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New Jersey Update

## Lucky Chucky, Tell All Latest to Leave NJ

By Bill Finley

In still more bad news for New Jersey racing and breeding, stallion **Tell All** and soon-to-be stallion **Lucky Chucky** (Windsong's Legacy) are abandoning the Garden State to stand at stud in states with more stable racing programs.

Lucky Chucky, who was headed to Perretti Farms in Cream Ridge, NJ, will now stand at stud at Winbak Farm's New York division. After beginning his stud career at Deo Volente Farms in Flemington, NJ, Tell All is on his way to Tara Hills Stud in Ontario.

The news of their departures came just days after it was announced that plans for **Rock N Roll Heaven** (Rocknroll Hanover), the likely 2010 Horse of the Year, have changed and that he will stand in New York at Blue Chip Farm and not in New Jersey at Perretti.

Perretti Farms is a co-owner of Lucky Chucky and is set to manage his career as a stallion, but even that was not enough to keep him in New Jersey under an on-going political climate where the future of harness racing in New Jersey is very uncertain.

"It just seemed that under the circumstances for a first-crop stallion that New York just might be a better fit," said Perretti spokesman Bob Marks. "After all, he excelled over the smaller tracks at Chester Downs, Pocono and Dover. Of course, the uncertainty in New Jersey was another factor. We consulted (trainer) Chuck (Sylvester) and (co-owner) Frank Antonacci and they also thought this would be a good idea. This was very much a consensual decision. We've always had a very close relationship with Joe Thomson at Winbak Farm."

Lucky Chucky, a son of Windsong's Legacy, has won 14 of 23 starts and earned \$2,099,973. He finished second in the Hambletonian, but had a tough trip that afternoon. Since, he has won the Colonial, the Zweig Memorial, the Canadian Trotting Classic and the Bluegrass.



Tell All is off to Ontario



Lucky Chucky is headed to NY  
Dean Hoffman photo

Perretti remains the home of arguably the top trotting and pacing stallions in the sport in Muscles Yankee and Rocknroll Hanover. Marks said he expects both will stay put.

"Muscles Yankee is going to be 16 years old," he said. "He's viewed as the Hambletonian sire; he's won the last three Hambletonians and is a great stallion about to hit the twilight. I'm not sure moving him makes any sense. If he loses a couple of bookings, so be it. When people breed to Muscles Yankee, they're not think of Jersey sires stakes, they're thinking of the Hambletonian.

"The same applies to Rocknroll Hanover. You breed to him to try to win the Little Brown Jug, the Meadowlands Pace. When you want to get the best pacer possible, Rocknroll Hanover is your first choice."

The first crop of Tell All's offspring sold this year at the yearling sales and they did not fare well. The consensus was that people were reluctant to invest in the sons and daughters of an unproven sire standing in a state where the sport is in trouble. His fortunes should improve now that he is on his way to Ontario.

"It's an exciting time to stand a horse of his stature," said Tara Hills manager Dave Heffering. "His first foals just sold as yearlings and are now on the way to their racing careers, so he has tremendous upside. He has been well-supported by major breeders and is an ideal horse for breeders here in Ontario. He had such a big following here, and a lot of his early success came north of the border."

"Tell All's yearlings were very athletic and they had terrific videos. We have a lot of faith that he can be a top sire," said Brittany Stallion Management's Art Zubrod. "Plus, the Ontario program puts tremendous strength behind a stallion and Tara Hills is a top-flight outfit."

Earlier in the week, it was announced that **Real Desire**, also managed by Brittany, was moving to Midland Acres in Indiana, another state with a flourishing racing program fueled by slot machine revenues.

"The Indiana program just keeps getting better and better, and Real Desire is a proven sire that can go in and have an immediate impact there," Zubrod said.

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## Atlantic City and Horse Racing: Chris Christie's About To Make His Bet

By Andrew Cohen (reprinted with the permission of *Politics Daily*)

As my colleague Jill Lawrence wonderfully reported earlier this month, there's little doubt (OK, there is some doubt) that New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie is a rising star in the Republican Party. He's widely perceived as a fiscal conservative willing to stand up to special interests -- like teachers' unions -- in the name of cost-cutting. He's evidently great at raising money on the campaign trail, which passes for a vital political skill these days. He was even supported, not scorned, by most of his constituents when he single-handedly killed what would have been the nation's largest public works (read: jobs) project -- a new commuter tunnel linking New Jersey to Manhattan. Too expensive, he said to the White House and New York, a message that naturally makes him popular these days.



