



# Harness Racing

Happy Holidays **PREVIEW**

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2014

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## STRETCH CALL



BY DAVE BRIGGS

### Norm Clements On Second Chances And The Spirit Of Giving

When Norm Clements popped into Woodbine Racetrack a few days ago to watch one of his horses race, the last thing the co-owner of the indomitable Cam Fella expected was to get a hug from driver Chris Christoforou.

"That's not his nature. He's an introvert," Clements said of Christoforou. "I was quite taken back by it. Guys like me will hug anybody, but for him to put his arms around me, something has hit him. He's quiet. He's got a different demeanor. He's got a calmness in his life that he never had. I'm not sure what it is other than he's done well. He's spending time with his family. It was great. In fact, it made my night. I stayed at the races for about 10 minutes. I watched the first race and I went home, but I was kind of

**"The ultimate act of kindness is when you do something for somebody when you know you'll never get anything back... You get it anyways because your heart feels good."**

— Norm Clements

Clements remembers that no one would give the three-time Canadian Driver of the Year a horse. No one, that is, except Clements.

"I remember maybe a couple of times early on when nobody was giving him drives and we gave him our drives, and I thought, 'Jeepers, he's not driving very well.'" Clements said, laughing. "Now he's king of the castle."

Clements, 75, was willing to help the driver because helping those in need is his particular gift. Also, long ago, Clements battled his own demons. "I should have been dead long ago. I was a drunk," he said. "Only for the grace of God I've had another opportunity."

This Christmas Eve, as he has for nearly 20 years running, Clements will stay up long into the night cooking Christmas

happy on the way home." The hug was a simple, but powerful, thank you for Clements' role in helping Christoforou rebound from an addiction to painkillers many years ago to be a finalist for Canada's 2014 Driver of the Year award. When Christoforou first returned to the sulky after time off for a suspension and treatment,

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## WHAT'S INSIDE . . .

**Maven, Gingras racing in Paris Sunday—pg. 3**

**Brick Bazooka a new face at Big M—pg. 4**

**Flashback 1991: Shady Daisy—pg. 4**

**January events calendar—pg. 7**

meals for people in his community of Stouffville, Ont. The goal is to go beyond delivering as many as 400 meals to shut-ins this Christmas.

"Rather than you giving their name or contacting us to have somebody deliver a meal to them, take those shut-ins and either invite them to your own house, or go and have dinner with them. That's the real Christmas. Now you've sacrificed something," Clements said.

The same day, 4,300 miles away in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, about 2,500 of the poorest people will have a meal and a gift delivered to them right on the streets thanks in part to Clements, and the many other volunteers that work with his niece Corina's mission in the city.

*Continues on page 2 >>>*

In November, Clements, the former owner of the National Sports chain of megastores in Canada, made his annual trip to the impoverished South American country to help prepare food for the meals. While he was there, he was struck by the story of a woman who had walked four hours to get to the mission to ask him for help.

"She asked me if I would pay for some rice and some oil for her children. I just crumbled. I don't know why it hit me so hard... This just hit me right in the heart. Here's a lady that walked four hours and asked me if I would give her a little tiny bit of money to buy rice and oil. I just cooked all week so I had a lot of other stuff in the kitchen, so, of course, I made a big bag and I gave it to her," Clements said. "It's perspective."

The coming year will mark the 25th anniversary of the Jennifer Ashleigh Children's Charity. Clements founded the group after his son, trainer/driver Daniel Clements, lost two infant daughters to a hereditary disease called Spinal Muscular Atrophy.

Clements said giving back is simpler than starting groups and supporting causes. He said he hopes this Christmas everyone in the industry and beyond will slow down and, "just do that one good deed for somebody... There are two guarantees: one is you'll feel better, and probably whoever you did that good deed for will feel good, too."

"The ultimate act of kindness is when you do something for somebody when you know you'll never get anything back... You get it anyways because your heart feels good."

Clements prefers to deflect credit and quietly go about his giving. He won't say it, but there's one thing he shared in abundance with the late, great Cam Fella.

"His heart was the answer," he said.



