

Sunday, January 1, 2017

Thanks to you, the new HRU turns 1 today

Today not only marks a new year, but the one-year anniversary of the return of Harness Racing Update (HRU).

by Dave Briggs



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Thanks to you, we made it.

Today not only marks a new year, but the one-year anniversary of the return of Harness Racing Update (HRU).

A year ago, when we brought HRU back under new ownership, we appealed to readers and advertisers for support. Now 141 HRU issues later, we're pleased to announce we've added nearly 1,000 new subscribers in 2016.

Yet, despite some positive returns, our commitment to you is that we're just getting started.

Before we get going on 2017, we owe a huge thank you to all of our advertisers. When 2016 started, we asked for their support and faith that we could produce a publication that would reach the very people that they most want to reach – those that are connected and invested and passionate about harness racing. Our pledge is to continue to work hard to help them reach their customers, while providing a timely, informative, engaging publication.

This past year was something of a test. Your support throughout 2016 is an indication there is a place for HRU in the industry and that serves as an impetus for us not only try to do more, but do everything better.

Our goal is to keep HRU free, but to do that we ask for your continued support. Please be an active reader. We can't get to every story, but we appreciate your suggestions. On the stories we do run, please send us your feedback – good or bad – whether it is for publication in our Sunday morning Feedback section or just a private note. If you like a story, please share it on social media. If you like HRU and don't, yet, subscribe, please take a minute to do it. If you know of someone who might like to receive HRU, please let them know. After all, it is free and every single person on our email list helps us keep publishing.

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Most of all, when possible, please support our advertisers. They are the ones that make HRU possible. You can click on most ads to be taken directly to that advertiser's website.

Thank you, as well, to our talented, dedicated staff that includes Brian Fuller, Lisa Bihuniak, Wilma Van Vaerenbergh, Lisa Duong and our accounting staff. We also owe a huge thank you to our team of skilled freelancers that includes Dean Towers, Dean Hoffman, Bob Heyden, Bill Finley, David Mattia, Lauren Lee, Trey Nosrac, Bob Roberts, James Platz, Brett Sturman, Dave Little, Tom Pedulla, The Curmudgeon, Dave Landry, Claus Andersen, Chris Lomon, Sandra Snyder

and many more. We couldn't have done it without every single one of you.

We made a lot of changes in 2016 while trying to preserve what you said you loved most about the old HRU. It wasn't perfect, and never will be, but that's what keeps us trying to improve each and every issue.

With continued support from our advertisers and readers, our goal for 2017 is to bring you better writers, better photographers, better opinion and better, more timely coverage.

Thank you, again, for a great start to HRU's return and we wish you health, happiness and prosperity in 2017.

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Note to our Readers:

This issue was produced on the evening of Dec. 30 to allow staff to have New Year's Eve off. Therefore, there is no results with this issue and pertinent news that happened on Dec. 31 will be published next weekend.

Happy New Year from all of us to all of you!

NEW FOR 2017:

ALL NOMINATIONS CLOSE FEBRUARY 15TH

PEPSI NORTH AMERICA CUP XXXIV

Three-year-old open pace.
Final raced on **Saturday, June 17, 2017.**
\$1,000,000 Guaranteed Final Purse.

ARM BRO FLIGHT

Three-year-olds and older fillies and mares trot.
Final raced on **Saturday, June 17, 2017.**
Purse \$240,000 E Final (\$175,000 A).

CANADIAN PACING DERBY

Three-year-olds and older open pace.
Final raced on **Saturday, September 2, 2017.**
Purse \$550,000 E Final (\$350,000 A).

CANADIAN TROTTING CLASSIC

Three-year-old open trot.
Final raced on **Saturday, September 16, 2017.**
Purse \$650,000 E (\$400,000 A).

CASUAL BREEZE

Three-year-old filly trot.
Raced on **Friday, August 25, 2017.**
Purse \$160,000 E (\$60,000 A).

