



E-NEWS AND E-NOTES FOR WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 11th, 2026

Tons the best...

Most of the time when someone draws in easy, gets the rail, & secures the leading driver they'll walk around with a slight smile and a raised eyebrow as they think "Tons the best" before they go to post. It's only natural. Unfortunately, we can never figure in what the horse has in mind when they get behind the gate either at Miami Valley or Northfield or any of the Fairs. Anywhere.

So many times they'll put 'em on the front end and the old fella responds by letting you know he's not happy to be there.

"Don't give them any air" because when you do the lines will go slack and it'll be like trying to push a wet noodle up against a kitchen wall.

And then there's always "The X Factor."

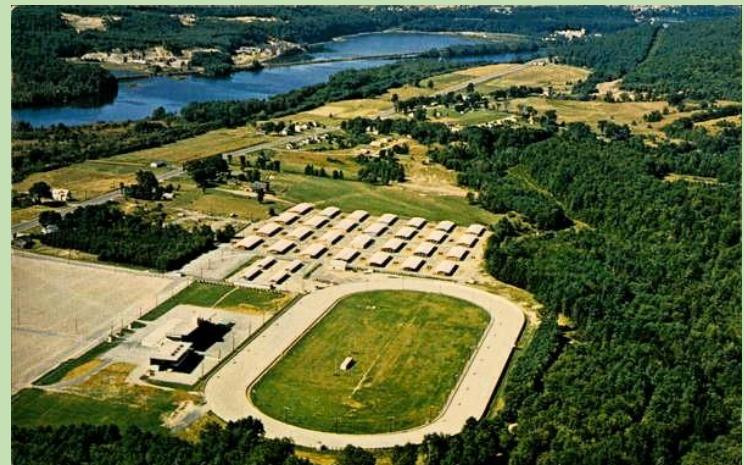
They'll go up in the air for the halibut.

It was many years ago when I first started out – in fact I hadn't even jogged a horse yet – the small 8-horse stable where I was the "assistant sanitation engineer" (I helped clean stalls & fetch water) got a new horse from who knows where. The only thing I'll say about him was that he was good-sized, was shiny black - although a bit ribby - and they liked him. He particularly didn't strike me as impressive because – even to my untrained eye – he had a big lug head and stood under himself. In fact when they rigged him for the first time and put a long hopple on him (that was correct for his size) I matter-of-factly stated that "they look like a baggy set of pants on him." I was quickly snapped at & I ran for some water.

Hinsdale, NH was like a large Fair track in those days as it was part of the circuit that went from Foxboro to Rockingham/Green Mountain to Hinsdale and back again. Originally opened in 1958 it was located on the other side of the Connecticut River just downstream from Brattleboro, VT which was the "big city" of 12,000 people. Saturday nights were a bit wild when the loggers came down from the hills on payday after a month's isolation.

But all the horsemen banded together too.

People really got along as families were raised, careers began, and people enjoyed themselves.



As the song goes:

*Don't it always seem to go
That you don't know what you've got
Till it's gone*

There were giants in those days: a young Teddy Wing, Mark Lancaster, Jimmy Winters, Bert Beckwith while Jim Morrill Sr, Bucky Day, and others were established. And they would never hesitate to give some needed advice:

"Don't give up your day job!" was heard quite often.

When it came time to train "Handsome Harry" they enlisted the expertise of one of the leading trainer/drivers – who shall remain nameless – to make sure they had him rigged right who agreed that he was okay but to "take the hopples up 4 inches."

I didn't say nuthin'...



He raced on the half-miler and everyone agreed that "he'll be better on a bigger track" as Foxboro (5/8ths) was about to reopen.

"And he'll get in cheap... he'll be tons the best."

A few weeks later, when the big night finally came, everyone was already planning their new purchases with their supposed winnings and we hadn't gone to post yet. I still wasn't convinced about the horse either. Just something seemed to be missing to him.

When **Harold Story**, a legendary horseman and a contemporary of **Eddie Cobb**, both "feared and respected by any knowledgeable bettor" (**Fair Chance Farms**' longtime stallion **Honest Story** was named for him) eyed him sideways with a scowl it removed most of my doubt. I placed only a \$10 wager to win... even though he was "tons the best."

The gate sprung, he left, got away 3rd and sat 3rd until heading for home when the horse sitting second swung wide and a hole the size of a barn door opened 100 feet from the wire. He was given a masterful steer but that wet noodle appeared.

Hootin' & hollerin' he finished 3rd.

With tears welling in his eyes the driver said "I saw my brand-new truck waiting for me at the finish line when that hole opened up but the sonovabitch would not go between the horses."

I still say no such thing as "tons the best."

And to this day: "*once bitten twice shy, my my.*"

February 22nd @ 6:30pm *Dan Patch Awards*



Night of Champions

Presented by Caesars Entertainment at
Rosen Shingle Creek Resort in Orlando FLA



Oh, what a night!

A very ancient trivia question:
Bacchus was the Roman god of celebrations
and festivities. He also ruled over:

- A) Wine
- B) Fertility
- C) The theater & the Arts

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