to have some high-ammunition horses. He had a great season last year, especially for riding in America for the first time," Aizpuru said. "If he didn't break his ankle, who knows how he would have fared? I was fortunate enough to ride some of those horses and pick up some wins, so it could have been Padge winning the title if he was healthy. But in the end, the biggest percentage of winning is the horse. I don't really concern myself with any one rider; I just try to concentrate on my horses and the spots they're put in."

• Chris Read, who rides for Neil Morris and Kinross Farm, has returned after missing the majority of the fall season with a torn anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) in his left knee. Read suffered the injury last September at the Blue Ridge Point-to-Point when his mount I Hear Banjos threw him in the paddock. He had surgery to repair the ACL in early October.

"It's the same injury and same knee that I tore back in 2001, so it's something I've been through before. I spent the winter rehabbing in Middleburg and started galloping and getting on horses in mid-January," Read said. "It was a tough winter and I'll still wear a small brace and be very cautious with it, but it's good to get back riding."

Read returned to action at Blue Ridge March 7, where he guided Kinross' Hey Doctor to a maiden timber win and then rode at the Warrenton Point-to-Point on March 14.

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Photo by Tod Marks



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Four Days

Cheltenham offers dose of magic, eventual return to the real world

BY SEAN CLANCY

How was Cheltenham?

As one of the few Americans (do Richard Hutchinson, Geoffrey Russell and Michael Dickinson count?) who made the trip to this year's four-day Cheltenham Festival, that's the question that greets me when I get home.

Four days. 26 races. £3.56 million (over \$5 million) in purse money. Careers made. Careers lost.

How was Cheltenham?

How much time do you have?

The roar floats across Prestbury Park as the 20 runners for the first race charge from the starter's flag on Tuesday, March 10. The Irish are in the bank early when Paul Carberry coddles the Noel Meade-trained Go Native through on the rail and win the williamhill.com Supreme Novices' Hurdle. Cousin Vinny, last year's Cheltenham bumper winner and Irish banker, fails to get home up the hill. Meade, flat out due to back surgery, hears about it from home as racegoers read in the racecard about Meade's agonizing record at Cheltenham. Medermit and Chocolate Thornton rally but just miss, starting a long

and frustrating Festival for the jockey and trainer Alan King.

Last year, Forpadydeplasterer came to Cheltenham as a big, raw-boned chaser in the making. He finished fourth in the Ballymore Properties Novice, unable to corner his hook-and-ladder body to threaten the top three. A year later, you can drop the "in-the-making" from his nametag. The Irish-bred 7-year-old looks grown up in the paddock, suits covering his hangers, and he runs and jumps like the finished article, staving off Kalahari King in the Irish Independent Arkle Chase. Irish 2, British 0.

Ruby Walsh greets trainer Paul Nicholls for the third. Grass-stained after just two races – the Irish champion fell on the favorite Tatenen in the Arkle – you wonder if the Festival will take him as victim this year. Grand National winner Comply Or Die carries co-highweight in the William Hill Chase and the money goes toward novice Wichita Lineman and Tony McCoy. The favorite finds a perfect spot on the inside, stalking the pace, then proceeds to jump his way out of that spot like a grade schooler at his first dance. In running, Wichita Lineman drifts to 60-1 after his head



David Jones/Press Association

Kauto Star soars a fence en route to victory in the Cheltenham Gold Cup.

hits the floor going down the backside. McCoy switches the 8-year-old to the outside, and he runs up one side and down the other of every fence on the course. Turning for home, he's 11th and taking on water. McCoy has been pushing and shoving for the better part of 3 miles but Wichita Lineman begins to reel in his 10 rivals. He nails Maljimar and jockey Daryl Jacob, searching for his first Festival winner. It's the ride of the meet – already.

A race later, trainer David Pipe walks next to McCoy on favorite Bin-

ocular and nods his approval of his ride on Wichita Lineman. McCoy nods to his former teammate, even McCoy is amazed at that one.

So we meet again. Champion Hurdle stalwarts Brave Inca, Hardy Eustace and Harchibald (the youngest being 10) take on former winners Katchit and Sublimity and the rising tide of the younger hurdlers, favorite Binocular, stablemate Punjabi and Celestial Halo in the Smurfit Kappa Champion Hurdle.

See **CHEL TENHAM** page 27 ►

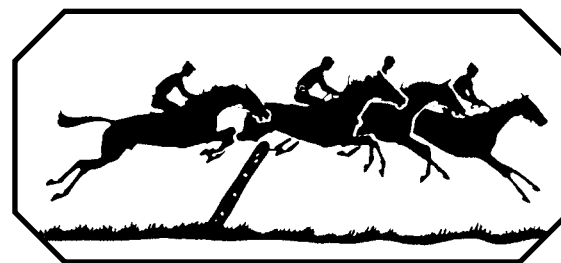


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Cheltenham —

■ Continued from page 26

Cheltenham takes its toll and leaves the race to the young guns. Walsh presses Celestial Halo to pick it up going down the backside, solely to tap the finishing steam out of Binocular. The favorite is cruising and so is Punjabi. Walsh is the first to go to the reserves as Punjabi ranges up to his shoulder. Binocular stalks in third. Punjabi and Celestial Halo jump the last together, with Binocular to their right flank. Punjabi begins to get the best of Celestial Halo. Up the hill, Punjabi idles and Celestial Halo fights back, Binocular claws from the grandstand side. The three hit the line together with Punjabi and Barry Geraghty hanging on over Celestial Halo and Binocular. It's the best Champion Hurdle in years.

