



Rambling Willie

## Keeping Christ Alive in Harness Racing!

Since 1983

In God We Trust



Christian Harness Horsemen's Association Newsletter

September 2019

Remember,  
I pray for all  
our members  
every day.



*Chaplain Lee Alphen*

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### Dancing with the Son *By Chaplain Lee Alphen*

Herman Drenth reminded me "You can't announce a horse race without a program." Knowing the horses and drivers is imperative. Larry Lederman concurs and adds, "Names of trainers and owners are also important for the post parade."

"Sunflowers stand at attention facing east," it said in a book I just read. "Then, throughout the day, they move with their faces upward, gradually following the sun" (Dancing with the Sun" by Kay Bratt).

What kind of experiences have you had in your lives? School, cooking, car repairs, golf, swimming, flying a plane? Have you trained or driven harness horses? You have probably walked a horse.

Can we experience something by reading a book? I've read about war. Does that mean I've experienced it?

We can read a whole library full of books on how to fly a plane. But, until we actually get into the cockpit and head down the runway, tilt the nose into the air and head for the clouds and blue sky, we won't actually experience flying a plane.

You may be an avid golfer. However, for me, sitting in the family room watching golf on TV with my brother counts as watching golf on TV, not experiencing golf.

We drive races from the grandstand, hollering for the horse to go to the outside, trot faster, faster, faster. Are we all race drivers?

Have we experienced Jesus? Sure, we go to church and read our bibles. But, have we really experienced Jesus?

Jesus said, "No one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost, and so are the skins; but one puts new wine into fresh wineskins" (Mark 2:22).

Friends, each day God gives us is a new day. We will always do well to greet each new day in a new way—as the advertisers say, "a new and improved way."

Consider Psalm 22. "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning? O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; and by night, but find no rest" (Psalm 22:1-2)

David's story told in the Old Testament tells of a man favored by God who often falls into temptation. In this passage David is crying out to God, searching for a renewed relationship, wanting to hear God's voice and, especially, is eager for forgiveness. Each time, when David realizes he disobeyed God, David seeks God out, repents and commits to live for the Lord, to walk in relationship with God.

Perhaps, when he falls, David is trying to put new wine into old wineskins. God gives us a new day every day with new opportunities, possibilities and challenges. We are not the same today as we were yesterday. Hopefully, we are older and wiser, having learned the lessons of each passing day. That's what God wants for us. When we get up in the morning and dredge up our old difficulties and grudges, we are putting our old wine into the wineskins of the new day.

Jesus says, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me" (Mathew 11:29). Whatever our struggles, turmoil,

**Dancing continued on Page 2**

## Dancing continued from page 1

trials, difficulties, relationships, finances, health issues, Jesus wants it all. When we learn to trust Jesus, to turn all this over to Him, we experience Jesus. When we praise God for our blessings and thank God for every gift we have, we experience God.

To get to know about Jesus, we read our bibles, go to church, and continue in fellowship with our sisters and brothers in Christ. To experience Jesus, we step out in faith and trust Him. We accept Jesus as our brother, our friend, our Lord. We come to realize God is everything and has given us all we have and made us all we are.

Just as “the sunflowers reach for the light and dance with the sun, pursuing what made them healthy and happy;” David continuously promises to turn to God. Every time he messes up, which he does often, he repents, seeks God out, turning back and allowing God to hold him in the palm of His hands like an eagle wraps its baby in its wings.

Let's join David in dancing with the Son. Let's experience Jesus in the same way a driver experiences winning the Hambletonian—by giving it everything we have. The bible is our program. It provides the information we need.

## Chippie

Chaplain Ken Carter posted his reflections on Max Lucado's book, “In The Eye Of The Storm” on FaceBook. He gave me permission to print his post here.