Dave Briggs was the editor of *The Canadian Sportsman* for 18 years and is an award-winning journalist. His column appears in *HarnessRacing Weekend Preview* in part through the advertising support of Hanover Shoe Farms and Woodbine Entertainment Group. Any opinions expressed in this column are his own and not necessarily those of the Horseman Publishing Company and its publications or its advertisers.



## THIS WEEK'S FEATURED RACES

### Friday, Dec. 26

All times listed are local.

1:20p Wdb2 **Niagara** 3FP final

[Trackmaster PPs](#)

3:00p Wdb7 **Valedictory** 3CP final

[Trackmaster PPs](#)

[Click here to download all Friday PPs](#)

### Saturday, Dec. 27

9:02p M6 **A2/A1/FFA** Pace

[Trackmaster PPs](#)

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### HarnessRacing Weekend Preview

**Kathy Parker**

[kparker@harnessracing.com](mailto:kparker@harnessracing.com)

Editor/ General Manager

**Lynne Myers**

[lm Myers@harnessracing.com](mailto:lm Myers@harnessracing.com)

Advertising Manager

**Gordon Waterstone**

[gwaterstone@harnessracing.com](mailto:gwaterstone@harnessracing.com)

Associate Editor

**Jay Hochstetler**

[jayhoch4@gmail.com](mailto:jayhoch4@gmail.com)

Intern

**Suzanne Starbuck**

[sstarbuck@harnessracing.com](mailto:sstarbuck@harnessracing.com)

Production Manager

**Heather Kemper**

[hkemper@harnessracing.com](mailto:hkemper@harnessracing.com)

Assistant Production Manager

**Suzy Hall**

[shall@harnessracing.com](mailto:shall@harnessracing.com)

Production & Design

**Stephanie Condron-Hall**

[scondronhall@harnessracing.com](mailto:scondronhall@harnessracing.com)

Editorial Art Director

**Vanessa Flannery**

[vflannery@harnessracing.com](mailto:vflannery@harnessracing.com)

Accounting & Circulation

For mail sent via U.S. Postal Service, either P.O. Box 8480, Lexington, KY 40533, or 1910 Harrodsburg Rd., Suite 200, Lexington, KY 40503. (859) 276-4026

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## Maven, Gingras To Compete Sunday In Paris

The final field and post positions won't be set until later this week, but we know the preliminary list of starters for the Prix de Bourgogne, to be raced Sunday, Dec. 28, at the Vincennes track in Paris, France. (The final field will be posted on harnessracing.com when available.)

The American trotting mare Maven, trained by Jimmy Takter, is scheduled to compete and be driven by her regular pilot, Yannick Gingras.

Maven's main goal, of course, is the 1 million euro Prix d'Amerique, scheduled for Sunday, Jan. 25. The last American representative to win the race was the Takter-trained Moni Maker back in 1999. Maven is co-owned by Canadians Herb Liverman and John Fielding along with Ohio's Joyce Ann McClelland. The three also share ownership of

Pinkman, recently voted the Dan Patch 2-Year-Old Colt & Gelding Trotter of the Year.

Maven arrived in Paris on Dec. 20 and was settled in at Harus du Plessis, the farm of French trainer Jacky Bethouart. Takter and Gingras plan to fly to Paris on Friday, Dec. 26.

Takter plans to keep Maven on a schedule

similar to the one he used for Moni Maker. Gingras, however, will be driving in his first race at Vincennes on Sunday.

"I've been watching tapes of races and will watch more," said Gingras on Monday, Dec. 22, while spending the day at home with his family. "I will get there the day before the race and watch. Watching on video is one thing, but being there live on Saturday and watching those races, it will help me trying to figure things out. I'm going out there open minded. I don't think there is much pressure this start; it's just about having her race well.

"From what I've seen on the videos and what I experienced in Sweden, it's harness racing in North America, then Sweden in the middle, and France is the opposite. France is not a whole lot of speed, but a lot of endurance. And it's a lot of positional strategy; you have to get position in the big, bulky fields. Plus, the Vincennes track is different, it's uphill and downhill."