J.P. McManus, Enda Bolger and Nina Carberry continue their roll in the cross-country race, winning their second straight with Garde Champetre. McManus owns the first three home.

The Irish are back at it for the finale as another banker, the Willie Mullins-trained Quevega and Ruby Walsh decimate the David Nicholson Mares' Hurdle.

Day 2

Amateurs begin the second day, with Sam Waley-Cohen and Tricky Trickster controlling 18 rivals in the National Hunt Chase. Punters jot down third-place finisher Nine De Sivola on their horses to watch for the Grand National.

Ted Walsh Jr. gives out his banker of the meet, Mikael D'Haguenet. The 5-year-old French-bred obliges — with brother Ruby on board — in the Ballymore Novices' Hurdle. Mullins' Irish raid continues.

A race later, Walsh makes it three in a row as he guides Cooldine to win the 3 1/16-mile RSA Chase. Watching from the third-to-last puts jump racing into perspective as Davy Russell slides right past the fans' toes the first time around and Mattie Batchelor looks



David Davies/Press Association

Cooldine jumps the last in the RSA Chase.

like he's wind surfing when Carruthers doesn't listen to his cue the second time around. Cooldine, lame hours earlier with a bad shoe, puts "Gold Cup" on his future book.

The Seasons Holidays Queen Mother Champion Chase comes next.

With three wins in a row and defending champion Master Minded still to come, Walsh has taken the Festival by the collar.

"It's nice," Walsh says, "but he's the one I want."

Two-mile chases get won and lost at the third-last. So do careers, jobs and first-call riding assignments. The fence sits on the long, downhill slope. The birch upright and stiff, a microphone taped to the inside wing, the ground clawed out from the RSA Chase one race before. Men tamp the divots and level the birch, but it won't matter, the 2-mile chasers don't care about ground or birch.

Master Minded rolls down the hill, while holding off Briareus and Petit Robin. Ruby Walsh sits motionless, power in his hands, as the champ meets it perfectly and accelerates in the air to land in front.

In an understated performance, the French-bred takes the Queen Mother. It wasn't as dominating as last year, not as flamboyant as his other victories, but some days, you've simply got to get up and go to work. Punch your time clock and get it done.

Well Chief, returning from a 698-day layoff runs hard to finish second, the 10-year-old receives a hug from jockey Timmy Murphy after the race. The fans roar and welcome him to the winner's enclosure, right before roaring in their champ Master Minded.

A race later, Tom Taaffe follows Ninetieth Minute into the parade ring for the Coral Cup.

"He'll make a chaser one day," Taaffe says.

He's a hurdler right now, winning the 2 5/8-mile handicap impressively.

Irish-bred, British-trained Silk Affair produces his fourth win in a row when taking the Fred Winter Juvenile Novices' Hurdle, a race restricted to 4-year-olds. American-bred Resounding Glory gets a mighty pat and hug from his groom as he's led back to the stable. He finished 11th.

The Weatherbys Champion Bumper finishes off the Wednesday card and Dinguib finishes off his rivals, flashing up the hill like he joined in halfway. Owner Dan Harnett tried to sell him — once.

"He's not for sale now," Harnett said. "We own one or two from time to time. Just for the sport of it. He's a once-in-a-lifetime horse."

See **CHEL TENHAM** page 28 ►



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Cheltenham —

■ Continued from page 27

Day 3

Timmy Murphy's eye can be too good. The jockey sees a short spot on Chapoturgeon at the second-to-last in the Jewson Novices' Handicap Chase and angles the fence to get to that spot. Others would have sent. The big fence nearly topples the 5-year-old novice, but the French-bred rights the ship and shakes off Isn't That Lucky to win the opener.

Kayf Aramis wins his third straight with an electric performance in the Pertemps Final, scoring impressively for trainer Venetia Williams. Jockey Aidan Coleman, another rising star to get started with Williams, collects his first Festival winner. Every year, the jockeys get younger.

The first banker of the day, Voy Por Ustedes, lolls along waiting for the inevitable in the Ryanair Chase. Then the fence on the top of the hill disrupts the cash machine as the favorite blunders and sends Thornton to the knot. Voy Por (he gets a nickname at Cheltenham) stays on up the hill to finish second to an imperious Imperial Commander.

