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HARDBOOT VALUES HAVE LASTING IMPRINT THROUGH NUCKOLS



Alfred Nuckols | Keeneland

by *Chris McGrath*

He was 12 when he finally convinced his father that he was ready to work with the horses. Previously he had been baling, mowing, weed-hooking, stripping bluegrass. His father agreed, albeit at a cost to his pay from \$7 a day to \$5. But the company of horses has always been beyond price to Alfred H. Nuckols Jr. Nor, to be fair, was that literal grounding--in the soil and pasture of the historic Hurstland Farm--lost on the youngster. To this day, in his stewardship of the portion that devolved to him, Nuckols still grows his own alfalfa and wheat; still round-bales bluegrass for bedding.

"Sometimes they'll rummage through that before the hay," he says. "It just keeps something going through their gut all night. And I'd like to think maybe I haven't had quite as many colics, things like that, because they keep something going through their system: it's not just grain, stop; grain, stop."

So often, the rest of society has to go round in circles to catch up with the guy who stands still; who perseveres in the ways of generations past. People have discovered the hard way the merits of raising livestock and their forage together, just as they have discovered the true cost of cheaply processed or imported foods for their own tables.

Cont. p3

PARX TRAINERS TRYING TO HANG IN THERE DURING SHUTDOWN *by Bill Finley*

Turn the calendar back to February and Joe Taylor could not have been doing better. He had been the leading trainer at Parx Racing in 2019 and was again on top of the standings in 2020. Racing for lucrative, slots-infused purses, he won 107 races last year at Parx for earnings of \$3,160,143. Now, he's just trying to stay in business.

"My hope is that I can get myself into a situation where I'm just treading water, not making or losing money and can pay my bills," he said. "If this thing goes on another two months, I have no idea what the answer will be. It's a scary situation."

Taylor last started a horse at Parx Mar. 10. That was the last day the track held racing, shutting down afterwards because of the coronavirus threat. Parx was among the first tracks to close down and, three weeks later and with the resumption of racing nowhere in sight, trainers are trying to figure out how to ride out the storm. **Cont. p7**

IN TDN EUROPE TODAY

GOFFS POSTPONES BREEZE-UP; 2020 LONDON SALE CANCELLED

Goffs postponed its breeze-up sale and cancelled the 2020 London Sale due to the coronavirus. [Click or tap here to go straight to TDN Europe.](#)

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Tuesday, March 31, 2020



"He definitely has that 'Do you know who I am?' twinkle in his eye." Read more about Brahms (Danzig - Queena, by Mr. Prospector) and his impact on the Arkansas State University Equine Center's breeding program on page 8. | Sarah Andrew

FASIG-TIPTON SANTA ANITA SALE CANCELED

10

Given the current situation at Santa Anita, where racing has been suspended, and in light of the changes that have been made to the 2020 Thoroughbred auction calendar, officials at Fasig-Tipton Co. announced the cancellation of the Santa Anita 2YOS in Training Sale.

IN SHARPER FOCUS: DROP THE CHALUPA **See NA Racing**

The oddly named Drop the Chalupa (Liam's Map) was sent off at debut odds of 16-1 in a Santa Anita maiden Mar. 7 with a pair of highly touted Bob Baffert runners. The \$35,000 FTMMAY breeder exceeded expectations, trainer Ron Ellis told TDN's Jessica Martini.

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Nuckols cont. from p1

"It's like your farm-to-market restaurants in New York City now," Nuckols says with a shrug. "If it works there, I guess it ought to work in rural Kentucky. When my father and uncles were alive, we'd run steers, and we'd raise the corn to feed them with. We'd sell the seed over at Weisenberger Mill, where they made flour out of it. We'd rotate the fields. Follow in behind the tobacco with the wheat; and then the clover; and then the bluegrass coming on behind that."

And these principles of husbandry extend seamlessly to the horses themselves.

Following the recent doping arrests, few voices in our community captured the sense of betrayal as authentically as did Nuckols in his "shocked and numbed" letter to *TDN*, urging the sport to embrace regulatory unity or face extinction.



Bill Nuckols, Charles Nuckols Jr. & Charles Nuckols III
Horsephotos

He extolled the horses of his youth, Kelso and Forego and the farm-bred champion Typecast, who had no need of pharmacology; and asked how we are supposed to evaluate those genetic traits that validly flourish, through our breeding decisions, if ability is artificially distorted. Perhaps most resonant of all, he declared: "These animals are my life and have given me so much joy that I could never break the bond of trust one develops with an animal totally within my control."

The tone was unmistakable. Its warmth and humility had pervaded an interview given to *TDN*, not long previously, and shared here today; and will be no less familiar to his peers at the Kentucky Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders, who have just saluted Nuckols with their Hardboot Breeders' Award. This "pays tribute to distinctive but unsung breeders that help make up the backbone of our industry". **Cont. p4**

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Nuckols cont.

The awards lunch, along with so much else right now, has been postponed until fall. But his very surname serves to remind us that land and livestock will always summon the kind of stoical, patient reserves we all need to get through the lean times.

"Well, you breed, it takes 11 months to get your foal," Nuckols says. "Then it takes another year to get to the sale. Another eight or nine months to get to the racetrack. You're looking at a three-year timetable, so you better have a little patience because you can't make these things happen overnight.

"It's fun, watching them develop. And yes, like all farming, it is a cyclical business. It's biorhythms, it's being outside, understanding what goes into the horse, raising the grain, learning things. Of course, I still foal all my own mares. The hours aren't the greatest, but there's nothing like pulling that new foal out of a mare. Or letting her push. I try not to pull too much! But to me, that's the most rewarding part of all. And watching them stand and nurse the first time."

Every time, moreover, this gangly new foal might become the next to write a chapter in a family saga extending to the 19th Century. The 1931 Kentucky Oaks winner Cousin Jo saved the farm from the Depression, but it was under Nuckols's father and uncles that Hurstland entered its real heyday, at one point expanding past 1,000 acres.

"The only reason people recognize my name is because those Nuckols brothers were so dynamic," he says. "People really respected them. My dad and Uncle Charlie were both directors at Keeneland, and very influential as horsemen."

As young men, the brothers Charlie, "Hoss" (Alfred Sr.) and Hi (Hiram) became a fixture in the cocktail bar of the Phoenix Hotel in downtown Lexington. As Nuckols says: "When they couldn't find anybody else to fight, they'd fight each other just for something to do." Their houses were all adjacent on the farm, and Nuckols and his cousins grew up together.

"It probably wasn't your most normal family, probably a little dysfunctional!" says Nuckols. "But that's the way I grew up. We were all very close. We'd go out on the farm and our grandmother would spread a blanket and we'd eat a picnic. In the summertime, we'd have iced tea on the porch. We'd make cookies and beaten biscuits. My aunts and my mother were all wonderful ladies. They put up with a lot with those three men, they really did. The older I got, the more I appreciated that!

"Those Nuckols brothers, they worked hard and they played hard. And they were tough task-masters. If your uncle caught you doing something wrong, you got whipped by him before you got home; and then your dad heard about it, and you got whipped by him! Justice was meted out very equally, and very quickly. But it taught you. I learned so much about respect, and manners. Boy, I'd get glared at, if I didn't add a 'sir' or 'ma'am'."



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—**Nick de Meric**, who purchased a \$170,000 Klimt colt and \$100,000 Klimt filly at the 2019 November sales.

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Nuckols cont.

In the 1960s, people still "kind of looked down their noses at commercial breeders"--but the market was just beginning to take off, and consecutive yearlings were led out of Hurstland's 1967 Keeneland consignment to make six figures. Charles Englehard bought them both. (Nuckols remembers the tycoon's little red flower wagon, a personal perk round the sales grounds, full of Coca-Cola.) The Sir Gaylord colt was sent to England, where he became Habitat; and the son of Hail To Reason to Mac Miller, who turned him into Mr. Leader.

Habitat was out of Little Hut, a daughter of wartime champion juvenile Occupy. The following spring she delivered a Northern Dancer colt, who went to Woody Stephens and won the Louisiana Derby as Northfields. Just like Habitat, he would become an important broodmare sire.



Cry and Catch Me (shadow roll) | Horsephotos

Little Hut's blood has percolated through the Nuckols broodmare band ever since. Her great-granddaughter Please Sign In (Doc's Leader) is dam of two elite winners in Cry And Catch Me (Street Cry {Ire}) and Certify (Elusive Quality), as well as a \$1.45-million filly by Street Sense, who topped the 2013 January Sale as a short yearling. (She was Hurstland's sole offering in that catalog.)

"Little Hut was just a nice little red bay mare, and blessed us year after year with wonderful foals," Nuckols says. "She had Shack by Mr. Leader when she was 24 years old, and he was a good horse too [Group-placed in Europe]. And the families have just carried on. Please Sign In has just filled up the page, and now her daughters are producing."