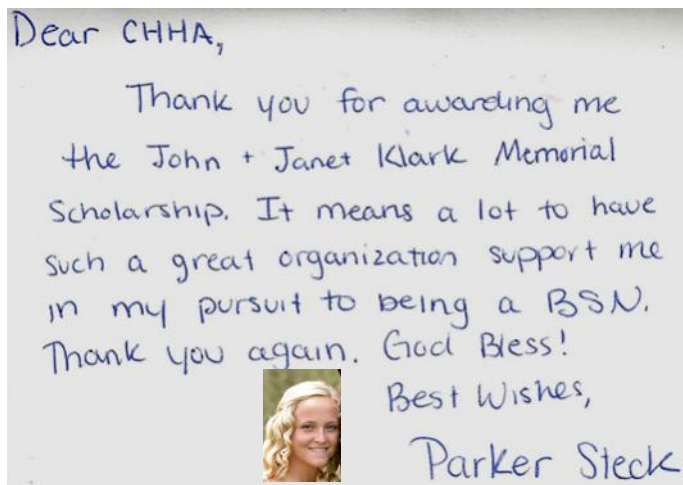
“The book is a story about a parakeet named Chippie. Chippie the parakeet never saw it coming. One second he was peacefully perched in his cage, and the next he was sucked in, washed up and blown over. The problem began when Chippie's owner decided to clean Chippie's cage with a vacuum cleaner. She put the end of the hose into Chippie's cage to clean the bottom, but then the phone rang. She turned to answer the phone, and barely said ‘hello’ when she heard ‘ssssopp!’ Chippie was sucked into the vacuum. The bird owner gasped, put down the phone, turned off the vacuum, and quickly opened the bag. There was Chippie, still alive, but stunned. Since the bird was covered with dust and dirt, she raced him to the bathroom, turned on the water and held Chippie under the running water. Then, realizing that Chippie was soaked and shivering, she did what any compassionate bird owner would do. She reached for the blow dryer and blasted Chippie with hot air.

Poor Chippie never knew what hit him. A few days after the trauma, the reporter who had initially written about the traumatic event called Chippie's owner to see how the bird was recovering. ‘Well,’ the owner replied, ‘Chippie doesn't sing much anymore. He just sits and



Chaplain  
Ken Carter

## Blessings from God



From Dr Jim Cummings...

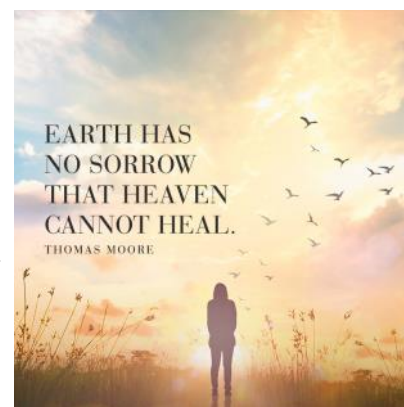
Recently I asked for prayers for 14-year-old Keegan, a young man from our community who nearly lost his foot in a farming accident. I saw him today at our county fair, getting around on a scooter. He will not lose his foot. God is good. Dr Jim Cummings

stares.’

It's not hard to see why. Sucked in, washed up, and blown over—that's enough to steal the song from the strongest heart. ‘Sucked in, washed up, and blown over.’ That about sums up how many of us feel at times when life hits us hard. Isn't that right? You've felt that way before, haven't you?”

Sure Ken, we've all had bad days. Your family has certainly had its share. However, since the book is talking about the day before the Crucifixion, I guess I can't say I've experienced anything that bad. It sure is beyond amazing how Jesus can go through all that rejection, suffering, humiliation, and torture and still choose to continue His journey to death on the cross just so all of us who caused His problems could live with Him forever in heaven.

Your point is spot on. Yes, Jesus does understand all our heartache, troubles, struggles, sickness and pain. He understands it all and wants to carry all these burdens for us. I say we let Him.



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Choose a Free Gift with your \$20 donation



CHHA Hat



Rambling Willie Remembers

These lovely 5 x 7 Rambling Willie cards are packaged in sets of 10 cards. They are blank inside.

## Gifts for family and friends

10 Rambling Willie Note Cards (see picture)

CHHA Blue Hat

Horseshoe Nail Cross necklaces and key rings—see below

### Books

Daily Oats by Chaplain Sam Ed Spence

Downloading God by Jack Levine

Live A Life That Matters for God by Jack Levine

My Addict Your Addict by Jack Levine

Where the Rubber Meets the Road with God by Jack Levine

Don't Blow It With God by Jack Levine

Sound Mouth—Sound Horse, The Gager Method of Equine Dental Care by ER Gager and Bob "Dusty Rhodes"

Still: A Story of the Black Doctor of the Jersey Pines by Edmund R Gager

## Horseshoe Nail Cross Necklaces and Keyrings

### Horseshoe Nail Product Descriptions

**Key Ring:** Horseshoe nails are bent into a cross and tied together with colored wire. Key ring is attached with rawhide.