A race later, the other day's banker Kasbah Bliss creeps into contention, widest of all, in the Ladbrokes World Hurdle, but the French favorite can't land the closing blow as Punchestowns vaults off the hill and Big Buck's refuses to go down.

Punchestowns flies the last as Big Buck's lands trotting while trying to get his legs to do what his mind wants. Race over? Not so fast.

Big Buck's pulls himself together and devours the hill to give Walsh his fifth Festival winner. Long leg, soft hands, loaded with stock, patient as a kindergarten teacher — he's the best of this Festival.

Big Buck's, cut from the chaser cloth, had struggled over the big fences earlier in the season. Trainer Paul Nicholls returns him to hurdling and a crack at the World Hurdle.

Williams isn't done, she produces the first and second finishers of the Freddie Williams Festival Plate as



David Jones/Press Association

Forpadydeplasterer makes it look easy in the Arkle Chase.

longshot Something Wells collars favored Ping Pong Sivola inside the final furlong.

In the finale, Mr. Jamie Codd holds on to Character Building, waiting, waiting, waiting, waiting. Then delivering. The 9-year-old bolts up the hill to take the Fulke Walwyn Kim Muir Challenge Cup. If you want to import a Maryland Hunt Cup rider, you could do worse than Mr. Jamie Codd.

Day 4

Eighteen novices roll to the second-to-last in the JCB Triumph Hurdle. Irish hope Ebadiyan locks his jaw and runs through the inside rail, leaving next year's Champion Hurdle contenders, Zaynar and Walkon, to battle up the hill. Henderson and Geraghty continue to solidify their new partnership, scoring with Zaynar over the hard-luck King and Thornton.

An American stands, gobsmailed, when American Trilogy bolts up the hill to win the Vincent O'Brien County Hurdle for Walsh and Nicholls. At 20-1.

Russell, none the worse for wear after his Wednesday fall, sends Weapon's Amnesty to the lead in the Albert Bartlett Novices' Hurdle. He looks home free until his ears flick like antennae. Pride Of Dulcote rallies, but the ears go flat again and Weapon's Amnesty hunkers down to win the 3-miler.

No horse has ever regained his Cheltenham Gold Cup crown. Twenty-four have tried — all have lost. The record speaks for the effort it takes to win. Victor in 2007, Kauto Star returns to try and become the first. He has last year's winner Denman to tackle. Both hail from Nicholls' deep yard.

Denman is chiseled from the chaser tablet. The dark copper chestnut can't quicken. He gallops relentlessly, siphoning the closing kicks from his rivals with every long, deliberate stride and jump. That's how he beat Kauto Star last year. But nothing has gone right since. An irregular heartbeat postponed his return and when he did make the racecourse at Kempton, he didn't get close to Madison Du Berlais, struggling in 23 lengths behind in second.

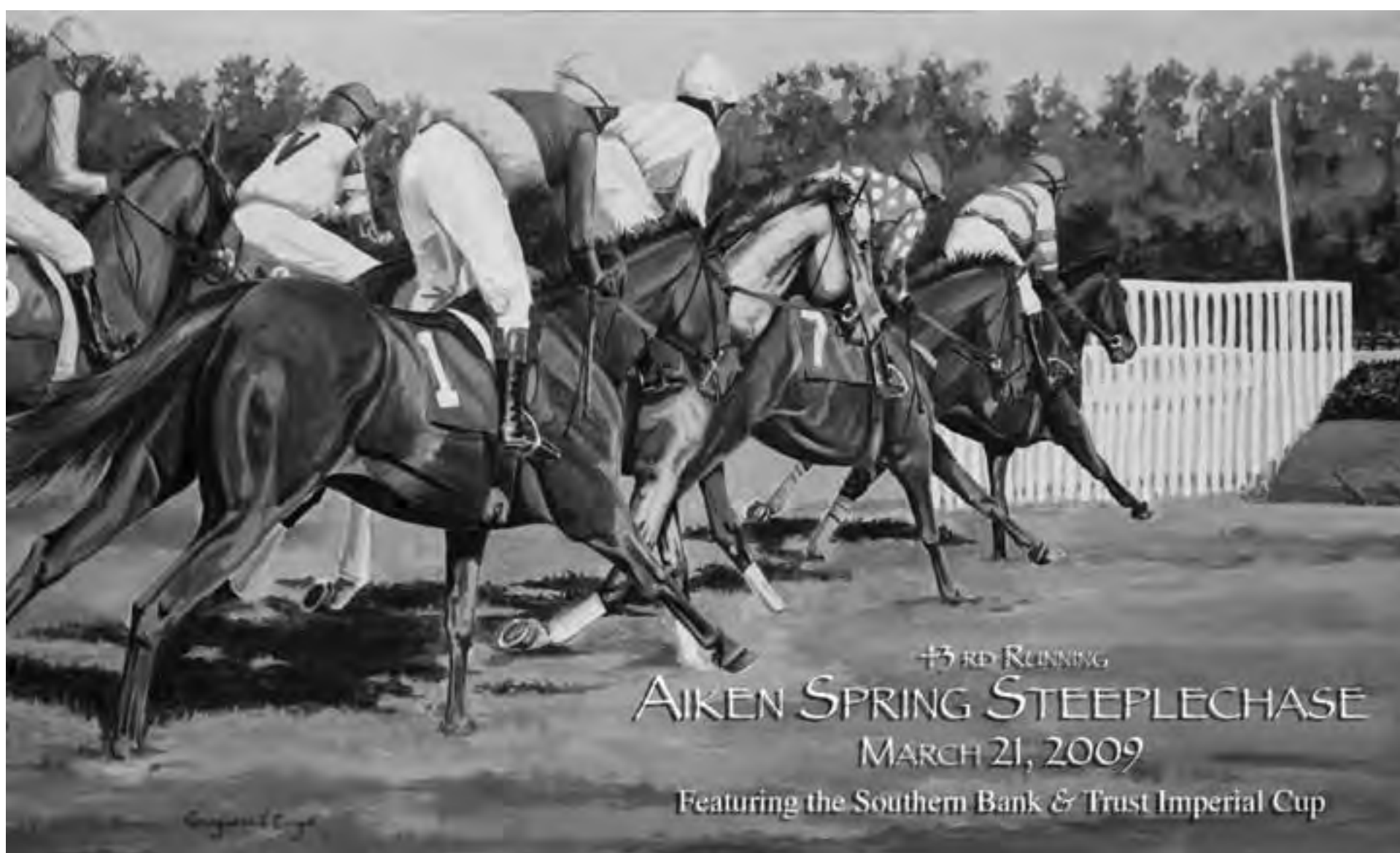
Kauto Star roars into Cheltenham this year. Nicholls keeps him fresh, believing a less arduous campaign would have him primed and ready to jump better and travel easier than he did last year, when Denman had him on the ropes the entire final circuit.

