Socorro Cabungcal

Socorro Canaya Cabungcal, 92, mother of Josephine Hodge, a Standardbred owner and longtime assistant farm manager at Klein Hans Racing Farms, died May 3, 2009, in the Philippines after a long illness.

Memorial contributions may be made in her name to the Standardbred Retirement Foundation.

Douglas Ferguson

Douglas Ferguson, 74, a prominent Standardbred breeder who raised many Maritime champions—including Gold Cup and Saucer winner Kilkerran Ingle and two-time Atlantic Canada Horse of the Year Kilkerran Fury—died May 23, 2009, at his farm in Bay Head, Nova Scotia.

Mr. Ferguson raised hundreds of horses at his Northern Nova Scotia farm, many of them sired by Oil Count, an unraced son of Oil Burner. They raced under the farm name Kilkerran.

His other Maritime champions include the Tarport Ervin filly Kilkerran Ella and the Newport Robbi colt Kilkerran Robbi, whose C$16,000 yearling price set a Maritime sales standard that lasted for some 12 years.

Mr. Ferguson is survived by his wife, Donna; two sons; five daughters; three brothers; and a sister.

Earl Gouchie

Earl Gouchie, 74, founder of Cumberland Publishing Ltd. in Amherst, Nova Scotia, died May 23, 2009, of an apparent heart attack at his hunting and fishing camp at Shulie, near Amherst, Nova Scotia.

Mr. Gouchie, who spent 54 years in the newspaper business before selling Cumberland Publishing to Transcontinental Media in 2004, co-founded Atlantic Post Calls, the Maritime harness racing journal, with editor Doug Harkness in 1979.

Nicholas Hans

Nicholas “Nick” Roger Hans, 20, of Westminster, Md., he was the son of Cheryl Martin Miller of Brattleboro, Vt., and Roger Hans Jr. of Westminster. He was the stepson of Kendra Hans and Richard T. Miller Jr.

Mr. Hans, who just turned 20 earlier in the month, was looking forward to joining the Marines within the year. He was a 2007 graduate of Westminster High School. He loved hunting, riding motorcycles and training horses. He especially loved being with his family and being on his grandparents’ farm.

Mr. Hans was a provisional driver and trainer for his grandfather at Hans Stables in Westminster. He had 15 qualifying starts in 2009 and in 2008 had a UDR of .268 with 34 starts and five wins.

In addition to his parents, Mr. Hans is survived by his sister, Brandy Davidson; brothers, James Harrod and Anthony Blumberg; grandparents, Walt and Kay Kunkle and Roger Sr. and Sandra Hans; nieces, Alyson and Kameran; and nephew, Ricky.

Memorial contributions may be made to the American Cancer Society, 1393 Progress Way, Suite 908, Eldersburg, MD 21784.

Frank Ives III

Frank T. Ives III, 65, who managed Fair Winds Farm during the 1980s, and later Windswept Farm in New York, died March 28, 2009.

Mr. Ives, who was living in Delaware at the time of his death, had been working outside of horse racing at H & R Ewell Trucking Company.

He was a decorated Marine in the Vietnam War.

Mr. Ives is survived by his wife, Karen; three daughters; a stepdaughter and stepson; and three grandchildren.

Frederick Leighton

Frederick “Fred” Leighton, 69, of Mechanic Falls, Maine, died April 28, 2009, at his home.

He was born in Lewiston, Maine, on Aug. 21, 1939, the son of Harry W. and Frances Johnson Leighton. He graduated from Edward Little High School and was an early pioneer in forming the Senior Little League field.
He was also coach and manager of the Auburn Suburban Little League.

Mr. Leighton was an ironworker and owned his own car sales business. He was a race car driver, an avid sports fan and he loved kids and people. In 1966, he received his first driver-trainer license and owned Standardbreds.

Mr. Leighton is survived by his companion, Jennifer Parsons; stepdaughter, Stephanie (Rene) Foster, and their children, Brandon and Christopher; four brothers, Heywood, Harry Sr., Randall and Lawrence; grandchildren; great-grandchildren; and several nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his daughter, Tracie Lee; son, Ray Thibodeau; and brother, Edward.

Leroy McKahan
Leroy McKahan, 58, a resident of Jackson, N.J., died May 9, 2009, in the paddock at Freehold Raceway.

The native of Washington, Pa., worked in the industry for more than 35 years as a groom at Freehold Raceway and with Nancy Patton Stables.

Mr. McKahan is survived by his two sisters, Judy, and Mary Lapointe; stepfather, Lincoln Wadsworth; and many others members of his extended family. He was preceded in death by his parents, Clarence and Betty; and his brother, Robert.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Standardbred Retirement Foundation, 108 F Old York Road, Hamilton, NJ 08620.