The purse for the Prix de Bourgogne is 120,000 euros, and the race will be started with a mobile gate. The distance of the race is 2,100 meters, or about 1 5/16ths miles. It will have a field of 18, with nine on the gate and nine trailers. The horses with the highest money-winnings start in the front line, and that group will include Maven.

Gerard Formi Photo



Maven, with Tobias J. Gustafsson, at Harus du Plessis outside of Paris.



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In addition to Maven, the preliminary starting list includes 2014 Elitlopp winner Timoko, who won that race over a field that included Maven and Gingras; two-time Prix d'Amerique champion Ready Cash, who has returned to the track after a brief retirement that included stud duty; and Solvato, a 5-year-old full brother to Trotter of the Year Shake It Cerry.

After Sunday's Prix de Bourgogne, Maven's next start is scheduled to be the Prix de Belgique on Sunday, Jan. 11, which Moni Maker also used as a prep for the Prix d'Amerique. Solvato, who worked out over the Vincennes oval on Sunday, Dec. 21, is scheduled to also compete in the Prix Tenor de Beaune on Jan. 10, which automatically qualifies the winner for the Prix d'Amerique.

Below is the preliminary field:

- |                         |                         |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Ready Cash</b>       | <b>Kadett C.D.</b>      |
| <b>Timoko</b>           | <b>Talicia Bella</b>    |
| <b>Roxane Griff</b>     | <b>Soleil Du Fosse</b>  |
| <b>Tiego D'etang</b>    | <b>Amour D'occagnes</b> |
| <b>Maven</b>            | <b>Solvato</b>          |
| <b>Up And Quick</b>     | <b>Viking De Val</b>    |
| <b>Texas Charm</b>      | <b>Elles W. Phedo</b>   |
| <b>Un Mec D'heripre</b> | <b>Oibambam Effe</b>    |
| <b>Severino</b>         | <b>Viscaria</b>         |
| <b>Uhlan Du Val</b>     | <b>Ribelinos</b>        |
| <b>Mosaïque Face</b>    | <b>Ursa Major</b>       |

## Brick Bazooka Among New Faces At Meadowlands

Following the Christmas holiday on Thursday, the first track back in action is Woodbine, which holds its traditional Boxing Day program on Dec. 26 with a 1 p.m. post time. The finals of the Niagara and Valedictory series are part of the card.

On Friday night, the Meadowlands has 13 races with full 10-horse fields except for Race 5, which has a field of 12. Meadowlands regular Yannick Gingras will not be in attendance since he is flying to Paris to drive Maven on Sunday. In addition, Ron Pierce has taken an extended holiday to travel to the West Coast to visit friends and family.

Pierce, who hasn't driven since Dec. 7, has been staying at the Oregon home of former horseman Roy Keeton and his wife, Tina.

"They were in the horse business for many years and we are still friends," Pierce said by cell phone Monday morning from Oregon. "I've been out here with them having a good time. They have a beautiful ranch out here."

Pierce, whose 2014 money-winnings topped the \$10-million mark for the 10th time in 11 years, said he plans on returning to his New Jersey home Dec. 29. Prior to that, he has one more stop to make while on the West Coast.

"I'm going to my mom's for Christmas today (Dec. 22), and I still have some shopping to do on the way. She lives in Great Falls, Mont., and it will take me about two days to get there," Pierce said.

With other tracks closed, horses new to the Meadowlands have been filling the track's entry box. One newcomer is Brick Bazooka. The 3-year-old gelding was bred in Michigan and didn't make his first start until Oct. 25 of this year at Balmoral Pak, which he won by seven lengths in 1:53.1.

Since joining the stable of brothers Larry and Ray Remmen earlier this month, Brick Bazooka has a win and a second. He'll be starting from post 5 in Race 12 on Saturday night at the Meadowlands for the ownership team of Howard Taylor and Brad Grant, who are also partners on the Southwind Roulette p,2, 1:51.4f (\$300,595).

"We've had horses before for Jim Springer of Wisconsin, and he sent this horse to us. Mr. Springer does not race 2 year olds, and this horse was trained down on a one-third mile track before he was sent to Chicago," said Ray Remmen of Brick Bazooka's life prior to the Meadowlands.