Sam Thomas, on Denman, knows he doesn't have the fuel to adopt the same tactics this time around. Walsh, aboard Kauto Star, knows it too.

Entrymate Neptune Collonges leads the way, with a subdued Denman and a boiling Kauto Star galloping in near unison. Ruby says go after the third-to-last and nothing matches the effortless acceleration from the re-anointed champion. Jumping blunders long ago buried, Kauto Star flies the second-to-last and sets sail to the last. Three slaps on the neck from his partner, and it's over. He gallops to the line as hats flutter in the air. Denman, punch-drunk but too classy to surrender, holds second. Exotic Dancer creeps from last to pick up third.

Thomas jumps off a spent Denman, the crowd strains to make sure he's OK, then welcomes him into the winner's enclosure. Kauto Star follows. The roar gets louder.

Cappa Blue, Andytown and Oh Crick round out the card, the Festival. Ruby rides seven winners. Nicholls saddles five. Kauto Star is back where he belongs. And the American is back to reality.



Pick 6

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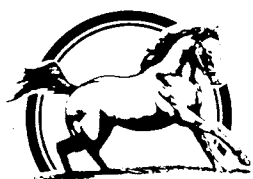
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Lisa Dehart

Allie Conrad and former racehorse Clever Ma compete at dressage.

Classwork

Conrad puts in hours, gets results with Thoroughbreds at CANTER

BY KATY CARTER

Allie Conrad goes to an office every morning, but it's only after her day as a software consultant for Booz Allen Hamilton ends that the real work begins. That's when she saves horses.

Conrad is the executive director of the Mid Atlantic chapter of the Communications Alliance to Network Thoroughbred Ex-Racehorses (CANTER), an organization dedicated to finding homes for retiring racehorses. Charged with running the day-to-day operations, her beat includes Charles Town, Laurel Park, Pimlico and Bowie Training Center.

An adult amateur rider, Conrad's involvement in horse rescue dates back a decade, when she took a portion of her paycheck to the New Holland sale in Pennsylvania. She ended up bringing home Clever Ma, a skinny, broken, fungus-covered chestnut with a broad blaze and a giant set of withers. Upon arriving home, she was certain that she would have to euthanize the horse, as he was in terrible shape with lymphangitis and multiple other infections.

"He proved me wrong, and went on to be the neatest animal I've ever had

the pleasure of knowing," said Conrad of the horse she affectionately calls Phinny. "We've foxhunted, evented, done jumper shows and trail ride extensively. He's a goofball with me, but a dead-quiet school horse for beginners. He has a sense of humor and a deep sense of loyalty. He's the reason I started CANTER."

Curious about Phinny's history, she obtained his Jockey Club papers. By Melodisk out of Asma, he raced 58 times, mostly in his native West Virginia, winning nine times. Conrad contacted his old owners, who had also bred him.

"I was terrified that I'd get hung up on, or yelled at for bothering people with a stupid horse – instead I got sobbing on the other end of the line," Conrad recalled. "These kind people had bred and raised this horse, and he'd raced for them successfully for many years. They retired him in the fall of 1998, and gave him to someone who promised him a good home."