**Necklace:** Key ring: Horseshoe nails are bent in to a cross and tied together with colored wire.

[Horseshoe Nail Item Order Form—Orders can also be placed at \[www.chha.net/products\]\(http://www.chha.net/products\)](#)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail with \$20 each + \$4 shipping to:

Roger Huston · 225 Fieldbrook Dr · Cannonsburg, PA 15317

Necklace Qty: Red \_\_\_\_ Blue \_\_\_\_ Turquoise \_\_\_\_

Keyring Qty: Red \_\_\_\_ Blue \_\_\_\_ Turquoise \_\_\_\_ Silver \_\_\_\_

Other colors are available upon request.





## Obituaries continued from page 5

**Walter G Gower Sr**, 87, died June 28. Walter owned and operated Hillsdale Farm in Allentown, NJ. He was a farmer and owned, trained and drove harness horses. Walter was well known, well respected and well liked in the harness industry. He will be deeply missed.



**Ron Jellis**, 77, of Pompano Beach, died July 6. Ron owned and bred harness horses for 55 years. While racing at Pompano, he changed the lives of many people in our industry. The last few years health wise were tough, but never once did you hear him complain. It was, "What can I do for you, not what can you do for me?" Love for family and friends were above and beyond. Ron worked as a service manager in the car business. As a boss, you never worked for him rather you worked with him. Everybody he met almost immediately became a better person.

**Leonard LeBlanc**, 80, died July 22. For many years Leonard was a top trainer in New England. He drastically cut his stable when his late wife and partner in the business, Noella, died in 2013. However, he did continue to race one or two to keep his hand in the sport that he loved. He also ran the LeBlanc Standardbred training center in Gardner, Massachusetts where many trainers stabled and trucked in to race at Plainridge Racecourse. The New England Harness Writers Association recognized Leonard over the years for his accomplishments.

**Harry Locke**, 89, of Oshawa, Ontario, died July 4. Harry is a longtime Standardbred owner of such notables as Deal Direct, Jet Pace and Northwest.

**Carol Okusko**, 83, of the Vernon, NY area, died July 15.

In her early working career she was employed with the Utica Phone Company. She and her husband, Howard, then operated the Utica Dry Cleaning Company and later the Utica Paint Company. Later on the couple became involved with harness racing at Vernon Downs. Howard still operates a very successful stable. Carol was a great advocate for the local horsemen and women and the sport of harness racing while serving as vice president of Harness Horsemen's Association of Central New York.



**John Pantalone**, 76, died July 5. John began a photography business in 1972. One of his first clients was Liberty Bell Park. This led to the development of World Wide Racing Photos which was the track photographer at Brandywine, Liberty Bell, Garden State, Freehold, and Harrah's Philadelphia. The firm acquired a reputation for quick and quality development and production of track photography. His innovative mind brought about the start of the many of the oversize "tribute" photos that owners purchased to mark especially big wins with their horses.

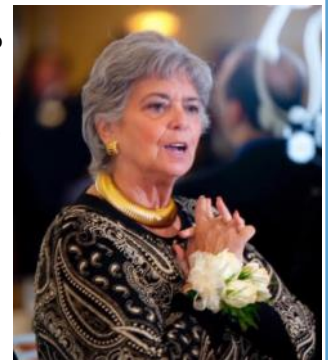


**Claude Richards**, 60, died July 9. Claude began his career as a horseman at 15. He won his first drive on his 21st birthday and was hooked on harness racing. Claude was great with breaking babies. He raced throughout the United States, but Pompano was his home.



**Catherine "Kay" Sudano Caras Spitaliere** died recently.

She was a tireless worker for the Lord. 30 years ago she started a women's class craft night weekly on the backstretch of Belmont and that was just one of the endless number of missions of love that encompassed her every waking moment. Her son, Nick Caras, has been working with Chaplain Humberto Chavez for many, many years providing recreational opportunities to stable area workers and their families.