"After we got him to train, Howard Taylor and Brad Grant bought him," said Ray. "I think he has an upside. He is very, very green, and he is going to be in some of the winter series at the Meadowlands."

While Brick Bazooka's pedigree won't jump off a program page—he's by Another Mile out of the Cam's Card Shark mare Hold Your Diamonds—Ray did his homework and was pleasantly surprised to find some very good performers in the bloodlines. Brick Bazooka's dam is a half sister to Rair Earth p, 1:48.2 (\$1.4 million) and his third dam is Cheri Apex, a tough invitational mare in Michigan in the early 1980s.—*By Kathy Parker*



## Flashback 1991: Shady Daisy Goes For History

Twenty-three years ago, on Saturday, Dec. 21, 1991, the illustrious 3-year-old filly pacer Shady Daisy attempted a feat accomplished last by the famed Mack Lobell: achieve world records on all three track sizes (half, five-eighths and mile) in the same year. After earning the half-mile and mile records earlier in the year, Shady Daisy made a stop at Pompano Park for the \$12,000 Invitational Pace, taking on older foes in her quest for history.

Shady Daisy's stop in South Florida was to best the world record of 1:52.2 set just a few weeks earlier at Pompano Park by Miss Easy in the Breeders Crown final. Despite making a breathtaking move past the five-eighths pole and sweeping to a four-length win, a youthful driver Ron Pierce and Shady Daisy were unable to break the record, settling for a 1:53.3 victory and the \$6,000 winner's check for owners Ron Jackson and Tammy Bauslaugh.

Trainer Lou Bauslaugh had trained Shady Daisy in 1:55.1 at Spring Garden Ranch the Monday before the race to make sure she was ready to go after a three-week layoff. Despite the encouraging training mile, Bauslaugh said he was skeptical that "lightning could strike three times."

Slow early fractions (:28.2, :57.4), doomed Shady Daisy's historic attempt. But sporting her well-known shadow roll, her three-wide move just past the half left the crowd and horsemen awestruck. The daughter of Falcon Seelster rolled home with a final quarter of :27.3, but it wasn't enough to take down Miss Easy's mark.

Shady Daisy took her lifetime mark of 1:51 earlier that year at The Red Mile, a time she equaled the following year at the Meadowlands. Taking on the boys frequently in her career from ages four to seven, Shady Daisy defeated legends Cambest, Staying Together, Silver Almahurst and Shore Patrol. She won the 1992 Breeders Crown for older pacing mares over Delinquent Account, which propelled her to the first of three consecutive divisional honors. She finished her career with 53 wins in 142 starts and earnings of \$1,807,755, at the time the most ever for a pacing mare.—*By Jay Hochstetler.*



## Russell Williams Voted Bergstein/Proximity Award Winner

Russell Williams, who is an important part of many of harness racing's major entities—Hanover Shoe Farms Inc., Standardbred Horse Sales Company, U.S. Trotting Association, Harness Racing Museum—and also serves as “Santa Claus” to horses after their racing/breeding careers are completed—has been named the Stan Bergstein Proximity Award winner by the U.S. Harness Writers Association (USHWA). It is the highest award given by USHWA that is voted on solely by its membership of 220.

Williams is the grandson of Hall of Famer Lawrence Shepard, founder of Hanover Shoe Farms. But while always enjoying the horses, Williams carved his own path in life as a lawyer, serving as assistant attorney general for the Commonwealth of Virginia and teaching law at the University of Richmond. Later, he returned to Hanover as a senior official, and to this day his contributions to Hanover and the sport are numerous and progressive.

He serves the dual roles in the “Hanover family” as vice president of Hanover Shoe Farms and as chairman and vice president of the Standardbred Horse Sales Company.

Williams is also vice chairman of the U.S. Trotting Association. He is a trustee of the Harness Racing Museum and the former chairman of the American Horse Council, a multi-breed organization.

Williams also campaigns a modest stable of horses and owns several broodmares, including Nicole Isabelle, a second-generation Williams mare whose first foal is Nuncio, winner of this year's Yonkers Trot and Kentucky Futurity en route to earnings of \$1.45 million in 2014.