Gov. Chris Christie

All of this also makes a great narrative to be spun by national political operatives and Sunday talk show hosts: Chris Christie is a "genuine" guy, a take-charge, can-do sorta pol, a practical East Coast Republican with Southern conservative social values. Maybe so. The problem is, like most myths, the one about Christie's great sense and sensibilities, the one about him having rare political courage, is a little light on factual support these days. He's been in office for less than one year. He hasn't parted the waters quite yet. New Jersey already has made some grievous errors under his stewardship. He's been exposed, by the Inspector General's office at the Department of Justice for spending way too much on hotel rooms when he was the state's U.S. attorney. And his greatest challenge is right around the corner.

We will learn, in the next few weeks or months, whether and to what extent Christie is different from his predecessors in Trenton. He is about to make a decision that will impact approximately 10,000 jobs in New Jersey; one which could gut the billion-dollar horse industry there. If he does the politically courageous thing, he will keep those jobs in the state, save that venerated industry, and ultimately increase state tax revenues. If he does the politically expedient thing, however, if he caves to the powerful casino lobby without extracting from it promises to cooperate and compromise for the state's common good, he'll be to many people in and out of the Garden State just another empty suit; another political shill captive to special interests.

Christie will act soon on issues that, while complicated and nuanced, have confronted virtually every other governor in every other state with a meaningful horse racing industry. He will not have to reinvent any wheels. Courageous executives and lawmakers have been there, done

that. In Delaware in 1996, for example, legislators far-sightedly opened up the state's racetracks to slot machines to compete with Las Vegas and Atlantic City. The result was a boon. By 2010, the tiny state was forecasting the receipt of tens of millions of dollars in revenue from these venues -- and the racetracks and horsemen were holding their own. In Pennsylvania, Gov. Ed Rendell, a Democrat, has zealously championed expanded gaming, virtually saving his state's horse racing industry and generating revenues for the commonwealth. Indeed, it is the success of gambling in these neighboring states, and not New Jersey's racehorse industry, that has Atlantic City legitimately concerned.

There are also many cautionary tales as well -- tales about what happens when political leadership or courage has been lacking. Things right now are dicey (at best) in Maryland, home of the Preakness Stakes, the second leg of thoroughbred racing's Triple Crown. In Kentucky, the national capital of horse racing, the lack of political cohesion on what ought to be a no-brainer -- helping the state's enormous horse industry -- is stunning (akin, you might say, to Trenton turning its back completely on Atlantic City, an unthinkable concept). And now neighboring Indiana, whose legislators did approve a comprehensive racing/gaming plan, figures to poach revenue from the Bluegrass State much in the same way that New York, with its "racinos," now is poaching on New Jersey's gaming take.

What's he going to do? The story of Chris Christie and the horse industry in New Jersey -- which is the story of Christie and the casino lobby in Atlantic City -- is a microcosm of the larger battle about the meaning of governance, a fight between and among state and local industries waged every day in every state and in Washington, D.C. It's a story about political choices -- some real, some false. And one way or another it's going to tell us more about what kind of man Chris Christie is. So pay attention, all your politicians out there. Here's a battle to follow as 2010 turns into 2011. (Disclosure: I own fractional interests in a few racehorses in New Jersey).

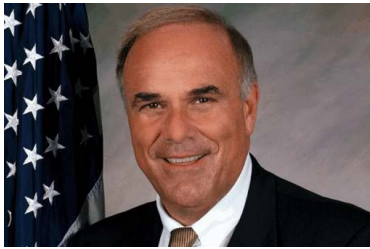
### On the Backstretch

Because of Atlantic City's long and celebrated influence on state government in Trenton -- a Boardwalk Empire, indeed -- New Jersey stands alone among its neighbors in failing to demand and nurture a synergetic relationship between its venerated casino industry and its ancient horse industry, neither of which is doing well these days on its own. All up and down the East Coast, large gaming corporations and racing leaders, working with state or provincial governments, have established popular venues where people come, gamble their money on games or horses, and thereby generate oodles of jobs and state and local tax revenues. People, millions of them all over the world, still want to bet. These other states have figured out how to make it easier for them to do so.

(Cohen, cont. p. 3)

**(Cohen, cont.)**

But not New Jersey. In New Jersey, there are no racinos. Nor is there a competent and comprehensive plan that otherwise 1) keeps New Jersey's gamblers gambling at home; 2) draws out-of-state gamblers to the Garden State; and 3) ensures the long-term stability of the state's horse industry, which is enormous. In New Jersey, there is Atlantic City, in the southern part of the state, with its casino and resort industry. There is a brief thoroughbred horse racing meet in the summer at Monmouth Park, near the Jersey Shore. And there is horse racing at the Meadowlands, in East Rutherford, just across the Hudson River from midtown Manhattan. For decades, the casino lobby has orchestrated this stilted and disparate approach to intrastate gaming with the support of Christie's predecessors (both



**Harness racing's friend:  
Gov. Ed Rendell**

Republican and Democrat). Trenton has let the casinos mostly call their own shots. And the result is a disaster; a state that has fallen behind its competitors in the very industry -- gambling -- for which it is known.