**Richard "Rich" A. Suda**, 76, of Darien, IL, died recently. Rich and his wife, Ruth, owned and bred harness horses. They were partners and good friends with Jim and Judy Ferguson for over 30 years.



## Obituaries

**Matthew “Ken” Bencic, 77**, of Westlake, OH, died July 21. Ken had been employed as head of capital markets at UBS (formerly Paine Webber) for more than 30 years and retired from S.G. Cowen. He was an avid owner of racehorses for more than 40 years and enjoyed watching his beloved trotters and pacers.



**Jack Case** died July 7. He owned Post Time Productions, the company that did photo, timing, TV at Foxboro Raceway and tracks across the country. Jack had a stroke the beginning of July. Roger Smith says, “He was a good friend and a special man who will be missed.”

**Obituaries continued on page 4**

**Sources for Obituary information include:**

www.harnessracing.com, www.ustrotting.com and  
www.standardbredcanada.ca

## Prayer Corner

**Please pray for all the people on our Prayer List who are battling cancer, especially:**

Lynn Antonelli, Lew Arsenault, Dan Ater, Emily Bier, Debbie Boardman, Amy Bondon, Jeanne Duso Boudot, Jana Brocco, Gary Bryant, Rick Carson, Karen Carter, Sam Castimore, Candice Coleman, Barbara Connors, Sharon Cromer, Joe Crothers, John Cross, Rolly Day, Mike Deeters, Barbara Dinning, Maryanne Doherty, Jerry Eby, Chaplain Tom Farley, Francine Federici, Tiffany Fisher, Lloyd Fortune, Rodney Grady, Pastor Bill Grant, Margaret Groce, Remi Gunn, Marilyn Hankins, Warren Harp, Rose Hennessey, Morris Hoagland, Glenda Holloway, Jeff Hurst, Betty James, Rita Jacobs, AJ Keaton, Harold Kelly, Bob Kinsey, Jim Kolnick, Donnie Knight, David Kovach, Larry Lederman, Rox Liles, Anabelle Lisi, Kevin Mack, Ricky Macomber, Nelson Malin, Wilma Mattuci, Joyceann McClelland, Donna Mclvor, Mrs Miller, Frank Mirahmadi, Lalya Mosley, Corey Murphy, Howard Nields, Pierre Noel, Jay O’Neil, John Panetta, Dee Parsons, Margie Polhamus, Valerie Prescott, Leigh Raymer, Robyn Rembleski, Emily Roper, Daren Richner, Taila Kaponinskyi, Del Smart, Elaina Storlazi, Doug Stringer, Jack Taylor, Carrie Thompson, Gary Tyron, Fred Ward Sr, Roland Wardel, Marty Woebkenberg, Maddy Wright, Joyce Zeasapolowski.

**These friends are also in need of our ongoing prayers:**

Jason Apperti, Jordan Aracena, Ken Bartels, Pleasant Batson, Gary Bennett, Peter Blood, Marilyn Bondon, Stephanie Bouchard, Danny Breton, Charlie Brigham, Betsy Brown, Kevin Burns, Mary Burton, Bob Cain, Carol Ann Case, Thelma Chrisman, Mary Clements, Joan Collins, Anthony Coletta, Bev Crane, Chet Crane, Karen Crothers, Dale, Jim Ferguson, Melanie Fisk, Scott Freck,