But the main equine beneficiaries of Williams' “ownership” are those horses whose careers as racehorses are finished, and elder broodmares retired from the breeding

ranks. The latter group of Hanover mares are boarded at Hanover for life; the racehorses are literally given “the gift of life” by “Santa Claus” Williams, as he purchases them and helps find them suitable homes.

Williams will be recognized at USHWA's Dan Patch Awards dinner on Sunday, Feb. 22, 2015, in Orlando, Fla. (USHWA)

## Takter Trainer Of Year, Gingras Driver Of Year

For the fourth time in his Hall of Fame career, Jimmy Takter is the Trainer of the Year as voted upon by the members of the U.S. Harness Writers Association (USHWA). Also voted a Dan Patch Award, as Driver of the Year, was Yannick Gingras, who led all drivers in purses this season with more than \$17 million. Gingras was the only driver nominated for Driver of the Year by USHWA's chapters.

Takter received 84 of 140 votes for Trainer of the Year, finishing ahead of Ron Burke, who got 56 votes.

Despite starting horses only 729 times through Dec. 21, Takter's stable earned a career-best \$13.35 million, for an average of more than \$18,300 per start.

Takter, 54, won this year's Hambletonian with Trixton, a horse he also drove to the victory, and the Hambletonian Oaks with Lifetime Pursuit. Takter became only the second trainer to win both races in the same year, joining Jan Johnson from 1988.

The Hambletonian was the first jewel in the Trotting Triple Crown and Takter-trained Nuncio swept the remaining two legs, the Kentucky Futurity and Yonkers Trot.

In addition, Takter won three Breeders Crown trophies, with 2-year-old male trotter Pinkman, 3-year-old male trotter Father Patrick, and 3-year-old female trotter Shake It Cerry.

Shake It Cerry was named the Dan Patch Award Trotter of the Year while Pinkman and Father Patrick received divisional honors.

Takter dominated the 3-year-old trotting ranks as he had the top three money-earning colts (Father Patrick, \$1.69 million, Nuncio, \$1.45 million and Trixton, \$893,370) and the top two money-earning fillies (Shake It Cerry, \$1.23 million and Lifetime Pursuit, \$795,216).

Father Patrick and Nuncio made Takter the first trainer in history to have two million-dollar trotters in the same division in the same year.

Among Takter's top pacers were 3-year-old male stakes-winners Lyonssomewhere, who captured the Cane Pace, Somewhere In LA and Tellitlikeitis, along with 3-year-old filly stakes-winner Uffizi Hanover.

Takter's previous Trainer of the Year honors came in 2010, 2000 and 1996.

The 35-year-old Gingras has established career highs in purses, with \$17.29 million, and wins, with 555. His earnings



## Red Mile Renovation Underway

Work is well underway at The Red Mile as the racetrack prepares for the introduction of Historical Racing machines by the fall of 2015. In this photo, the old paddock at one end of the grandstand has been demolished to make way for a new entrance for the Historical Racing area of the building.

Continues on page 6 >>>



led all drivers in North America and were more than \$5 million ahead of second place.

Never in history has a driver finished at least \$5 million in front of his nearest competitor. In addition, Gingras' purses were fourth highest in history for a driver.

Gingras won four Breeders Crown titles, victories that were among 15 triumphs worth more than \$300,000 this year. Those 15 lucrative wins came with nine different horses and included the Canadian Trotting Classic, Hambletonian Oaks, Little Brown Jug and Cane Pace.

A native of Quebec, Gingras was USHWA's 2003 Rising Star Award winner. *(USHWA)*

### Harrah's Philadelphia Adds Rich Races

Sam Beegle, president of the Pennsylvania Harness Horsemen's Association, has announced major additions to the 2015 stakes schedule at Harrah's Philadelphia Casino & Racetrack. On Sunday, May 24, a new Open Pace for colts and geldings, named in honor of Jerry Taylor, will join the Maxie Lee Open Trot and Betsy Ross Open Mares Pace to round out a trio of invitationals. The purse for each race is \$150,000. Also new is the Liberty Bell Series of early closers scheduled for September. Each of the eight races for Pennsylvania sired horses carries an estimated purse of \$75,000.