Except somewhere along the line, that promise had been broken.

"I decided after speaking to these people that I had the ability to help peo-

See **CANTER** page 31 ►



Douglas Lees photo

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CANTER —

■ Continued from page 30

ple find homes for their retiring horses,” Conrad said. She re-started the CANTER program, which had been terminated the year before, at Charles Town.

Run solely by volunteers, CANTER has placed 6,000 horses nationwide since 2000. The Mid Atlantic branch has been responsible for roughly half of that figure, which does not include horses sold directly from the racetrack into new homes. The non-profit organization currently has chapters in Michigan, Ohio, Northern Illinois, New England, Pennsylvania and California. Each has an Internet page where available horses are listed with photos and descriptions. Prospective buyers can coordinate with CANTER to schedule appointments to see horses at participating tracks.

While some horses are sold directly, many find their way into a CANTER-sponsored home which assists the transition from racing.

“We are pretty unique in that we do not have a central facility for keeping horses, and we pay board on all of the horses we care for,” Conrad said. “While

this seems astronomical, as far as monthly bills, it has some serious pluses. Each dollar donated to CANTER goes toward the care of the animal – there are no overhead fees or leases, maintenance or labor . . . instead (we) can allow for more horses to come in as funding allows.”

Despite the current economic times, Conrad remains optimistic. Horse sales have decreased, but interest has increased. Several are competing successfully and the organization uses blogs to communicate the steps necessary to retrain a Thoroughbred for a new career.

Eventing has long been a traditional second career for Thoroughbreds, but in recent years many competitors have turned toward horses bred specifically for the sport. Conrad still sees a continued place for the ex-racehorse.

“There will always be a relationship (between racing and eventing), because there will always be people who cannot afford a horse specifically bred for the sport,” Conrad said. “There will always be people on a budget, and there will always be ex-racehorse lovers who know the satisfaction and happiness of bringing one along to be a show or event horse.”

During her nine years with CANTER, Conrad, who lives in Gaithersburg, Md., has met an impres-

sive number of Thoroughbreds. A few found a way to become particularly special, including Last Train Home (by Horatius out of Dr. Nunn) or “Larry” as he became known.

Larry arrived at CANTER after rebowing a tendon, and although quite sound on it, he required stall rest and daily wrapping. During her interaction with Larry, Conrad discovered the horse's good points – despite the bow and a parrot mouth, he had beautiful conformation and a great disposition.

“I could tell there was just something special about him,” she said. “I took a few pictures and caught the eye of a friend who thought he might make a good event horse. She rehabbed the bow and began riding him to great success.”

Now competing at the preliminary level, Larry and owner Jeannette Ford have garnered ribbons from Maryland to South Carolina.

“Every professional who has ever had the pleasure of teaching them either says ‘Don’t ever sell him’ or ‘Sell him to me,’ ” said Conrad. “It seems like an inconsequential story, but I know the horse market, and I know that finding a home for a horse with a giant bow and a parrot mouth is the kiss of death. But Larry is an inspiration to me, and I know he’s an inspiration to Jeannette.”

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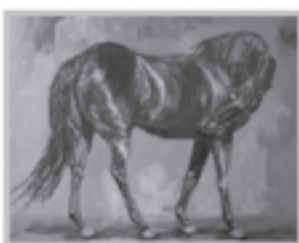


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Hunter Chase

Ryan extends career as horseman with rides at Casanova, Blue Ridge

BY KATY CARTER

Noel Ryan has hunted hounds on three continents, but was nevertheless a bit nervous at the Casanova Point-to-Point Feb. 21, despite being entered in the foxhunter's timber aboard the very horse, Quick Line, on which he hunts.

"I was nervous with the butterflies, like at the start of hunting," said the native of County Limerick, Ireland and current huntsman for the Loudoun Hunt in Virginia. "That way you know you're alive."

Quick Line possessed more jump-race experience than his rider, with seven hurdle starts on the NSA circuit and recent timber tries for his previous owner/rider, Ralph Trail.

"What I knew I could do was throw a leg over and be safe," Ryan said. "As soon as I got on, I was comfortable. He was awesome."

Ryan came upon the 13-year-old through an e-mail last fall detailing that an ex-timber horse was in search of a new job. Ryan just happened to be looking for a new ride, so he and girlfriend Julia Butcher brought the horse home to Middleburg, Va., to see if the chestnut gelding would make a suitable staff horse.

"He was kind of nondescript when we first got him home," said Ryan, who in addition to his duties as huntsman is a real-estate agent and photographer. "He wouldn't go over a creek, he stopped a bit and he wasn't hound-proof. Of course, the only way to see if they'll work out is to take them out with the hounds."

The first morning did not go well for "Clifford the Big Red Horse."

"He had a few issues where he'd get fed up and say 'I don't want to,' so I took him into the woods, where he didn't want to go," said Ryan. "I like taking horses with an edge into the woods, get them cantering along on a loose rein and listening to me. If they bolt or do something stupid, they hit a

tree. It sounds kind of cruel, actually, but they have to learn to be careful."

