LAZARUS N
AND THE DOWN UNDER GANG

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It's an awesome thing when talent and gifting intersect with opportunity. Sometimes all a person needs is a chance to shine.

This is true of our equine athletes, up-and-coming trainers and drivers in the sport, and, well, anyone really.

In March, at the annual USTA Board of Directors meeting I had the pleasure of meeting our USTA Youth Delegates face to face. We had a very productive (and fun) subcommittee meeting where we discussed the program, its mission and its future. I came away from that meeting very impressed—as were many others in attendance.

Since then, we have been working with the delegates to find new projects and opportunities for them to shine. In March, Katie Eick—a delegate from District 12—wrote an excellent article for Hoof Beats. And in this issue we have not one, not two, but three pieces written by delegates.

I'm proud of all of them and look forward to many future contributions.

I hope you enjoy this issue of Youth Beats and I hope you have a fantastic summer.
Shartin N, superstar and winner of the 2018 Dan Patch Award for older pacing mares, accomplished a lot last year. She won 19 of 25 starts and became the first pacing mare ever to earn $1 million in a single season. She’s also representative of a recent trend in North American harness racing: the importing of New Zealand-bred horses.

The “Wonder from Down Under” Lazarus N came to the U.S. mid-2018, won the Dan Patch Stakes and earned more than $300,000 in just three months.

Bit Of A Legend N has been dominant at Yonkers Raceway since arriving stateside in 2016, finishing first in each leg of the Levy Memorial that year and having earned more than $500,000 each year since.

Through the first quarter of 2019, 7-year-old Don Domingo N was among the leaders in North American earnings with $90,050.

These are just a few standouts from the growing pack of New Zealand Standardbreds who have found recent success in the U.S.

The horses’ connections attribute the trend to a decrease in the number of U.S.-bred horses available for purchase, as well as a sense that New Zealand-bred horses have a chance to stay competitive longer than those bred stateside.

“New Zealand horses tend to last longer because they’re not pushed,” said Bit Of A Legend N’s trainer Peter Tritton. “Some of them are not raced until they’re 4 years old and they give them time and then they last longer.”

An Australian native who came to the U.S. in 2002, Tritton has been training Down Under horses...
for decades and currently has an all-New Zealander stable.

“I still think they’re some of the best horses in the world in New Zealand,” he said.

Shartin N’s trainer Jim King Jr. agreed that horses not being pushed as hard when they’re young is a big part of New Zealand horses’ appeal. “That’s probably the biggest difference in the horses; they’re allowed to grow up,” he said.

Since New Zealand races vary in length as compared to the North American standard of one mile, the country’s horses have a reputation for longevity. “The American sires started going over there and kind of injected some more of our speed-based racehorses into their long-distance tough animals,” said Jordan Stratton, the regular pilot for Tritton’s New Zealanders.

While that breeding combination makes for a competitive racehorse, the process of getting a horse from the other side of the globe to race successfully in the U.S. is rife with challenges, beginning with the trip itself.

First there is the shipping cost, which ranges from $18,000 to $26,000, according to several owners and trainers.

Then, there is the journey. Horses spend a full two days on planes and then are quarantined for a few more days upon arrival. Many New Zealand horses might have previously shipped to Australia, helping them to handle the long journey. Some less fortunate horses might lose weight and fall ill, possibly delaying their appearance on a U.S. track by months.

In even the best circumstances, New Zealand horses still have a lot of adapting to do. “It’s an interesting concept, the way a trainer has to approach training these horses,” said Shartin N co-owner Richard Poillucci. “They’re totally different in the way that they’re jogged and they spend a lot of time outdoors, which is important not to keep them in a racetrack because they’re so used to being outside. And the long-distance racing, the biggest problem with a New Zealand horse when they get to America is them finding the wire because they’re so used to sometimes going around two times. You have to kind of teach them and school them on that.”

Additionally, the horses are acclimating to a sudden change of season and a shakeup of everything they know. “I think their first qualifiers and first couple starts are really important because they’ve shipped all the way across the world; a new environment, new surroundings, new air pollution, everything’s new to them,” Stratton said. “So the first couple experiences are really important.”

Tritton agreed that pushing them too hard too early could be disastrous and added that such an experience undermines the entire point of importing horses: to make money over time. “You can only make your money back on longevity,” he said. “You’ve got to be able to race them for a couple of years.”

Figuring out which horses will be able to withstand such challenges and achieve long-term success is a full-time job, said Poillucci. He estimated spending 30-40 hours each week on horse research and consultation with his Down Under contacts. “I sort of run it like a baseball team,” he said. “You start your 2019 lineup and those are the ones that you’ve picked to be on your team. Those are the ones that you race, and during the course of the year I try to find the younger horses. Once the stake season starts, I don’t buy horses that I’m targeting for stakes. I buy younger horses that I think can get ready for stakes the following year.”
Harness racing is comprised of a very connected group of horsemen that, for the most part, all know each other. Horsemen generally have very close relationships with one another and even have the ability to pick out each other’s horses by name, face, or equipment.

Becoming a part of this tightly knit group typically happens one of two ways; either a horseman is born into the community or brought into it by a close friend or family member.