Actually Please Sign In is herself now 24, and has been pensioned after delivering an American Pharoah colt Mar. 1.

Cont. p6

Gulfstream Park, Palm Meadows and GPW Horses



Helping horsemen at Gulfstream Park, Palm Meadows and Gulfstream Park West during the Coronavirus pandemic to ensure that horses are given the most acceptable care in every way, and to also make sure that the backstretch employees are fed and receiving proper health care if needed.

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Nuckols cont.

"She's still the alpha female," Nuckols reports. "She runs everybody else off of the gate every morning, when we're bringing them in. She'll pin her ears and fire at them. She was very, very tough as a racehorse, too. She would lead out of the gate and run as far as she could, as fast as she could. Pick up her hind foot, and she'd try to kick your eyeballs out. The vet said, 'Nuckols, you need to spay this bitch, she's going to kill somebody.' I said, 'Doc, I can't--she's the best female I've got on the farm.' And I'm glad I didn't."

Her sire Doc's Leader was one of the first stakes winners Nuckols bred in his own right, by Mr. Leader out of a mare bred by Hurstland stalwart Russ Reineman. "He was a hickory racehorse," says Nuckols. "Never tried the turf, though Mr. Leader still has his grass track record at Arlington. His owner [Dr. Frank Loccissano] wanted to send him back to me as a stallion. I said, 'Gee, Frank, I'm not sure a horse like this is going to make it, he's just graded stakes-placed, and there's so much competition.' And he said, 'Well, I want to try him.' I think he ended up with eight foals his first year, all were winners, and four were stakes horses."



Rosalind | Horsephotos

Please Sign In was among them. Sadly Doc's Leader's health deteriorated just as breeders were catching on, and Nuckols still grieves the day he had to be euthanized in 2001.

"He was such a neat old horse," he says. "He was a chestnut, we had little games we'd play. He was syndicated, so when we had to put him down, I unfortunately had to do a necropsy on him. So I got him cremated and the day I picked him up was the first time I ever had a horse ride home with me in the front seat. It was kind of neat having Doc's Leader sitting there, I could talk to him. He's buried in my back yard. And all my Doc's Leader mares turned out to be great producers."

Reineman, a Chicago steel man, was one of many cherished characters whose interaction has, for Nuckols, long complemented his love of the Thoroughbred.

"A wonderful, wonderful gentleman," says Nuckols. "And he loved racing. He had a champion filly many years ago, Smart Deb, who became the linchpin to his families. When I was a kid we had so many good mares of his. He'd list us as the breeders. He said, 'I want you all to get the recognition.' [Distorted Humor a case in point.]

"That was back in the days when people bought to race. You had people like Mr. John A. Morris. Gosh, just pillars of the Turf. He was the most dapper gentleman, and always so nice to me as a youngster. A New York banker, he didn't have to talk to me. But showing horses at the sale, I got to meet so many people I would otherwise never, ever have met. The horses are the common denominator. But back then it was just a whole different school. It was a whole lot of fun."

Though Hurstland was ahead of the curve with commercial breeding, nowadays Nuckols is dismayed to see the sales ring supplanting the racetrack as the governing priority--the "tail wagging the dog," as he puts it. He was raised to believe that there was nothing more commercial than a family full of winners.

"Now, horses are treated just like stocks," he laments. "Just as a different type of asset. A lot of people will buy a mare because she's in foal to a good stallion, they'll pull the foal, sell it and then breed the mare back, throw her back in the ring. I still like to try to breed a racehorse: without a racehorse, there's no family. But now I also have to be still looking in the rear-view mirror, trying to see what's going to be commercial or not. And that can change within a matter of days. They can hit with a 'TDN Rising Star', and all of a sudden everybody's on a horse."

His father and uncles would seldom even contemplate a first-year stallion; just occasionally, perhaps, with a proven mare. Nowadays Nuckols is appalled to see them typically launched at the highest fee they will ever command.

"All those horses like Hail To Reason started at a very low fee," Nuckols observes. "Even though he was champion 2-year-old. They'd have to get runners to the track to prove their value. Because you never, ever wanted to be backing off a stud fee.

"Of course, I remember when 32 mares was a full book. Yes, it's nice to be able to get to a really good sire today. But then you come to the sales, and find those horses have been breeding 175, 200 mares. So what used to be your late Book II, Book III horses have now been shoved back to Books V and VI."

Nuckols cont.

But whatever else changes, the magic of the Thoroughbred abides. As a young man, Nuckols was sent off to college: first to Pennsylvania, and then back to UK to qualify as a tax and business lawyer. Indeed, he practiced for a few years before returning to his roots. "It did teach me a lot," Nuckols says. "I can appreciate red ink a lot better as a result. I'd like to see a lot more black, but I understand the 'blood' better!"

It is tough, clearly, to compete toe-to-toe with the industrial farms. But by keeping faith with principles learned in boyhood, Nuckols is entitled to keep producing another Certify; or another Rosalind (Broken Vow), who won the GI Ashland S. in 2014. Same with his cousin Charles, who manages the other half of the original estate. The star graduate of Nuckols Farm was War Emblem, whose 2002 Kentucky Derby success in the Reineman silks redressed the near-miss of No Le Hace, bred by the Nuckols Brothers and runner-up to Riva Ridge 30 years previously.

War Emblem, **who died Mar. 11**, notoriously had fertility issues before being retired to Old Friends--an institution that actually started when Michael Blowen brought Sunshine Forever and Creator to Hurstland, and later the likes of Ogygian, until the project eventually outgrew the available site.



War Emblem | *Horsephotos*

But if Nuckols worries that the whole industry is itself ageing, and worryingly vulnerable to disastrous recent publicity, then he should take comfort that his peers still esteem the old school virtues that he embodies. He was named Kentucky Farm Manager of the Year in 2013, and now, in his 69th year, there's that Hardboot Award.

"There are so many other people out there, doing the same thing you do every day," he says. "So if they say this guy has done a fairly good job over the years, he's our pick this year, that means a lot. I have been looking at past recipients, and having a hard time figuring 'why me?'"

Times have changed since Hurstland was a pioneer commercial farm, selling alongside Warner Jones in the old Barns A and B at Keeneland--up at the top, behind the grandstand.

"It was a more social business back then," Nuckols reflects. "I mean, it wasn't all about the money. You had the owners that raced for the sport. I've been very lucky. My father and uncles were pretty smart. They knew the real way to do it is to build your own family. Uncle Charlie knew everybody, and Dad was wonderful with the horses, the teasing and all that, and they'd both work on matings. It was very symbiotic. They worked very, very hard; and they were very successful.

"That was when Spendthrift was Leslie Combs and Claiborne was Bull Hancock. Everybody knew each other. We'd dove hunt in the fall, rotate around the different farms. They'd have cocktail parties at the shoots, or we'd sit around in the dove field and they'd set up a bar. It's an entirely different business now. But I couldn't have lived a better life."

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Parx Trainers cont. from p1

A typical day rate at Parx is \$75, which, trainers say, is just enough to cover the expenses of caring for and training a horse. Their money is made from the share of the purse they receive when a horse races. With that revenue stream no longer available, trainers have already taken steps to keep their businesses going. Taylor said his help has agreed to take a 50% cut in pay.

"I have a pretty large staff," he said. "We all got together and everyone agreed to have their pay cut in half so they can keep working. They didn't want to lose their jobs. They said, 'We love working for you, we love working here, we'll keep working and take half the pay.'"

Scott Lake said he may cut what he pays his employees next month. Phil Aristone said he had to lay off three employees. Ron Dandy hasn't cut back yet on his staff, but worries that he will eventually have to do so.

"It's terrible," Dandy said. "There are people back here that are living week to week. They only make money when the horses are running and right now we can't do anything here."

It's also been a hard time for the owners. They are being asked to pay in the neighborhood of \$2,600 a month per horse to keep them in training at Parx. That's a hefty price in the best of times and some are trying to cut their losses. The easiest way to do so is to send a horse to a farm, where the costs are less than what they are on the racetrack.

"If a guy says he wants to turn his horses out and send them to the farm, I can't argue with him," Lake said. **Cont. p8**

Parx Trainers cont.

While sending a horse to the farm may solve one problem it creates others, as you risk putting them in a position, should racing resume, where they are not fit enough to run.

“A lot of these guys are just trying to keep their help going and keep the horses fit enough that if we do start back up they are ready to run,” Aristone said. “If you start sending horses to the farm, and they announce they’re going to run again, it will take another month to get them ready to where they can race.”



No one knows when Parx may reopen | Sarah Andrew photo

Taylor said he has discouraged his owners from sending horses to the farm because a horse that is in training can have a hard time making the adjustment that comes with being turned out.

“One of my owners wanted to send all his horses to the farm, but I thought that would be detrimental,” he said. “You can’t just send a fit horse to the farm. They’ll run through fences.”