They may have ended up in a briar patch that morning, but Cliff's education as a foxhunter continued as the season progressed.

"Sometimes he has to be reminded that hounds are his friends, but in the field he will jump anything," Ryan said. "I can even take videos off of him at joint meets. He just quietly stands there as the field goes by."

Where, you may ask, did Ryan – who had never before galloped a racehorse in his lengthy international career as a horseman – find his inspiration to give racing a try? Enter Loudoun Master Harry Wight.

"Harry and I were back at the kennels after hunting one day, and he was talking about racing," Ryan said. "I thought I'd give it a go, seeing as though I have a horse that's done it, is fit enough, and I feel safe on. After all, Cliff did carry around an older gent before me."

Ryan enlisted the help of friend Betsy Parker, who took him to the Middleburg Training Center to gallop several mornings leading up to Casanova, and also sought sage advice from friend and top rider Carl Rafter.

"Carl was out on an unfit mare and was good enough to ride along with me," Ryan said. "I was concerned about things like stirrup length and how fast to go and Carl explained that it was important to find a position and length where I was comfortable, and to kick on. Now, prior to this, I thought I had sat on some fast horses in the hunt field. I thought I had galloped. Cliff knew what he was doing and I discovered a whole new gear."

Ryan arrived at Casanova dressed for success in his new, proper jockey helmet, safety vest, Parker's overgirth and breast plate, Harry Wight's borrowed red coat and saddle made by Tom Wallace, a Limerick saddler and his father's best friend. The 6-foot tall Ryan stepped on



Douglas Lees

Quick Line and Noel Ryan soar a fence at Blue Ridge.

the scales and was subsequently horrified at the number – 213.7 pounds. Everyone around him burst into laughter.

"Dating a chef does not benefit my racing career," he noted, referring to his girlfriend Julia's tendency to use him as the taste tester for recipes she creates for her Le Petit Chou personal chef business. "At that weight, I may have to take up donkey racing in Nicaragua."

Ryan's strategy was basic: get around in one piece. But after each fence, he became more confident and more excited.

"We weren't going as fast as we had at the training center, but faster than we would out hunting, where I would have checked a bit more," Ryan said, drawing comparisons between the sports. "I was a bit apprehensive going to the first fence, not having actually schooled anything beforehand, but Cliff sailed over and I thought 'Cool!'"

Steadily galloping the course, Cliff listened to his pilot in spite of the fact that he thought they should be motor-ing on at a slightly faster pace.

"He wanted to pick up the pace a lot sooner," said Ryan. "About three quarters of the way around, the other two

were well ahead of us and he wanted to pick up the pace. I was just so grateful so I patted him on the neck and let him roll on."

Butcher, serving as groom that day, also had pre-race jitters.

"I saw that they were going well and that Noel was riding well," she said, "and I started cheering 'Kick! Go Faster!'"

Leaders Rod Cameron and Midnight Classic ended up falling at the last, handing victory to Michael Harris and Pan Adam, with Ryan and Quick Line well back in second.

"I was so proud of my horse," said Ryan. "He did everything right and I had so much fun doing it with him. I've learned how much potential there is in a Thoroughbred. The feeling of one galloping underneath you is amazing."

Update: Two weeks after Casanova, Ryan and Quick Line improved another step by placing second behind Royal We in the combined owner/rider and foxhunters' race at the Blue Ridge Point-to-Point in Berryville. Though second across the line, they won the foxhunters' division.

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Two Rows Farm near Fair Hill, Maryland

Betty Bird, 81

Elizabeth C. "Betty" Bird, an internationally acclaimed horsewoman known for her touch with difficult horses and her elegant personal style, died Dec. 30, 2008 at her home in Unionville, Pa. She was 81.

Born in Baltimore, the daughter of John Bosley II and Elizabeth Cromwell Bosley, Betty trained flat horses, steeplechasers, show horses and foxhunters at the highest levels. She was particularly respected for the intuitive combination of perseverance, discipline and sensitivity that enabled her to work successfully with temperamental horses. In 1954 she became the first woman to train a winner of the Maryland Hunt Cup with Marchized, and she repeated that tally in 1976 when Fort Devon, a horse some considered untrainable, won by 25 lengths. Fort Devon won the NSA timber championship the previous two years and, after the Hunt Cup, went on to compete successfully as a top-class English chaser.

In the horse show world, she competed successfully for years in what was still a man's sport. She ran the stables of R.K. Mellon in Ligonier, Pa., and William du Pont Jr. in Unionville. The latter encouraged her Olympic aspirations, but her hopes fell unwitting victim to her own glamour: in the early 1950s Herbert Tareyton Cigarettes featured her in riding attire for a magazine advertising campaign, which compromised her amateur standing. She was inducted



Douglas Lees

Betty Bird accepted the trophies after Fort Devon won the Maryland Hunt Cup in 1976.

into the American Horse Show Association Hall of Fame in 2001.