One example of a horseman who was born and raised on harness racing is Hall of Fame driver Wally Hennessey, and an example of someone who was brought into the fold at a young age is his protégé John Hallett.

Hennessey, a third-generation horseman, is from Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island.

“I was raised with horses,” he said. “Learning this business and this sport from my father was the greatest experience I could have.”

Hennessey started out by learning from the ground up, never advancing quickly. First, cleaning stalls, grooming horses, and cleaning buckets, and gradually adding responsibilities until he was ready to start jogging and training.

Hennessey started driving at 18, the previous minimum required age to do so.

“That was the day I was anxiously awaiting because it’s something I always wanted to do, watching my father,” he said. “Although, I wasn’t as good as I thought I was.”

Hennessey remained focused and stuck with it, earning his first lifetime win with Cambridge Frisco in his last race before turning 19.

“It was surreal, I went to the front and kept going and got to the finish line first,” he said. “It was a very happy moment.”

John Hallett was born and raised in Saint John, New Brunswick. Around the age of 6, he found his way to Exhibition Park Raceway, by way of selling apples for Cub Scouts. His first job was working for Ted and Tom Scovil, cleaning stalls and equipment every day after school.

At 8, Hallett met Hennessey.

“John grew up near the Exhibition Park Raceway, where I moved when I was 20,” Hennessey said. “He was a young boy that showed up at the barn one day and he was hooked. I gave him the same education my father gave me – from the ground up.”

Hallett began driving at the age of 16, with Hennessey as his coach, and got his first win with J Ds Casey. He started his own stable in 1991, along with his wife, Michelle, and got his first training win with PJ’s Bobby Sox.

More than 20 years later, Hennessey is still driving and Hallett is still training. Both men spend their winters in Florida and travel north to New York for the summers. They share a passion and dedication to their stables and their horses.

“We both have the same feelings for the horses; we love our animals and what we do,” said Hennessey. “I have driven many horses for John and nothing makes me feel better than when I have success with his stable.”

“Growing up under one of the best ever, there is
a lot to be learned,” Hallett said. “He may tell you I didn’t always listen, but he was always heard. Wherever this path takes me in the future, Wally is and always will be my best friend and like a second father. Harness racing has taken me through an exciting journey and I wouldn’t change anything.”

For those just starting out in harness racing, Hennessey said you have to have a tremendous work ethic, be able to handle the ups and downs, and treat people with respect.

Like all sports, there are good days and bad days in harness racing; but the most important things are the relationships you build and the work you put in.

“As was instilled in me by Wally; work hard, integrity is paramount, and keep things clean and tidy,” Hallett said.

Growing up under one of the best ever, there is a lot to be learned. He may tell you I didn’t always listen, but he was always heard. Wherever this path takes me in the future, Wally is and always will be my best friend and like a second father.

—JOHN HALLETT

WALLY WORLD:
Hall of Fame driver Wally Hennessey is a mentor and hero to many, including New Brunswick trainer John Hallett. He has driven numerous champions, but his best-known is the iconic Moni Maker (top photo).
BIT OF A
Standardbred Spotlight

Photos and art from kids in harness racing

Illustration by Kathy Yoder

Scarlett Miller Blanchard, OK

Nice Work!
Hey Kids!

Want to see your picture in Standardbred Spotlight? Submit your photos or drawings to Youth Beats editor Jason Turner: 6130 S. Sunbury Rd., Westerville, OH 43081-9309.
Summer means fun and exploring new things—two things you will almost certainly experience at one of the HHYF’s many summer camps. But what do kids actually “do” there?

First, you get to meet and spend time with our elite staff: HHYF Director Ellen Taylor, and experienced veterans like (Miss) Katie Eick, (Miss) Hannah Hasson and many other past participants, volunteers and industry leaders who always stop by.

You’ll also get to experience and learn from our equine crew: Cherokee, Chip, Homer, Missy, Roy and Wawa. Our camps would not be nearly as hands-on (or fun) without these wonderful horses.

With the help of our staff and a helping hoof from our equine assistants, participants will learn to groom, harness, drive, jog and bathe horses. They also learn about harness racing equipment, famous drivers and horses, the basics of feeding, and how to properly clean a stall. And there are games and quizzes to help you remember everything we go over at camp.

But don’t take our word for it! Here are a few things past campers had to say about the program.

“I loved this camp!”
“This was the best camp ever!”
“I want to come back again next year.”

If you love animals—especially horses—you should plan to attend a HHYF summer camp in your area. After all, summer is about doing new things and enjoying the outdoors, and the only thing better than that is doing it with sunshine and Standardbreds.