There’s also the matter that trainers who lose horses to farms don’t need as much help. That makes it harder to justify keeping your employees or not cutting their pay.

All of these are problems that have arisen in just three weeks of no racing. The situation will only grow worse with each day that goes by with Parx dark. Even a top trainer like Taylor said he was worried about his future. The smaller outfits may not be able to survive.

“Personally, this could cripple us,” said Dandy, who has 12 horses. “My owners aren’t big owners. They are small owners who do it because they love the game. If this only goes another month or so, they won’t have a problem. When you get into another month or two after that, I don’t know what they’re going to do. They’ll have to get rid of their horses and, at that point, where do you go to get rid of them? For a lot of us, where do you go to get money? You still have to pay your help, you still have to pay for your grain, you still have to pay the workmen’s comp and all of the other bills. It’s going to be very difficult.”

“If this thing goes for another six or seven weeks, it will be drastic,” Taylor said. “I hope I’ll be in a situation where I can pay my bills. I don’t know what the answer is going to be. I have 40 horses over there. You go in every day worried about the virus, worried about your staff, worried about your horses.”

The hope is that Parx can race again within a short period of time. The reality is that it could be months before racing resumes there. No one knows.

“What will it be like three, four months from now? I don’t know,” Aristone said. “Nobody really knows. That’s a question 99% of the people in U.S. would like answered. It will depend on how much longer owners can afford to keep paying us and how much longer the track will let us train. All you can do is hope for best.”

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BRAHMS IS SOOTHING MUSIC TO A UNIVERSITY’S BREEDING PROGRAM

by T.D. Thornton



Malissa Meyer and Brahms | Sarah Andrew

College students in equine management programs are facing an educational tradeoff this spring: Thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic, they’re getting an immersion in crisis control that wasn’t originally on the syllabus. But the horse-related teaching is not as hands-on as instructors and pupils would like, because many learning institutions have mandated a switch to online-only classes in an attempt to keep the virus from spreading on campuses.

This presents a unique challenge at Arkansas State University, because the school is one of the few in the nation that offers degree coursework involving Thoroughbred matings and foalings.

Brahms cont.

This is the third year the breeding program has been in full swing, and this autumn is supposed to be the first in which yearlings that the students helped to raise will be headed for public sales.

“This will be our first crop that we try to auction,” Malissa Meyer, the animal science instructor who runs the program, told *TDN*. “We are going about business as usual, obviously with new safety precautions. With the current crisis, we’re not sure how that’s going to affect us. Like everyone else in the breeding industry, we’re kind of up in the air right now.”

That means A-State’s 20 or so full-time equine management students don’t get to rush over to the foaling barn like they usually do whenever word spreads that a mare is about to give birth. They’re also no longer donning safety vests and helmets to participate in live covers involving the three stallions that stand at the school.

“It’s actually very difficult,” Meyer said of the transition to online education for subject matter that is best taught up close to groups in a stable or paddock. “Luckily, we got in a whole lot of hands-on experience before our classes went strictly online. But yes, moving classes online has presented new challenges for everyone.”

This past Saturday, a severe tornado ripped through Jonesboro, where A-State is located. The original projected path of the destruction looked like it might hit the school’s equine center, but it veered and spared that part of campus. Other parts of the city suffered significant structural damage, and at least 22 people were injured. The governor has declared Jonesboro a disaster area as the cleanup gets underway.

Tornado and coronavirus concerns notwithstanding, Meyer remains bullish about the prospects for her equine breeding program and her students.

A-State’s niche bloodstock program took a huge leap forward last year, Meyer explained, when former GISW and Kentucky-to-Australia shuttle stallion Brahms (Danzig) was given to the school as a gift.

“He came in at the middle of breeding season last year, and it was definitely an eye-opener for the students to see such a world-class act,” Meyer said of Brahms, who turns 23 on Mar. 31. “He definitely has that ‘Do you know who I am?’ twinkle in his eye.”

Brahms raced as a MGSP juvenile in England and Ireland for Michael Tabor and Susan Magnier, once running second to eventual European Horse of the Year Giant’s Causeway. Sent stateside in a private purchase, he won four straight races late in his 3-year-old season, including the GI Hollywood Derby.



Brahms winning the 2000 Hollywood Derby | *Horsephotos*

His first crop of 140 foals hit the ground in 2003, and he was ranked as high as 10th and no lower than 17th in North American progeny earnings among same-crop peers over his first three seasons. In 2008, Brahms was sent to Louisiana on a lease agreement. He was the leading general sire in that state in 2009, and again in Arkansas in 2012 after moving there. His offspring have a reputation of being more sound and durable than precocious.

“We had a gentleman from Kansas, Jerold Johnson, who donated our first four broodmares to really get this program going,” Meyer said. “And he was in contact with the Hessee family from Arkansas who owned Brahms but had stopped breeding outside mares to him. But they wanted him to still have a career, so they ended up donating him to the university.”

Rascal Cat (Pulpit), an 11-for-68 campaigner, and Macho Rocket (Macho Uno), who won his 2011 debut at Hollywood Park for trainer Bob Baffert but was retired soon after, also stand at A-State, but they do not belong to the university.

“We have three stallions, and they rank anywhere from about a two to an eight on the temperament scale,” Meyer said. “Brahms is great to teach with. Macho and Rascal are definitely lower on the temperament scale, which is great in a different way for teaching students. We like to start them off with something that’s safer, then move up to the more difficult-to-handle stallions. Brahms definitely knows who he is, and he gives the students an opportunity to learn the real behavior of an experienced stallion.”

Meyer said last year the A-State stallions covered about 40 mares. Stud fees are \$1,000 for each of them.

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Brahms cont.

“Our clientele ranges all the way from Nebraska to Tennessee,” Meyer said. “We do get local mares as well, and we had some people send mares up from Louisiana when they found out we had Brahms. Most of these clients are breed-to-race versus breed-to-sell, which I think is fantastic.”

Of the school’s four mares that will deliver foals at the campus equine center, Meyer said, “Obviously, we need to have an outlet for these horses. But another goal is to use them in our yearling and weanling management courses to teach the students how to sales prep. We are trying to have a market to sell them in at the yearling sales. There is no in-state sale in Arkansas yet, unfortunately. And I say ‘unfortunately’ because that is something we are all working towards.”



Brahms at Payson Park in 2001 | Horsephotos

Meyer is also proud of the fact that A-State’s equitation program—separate from the breeding curriculum—counts a number of retired Thoroughbreds in its ranks.

“I firmly believe that if we’re contributing to the breeding of these animals, then we also have to have an outlet for when their careers are done if they don’t go back into the breeding shed,” Meyer said.

A-State’s breeding program was founded by Dr. Bill McGuire, Ph.D. McGuire was also instrumental in encouraging Meyer to pursue her Master of Science in Agriculture degree at the school. When McGuire left A-State to take the assistant farm managing job at Sequel New York last year, Meyer applied and was hired to replace him. Cassie Burdett, an A-State alum who interned at WinStar Farm, came back to help grow the program and to teach alongside Meyer.

Meyer said three of the program’s graduates were able to attain bloodstock-related internships. All three were subsequently offered jobs in the Thoroughbred industry.

“By implementing the breeding program here, we’re giving them a job outlet,” Meyer said. “As educators, that’s what we want. We want them to be able to graduate and to receive a job in their chosen field.”

“We really offer a full spectrum of classes, all the way from breeding the animals to maintaining the gestation, to foaling out, re-breeding, and sales prep,” Meyer continued. “We teach how to manage these horses and then actually sell them, because that is the greatest key to sustainability and staying in business.”

“In our management classes, we work hard on return on investments. We make students do a full-encompassing business plan, because we want them to know that if they walk in with that plan to get a small business loan, they are going to need to understand risk analysis.”

Meyer said she is also working on implementing a certificate program.

“In the Thoroughbred industry, education plays a factor. But actual experience plays a huge factor,” Meyer said. “We want to allow students to go in with both the hands-on experience and the knowledge, but maybe without a four-year degree if that’s what they choose.”

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SANTA ANITA 2YOS IN TRAINING SALE CANCELED

Owing to the current restrictions in place at Santa Anita Park in Arcadia, CA, relating to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and in light of the changes to the 2020 Thoroughbred auction calendar, officials at Fasig-Tipton have announced the cancellation of the Santa Anita 2-Year-Olds In Training Sale. The event had been scheduled for June 3.

“Factors beyond our control have necessitated the sale’s cancellation,” said Fasig-Tipton President Boyd Browning. “We greatly appreciate the support we received from those that had already committed entries, as well as the efforts and cooperation of Santa Anita’s management and staff these past several months. With so much uncertainty, we felt it was best to go ahead and announce the sale’s cancellation to provide sellers with ample time to redirect their horses to other venues.”