ELEGANT IMAGE

Three-year-old filly trot.
Final raced on **Saturday, September 16, 2017.**
Purse \$400,000 E (\$225,000 A).

ETERNAL CAMNATION

Two-year-old filly pace.
Raced on **Saturday, August 26, 2017.**
Purse \$210,000 E (\$60,000A).

FAN HANOVER

Three-year-old filly pace.
Final raced on **Saturday, June 17, 2017.**
Purse \$400,000 E (\$275,000 A).

GOODTIMES

Three-year-old open trot.
Final raced on **Saturday, June 17, 2017.**
Purse \$265,000 E (\$125,000 A).

MAPLE LEAF TROT

Three-year-olds and older open trot.
Final raced on **Saturday, September 16, 2017.**
Purse \$600,000 E Final (\$350,000 A).

METRO PACE

Two-year-old open pace.
Final raced on **Saturday, September 23, 2017.**
Purse \$700,000 E Final (\$300,000 A).

MILTON

Three-year-olds and older fillies and mares pace.
Final raced on **Saturday, September 16, 2017.**
Purse \$250,000 E Final (\$150,000 A).

NASSAGAWEYA

Two-year-old open pace.
Raced on **Saturday, August 26, 2017.**
Purse \$210,000 E (\$60,000 A).

PEACEFUL WAY

Two-year-old filly trot.
Final raced on **Monday, September 18, 2017.**
Purse \$350,000 E Final (\$175,000 A).

ROSES ARE RED

Three-year-olds and older fillies and mares pace.
Final raced on **Saturday, June 17, 2017.**
Purse \$325,000 E Final (\$225,000 A).

SHES A GREAT LADY PACE

Two-year-old filly pace.
Final raced on **Saturday, September 23, 2017.**
Purse \$500,000 E Final (\$250,000 A).

SOMEBEACHSOMEWHERE

Three-year-old open pace.
Raced on **Saturday, June 3, 2017.**
Purse \$130,000 E (\$60,000 A).

WILLIAM WELLWOOD MEMORIAL

Two-year-old open trot.
Final raced on **Monday, September 18, 2017.**
Purse \$350,000 E Final (\$175,000 A).

BATTLE OF WATERLOO

Ontario Sired Two-year-old open pace.
Final raced on **Monday, August 7, 2017.**
Purse \$175,000 E Final (\$90,000 A).

BATTLE OF THE BELLES

Ontario Sired Two-year-old filly pace.
Final raced on **Monday, August 7, 2017.**
Purse \$120,000 E Final (\$60,000 A).

CONFEDERATION CUP

Four-year-old open pace.
Final raced on **Sunday, May 21, 2017.**
Purse \$175,000 E (\$150,000 A).

BALANCED IMAGE

Ontario Sired Two-year-old trotting fillies & colts in 2017.
Final raced on **Saturday, August 26, 2017.**
Purse \$50,000 E (\$20,000 A).

DREAM OF GLORY

Ontario Sired Three-year-old trotting fillies & colts in 2017, non-winners of \$75,000 (fillies \$100,000) in 2016.
Final raced on **Saturday, August 5, 2017.**
Purse \$60,000 E (\$40,000 A).

KIN PACE

Ontario Sired Three-year-old pacing fillies in 2017, non-winners of \$50,000 in 2016.
Final raced on **Sunday, July 9, 2017.**
Purse \$60,000 E (\$40,000 A).

REMINDER: SUSTAINING PAYMENTS DUE

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Without revealing your age.....

I saw this Twitter meme this week (see graphic).

Some of the answers – It's a long flight so I am going to choose the smoking section; Get off the phone I am expecting a call; In my house, I was the remote control; I used to go to a movie I liked 10 times, because there's a chance I'd never be able to see it again – were sometimes hilarious, and so true.

Well, since this is a harness racing column:

Without revealing your actual age, what's something you remember in harness racing that if you told a younger person they would not understand?

I have a few.