She was a member of the Green Boundary Club in Aiken, S.C., and Mr. Stewart's Cheshire Fox Hounds in Unionville.

Betty loved the many dogs who were her companions over the years, and she enjoyed a good party, where she held audiences spellbound with stories about her exploits. During one hunt ball she agreed to buy The Clown, who would

become her champion show horse, and – still in her evening dress – schooled him over fences that night.

Survivors include nieces, Beth Secor and Tina McCarthy; nephews, J. B. Secor, Steve Secor, Jay Ketchum Secor, John M. Bosley, and Louis Bosley; 13 great nieces and nephews; and her former husband, Charles S. Bird III. Her sister, Sarah Bosley Secor, and brother, John Bosley III, predeceased her.

Contributions may be made in her memory to the Cheshire Land Preservation Fund, P.O. Box 983, Unionville, Pa. 19375 and the National Steeplechase Foundation, 400 Fair Hill Drive, Elkton, Md. 21921.

John Thigpen, 89

John Fleming Thigpen Jr., who graced steeplechase meets as an official, volunteer and fan for more than 50 years, died Feb. 7 at Martha Jefferson House in Charlottesville, Va.

Born in Greenville, N.C., in 1920, he grew up in nearby Williamston. He attended Williamston High, Mars Hill College and North Carolina State University, participating in the athletics programs of all three institutions. During World War II he served nearly four years with the Chemical Warfare Service at Huntsville Arsenal in Alabama.

Thigpen was passionate about horses, horse people and especially steeplechase racing, serving more than five decades as an official for the National and Virginia Steeplechase Associations.

During this time he was an integral part of many steeplechase meetings and was close friends with owners, riders and stable help alike. He received the Francis Thornton Green Award from the Virginia Steeplechase Association in 1998 and the NSA's Monk Noland Award in 2002 for his volunteer efforts. In 2005 he was inducted into the Hall of Fame of the Virginia Horse Shows Association.

He enjoyed outdoor activities on the coast, rivers and mountains of Virginia and his native North Carolina, especially hunting and fishing.

Although his first job was with Saunders and Cox Sawmill, his career focused on the importing and wholesaling of English riding equipment. He held sales and management positions with M.J. Knoud, Kopf Manufacturing Company, B.T. Crump and Company, Blue Ribbon Leather Company and Northrun Saddlery and established an extensive business and personal network across the United States. John was active in saddlery trade shows and served on the Board of Directors for the Midwest, King of Prussia and Denver trade shows.

He is survived by his wife of more than 50 years, Eunice Parker "June" Thigpen, their sons James Anderson "Andy" Thigpen and John Fleming Thigpen III, his brother Joseph Thigpen and two grandchildren.

The family suggests donations to Hospice of the Piedmont or The National Steeplechase Museum in Camden, S.C.



Tod Marks



The Carolina Cup Racing Association,
the National Steeplechase Museum
and his many friends invite one and all
to a memorial service
to celebrate the life of Bob Witham.

Friday, March 27
11:30 AM
National Steeplechase Museum
200 Knight's Hill Road
Camden, South Carolina



TIMES EDITORIAL

Get on the same side

After a sigh, new NSA President Guy Torsilieri summed up American steeplechasing's position in the world: "We have a great little industry here, a great, little, boutique industry and we should be working together to improve it."

Amen.

Don't anyone forget that.

The last year put the sport through a wringer of "whose side are you on?" and we are all the worse for it. Whether you are Little Everglades, the Queen's Cup, the NSA, an owner, a trainer, a jockey, a race meet, a fan, there's only one side – the sport's – and we all need to get on it.

Before you do anything this year, ask yourself if it's good for the sport. If the answer is yes, do it. Proceed with caution, and confidence. Do good deeds, make it work, spend the money, buy the horse, fix the race course, give that kid jockey a chance, research the new fence, encourage the new owner to get involved, extend the olive branch. Don't try to take credit for something, pass along a thank you instead.

Now in its 16th year, this newspaper has covered thousands of issues. Fences, dates, people, horses, race meets, racetracks, associations, policies, rules, guidelines, stewards, doctors, lawyers, drugs, gambling, apprentices, amateurs, owners, trainers, CEOs, secretaries, diagnoses, identifications, mistakes, misdeeds, misses, hits, countries, states, provinces, weather, travel . . . news at 11.

For 2009, topics abound.

The Queen's Cup came back. Little Everglades stayed out. Keeneland left. Torsilieri moved into the president's position (the fifth in the ST era). Palm Beach added April to its November. The Carolina Cup became an open stakes again and so did the Temple Gwathmey – somewhere the steeplechase gods are smiling. Thoroughbred racing's Hall of Fame will consider steeplechasers again this year (we say Tuscalee and Ben Nevis need to get in). Dave Johnson will call a jump race again – "and down the stretch they come at the Queen's Cup."

People are talking about pari-mutuel wagering becoming a reality for the NSA circuit. Good Night Shirt and Xavier Aizpuru are going for championship three-peats.