Sunshine and Standardbreds
HHYF summer camps offer fun and educational activities

PHOTOS COURTESY OF HHYF
**HHYF 2019 SCHEDULE**

**June 1** – Canfield, OH (one-day program)

**June 3** – Bucyrus, OH (one-day program)

**June 5** – Napoleon, OH (one-day program)

**June 6** – Paulding, OH (one-day program)

**June 7** – Van Wert, OH (one-day program)

**June 9** – Greenville, OH (one-day program)

**June 11** – Marysville, OH (one-day program)

**June 15-17** – Harrington Raceway, DE (three-day program)

**July 8** – Shenandoah Downs, VA (one-day program)

**July 10** – Shenandoah Downs, VA (one-day program)

**July 15** – Gaitway Farm, NJ (one-day program)

**July 17** – Gaitway Farm, NJ (one-day program)

**July 19** – Gaitway Farm, NJ (one-day program)

**July 25** – Goshen Historic Track, NY (one-day program)

**July 27-31** – Goshen Historic Track, NY (Leadership program)

**Aug. 2-3** – Meadowlands Racetrack, NJ (Invitation only. Must attend Leadership camp to be considered)

**Aug. 5-7** – The Downs at Mohegan Sun Pocono, PA (three-day program)

**Aug. 8** – The Downs at Mohegan Sun Pocono, PA (one-day program)

**Aug. 17** – Diamond Creek Farm, PA (one-day program)

**ONE-DAY PROGRAMS (LEVEL 1)**
- 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. with lunch provided
- Ages 10-17
- Cost $100 (unless subsidized by a horsemen’s group)
- Groups of eight or more, $50 each

**THREE-DAY PROGRAMS (LEVEL 2)**
- Events are overnight events – all meals and lodging provided
- Ages 12-17
- Cost $250 (unless subsidized by a horsemen’s group)

**LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS (LEVEL 3)**
- Events are overnight events – all meals and lodging provided
- Ages 12-17
- Cost $450

Preregistration is required for all events.

Contact: ellen@hhyf.org / 317.908.0029

www.HHYF.org

Colin’s Corner

USTA Youth Delegate Colin Boyle is a huge harness racing fan and loves to talk about the sport. In this column, he will share some of his favorite observations and respond to reader-submitted questions.

In harness racing, a world record is an impressive accomplishment.

The list of champions and world-record holders in the sport is stacked with famous horses: names like Moni Maker, Foiled Again (right), Gallo Blue Chip, Somebeachsomewhere and Wiggle It Jiggleit. It’s impossible to know who is the greatest horse of all time, but it sure is fun to talk about!

What do you think? Do you have a favorite horse of all time? I’m also looking forward to a great year of racing in 2019. Here are some of my top picks for this season: *Melady’s Monet*, *All Champy*, *Smalltownbrowndown*, *All About Cowboys*, *Weslyn Dancer*. Who will be the top money earner? Will the Horse of the Year come from this group? Who would you add?
What was the most meaningful win in your career?
Winning the (PA Sire Stakes) fair final (in 2015) with Royaltyhasarrived

When have you felt the most challenged in the sport?
Beginning my driving career at The Meadows

Are there any drivers/trainers you look up to?
(Driver) Aaron Merriman, and (trainers) Steve Schoeffel, Mark Goldberg, Tyler Stillings, Roger Hammer

When traveling to different tracks how do you remain calm and focused?
Checking my entries and doubles and studying all of my races

If you had the chance to drive in any race which would you choose?
I’d have to say the Little Brown Jug, because I like racing on a half-mile track and the crowd is enormous.

Who is the greatest horse of all time in your opinion?
Vivid Photo

How did driving at fairs when you were younger shape you into the driver you are today?
It taught me how to drive aggressive but with patience and really helped me learn how to get a horse off the gate.

What does the future look like for you?
I’d like to continue driving, but I’m open to every opportunity given to me.

Because you come from a harness racing family, what does it mean for you to be able to carry on the tradition?
Being a third-generation horseman, it’s one of the best feelings in the world.

If you could go back and give yourself advice when you were younger what would you say?
Pay attention and listen when people are trying to help you out. Don’t be cocky.

If you could race at any track besides The Meadows where would you go?
The Downs at Mohegan Sun Pocono because they all get good speed up there and the horses seem to get over the track well.
How well do you know your emojis? Use these clues to find the names of some of harness racing’s biggest stars of the past and present.

*Answers below*

This mare has 30 wins for drivers like Montrell Teague and Corey Callahan

2010 Horse and Pacer of the Year and sire of Blazin Britches and Springsteen

The Write Stuff

Ask a friend to give you a word for each blank space without letting him or her see the page, then read the completed story out loud for some hilarious results!

No matter how _______ the odds are, you can never count out at ________ ________.

For starters, you never know what might happen during a _________. The leader could get a _______ ________, the favorite could get ________ on the inside, or maybe a _______ ________ might run onto the ________ and surprise everyone. One thing a longshot absolutely has to have, however, is _________. Perseverance can take you from the back of the ________ to the front of the ________ in the ________ of a _________.

It’s not always easy, but when things get _________, you have to keep your ________ up and you might just find yourself in the winner’s _________.

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1. Apple Bottom Jeans
2. Rock N Roll Heaven
Hey kids!

Would you like a free subscription to the No. 1 magazine for and about kids in harness racing?

Getting connected to Youth Beats is easy! Just fill out the subscription form below, send it back to us, and every quarter we’ll send you a copy of the magazine, filled with games, photos, stories, posters and your favorite harness racing stars.

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