"I was going to claim him but he only raced 34 times last year. He must have problems."

"My vet bill this month was \$85."

"It's been zero minutes to post for a few minutes, there must be a shoeing issue."

"The OTB is only a half-hour drive. Very convenient."

"The trifecta just went to a one-dollar minimum."

"It's Fritz is racing Cam Fella, I wish I knew someone with a dish."

"I love half-mile track racing, the horses come from everywhere."

"Every horse tonight at Roosevelt is driven by their trainer

except three. I heard one is sick and two are on vacation."

"I handicapped that new place in Jersey like I always do; by finding the horse that will get the two hole. The thing was, every horse who got the two hole was 8th at the wood by the head of the lane."

"If I don't buy a Most Happy Fella yearling this fall I won't be able to compete."

"It's a \$900 purse and there's \$150,000 in the betting pools. Do the math, this race is ripe for a fix."

"He's parking out Die Laughing from the quarter. Suicide."

"Things are crazy, I just paid \$300 for a race bike."

"It's snowing, 12 below and the track is like frozen soup. I'm sure they won't cancel."

"The slots are opening so there should be way more people betting the races."

"There's no money in catch driving."

"I'm going to take an early train because I'd like to get there to watch last night's replays."

"Can I get a stamp to come back in? I have to go across the

street to the diner to make a phone call."

"He went :56.2 to the half. What could he have been thinking?"

"I can't imagine anything faster than my new Telstar."

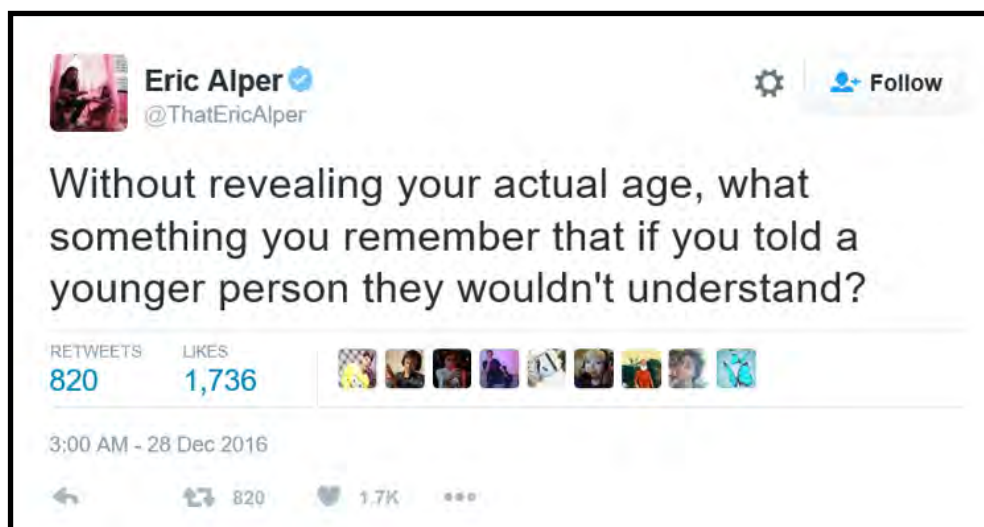
"We could go to Joe's house and watch the race. He has a 56k

modem."

"We left the track right after the last and made great time. We caught the last four at Garden State and bet 14 races in one day!"

"That's a good trainer. After two months of good nutrition, working on stifle problems and some paddock time, the horse almost dropped a full second."

"Of course we're going to the Jug. Who wouldn't go to the Jug with a horse who can win it?"



"The only thing I want this year is to win the Triple Crown."

"There are 11 races tonight. It must be some kind of special card."

"I hit a \$240 double at Batavia. What a jackpot!"

"My favorite part of the Hambletonian is the parade."

"He set the track record in 1:55.3. Horses are so fast today."

"I'm sad you can't make it to see your horse race, but I know a guy in the race office. He said he'd hold the phone to the in-house TV so you can hear the call."