“While disappointed with this outcome, we look forward to continuing to work with California breeders and sellers on the California Fall Yearlings Sale scheduled for Oct. 19 of this year at Fairplex in Pomona, California,” added Browning.

The Keeneland 2-Year-Olds In Training and Horses of Racing Age Sale, originally scheduled for Apr. 7, was canceled Mar. 16. The following day, Fasig-Tipton announced the postponement of its Midlantic 2YO Sale by one week from May 18 and 19 to May 26 and 27 in Timonium. It simultaneously announced a second Midlantic sale to take place June 24 and 25. While the OBS March Sale went on despite the pandemic, the company decided to postpone its April sale. That auction will now take place June 9-12. Entries for Fasig-Tipton's next California sale, the California Fall Yearlings Sale, are now open. [Entry forms](#) may be found online at www.fasigtipton.com.

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OBS SPRING CATALOGUE ONLINE

The catalogue for the [OBS Spring Sale of 2-Year-Olds In Training](#), postponed from next month to June 9-12 due to the coronavirus pandemic, is now online at the company website at www.obssales.com.

A total of 1,231 juveniles have been catalogued for the four-day sale, with lots 1-308 going under the hammer Tuesday, June 9; lots 309-616 Wednesday, June 10; lots 617-924 Thursday, June 11; and lots 925-1231 Friday, June 12. Bidding begins each day at 10 a.m.

Seven under-tack previews are scheduled to begin Sunday, May 31 and continue through Saturday, June 6.

An iPad version of the catalogue can be accessed via EquineLine's Sales Catalogue App. For additional information and to download the app, click [here](#).

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OLD FRIENDS DEBUTS VIRTUAL TOURS

Old Friends, the popular Thoroughbred retirement facility located in Georgetown, KY, debuted the first in a series of virtual farm tours Monday that will allow visitors to continue to monitor the activity of the farm's over 100 equine retirees during this time of the COVID-19 quarantine.

"Monday Mornings With Michael," is, as the title implies, hosted by Old Friends founder Michael Blowen and will feature brief visits with a handful of horses each week. Old Friends is posting the clips across its social media channels and also at the [Old Friends website](#) and YouTube channel.

The first instalment was uploaded Monday ([view on YouTube](#)) and features two of Old Friends' oldest retirees, the 32-year-old Dinard and one-time claimer Archie's Echo, 31.

There is no charge for watching the videos, but Old Friends welcomes donations, which can be made on Facebook by using the donate button ([via PayPal](#)) or [Network for Good](#).

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SO... WHO'S THE LEADING FIRST-CROP SIRE OF 2020?

Even if most racing is delayed, we're all hoping it will get underway sometime this spring or early summer, if for no other reason than so we can all find out the answer to our annual favorite question. We surveyed some top judges on who their leading first-crop sire is, and to give us some under-the-radar picks as well.

DAVID INGORDO



Nyquist gets the slight nod from David Ingordo | Darley photo

My top two picks are between **Nyquist** and **Runhappy**, but I will probably give Nyquist the number one slot. We bought several Nyquists ourselves and I've seen several at the training sales that have all looked like Classic horses, but with enough speed to run in the Del Mar or Saratoga 2-year-old races. I was pretty impressed with what I saw in them at the sales. They have good scope, good minds, and they have great bodies on them. Of the ones we've purchased, they've all developed really well. They're a pretty uniform group and I've liked everything I've seen about them.

The Runhappys look pretty nice too. I've been really pleased with the ones we have in our portfolio, and the ones from the sale. At the OBS March sale, I remember Hip 320 was a beast and brought \$475,000.

Because Runhappy was a sprinter, I'm not sure how far they're going to go. I'm not condemning them to being exclusively sprinters, but they look pretty high quality, whatever they're going to do. **Cont. p12**

Leading Freshman Sire cont.

I'm going to go with **Air Force Blue** as an under-the-radar horse. Because he didn't run here, I think a lot of people don't know him, but War Front is emerging as a sire-of-sires and this horse was very well bred and well thought of by the Coolmore and Ballydoyle bunch.

We bought a filly by him at the last sale that I think is magnificent. I'm really excited about her. She's a queen. I've seen a few others at the yearling sales and in my travels. I didn't set out to find them, but I always wound up with a few of them on my short list.

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**FOR THE WEEK ENDING MARCH 29, 2020
NORTH AMERICAN-BASED STALLIONS**

Sire (Sire's Sire)	#SWs	#GSWs
CREATIVE CAUSE (Giant's Causeway) <i>(Identifier--GIII Hal's Hope S.)</i>	15	5
DAREDEVIL (More Than Ready) <i>(Swiss Skydiver--GII Fasig-Tipton Gulfstream Park Oaks)</i>	3	2
INTO MISCHIEF (Harlan's Holiday) <i>(Bemma's Boy--GII Kitten's Joy Pan American S.)</i>	69	28
PRIMARY SUSPECT (Hennessy) <i>(K J's Nobility--Nodouble Breeders' S.)</i>	5	---
SKY MESA (Pulpit) <i>(Highland Glory--Sanibel Island S.)</i>	71	25
STREET BOSS (Street Cry {Ire}) <i>(Social Paranoia--GIII Appleton S.)</i>	39	16

Italicized numbers indicate new activity

Interested in listing your information in future New SWs tables? Contact suefinley@thetdn.com

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APOGEE (f, 3, Malibu Moon--My Limit, by Wagon Limit)

The name of Christophe Clement's recent 3-year-old winner at Tampa Bay Downs is wise to lunar science and astronomy. She is by Malibu Moon out of My Limit, and her name is Apogee, which, according to the Google Dictionary, is "the point in the orbit of the moon or a satellite at which it is furthest from the earth." Brainy, inventive name.

An Italian native, Andrea Branchini now lives in Lexington, KY, where he works in the equine transport industry.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

PHYLLIS GODWIN

The Thoroughbred industry has certainly taken a beating over the past year: The controversial DQ of Maximum Security in the Kentucky Derby, numerous breakdowns at Santa Anita, recent indictments related to the sport--and now the Covid-19 virus. COVID-19 has caused some tracks to end their meets early, and others to race with empty spectator stands. A few jockeys have taken a break, citing health concerns for their families. Jockey Javier Castellano, who arrived back in Miami after racing in New York, has tested positive for COVID-19. With the turmoil of bad news afflicting the sport, there are still stories of good news, if you know where to find them. **Cont. p13**



Kit Kennedy | Caitlin Ogden

Letter to the Editor cont.

When Dani Dougherty, owner of Oakton Farm Stallions, heard that there was a baby that could benefit from the stallions on her farm, she not only arranged to offer the stallions, she spoke to friends who were glad to help as well. They agreed to hold an online Stallion Season Auction to help a little boy named Kit Kennedy.

"I am blessed to have amazing clients," Dani admitted. "If that was my child and somebody had the resources to help, I would really appreciate it. I have the resources."

Kit, an adorable baby boy with a sweet, disarming smile, has recently been found to have a rare genetic disorder, ZNF335. There are only 50 known cases in the world.

"ZNF335 hinders his brain from making new brain cells, which causes a numerous amount of neurological and other health issues," Kit's mother, Cady, explained. "We've been told not to expect Kit to make it past his first birthday. We aren't going to accept that. We believe God has greater plans for Kit's life."

Although Thoroughbred breeding season is already in full swing, those looking for an opportunity to obtain a great deal on a stallion cover can not only do that, but help a little boy as well. The online auction can be found on Facebook's page: Stallion Auction to Benefit Kit Kennedy. The auction is open for bids until Saturday, Apr. 4 at 5 p.m. ET. Bids start at only \$500. For those not looking for a stallion season, but who would still like to help, information on how to donate can be found on the auction's Facebook page.

With your help, his family will be able to afford the medical equipment and treatments to ensure the greatest outcome possible for Kit.

We would like to thank the stallion's owners who made this benefit possible:

Oakton Farm Stallions: Rogueish (Into Mischief), Young Brian (Hard Spun), Finale (Scat Daddy), Backtalk (Smarty Jones), Big Drama (Montbrook), Matanzas Inlet (Kitalpha)

Equistar Training and Breeding (www.Pastallions.com): Uncle Vinny (Uncle Mo), Airoforce (Colonel John)

Solera Farm (www.solerafarm.com): Greatness (Mr. Prospector), Field Commission (Service Stripe)

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 March 26, 2020
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Struggle Ahead for NJ Horsemen In \$150M Lawsuit Vs. Sports Leagues

New Jersey's Thoroughbred horsemen's association may have run into a brick wall in its efforts to unseal eight-year-old depositions from commissioners of the NFL, MLB, and other major sports organizations in the original sports betting case won by the state. NJOnlineGambling.com



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Leading Dirt Sires of 3-Year-Olds by Earnings

for stallions standing in North America through Sunday, Mar. 29

Earnings represent North American and European figures, stud fees listed are 2020 fees.