Both the gaming and racing industries are struggling. Atlantic City has woes -- from the lingering poor economy, from out-of-state

competition, and from online gambling. It may need help from Trenton, but it's still a viable and heavily capitalized industry. The same cannot be said for horse racing in the state. It really needs help from Trenton -- and more cooperation, or at least protection, from Atlantic City. Once a popular venue for fans and bettors, the sport of kings has been decimated over the past decades by poor leadership, bad marketing, and a lack of capital investment in racing facilities. It's also been stymied, more recently, by Atlantic City's (and Trenton's) failure or refusal to allow it to compete on equal terms with racinos in neighboring states. Betting handles are down. So is attendance. To survive, the horse industry needs Atlantic City to relax its monopolistic hold on gambling in Northern New Jersey, which means it needs Trenton to take a stand.

It shouldn't be this hard. Both industries, after all, are subsidized by the state. For decades, the large corporations that run the casinos in Atlantic City have enjoyed vast support from Trenton. And through a complicated deal brokered by the last regime in the governor's mansion, the casinos over the past few years have in turn been forced to subsidize horse racing, especially harness racing. The result is a mess, a vicious downward cycle: Horse racing is weak in New Jersey because of Atlantic City -- and the casinos want to rid the state of horse racing because it is weak. This year, coinciding with Christie's ascension to the governorship and prolonged economic stagnation, all of this dysfunction has come to a head. The casinos no longer want to subsidize live horse racing. They want the Meadowlands facility for themselves, to finally establish a Northern New Jersey casino outpost that they know (that everyone knows) will be a huge success, and they want to ditch the horses at the same time. This cannot be done without Trenton's approval -- from both Christie and state legislators.

**The Homestretch**

When he was campaigning for office last year, candidate Christie assured horse industry leaders that he understood their concerns. He did not explicitly promise to rescue racing in New Jersey by opening up the Meadowlands racetrack to other forms of gaming, but he did promise constructive action to break the logjam that has helped lay the Garden State racing industry so low. As soon as he was elected, he created a "commission" to look at how to fix New Jersey's multitude of inter-related gaming problems. The man the governor chose to lead the inquiry, the man who therefore would be the governor's voice on the topic, was a real estate developer named Jon Hanson. Almost immediately, Hanson generated criticism for his prior roles in government and for his comments about the East Rutherford site being an attractive real estate property. The horsemen immediately distrusted him and expected the worst. When it came, they were disappointed but not surprised.

In July, an initial draft of the Hanson Report, the commission's written work product, was made public. Its recommendations were a mash note to Atlantic City. Instead of badgering the casino industry to open up Northern New Jersey to gaming, instead of increasing the size of the revenue pie for all by introducing slots or video lottery terminals to the existing operation at the Meadowlands, the report instead recommended that horse racing be taken off the main stage -- relegated to short meets elsewhere in the state without any further support from Atlantic City. "The Meadowlands Racetrack no longer resonates as a viable entertainment option to large segments of the population except on major race days," the report stated. "The New Jersey racing industry cannot compete long-term with the New York and Pennsylvania purse structures or breeders' incentive programs funded by racino revenues." In other words, even though the patient could be saved, Hanson and Company were ready to declare it dead.

And so, evidently, was the governor himself. Instead of sending the drafters of the Hanson Report back to look at better options -- options that did not include the loss of about 10,000 horse-industry jobs, for example -- Christie accepted the corpse delivered to him by Hanson. "I'm not wed to any one option," he said at the time, but "I don't have the money to subsidize failure." It was a classic case, a politician's trick, of begging the question: Horse racing's "subsidized failure" in New Jersey, of course, is a direct result of casino-friendly state policies enacted by Trenton at the direction of Atlantic City. Yet in purporting to search for a comprehensive solution to the problem, Christie and Hanson automatically excluded from their calculations any notion of seeking concessions from the casino lobby, even relatively simple and minor ones like video lottery terminals (VLTs) at the Meadowlands, in order to preclude the need for subsidies to racing.