"With the addition of the Liberty Bell series, we hope to extend the excitement of prime summer racing well into September and provide new opportunities for Pennsylvania sired horses," said Beegle. "We're also pleased to honor the memory of Jerry Taylor by adding his name to our May invitationals."

Taylor, who passed away in 2013, was a Philadelphia attorney who raced at Liberty Bell Park and Brandywine Raceway for years. Among the many horses he owned was New Jersey Sires Stakes and Grand Circuit champion Devil's Adversary. He is the father of prominent Standardbred owner Howard Taylor. *(PHHA)*

### Northfield Horsemen Deliver Toys To Kids

After spending the weekend with their families in Michigan, Ron Wrenn Jr. and Jason Merriman hit the road back to Ohio at 4 a.m. to spread some good cheer Monday morning (Dec. 22).

Joined by Kurt Sugg, his wife Becky and children Brandon, Kiersten and Kaitlyn, the trio of Northfield Park drivers suited up in their colors and dispersed nearly \$3,000 worth of toys, electronics, movies, CDs and gift cards among those at the Cleveland Clinic Children's Hospital.

The gifts were all gathered within five days through donations from not only Northfield Park horsemen but of those in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Florida, plus individuals who called to give after simply reading of the fundraiser.

Heather Miller, an employee of the clinic and longtime horsewoman, helped arrange the visit. The donations will be dispersed and used throughout the year at the hospital's many campuses.

The hospital cares for children who range in age of a few months to 18 years old with vari-

ous medical issues. Many were confined to ventilators, wheelchairs or their beds but none of them were hampered by the ability to smile as Merriman, Sugg and Wrenn entered the room.

Spending a few minutes with each child and posing for pictures was an obvious honor for the men who more than willingly gave of their time and resources.

"As much as it may have brought joy to the kids, it brings me much more," said Sugg.

Future charitable acts are being planned for horsemen and horsewomen, plus their families. Those under consideration are volunteering at the Akron Food Bank and Haven of Rest Ministries. *(Amy Hollar)*

### Miami Valley To Open With Improved Paddock

Miami Valley Raceway will kick off its second season of live racing on Friday night, Jan. 2, with improved purses, paddock and grandstand improvements, and a longer season spiced up with numerous late-closing series.

The live racing calendar calls for 89 programs from Jan. 2 through May 3 in 2015, up from 65 race cards in 2014. Average nightly purse distribution will be approximately \$90,000 for the first month of the upcoming season, a considerable increase over the \$60,000 in average nightly purses in 2014.

The massive paddock at Miami Valley has been fully insulated and overhead gas heating units have been placed throughout the building. Bath stalls have been improved, including the addition of several huge hot water tanks; and seven additional television monitors have been placed throughout the paddock.

Ten new late closers, dubbed the "Winter Claim To Fame Series," have been unveiled for the month of January. There are four claiming levels offered for pacers, divided by sex, as well as two for trotters. Condition sheets for the first week of the upcoming Miami Valley meet are available on the USTA website; entry blanks for the January "Winter Claim To Fame Series" are now available at: [www.miamivalleygaming.com](http://www.miamivalleygaming.com) under the Racing/Horsemen's Info tabs. *(Miami Valley)*



# JANUARY 2015



sunday

monday

tuesday

wednesday

thursday

friday

saturday

				1	2	3
				New Year's Day		
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
				Blizzard 3&4YO FM Pace (Wdb) Super Bowl 3&4YO Trot (M)	Snowshoe 3&4YO Pace (Wdb) Worldly Beauty 3&4YO FM Pace (M)	Escort 3&4YO Pace (M)
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
				Blizzard 3&4YO FM Pace (Wdb) Super Bowl 3&4YO Trot (M)	Snowshoe 3&4YO Pace (Wdb) Worldly Beauty 3&4YO FM Pace (M)	Escort 3&4YO Pace (M)
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
					Blizzard Pace final (Wdb) Snowshoe Pace final (Wdb)	Escort Pace final (M) Super Bowl Trot final (M) Worldly Beauty Pace final (M)
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Prix d'Amerique (Vincennes)						



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