Rank	Stallion	BTW	BTH	GSW	GSH	G1SW	G1SH	Starters	Wnrs	Highest Earner	Earnings
1	Into Mischief <i>(2005) by Harlan's Holiday Crops: 9</i>	6	10	2	4	--	--	62	17	300,000	1,527,656
				Stands: Spendthrift Farm KY Fee: \$175,000						Authentic	
2	Constitution <i>(2011) by Tapit Crops: 2</i>	2	5	1	3	1	1	35	11	598,300	1,197,635
				Stands: WinStar Farm KY Fee: \$40,000						Tiz the Law	
3	Uncle Mo <i>(2008) by Indian Charlie Crops: 6</i>	4	6	4	5	--	--	41	15	377,400	1,161,053
				Stands: Ashford Stud KY Fee: \$125,000						Modernist	
4	Munnings <i>(2006) by Speightstown Crops: 7</i>	3	5	3	4	--	--	33	8	291,600	1,001,288
				Stands: Ashford Stud KY Fee: \$30,000						Bonny South	
5	Blame <i>(2006) by Arch Crops: 7</i>	1	2	1	2	--	--	14	2	753,000	933,850
				Stands: Claiborne Farm KY Fee: \$35,000						Nadal	
6	Lookin At Lucky <i>(2007) by Smart Strike Crops: 7</i>	1	2	1	2	--	--	12	2	801,600	915,862
				Stands: Ashford Stud KY Fee: \$20,000						Wells Bayou	
7	Tonalist <i>(2011) by Tapit Crops: 2</i>	1	2	1	2	--	--	31	9	213,110	686,654
				Stands: Lane's End Farm KY Fee: \$15,000						Tonalist's Shape	
8	Tapiture <i>(2011) by Tapit Crops: 2</i>	2	4	--	--	--	--	44	14	90,000	581,423
				Stands: Darby Dan Farm KY Fee: \$7,500						Steph'sfullasugar	
9	Liam's Map <i>(2011) by Unbridled's Song Crops: 2</i>	--	1	--	1	--	--	35	12	100,000	580,775
				Stands: Lane's End Farm KY Fee: \$35,000						Basin	
10	Curlin <i>(2004) by Smart Strike Crops: 9</i>	--	3	--	3	--	--	35	10	105,000	575,870
				Stands: Hill 'n' Dale Farms KY Fee: \$175,000						Fire Coral	
11	Khozan <i>(2012) by Distorted Humor Crops: 2</i>	1	3	--	2	--	--	35	9	109,000	570,149
				Stands: Journeyman Stud FL Fee: \$8,500						Liam's Lucky Charm	
12	Tapit <i>(2001) by Pulpit Crops: 13</i>	1	5	1	4	--	--	28	6	220,000	551,646
				Stands: Gainesway Farm KY Fee: \$200,000						Enforceable	
13	Violence <i>(2010) by Medaglia d'Oro Crops: 4</i>	1	1	--	--	--	--	31	13	94,266	540,485
				Stands: Hill 'n' Dale Farms KY Fee: \$25,000						No Parole	
14	Congrats <i>(2000) by A.P. Indy Crops: 11</i>	--	3	--	--	--	--	48	14	81,000	532,349
				Stands: WinStar Farm KY Fee: \$10,000						O Seraphina	
15	Palace Malice <i>(2010) by Curlin Crops: 2</i>	2	2	1	1	--	--	38	5	260,000	523,390
				Stands: Three Chimneys Farm KY Fee: \$25,000						Mr. Monomoy	

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DROP THE CHALUPA AHEAD OF SCHEDULE FOR ELLIS

by Jessica Martini

When Ron Ellis sent the quirkily-named **Drop the Chalupa** (Liam's Map) out for his first start earlier this month, the trainer admitted he had modest expectations for the 16-1 longshot. After all, the gelding, who Ellis had purchased for \$35,000 on behalf of Richard Templar's Doubledown Stables at the 2019 Fasig-Tipton Midlantic May sale, was up against a pair of well-respected runners from the power-packed Bob Baffert barn in the 6 1/2-furlong maiden special weight.

"I liked him and I knew he had talent," Ellis said of Drop the Chalupa. "But Baffert, in the last couple maiden races before that, had unleashed Nadal (Blame) and Charlatan (Speightstown)—those were the last two that had won the straight maiden races. And then he had an American Pharoah that he really liked in our race, and I'm like, 'We're probably not that good, but he could hit the board.' The instructions were to let him settle in and make a little bit of a run and see what he could do."

Off a step slowly in his Mar. 7 debut, Drop the Chalupa raced second-last as the 3-5 Baffert firster American Code (American Pharoah), a \$350,000 Keeneland September Yearling, set the pace. Starting to pick up his feet while three wide past the five-sixteenths pole, the chestnut charged up alongside the favorite at midstretch and inched away late to score the 1 3/4-length upset ([video](#)).

"I was very impressed because I didn't have him 100% cranked up and we didn't ride him 100%," Ellis said of that debut effort. "I wanted him to round into form gradually. He's not a big horse, he's just a medium-sized, nicely balanced horse. When I bought him, he really reminded me of a Grade I winner I had a few years back, [2013 GI Triple Bend H. winner] Centralintelligence (Smarty Jones). That horse we kind of did the same program with. He ran third first time out and then won his next start. So I was just looking for something like that, run third first time and come back and win the second start."

Drop the Chalupa first caught Ellis's eye at last year's Midlantic sale ([hip 307](#)), despite the chestnut's adventurous work in Timonium.

"I was just there looking for anything we could buy," Ellis said. "Richard was looking for something over \$100,000 and I thought that horse would maybe go for \$60,000 or \$70,000."

Of the youngster's appeal, Ellis said, "He is by Liam's Map, who I was kind of high on going over to the sale because he had quite a few horses who worked well. And they've come out running."

Still, buyers may have been put off by the juvenile's work.

"He blew his workout," Ellis said. "He started to work and then he bolted, then he came back in. He still worked in :10 2/5. And I thought, 'Well, if he had run straight, he would have worked a tick or two faster.' So I went over and looked at him and he seemed quite sensible. Usually those horses will show if they're nuts. And if he had bolted because he was nuts, then I wouldn't have been interested in him. He acted quite sensible at the barn, so I figured it might have just been a single incident, rather than a habitual one."



Drop the Chalupa working in Timonium | Photos by Z

Ellis is giving the gelding plenty of time to regroup from his debut effort.

"I'm just letting him build back up," the trainer said. "It's going to be kind of tough to spot him because now he's going to run against winners and maybe even older winners. So I'm just giving him a little bit of time to regroup off of that and see where he goes. We'll let him take us there, instead of us pushing."

Ellis has nine horses in training for Templar, whose Doubledown silks have been carried to victory over the years by Grade I winner Black Mamba (NZ) (Black Minnaloushe) and graded stakes winners Recount (Limehouse) and Ben's Duchess (Munnings), as well as Grade I-placed BlameitontheLaw (Blame).

Doubledown was represented by a homebred maiden winner last week when Royal Commission (Field Commission), a son of the stable's graded-placed Royal Taat (NZ) (Faltaat), won first-time out at Oaklawn Park Friday for trainer James DiVito.

"He just loves racing," Ellis said of Templar. "And he's been super patient with all the things we've gone through in the last year [in California]."

Ellis will once again be representing the Chicago native at this year's delayed 2-year-old sales, but will be working with an increased budget.

“He asked me to find him two to three really nice 2-year-olds,” Ellis said. “When I said that might be a higher price point, he said, ‘I’m not getting any younger.’ And I said, ‘I love that attitude.’”

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Sunday's Results:

1st-CKO, ¥9,680,000 (\$89,718), Maiden, 3yo, 1400m, 1:24.7, sy.
TRAIN BEARER (f, 3, Carpe Diem--Cabaret Starlet, by Tale of the Cat) was off the board, but not embarrassed, in a pair of starts on the grass to begin her career, but hinted there was better to come with a narrowly beaten second in the Hanshin slop Mar. 8. Catching similar underfoot conditions here, the 21-10 favorite settled at the back of the leading group, but was trapped wide for the run around the turn. Pulled out nearing the quarter pole, the bay accelerated sharply to lead clear at the furlong grounds and came away to a very impressive five-length victory. Train Bearer is out of an unraced half-sister to Canadian Horse of the Year, champion turf female and MGSW Arravale (Arch), dam of Nancy O (Ire) (Pivotal {GB}). Her year-older half-brother San Jose Tesoro (The Factor) is a winner of three-from-eight in Japan. Cabaret Starlet is the dam of a 2-year-old colt by Orb and a yearling filly by Union Jackson. Acquired for \$55,000 carrying this foal at Keeneland January in 2017, Cabaret Starlet was most recently bred to Street Boss. Sales history: \$90,000 Wlg '17 KEENOV; \$150,000 Ylg '18 FTSAUG; \$250,000 2yo '19 OBSMAR. Lifetime Record: 4-1-1-0, \$72,819.