**(Cohen, cont. p. 4)**



### Cohen, cont.

It is fair to say that the horse industry in New Jersey was blown away by the Hanson Report -- not just by its one-sided nature but also by the speed with which Christie seemed to embrace its conclusions. Why would a governor elected to help a state out of a financial mess look away from capturing new taxable revenue from a racino at the Meadowlands? Why would a governor elected amid huge budget deficits and high unemployment drive up joblessness and property taxes by driving a billion-dollar industry to neighboring states? Why would such a governor do so without a comprehensive review of the alternatives? Why, in other words, would this tough-talking, brash politician -- who gleefully took on the teachers' union -- cave so quickly and so completely to the casino interests, like so many of his predecessors? What followed were two seasons of discontent among horsemen -- and a marked downturn in the market for New Jersey-bred racehorses.

Three important things have happened since the heat of the summer. First, state legislators have reacted to the Hanson Report with proposed legislation that likely would save thousands of jobs and allow horse racing to pay for itself. Second, word has leaked that Harrah's Entertainment, one of the huge casino operators in Atlantic City, has staked out an investment in Philadelphia, just a short trip from the Boardwalk. In other words, at the precise moment when Christie and Hanson were trying to kill off racing to help save Atlantic City, the casinos were hedging their bets -- and harming New Jersey's economy further -- by investing out of state. Third, a second "Hanson Report" emerged just recently. After a series of official public forums wherein interested parties were encouraged to share their view of the governor's plan, Hanson et al. came back with, yes, an even sweeter deal for Atlantic City.

### Under the Wire

Last month, at a campaign rally for a fellow Republican, Christie said: "I want horse racing to continue in New Jersey. . . . If there's a model that doesn't require government money, I'm sure we'll be able to work it out. I appreciate the proposal the Democrats made. I think there's a lot of similarities between the two and we'll be able to work it out." Another statement, another begged question, another politician's trick. Of course, there is "a model, ready to be implemented, that doesn't require government money" to save the horse industry. It's a model the horsemen have been asking for, and the casino lobby has been resisting, for years. It's a model currently being employed, with great success, in Pennsylvania and Delaware and even Ontario, Canada. The question is whether the governor is going to support or ignore it when the conflict comes to a head in Trenton.

So we'll know soon whether Hanson and his reports were just negotiating foils for the governor. We'll know soon whether the Democrats and Republicans in the state legislature -- many of whom also have done Atlantic City's bidding over the years-- have the political strength to impose their comprehensive solution on the casinos. And we'll know soon whether Christie is going to use his own

political capital to either kill off racing or rein in Atlantic City. The fight is front-page news in New Jersey and it should be. Not only does the horse industry account for hundreds of thousands of acres of green space in the Garden State, not only does it help keep property taxes low, it also brings hundreds of millions of dollars of revenue to small businesses in the state each year.

Those who oppose the continuation of meaningful horse racing at the Meadowlands, those who don't want to press the casino corporations to allow gaming in Northern New Jersey, frame the issue as one of choice -- the horses or Atlantic City, since the state cannot afford both. But this is a false choice. There is room in New Jersey both for a vibrant casino industry and a revitalized horse industry. There is room to accomplish this without burdening the state any further. But it will require a degree of political courage that is rare these days; it will require leadership that tells the state's most powerful lobby it must give a little more. It will require further inroads into the virtual monopoly, the veto power, Atlantic City has enjoyed for many decades in the state. It will require the strength and clarity of purpose Americans like to see in their political figures.

Does Chris Christie have what it takes to oversee the comprehensive solution New Jersey desperately needs to raise more revenue and save more jobs? If he does, he's a legitimate national figure on the political scene. If he doesn't, well, it wouldn't be huge shock. State politics have buried the national aspirations of officials with far more impressive pedigrees than he.

### Flanigen Wins Driving Honors

*Edited press release from Tim Bojarski*

Jack Flanigen has been named Western New York Driver of the Year.

Flanigen started driving in 1984 and has been a fixture on the Batavia Downs-Buffalo Raceway circuit ever since. Some 26 years later, he is completing the best year of his career, scoring 295 wins (most of his career), \$1.4 million in purse money (twice as much as any other year in his career), and a UDR of .332 (second highest of his career). His 2010 totals rank Flanigen tied for 24th for UDR ranking in North America among all drivers with 500 or more starts.

Besides being one of the most sought after catch drivers locally, Flanigen found himself in the majority of New York Sire Stakes legs at both Batavia and Buffalo all summer as many ship-in trainers found themselves using him whenever he was available.

Last year Flanigen was honored as the Comeback Driver of the Year, having bounced back from an accident that sidelined him for most of 2008. But the heights he hit this year far outshine his accomplishments of 2009 and once again put him atop the local driving colony in Western New York. His current lifetime totals show 3,497 wins and just under \$9 million in winnings.



**Jack Flanigen**