

In the Know in Ohio

E-NEWS AND E-NOTES FOR SATURDAY, MARCH 4th 2026

Shippin' money

Beginning in 1964 Pompano Park in South Florida was definitely "the Winter Capital of Racing" and even though I hadn't been there in over 40 years it was truly sad event when its doors were shuttered in 2022.

The whole complex has been replaced with luxury condos, golf courses and the world's largest Walmart.

The tracks may be gone but the memories are indelibly etched in our hearts.

There's great FB site named *Remembering the Training side of Pompano Park* but this yarn is about what we always referred to affectionately as "the Gyp side." Although the race side had its good stables they were dwarfed by the elite of the Sport such as Billy Haughton, Delvin Miller, George Sholty, Glen Garnsey, Stanley Dancer, and included Castleton Farms, the proprietor of Pompano Park on the training side.


Ohio names such Marc Furgeson, Dick Oldfield (of Sylvania, Ohio before he shuffled off to Adrian, Michigan) Dr. Frank Todd and numerous others. The raceside stables were as diverse as the people who worked there and included the oddest groupings you could imagine. They came from all points in Ohio, New York, Canada, New England, Indiana, Tennessee, Michigan and New Jersey.

But we all spoke "horse."

There was a trio that merged together: "Buffalo" was from NY, Frankie called Saratoga, NY home, and Mitch from someplace in the Buckeye State. He never said much but Frank and Buffalo made up for him... "Am I right or am I wrong, Frank?"

"You're right, Buffalo. You're right."

P O M P A N O P A R K P O M P A N O



P O M P A N O P A R K

Florida-Bred Or
Trained Winners
Are Everywhere

THESE ARE JUST A FEW OF LAST WEEK'S WINNERS

Horse	Owner	Track	Purse	Time
Most Happy Fella	Egyptian Acres Stable	Delaware, O.	\$100,110	p. 1:57.1h
Quick Pride	Miller & Kassab	Yonkers	49,495	2:04h
Sonata Hill	Sonata Hill Stable	Yonkers	25,747	2:05.3h
Paris Air	Garrett Claypool	Delaware, O.	23,033	2:02.2h
A.C.'s Orion	A. C. Petersen Stable	Yonkers	24,747	2:08.8h
Gallant Man	Gainesway Farm, Owen, & Simpson	Liberty Bell	19,155	2:05f
Smart Lobell	Leavitt & Helman	Delaware, O.	16,351	p. 2:01h
Keystone Selene	Max Hempf	The Meadows	17,925	2:07.2f
Tarport Helene	Messenger Stable	Delaware, O.	12,182	p. 2:03.4h
Keystone Aaron	Jorobe Stable	Yonkers	17,500	p. 2:00.3h
Soda Hill	John Jackman	Delaware, O.	11,951	2:05h

IT ALL HAPPENS AT POMPANO PARK ...

The Winter Capital Of Harness Racing

Pompano Park, winter capital of harness racing, will have a new and brighter face on the track surfaces for the coming season due to some new heavy equipment which has been purchased for the implement pool.

The Austin-Western grader, driven by GMC diesel power, has a ten foot blade and heavy scarifier and is substantially larger than the previous grader used for cutting and maintaining the tracks.

George Rich and his permanent track crew, Roosevelt Williams and Rufus Heberston, are charged with the basic maintenance of seventeen furlongs of trackage, to say nothing of the several miles of access roads.

It is a tribute to their skills that horsemen now preparing for Gator Downs on the half-mile training track, have unanimously given their opinion that the old four furlong loop is in the best condition that they have ever seen.

This staff will be active in the maintenance of the training track throughout the coming season.



From left to right are Roosevelt Williams, George Rich and Rufus Heberston, veteran members of the Pompano Park maintenance and track staff, whose combined services at Pompano Park now exceed a half century's duration.

P O M P A N O P A R K P O M P A N O

I was hooked up with stable from Saratoga whose name I won't mention but if you're topping of water glasses make sure to fill Leon's...

We didn't win too many races during the first few months even though his arrival had been heralded in the local newspaper. And neither did that big stable he was contract driver for from Canada by the name of Billie Jean Farms or something like that.

in any event the group of us were relegated to try and pick winners out of the program - good luck with that - and we all were scraping by I week to week.

But then... then Mama came down for a vacation with her entourage of four and made quite a score.

I remember it was a wet Saturday night and there was an older mare who he catch drove and evidently, she "loved the mud." Evidently everyone in their group knew that but nothing was said to us and we couldn't understand French anyway.

"She don't get beat," they grinned afterwards to me when she paid \$18.00 as they pounded on her. Mama and her crew split the \$128 cost of a trifecta key ticket, the one winning ticket and the payout (with two longshot Ohio horses) was a staggering \$12,000 plus,

That score started everyone on a downward spiral as they tried to replicate the payoff to no avail. People were wheeling just about any horse they thought had a chance and the resulting payouts were usually \$40 less than they invested. And "they" included a hoard of people from everywhere and which way and loose.

I didn't take part of the action, not because I was smart but primarily, I was too cheap.

That plan left a field of debris all over the race side. When the enthusiasm for the plan died out everyone concentrated on getting some shipping money with dribs and drabs.

I think Mitch was the smartest as he caught the earliest rig back to Ohio. No fanfare just hop aboard and see you whenever.

It was the week before we were ready to head back up North when Frank came walking slump-shouldered through the grandstand. His head was hung low as his Everly Brother's D.A. hairstyle (current in 1957 but this was 1975) drooped down to his Roman nose. I don't know the logistics of it but he slowly shuffled with a limp as his left foot would sort of slap the floor. He looked defeated.

"How you doing, Frank?" I asked sympathetically.

"Buffalo," he groaned, "finally got his two weeks back pay. Before I could see him to get some money for some food, he'd run up to the track kitchen and lost every cent in that damn pinocle game. I haven't eaten for two days."

"Oh jeez Frank," I said as a peeled of \$5 of the \$15 I had in my pocket. "Get yourself a couple of hot dogs and some chips."



Track kitchen on the Training side (thanks to FB)

"Thanks Tommy," he said appreciatively. "Thank you, thank you."

I watched as he ambled off to the concession stand and stood in line and studied the menu.

When I looked over again he was studying the tote board intently.

I glanced at the horses on the track and turned towards Frank once more.

He wasn't in line but I caught a white-shirted flash out of the corner of my eye. Frank was booking it up to the windows as that left foot of his was a flopping hard on the floor and winging in so bad he was gonna need a set of knee boots to make the final ten yards.

He made it just in time... sadly... as his 10-1 pick finished off the board. There went his hot dogs and his chips as he slowly walked sheepishly away.

I just smiled and shook my head.

To hell with the gaddamn hot dogs, he needed some shippin' money.