"I got shut out of that exacta because there were too many people in line."

"Unlike the thoroughbreds, harness horses are bred to race,

not raced to breed."

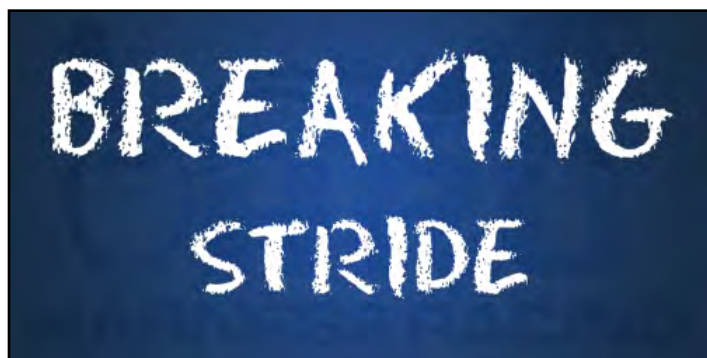
"Bah, this track should have more parking attendants. This is the fourth time this month I missed the early double."

"Don't ever claim off of him. He has 40 years of training experience."

"Come on over tonight and bring the popcorn. The VHS of our horse's races just came in the mail."

Those are a few of mine. If you have any you'd like to share, we'd love to hear them.

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Mother of an Invention

by *Trey Nosrac*

"Almost all really new ideas have a certain aspect of foolishness when they are just produced." - A.N. Whitehead

Driverless cars are around the corner. No sense bitching. Scientific advancements grind forward and leave the roadside littered with the carcasses of folks simply minding their own business. Due to technology, my Lyft job, like about half the jobs in the world, will soon be toast. In an effort to be proactive, I am sitting here planning my future in this crazy world.

For my next act, I may move into the invention business. Yeah, I know that inventing is a risky game and paychecks are often non-existent, but like W.C. Fields said, "A dead fish can float down a stream, but it takes a live one to swim upstream." The first invention on my launch pad may be of interest to some of you.

Once upon a time, in a desperate attempt to keep up with training bills, I jogged horses on the weekends. My qualifications were inflated, minimal and fabricated.

Basically, I said, "Sure, I can do that." I hopped onto a jog cart and headed out to make four fun-filled laps where mercifully no horses or human were maimed.

Should you ever try jogging harness horses, and I suggest that you do, you will discover that after a while you have a lot of time to meditate. Looking at the backside of a harness horse, listening to the clopping hoofs and smelling the smells is sort of Zen-like. In nice weather, my thoughts while jogging were always, "This is enjoyable and sort of therapeutic." In the winter my thoughts were always, "What in the hell am I doing out here and please let me get back to the barn alive before the gelatinous parts of my eyeballs are frozen into marbles of ice."

Horse trainers of my acquaintance seem to have personalities with a bit of masochism mixed together with stoicism. They battle the ridiculously harsh winters on jog carts and race bikes and shrug off 27 layers of clothing with pride. I am not a horse trainer. With immobile fingers clawing





at frozen buckles, my thinking was that these winter horse people are insane.

Actually, during each miserable lap of winter jogging, the part of my mind that remained free of frostbite fixated on the invention that I would begin to work on... an enclosed jog cart. After an extensive 15-minute study of pictures on YouTube, this is the model that I will retrofit:

The mandatory new adaptations to this enclosed vehicle are two slits where the reins will be threaded through the front and two shafts that will be bolted to the chassis. The name will be the Trey Sleigh. The cost will be five grand, a tad costly, but you will be the envy of all your friends and it is less expensive than the cost of hospital treatment for hypothermia.

As you can see, this vehicle will offer much more protection from bone jarring arctic winds that the scarf Aunt Meg knitted that was always wrapped Red Baron-like around my second parka. If you approach this with an open mind, several positives will occur. A third wheel in the rear of the contraption will offer additional stability. Humans will have some protection from kicking and discharges of the animal. Falls and spills will be less harmful.