Economy? What economy? They say it sucks, but we're going to choose not to participate in the recession thank you very much – if you'd like to buy an ad, the line forms to the left.

The horse inventory (see pages 10-16) looks strong for now. Jazz Napravnik has a string of horses. Tom Voss is training former Coolmore horses. Irv Naylor bought a pair of stars from Godolphin and is going to expand his hurdle division.

So how's our industry? Small. Boutique. A little more dysfunctional than we'd like. We can't do much about the first two, but we can sure work on the second.

Whose side are you on?



Lydia Williams

BAD SHIRT. Two-time steeplechase champion Good Night Shirt makes life miserable for fieldmate Shiny Emblem during a break from training this winter.

A Lucky Man

"I'll see you when I'm lucky."

For the better part of 15 years, my day at the races ended when I heard that statement from John Thigpen. I can't even be sure where we met, but the relationship stayed fairly constant in Virginia, South Carolina, North Carolina, New York, New Jersey, wherever the circuit took us. He provided conversation, insight, opinion, jokes, a program, a chair, some history, a little advice. Eventually, he even became a paperboy. I sent him a box of newspapers, and he handed them out on his rounds.

And he made lots of rounds. Mr. Thigpen used to be in the tack business, traveling the country for some of the biggest names in the industry: M.J. Knoud, Kopf Manufacturing Company, B.T. Crump and Company, Blue Ribbon Leather Company and Northrun Saddlery. He was good at it, too. Mr. Thigpen could have sold hockey pucks to Cubans. He once got me a ticket to a big trade fair in Pennsylvania (I was a Northrun salesman for a day) so I could try to sell ads. I didn't do so well, but I had fun watching Mr. Thigpen. Predictably, he knew everyone and kept up a steady banter with customers of all ages.

When he died last month, he left me thinking about all of those moments, all those years.

At the two-day Virginia Fall meet one year, he booked me a hotel room in Warrenton (Howard Johnson's, I believe). We ate dinner together that night,

The Outside Rail

By Joe Clancy

breakfast the next morning – he knew everyone in both restaurants – toured Middleburg Training Center, talked about Paul Mellon, soaked up the mountain views along Atoka Road.

At Saratoga one year, Mr. Thigpen got into an accident. A bigger truck hit his little silver pick-up at the intersection of Fifth and East Avenues (who hasn't almost been hit there?). His biggest worry was the Steeplechase Times he left blowing all over the corner.

In 1998, Sean led the NSA jockey race late in the year. Mr. Thigpen came along for the ride and shared a personal good-luck habit. "I'm holding my left one," he'd tell us whenever things got close in the standings. Craig Thornton won three on the season's final weekend, and then got another victory via disqualification after the season ended, but he never passed Sean (they settled for a tie). Thanks for the luck, odd as it was.

Years into our friendship, Mr. Thigpen met my family. He liked my son Jack right away. In the middle at home, Jack makes friends easily and found a sure one this time. Mr. Thigpen asked about Jack every time we

See **OUTSIDE** page 35 ►



John Thigpen (left) and his son at the Colonial Cup in 2003.

Tod Marks

Outside —

■ Continued from page 34

spoke. “Holler at Jack for me when you get home,” Mr. Thigpen would say at the end of a phone conversation. He also took a shine to my wife, Sam, and made me smile every time he said “Tell Sam I’m crazy ’bout her.” I always relayed both messages. Over the past few years, I met Mr. Thigpen’s sons Andy and Jack but never did meet Mrs. Thigpen, though I heard plenty of stories (she’s apparently a saint). I hope my family stays as together as the Thigpens.

In 2002, the NSA presented Mr. Thigpen with the Monk Noland Award for behind-the-scenes service. Nothing fancy, the award gets given periodically in honor of a man who put in countless hours to help the sport. The crowd at Springdale Hall Club that night stood and cheered for the none-more-deserving recipient – and I got chills. One of my favorite moments in steeplechasing.

The last few years were tough on Mr. Thigpen, and anyone who knew him.

As his sons told me, he failed a little bit at a time.

He didn’t travel as much. He stopped driving. He grew a beard. He and June moved to a home for seniors. He still talked – louder – but the conversations weren’t quite as regular. He had his moments though, and floored me with spot-on opinions and statements about the latest crisis in the sport. He would have made a good ombudsman, with the ability to make peace while still taking a stand.

But he’s gone at 89. Somebody recently told me that steeplechasing too often doesn’t recognize people who contribute to the sport. People pass away before we pay them tribute. She was right, but it’s not just steeplechasing. We never fully appreciate a life well lived until it ends.

That’s not steeplechasing, it’s human nature, the way life goes. Mr. Thigpen certainly didn’t wait to tell anyone how he felt. Me? I guess I should have written this column years ago, but I think he knew. I’ll miss the conversations, the time, the phone calls. I’ll miss him.

And I’ll see him when I’m lucky.



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