O-Kazuko Yoshida; B-Daniel S Mallory, Amy Bayle & Allen Racing LLC (KY); T-Sei Ishizaka.

Co Bred & Consigned by SCOTT MALLORY, agent

Saturday's Results:

3rd-HSN, ¥9,680,000 (\$89,718), Maiden, 3yo, 1800m, 1:52.9, sy.
UNSAID VOW (c, 3, Giant's Causeway--Country Cafe, by Lion Heart) was sent off the prohibitive 1-2 chalk off a near-miss runner-up effort over this track and distance Mar. 1. Ridden for speed from gate six, the chestnut raced three wide out of the stretch for the first time and stalked in the clear down the backstretch. Asked to get closer leaving the 600-meter marker, Unsaid Vow took some time to hit his top gear, but came calling for the lead with a bit less than a furlong to race and held off Besame Mo (Uncle Mo) for a U.S.-bred 1-2. The April foal is out of a full-sister to MGSW Heart Ashley--dam of Japanese MGSW

Fiano Romano (Aus) (Fastnet Rock {Aus})--and out of a half to GISW and Coolmore sire Cupid (Tapit); GSW Ashley's Kitty (Tale of the Cat); and SW Indianapolis (Medaglia d'Oro). Country Café is the dam of a yearling filly by Frosted and was barren to Street Sense for 2020. Sales history: \$110,000 Ylg '18 KESEEP. Lifetime Record: 4-1-1-0, \$70,439.

O-Makoto Kato; B-Mike G Rutherford (KY); T-Kazuya Nakatake.

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ALLOWANCE RESULTS:

8th-Golden Gate Fields, \$34,162, (NW1\$X)/Opt. Clm (\$25,000), 3-29, 4yo/up, 1m (AWT), 1:37.18, ft.

I DECLARE WAR (g, 4, Declaration of War--City Sister {GSP, \$136,490}, by Carson City) Lifetime Record: 13-4-3-2, \$56,220. O-Madden Racing, MJVET Stables & Michael Nentwig; B-Tada Nobutaka (KY); T-Jonathan Wong. *\$95,000 RNA Ylg '17 KESEEP; \$57,000 Ylg '17 FTKOCT. **1/2 to Dixie City (Dixie Union), GSW, \$231,980; and Win the War (War Front), MSW-Can, GSP-USA, \$151,526.

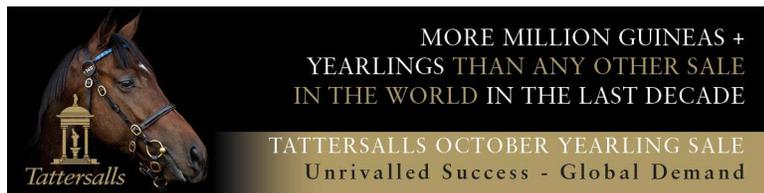
ADDITIONAL MAIDEN WINNERS:

Past Visions, g, 4, Flashback--Magic Charm, by Horse Greeley. Will Rogers Downs, 3-30, 6f, 1:12.02. B-Gary & Mary West Stables Inc. (KY).



DECLARATION OF WAR, I Declare War, g, 4, o/o City Sister, by Carson City. AOC, 3-29, Golden Gate

FLASHBACK, Past Visions, g, 4, o/o Magic Charm, by Horse Greeley. MSW, 3-30, Will Rogers



GOFFS POSTPONES BREEZE-UP; 2020 LONDON SALE CANCELLED



A horse parades during the 2019 London Sale | Goffs

The Goffs Group has issued a revised calendar for its spring sales and has announced that it will suspend the Goffs London Sale for one year amid uncertainty for racing and sales during the COVID-19 outbreak.

The Goffs UK Breeze-up Sale, which was originally scheduled to take place on Apr. 22 and 23, will now be staged on either June 13 and 14 or June 14 and 15, immediately prior to the start of Royal Ascot on Tuesday, June 16. The venue for the delayed sale is yet to be confirmed, but Goffs is discussing the option to stage the breeze-up close to London. The company previously held a breeze-up sale at Kempton Park racecourse for several years.

Since 2014, the eve of the Royal Meeting has been the slot of the London Sale, which had the unique selling point of offering a selection horses in training with entries for Royal Ascot.

Goffs and Goffs UK also hold National Hunt store sales in May and June at their venues in Doncaster and Kildare. The Goffs UK Spring Sale of HIT/Point-to-Pointers and the Goffs Land Rover Sale will now take place in the weeks commencing July 27 and Aug. 3, respectively.

[Cont. 2](#)

NEWMARKET LAUNCHES COMMUNITY CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE *By Emma Berry*

A combined response from business and council leaders as well as members of the racing community has been launched in Newmarket to aid vulnerable residents during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The largest training centre in Britain, Newmarket is home to 76 training yards and two racecourses, as well as the British Racing School, Jockey Club Estates, Tattersalls and a number of major studs. The Thoroughbred Breeders' Association, European Breeders' Fund and Racing Welfare are among the racing-related bodies with head offices in the town.

At present, the training of racehorses is continuing, though some trainers have already taken steps to turn horses out and furlough staff through the government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. The breeding season is also continuing largely uninterrupted but under strict conditions. Many of the country's leading stallions stand at studs close to Newmarket, including Dubawi (Ire), Pivotal (GB), Frankel (GB), Kingman (GB) and Sea The Moon (Ger).

An economic impact study published in 2014 estimated that the contribution to Newmarket and the surrounding area from the horseracing industry to be £208 million, creating direct full-time employment for around 3,300 people. [Cont. p4](#)



Newmarket town and the Rowley Mile grandstand seen from the gallops | Emma Berry

IN TDN AMERICA TODAY

HARDBOOT VALUES ENDURE THROUGH NUCKOLS

Chris McGrath speaks with breeder Alfred H. Nuckols, Jr. [Click or tap here to go straight to TDN America.](#)



Henry Beeby | Goffs

Goffs Cont. from p1

Explaining the revision to the sales schedule, Goffs Group Chief Executive Henry Beeby said, "In these uncertain times we must plan as best we can but accept that time is going to be required before any degree of normality returns to our lives. With that in mind we have revisited our sales calendar and listened to the directives and information coming from our governments and the aspirations of the racing authorities in both countries. We do not feel it would be sensible to attempt to sell any category until such time as racing returns in some form in the UK and/or Ireland and hope this revised schedule allows the time for that to happen and for the dream of racehorse ownership to be reignited in potential purchasers."

He continued, "The Breeze-up Sale will utilise a highly successful date in the Goffs calendar and follows a proven formula for sales ring and top-class racecourse success. Meanwhile the alternative store sales dates recall a time when the best stores used to be sold at that time of year. Indeed, I remember working my first DBS sale in August 1978 when the cream of the crop was offered. These later dates also provide the opportunity for some point-to-pointers and horses in training to be marketed to a willing market."

"We hope that this revised schedule gives some clarity to our clients whilst recognising that there are no ideal solutions to a situation no one foresaw just a few weeks ago. However, we are grateful to the industry for their assistance and assure every Goffs client that we will work tirelessly to provide the best possible opportunities to sell and buy."

"Finally, I want to thank the Goffs teams in Ireland and the UK for their commitment and proactivity whilst we operate our work from home policy to ensure that we keep everyone safe and play our part in trying to halt the spread of this awful virus."

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MARLEY OUTLINES DIFFICULTIES FOR BREEZE-UP SECTOR

By Emma Berry

The big question to which everyone in the industry would like to know the answer is when will racing be able to resume? It is a key concern for many, not least the breeze-up consignors, whose sales season in Europe should have started this week at Ascot.

The Tattersalls Ascot and Craven Breeze-up Sales have already been postponed until the end of April, while Arqana has pencilled in an early June slot for its Deauville sale currently scheduled to be held on May 8 and 9. On Wednesday, Goffs UK announced that its mid-April Breeze-up Sale will now be delayed until June, just prior to the start of Royal Ascot, and could be transferred from Doncaster to a London venue.

While breeze-up consignors will doubtless be supportive of moves which allow the sales to take place once coronavirus restrictions have been eased for the majority of the population, the rescheduling brings with it headaches of a different kind.

"There's no point having a sale unless there's racing on," agrees Roger Marley, who is based in Yorkshire and sells in partnership with Irishman John Cullinan under the Church Farm & Horse Park Stud banner.

"Things won't be back to normal for a while but there has to be some kind of normality to it all. I'm not a big fan of the idea of an online breeze. Horses still have to be in the same place anyway, they have to breeze on the same gallop, you can't have them breezing at home on different gallops and being timed."