Robert Mitchell

Mr. Mitchell was born in Salisbury, to the late Willie and Mary (Pryor). He farmed most of his life and made many friends while running the family produce stand at his home.

He also had a special way with the horses he loved so much, and was an accomplished Standardbred trainer for many years. He was an active member of the USTA and the Cloverleaf Standardbred Owners Association.

Mr. Mitchell is survived by his wife of almost 66 years, Frances; four children, Nancy (Tom) Shields, Judy Taylor, Roger (Susan) and Brenda (John) Seaton; six grandchildren, Robert Lewis, Debbie Lewis, Phillip Taylor Jr., Gail Charnick, Erin Shockley and Ingrid Harris; and five great-grandchildren, Amanda Taylor, Matthew Taylor, Dylan Charnick, Kyle Charnick and Carter Shockley. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by two brothers, Edgar and George; and two sisters, Mae Parker Richardson and Pearl Morris.

Memorial contributions may be made to Coastal Hospice, P.O. Box 1733, Salisbury, MD 21802.

Charles Peter
Charles “Chuck” E. Peter, 63, of Hicksville, Ohio, died May 9, 2009, at HooF EatS • JU Ly 2009

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Fred Roberts

Fred “Derf” Roberts, 56, a former Standardbred driver and trainer, died May 6, 2009, after a battle with pancreatic cancer.

At the time of his death, Mr. Roberts was employed as a teller at Freehold Raceway and resided in Manalapan, N.J.

He is survived by his longtime companion, Gina Krantz.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Lustgarten Foundation.

Louis Rocco

Louis Rocco, 83, died at his home May 26, 2009, after a long illness.

Mr. Rocco was born Feb. 12, 1926, in Saratoga Springs, N.Y., the son of the late Frank Rocco and Genevieve Longo. He was a veteran of World War II, having served in the U.S. Coast Guard aboard the USS Billy Mitchell. He owned and operated the 41 Bar and Grill for many years.

He was an owner, driver and trainer at Saratoga Raceway for more than 60 years, and was honored on his 80th birthday with a race dedicated in his name for his devotion to the sport.
of harness racing.

Mr. Rocco is survived by his wife, Mary; daughters, Genevieve (Wayne) Wilson and Marylou (Marc) Bouthot; sister, Patricia Boyton; brother, Donald; granddaughter, Genevieve O’Keefe; great-grandson, Ian Patrick; and nephew, Patrick.

Mike Shapira


Mr. Shapira came to national prominence in 1984 when his 3-year-old colt pacer Colt Fortysix became the sport’s all-time fastest racehorse when he won for trainer-driver Chris Boring in 1:50.3 at Springfield. Later that year Colt Fortysix captured the Little Brown Jug in straight heats.

In 1987 Albert Albert, also trained and driven by Boring, became the fastest freshman of all time on a half-mile track, capturing the Kentucky Pacing Derby at Louisville Downs in 1:55.1. He finished his racing career with earnings of more than $1.2 million.

As operator of the suburban Detroit-based advertising agency W.B. Doner & Co., Mr. Shapira is credited with creating the advertising slogan “In harness racing, it all comes down to the Breeders Crown” for the Breeders Crown races.

Mr. Shapira is survived by his wife, Carole Gall; son, Jacob; daughters, Kim Bowman and Michele Lyons; and brother, Steven. He was preceded in death by his sister, Jacqueline Zimmerman.

Memorial contributions may be made to The Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit, 6735 Telegraph Rd., Bloomfield Hills, MI 48301.

George Whitcroft

George M. Whitcroft, 72, died at the Norfolk Hospital Nursing Home in Simcoe, Ont., on May 2, 2009.

Mr. Whitcroft trained horses and raced at tracks across Ontario before competing in the U.S. at Pompano Park, Buffalo, Batavia, Freestate and Rosecroft Raceways. His last years in the horse business he shipped horses based out of Florida.

He is survived by his wife of 54 years, Marion (nee Workman); children, David (Robin), Kathy (late Ivan) Wills, Mark (Cheryl), Allan (Patti), Debby (Steve) Egan, Dan, and Ricky (Pat); 18 grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.

Memorial contributions may be made to the charity of one’s choice.

Please send obituaries to In Memoriam, Hoof Beats, 750 Michigan Ave., Columbus, OH 43215. You can also send them by fax to 614.222.6791, or by e-mail to obituaries@ustrotting.com. Obituaries are subject to editing for clarity and space.