Not only do I swim upstream, my preference is to always go overboard.

As I gaze at this vehicle and imagine myself hitched to a horse going the endless winter miles that a harness race horse must log before attempting to race, I see a few additional adaptations that could make this a "must have" product – a heater, windshield wipers, Wi-Fi, a speedometer, a seat with a backrest and something that I desperately needed in my jogging days – an odometer (keeping track of

laps traveled always gave me trouble).

Now imagine this. The temperature is 12 degrees, the track surface an ugly ooze, sleet pellets ricochet like shrapnel and you have two dozen horses that must get miles under their harness. Today you have a Trey Sleigh. You set the thermostat to 70, tune into soft rock on Sirius radio, maybe take a sandwich, place a cup of coffee in the handy cup holder and head out in your bubble of serenity. Not bad, huh?

For the time being, trainers and joggers will still need to hold the reins and pay attention to the horse they are hooked up to, but the boys in Silicon Valley are working feverishly to eliminate more jobs. It is only a matter of time until driverless jog carts hit the market.

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Manofmanymissions sold

Kentuckiana Farms announces that Manofmanymissions has been sold to a group of European owners for export and stud duty in 2017.

Atlantic Trot, through Mario Zuanetti, represented the owners.

– *Kentuckiana Farms*

Ontario Racing issues New Year's message

As we welcome the New Year, we reflect on the year that passed. 2016 was marked by significant milestones for the horse racing industry in this province. We have been given good reason to be hopeful about a long term, sustainable future for horse racing in Ontario: the government has proposed an unprecedented long-term investment in our business and there is growth in wagering for the Standardbred Alliance. As an industry, our efforts to right the ship are showing promise for success into the future.

Ontario Racing conducted consultations across the province about what that future could look like. On behalf of our directors and staff, I would like to thank everyone who took the time to participate. While challenging at times, the passion of our industry participants was reflected as a shared commitment to finding the right path forward.

Ontario Racing is committed to working with government

and the OLG to represent the needs of our industry with vigor in 2017. As we continue to advance our governance structure, Ontario Racing emphasizes the importance of unity and support from the industry as we negotiate and secure a new long term funding framework.

There are challenges but also great opportunities facing us in 2017. I encourage everyone to be positive, stay invested in our industry and do your part to move forward collectively on the issues that will surely shape our industry's future. Together we will continue to rebuild and grow.

Warmest wishes for a prosperous new year,

– Sue Leslie / chair Ontario Racing

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The Golden Age was golden...

Loved Joel's article about the old days ([Joel Kravet, The Golden Age – HRU, Dec. 30](#))

Herve was, by far, the best driver. I could tell you stories about owners I knew that told me they liked their horses on a particular night, and somehow they would get beat in the last few steps by Herve. He always knew who his competition was and how to beat them any time he wanted.

For a few years in the Yonkers fall meet, he would have a trotter race in the class just below the FFA's, and he would be second and third every week, and would win the last week of the meet. The next week at Roosevelt those classes would be combined, so he lost nothing by winning the last week of the meet.

No one could compete with Herve on the racetrack.

– Phil Shafit / Port Washington, NY

... or not so golden

I must take exception to the words of Joel Kravet in his "The Golden Age" column headlined "Herve Changed Everything" when he states "Herve was leaps and bounds ahead of the best drivers in New York."

As a regular and first hand witness in that era, this is not only an inaccurate statement but a disservice to Sholty, Gilmour, Abbatiello, Chapman, et all, who were every bit the equal to Filion, and in my opinion, in many instances superior and for a variety of reasons.

– Bob Boni / Secaucus, NJ

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HARNESS RACING UPDATE

About Harness Racing Update

Harness Racing Update is owned by HRU Publications of Millwood, NY and will publish Fridays and Sundays November through April. HRU will add Saturday editions May through October, publishing 3 days per week, and of course will add editions throughout the year as major news breaks.

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