With horses being prepared to breeze at Doncaster on Apr. 22 now facing a two-month lag in sale date, their training schedules will have to be modified accordingly. [Cont. p3](#)



Roger Marley | Emma Berry



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IN TDN AUS/NZ TODAY

AGENTS PIVOT ON EASTER PLANNING

Bren O'Brien speaks with several bloodstock agents ahead of the reformatted Inglis Easter Yearling Sale. [Click or tap here to go straight to TDN Aus/NZ.](#)

Marley Cont.

"We've taken our foot off the gas with these horses now," says Marley. "We did that a fortnight ago. The horses that were going to the Craven on the original date, or to Goffs UK on the original date, they haven't done any fast work for a fortnight since they announced the delay to the Craven and that there would be no racing at all. My horses usually go in to [nearby training centre] Malton for a change of scenery twice before they go to the sales but we've not done that yet and I'm not willing to do that until we know for certain what is going to happen. They are doing steady canters most days, nothing more than that."

He continues, "It's worrying for everyone, the uncertainty of not knowing when anything is going to go ahead. Doncaster [Goffs UK] is now 10 weeks away and I know they mentioned they might be having it at Kempton, but that's a minor detail for someone to worry about later on."



Roger Marley breeders on the gallops | Emma Berry

"If the racing and sales go ahead in May none of us would be worried. The delay of a month we can all take, but if we're getting into a delay of three months then people are going to hit difficulties. I spoke to Freddy Powell today because Arqana have taken a week in early June but they're still hoping to go ahead with their set dates in May at the moment. The first week in June is the last option they would have to hold the breeze on the grass at Deauville before they start to get the course ready for the big August meeting."

The resumption of racing and rescheduling of fixtures will play a key part in the results of the breeze-up sales, according to Marley.

He says, "There is going to be some backlog. We're all hoping that they can try to push Royal Ascot back—nobody wants to lose Royal Ascot." [Cont. p4](#)

Marley Cont.

"The Guineas in England, Ireland and France need to be first so that the Guineas winners can take each other on in the St. James's Palace," he continues. "And Royal Ascot can't be behind closed doors.

"Some of the really precocious horses they might even miss their chance but if they can push Royal Ascot back and we can sell these horses as potential Royal Ascot horses that gives us a chance. This year it might play into the hands of those who have more backward-type horses. For example, we know that Arqana is renowned for selling more of a 3-year-old type."

The outcome of the 2-year-old sales will also have repercussions for the trade for yearlings this

autumn, just as a heavily revised sales calendar will cause problems for the many consignors who are active as vendors across the breeze-up, store and yearling sectors.

"The sales companies know that these sales have to go ahead because if they don't there will be a lot of people not able to go back to restock at the yearling sales in the autumn," Marley notes. "There are 900 breeze-up horses to sell in Europe, never mind America, at a cost of £20-odd million, and if you took out the majority of those out of the yearling market that leaves a huge hole.

"There's a chance that some of these breeze-ups might not take place until July, we just don't know. Then the store sales are going to be late July or early August. So we're going to have the breeze-up horses still filling our yards up when the store horses need to be in getting prepped for their sales, then the yearlings will be coming in to be prepped. Quite a few people do all of that. I don't personally sell any yearlings so it doesn't really affect me, but I imagine the autumn yearling sales are going to have to be pushed back a month as well to give people that do every type of horse, like Mark Dwyer, a chance to get them all ready."

Currently Marley and Cullinan have 24 horses being readied in Yorkshire, 15 of which were originally slated for sales in April at Tattersalls and Goffs UK.

Marley says of his revised training schedule, "The backward ones need educating, they don't know how to gallop yet and if France goes ahead in five weeks' time, or the Craven goes ahead in four weeks' time, we've got to keep doing something with them. If the horses are ready, like the Doncaster horses were,

they can now have an easy time, do steady canters and still thrive that way."

He adds, "The other point is that it will now cost a lot more this year to keep the horses for extra months and keep the staff on for longer, and with all likelihood that we will be taking a lot less money for them at the sales.

There will be an awful lot of people who buy a breeze-up horse, or any kind of a racehorse, and it's a hobby to them. And you have to wonder if the people that buy those horses for a bit of enjoyment are going to have the money to do that this year."

Acknowledging that the ongoing uncertainty surrounding the pandemic is affecting all walks of life, Marley admits that many people currently have other priorities.

He says, "If we can get out of this year with our health and our properties and be able to go forward, even if it's into next year or the year after, that's the important thing."



Roger Marley, Brendan Holland & John Cullinan | Emma Berry

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EUROPEAN NEWS

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Newmarket Launches Community Cont. from p1

The collaborative approach from The Jockey Club, Godolphin, Newmarket Town Council, West Suffolk Council, Discover Newmarket, and supermarket chain Tesco, includes ensuring deliveries of food and supplies to those in need of support in the local area. The fleet of buses owned by Discover Newmarket is being used in this effort being undertaken by a team of volunteers.

"Everybody in our community has been affected in some way by the COVID-19 outbreak but there are those for whom the coming weeks and months are going to prove extremely difficult," said Amy Starkey, Regional Director of The Jockey Club's East Region. "All of us at The Jockey Club take our responsibility to our community very seriously and it has been incredibly heartening to see my colleagues joining together with our partners across Newmarket to find the most effective ways to help."

Cont. p5

Newmarket Launches Community Cont.

She added, "We were conscious that we wanted to help the whole community, and Tesco have also come in to help by sponsoring some of the boxes and paying for the fuel. It's amazing the offers of help that we've had and it's great to see what some people are volunteering to do to help during this time."

Ordinarily at this time of year, Starkey and her colleagues at Newmarket Racecourses would be gearing up for their opening fixture of the season, the three-day Craven Meeting, which is one of a number of high-profile meetings to have been lost so far in the current shutdown in Britain, which is set to run until at least the end of April. The first Classics of the British season are currently set to be run during Newmarket's Guineas Meeting on May 2 and 3 and though plans are being made by the British Horseracing Authority to resume racing behind closed doors at the earliest possible date, there is likely to be further upheaval to the racing programme beyond the current suspension deadline.

With pubs, hotels and restaurants closed temporarily, many local businesses are also being hit hard at a time when they could usually expect to benefit from increased trade related to the racing and sales.

Rachel Hood, the Mayor of Newmarket who is also married to champion trainer John Gosden, said, "There has always been a wonderful sense of community in Newmarket, a town that brings people together not only from across our own country but from all corners of the world.

"I am delighted to see that during these testing times, Newmarket Town Council and West Suffolk Council are working collaboratively with our town's key industries and employers to ensure those least fortunate among us are not forgotten as we face up to our temporary new reality.

"We are all incredibly grateful to our industry partners and community organisations who have worked tirelessly to set up this much needed support of those that require it within our community."

While Racing Welfare, the charity which supports the British racing workforce, has its headquarters in Newmarket, its remit is nationwide and it has already stepped in to help more than 300 people with issues relating to the coronavirus crisis between

Mar. 17 and 27. Put in context, the charity routinely helps 48 people per week on average, so the current surge in calls for its service amounts to a more than five-fold increase.

Simone Sear, Racing Welfare's Director of Welfare said, "We have already seen a significant number of people getting in touch for help following the Covid-19 outbreak. This has included people who are self-employed, on zero-hour contracts

or casual workers who may have been laid off. We are in a good position as we already have a good infrastructure in place and a strong welfare team from across our offices. Their skills will come to the fore in light of the challenges we are facing."

She added, "We are focusing our COVID-19 response around three main strands of work: information, advice and guidance; community support to prevent loneliness and isolation; and grants to relieve immediate financial hardship. Calls are still

being taken via our regional office numbers during the day and our 24-hour support line is available outside of office hours. I would encourage anyone who needs support to get in touch with a member of the team, we are geared up and ready to assist."

The Racing Welfare 24-hour national helpline number is 0800 6300 443, and Newmarket residents in need of help during the crisis can call Newmarket Town Council's helpline on 01638 667227.

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Newmarket Mayor Rachel Hood | *Racing Post*

UK RACING'S COVID-19 RESPONSE PLAN RELEASED

A **COVID-19 response plan** for the UK racing industry was published on Monday by the industry group coordinating the response and liaising with the UK government. The purpose of the operational plan is to protect the health of British racing's people, horses, and businesses during the pandemic and have a blueprint in place for the earliest possible resumption of racing and a strong recovery once racing has begun again. It also outlines the range of activities, led by the industry's COVID-19 Group, to meet the challenges presented by the pandemic.

It sets out objectives for five key streams of work, including finance, people, equine health and welfare, resumption and recovery. [Cont. p6](#)

UK Racing's COVID-19 Plan Cont.

The plan will structure and drive the work going forward and be used as a template for reporting back to senior leaders, the industry and external stakeholders where required.

It has been developed by the Industry Group (IG) and approved by the Members' Committee of the British Horseracing Authority (BHA) representing racing's tripartite leadership of the Racecourse Association (RCA), The Horsemen's Group (THG) and the governing body and regulator, the BHA.

The industry group includes the Chief Executives of the BHA, RCA, National Trainers Federation (NTF), Racehorse Owners Association (ROA) and Thoroughbred Breeders Association (TBA), and has direct input from the chief executives of other industry organisations such as the Horserace Betting Levy Board, Racing Foundation and Racing Welfare.

"The Industry Group is working hard to meet the needs of the racing industry in this period of great uncertainty," said a spokesman from the COVID-19 Group. "There has already been a huge collaborative effort and this will continue as we move to a point at which we can resume racing.

"We are publishing the plan so that the industry's stakeholders and participants can see the extensive programme of work that is underway. We believe this will help avoid duplication and use resources in the best possible way. We will continue to give updates at regular intervals."

In addition to the latest plan information, a financial submission to the UK government, developed with input from the group, is being sent to the Department of Digital, Media, Culture and Sport (DCMS). In the submission, a wide range of ways in which racing can work with government to reduce the economic impact to the industry is detailed, including further financial support.

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Newmarket's July Course | *Racing Post*

SIMCOCK LOOKS TO HEIGHTS



Mohican Heights | *Racing Post*

David Simcock is awaiting the commencement of the 2020 flat turf season with keenness as he prepares the unbeaten **Mohican Heights (Ire)** (Australia {GB}) for a potential Derby tilt. Acquired by Qatar Racing and Sun Bloodstock for £520,000 at the Goffs London Sale following his winning debut for the Fozzy Stack stable at Leopardstown, the half-brother to the Group 3-winning stayer Eye of the Storm (Ire) (Galileo {Ire}) was successful for his new yard in Salisbury's Listed Stonehenge S. over a mile in August.

"He is the one I'm looking forward to the most of our 3-year-olds," he said. "He's a talented horse and one who will stay very well. He has a great attitude and will go on most ground, but doesn't want extremes. I probably felt it was all happening a bit too soon for him last year and we were conscious that he is bred to get a mile and a half very well, so we decided to wait. My own personal favourite race for him would be the [Listed] Cocked Hat [S. at Goodwood]. It's been a good race for us in the past."

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AGENTS PIVOT ON EASTER PLANNING



James Harron | TDN AusNZ

By Bren O'Brien

When Inglis was left with no option but to change the format of its famous Australian Easter Yearling Sale, the goalposts shifted enormously for everyone, no more so than the bloodstock agents who had already begun their inspections.

The past few days have seen the country's leading agents criss-crossing the Hunter Valley and the rest of New South Wales, trying to ensure they see as many horses as possible, working on their shortlists and getting second and third looks underway.

While that in itself is not unusual a week out from a big sale, the fact that they won't then get the chance to see these horses again before they choose to bid on them does add an extra level of pressure to the process.

For leading agent James Harron, it has meant spending that bit more time looking over the drafts and honing that shortlist even more.

"When you are doing your on-farm inspections, you want to be very thorough in viewing the horses and taking your time. Where previously your on-farm inspections were just a bit of a gauge, now it's about being a bit more thorough as we look through the horses. There's also the ever-changing policies and we need to make sure we are sticking within those guidelines," he said.

Sheamus Mills hit the road as soon as it became apparent that the sale would be conducted in an online environment, and like Harron has been ensuring he is taking his time assessing the horses that match his criteria.

"It is dramatically different from previous years but once it was decided to hold it online, we got in the car and did a four-day tour of the farms. The farms have been very good and accommodating. I've felt more secure in terms of COVID-19 exposure than I would have staying at home," he said. "All I've really done different is keep out the horses that I've liked for longer. Instead of going back the second time, I've spent more time looking at them the first time. If they spark my interest and I'd normally put them on a second list, I just keep them there for longer than I normally would."

James and Bill Mitchell of Mitchell Bloodstock spent Monday on the road to and from Newhaven Park, south-west of Sydney, some 450km from the breeding heartland of the Hunter Valley, something they wouldn't have usually done ahead of the Easter Sale.

"We would always get out and see as many horses as we could in New South Wales. We are just coming back from Newhaven Park now which we wouldn't usually come down to see because they usually arrive at the complex early as a rule," James said. "With the situation as it is, we thought we'd pop down here. We'd always do the Southern Highlands and the Hunter Valley, and we will get out to Corumbene later in the week, because they always have good horses and it would do a disservice to our clients if we didn't get there."



Sheamus Mills | TDN AusNZ

The fundamental difference for agent Andrew Williams is the fact he is spending a lot more time in the car than he usually would this week.

"You are just driving, and that takes you off the phone for half a day, because they are scattered far and wide but you just have to do it," he said. "It's the exact same process as we would do at the sale, but instead of going from barn to barn, we are going from farm to farm."

In a select sale like Easter, the extra miles pay dividends when it comes to the sales ring, be it physical or virtual, in seven days' time. There is also the fact that the Easter Sale has been split with the possibility that horses may also be offered at a Second Round, a traditional sale held at the Riverside Stables in July.

Times Change, Quality Lasts

Williams said while there is a lot of uncertainty about the market, the one thing you can count on is the quality of the horses on offer at an Easter Sale.

"They're proper horses. They are the real deal and as good as we've seen all year and there are a lot of them too," he said.

Harron is very much familiar with the top end quality and says the vendors are doing everything in their power to ensure that that is apparent through their parades.

"The operators are very sophisticated. The farms are very well set-up and you are able to look at the horses in a really good

light. It's a really fantastic catalogue, full of quality. We're seeing physicals and the page matching up beautifully which is great."

Bloodstock agent Will Johnson took time between inspections to echo Harron and Williams's enthusiasm for the catalogue.

"There are plenty of physicals that match the pedigrees. Across the board, there are so many nice horses and it is going to be an interesting week ahead with how the process fares compared to previous years," he said.

Market Uncertainty a Significant Factor

Indeed, the number one question, given the world is facing its greatest period of financial uncertainty in 80 years, is how will the market react? The feedback agents are getting from their clients is understandably mixed.

"We are just trying to get a bit of a gauge on what the market is going to be like," James Mitchell said. "We are all guessing in a sense to how strong it will be. Will it come off half, will it come

off less than that? It is all up in the air at this stage," he said.

"Our clients are pretty keen to seize some opportunities in the market. Potentially, there could be a chance to perhaps bolster up a broodmare band or find some value in the market if it is available."

Harron's clients come from a wide range of business backgrounds and with the effects of the COVID-19 crisis being felt across the board, there is understandably some reticence about investing when so much is unclear.

"A lot of people are obviously trying to work through a very changing environment and determine where their businesses may be at and where they sit. I think a lot of people are doing that," he said. "Our job now that we've done a lot of homework on the horses, we will go and see some for the final time this week and it's a matter of talking with the owners and seeing what sort of position they are in going forward."

"Things are difficult all over the world, but I think the sale,

given the quality and given the physicals and the pedigrees, there will be some terrific buying opportunities."

Mills said the buyers' market is understandably guarded and has less orders than he would have ahead of an Easter Sale. Instead of buying around five yearlings, he may end up purchasing two or three.

"But we are still a few days away from the sale and there may be a few people who see there is a good opportunity here.

Maybe those people will think a bit longer term and get involved," he said.

Johnson also pointed to the fact that the weak Australian dollar might prompt greater investment internationally, which could add another dynamic to the sale. But almost all the agents agreed that there will be very little or no speccking of yearlings from local trainers, with so much uncertainty moving forward.

"Are people going to be buying shares in racehorses? That's the ultimate question that we must look to answer," Johnson said.

Online Format Another Unknown

The other uncertainty is how the online environment will differ from a traditional sales ring. While Inglis has offered Round 2, the traditional sale to be held in July, as an alternative market for horses in the catalogue, it will be the first time a sale of this quality will be conducted online in the first instance.



Andrew Williams | TDN AusNZ

All of the agents spoken to have some experience buying and selling through the Inglis Digital platform and all had faith in how it had worked previously.

Harron said his clients had inquired with him about how the sale would progress, and he and his team had been busy getting fully across what will be involved.

"There has been a lot of enquiry about how that would work and about how we understand that. We are getting further educated and briefed on that. It's important that we are as up to speed as possible," he said. "It exists and it has worked and functioned well, but it is going into new territory for people and obviously buyer confidence is number one at the moment."

For Williams, the frantic nature of a sales day condensed into an online environment is going to make for a whole new experience, but he feels it is just a matter of being organised and ensuring strong communication.

"It's an online auction and you have to treat it like any other sale. I'll be on the phone a lot more, and you'll need your ducks in a row and be a lot more organised, but we'll work through it," he said.

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