Sylvain Gagnon, Greg Gehman, Dr Howard Gill, Bob Goth, Barbara and Brent Graham, Debbie Gray, Bob Hilliard, Vickie Howard, Bob Jones, Ruby Hensley, Miguel Hernandez, Paul and Mrs Hershey, Carol Heusinkveld, Trudy Hite, Jerry Hissam, John Hostler, Jason Hughes, Jesse Hughes, Donna Ingram, Don James, Kenny Kane, Dave Kelly, Barbara Kinsey, Thelma Klark, Michael Klark, Victor Kiss Art LaPlante, Larry Lawter, Ray Levay, Sam Lilli, Katherine Lonager, Sharon Lowell, Faye Mackey, Terry Mahar, Joanne Maiorca, Pedro Martinez, Jr, Kaye McDonnell, Dean Miller, Raymond Miller, Nancy Miner, Mike Murphy, Doug Nash, Elaine Parlin, Ronnie Parker, Waverly Parsons, Susan Parks, Doc Parry, Louise Pelletier, Rita Polese, Noreen Paulen, Art Plant, Joanne Ranger, Donnie Richards, Ray Romanetti, Tori Scott, Delma Smart, Madisyn Smith, Brad Strawser, Lee Anne Taylor, Monica Thors, Marsh Townley, Lorraine Truitt, Mel Turcott, Justin Vance, Barry Vicroy, Max Walton, Steve Warner, Greggie Welch, Jr, Alice Williams, Anne Winters.

**Please try to keep me updated about the people on our prayer list.**

**Please pray for those serving in the military, especially:**

John Beauregard, Joshua Hankins, Yann Lamiqu, Chris Petruzzo, Sgt David Thomas, and Elizabeth Welch.

**Special Intentions for this month:**

Amy Bondon is recovering from radiation and surgery.  
Billy Cole has a tumor on his colon and spots on his liver.  
Vivian Farrington has back pain.  
Harold Kelly is hospitalized with an infection.  
Paula Kuchinski’s niece, Kelsey, 13, has cancer.  
Art Plant has gall bladder problems.  
Robyn’s family member has health issues.



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Salem, NH 03079  
USA



Information at [www.chha.net](http://www.chha.net)

Please indicate  
Address corrections

## Jug Prayer Breakfast Wednesday, September 18

### Congratulations CHHA Scholars Casey Hite and Parker Steck

CHHA Scholarship Committee chairperson, Lisa Schwartz, wrote to Casey Hite, "The Rambling Willie Scholarship is special to us because that was "The Horse that God Loved" and so entitled was the book about him. He had a race tour of 17 cities during his time and is an Immortal Hall of Fame member, as we may well know. Rambling Willie was not only a great competitor earning over two million dollars, he was the greatest four-legged promoter of Standardbred Racing of his time. A marketing wonder!"

Because of Casey's faith-filled application and her passion for the promotion and marketing of Standardbred racing, Casey received the Rambling Willie Scholarship to continue her studies in Corporate Communications at Pennsylvania State University – Fayette. Lisa points out that CHHA is making, "a wise investment in the future of the corporate communications role Casey is sure to be playing in the perpetuation of the Standardbred industry."

As Casey approaches her senior year she writes, "God has blessed me with amazing relationships and memories to last a lifetime while working toward my degree."

As a starting pitcher on the girls' softball team, she leads the team in prayer before each game. She says, "I am a proud Christian and share my views regularly. I'm hoping my openness with my belief will trigger another player to become an advocate for Jesus Christ or intrigue them enough to ask questions."

As a volunteer with her church's Vacation Bible School she loves working with the kids, "teaching fundamentals from the ground up. So many little ones have the dream to stand out on that pitcher's mound and strike a batter out but lack not only the talent, but the confidence. The whole time they are learning to pitch, they don't even realize I am building them up mentally. I teach them to be proud of their talent [...] teaching them to go out there with the, 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me' attitude. I also teach them to be the leader of their team and to PRAY before every game. We never pray to win, but for safety, calm attitudes and

acceptance."

Casey's goal is, "to work in the racing industry public relations field. I love this business and want to see it thrive. I know things won't always be easy, especially in this industry, but a close relationship with God will help with the difficult moments. The racing industry is very volatile right now. We are at a crossroads where we can either shoot forward or continue to slowly decline. I feel this can only be done with public relationships. This is why I chose my major in Corporate Communications. I want to see this industry continue for generations."



**Parker Steck was highlighted last month.**

### Jug Prayer Breakfast Wednesday, September 18

Join us in the Hospitality tent across from the Log Cabin at 7:30 AM, Wednesday, September 18<sup>th</sup> for a FREE breakfast.

Meadows Chaplain, Pastor Joe DiDonato, is sure to inspire us. Pastor Joe and his ministry are a big part of CHHA. He and Marcy are always a blessing during Jug week.

Of course, we will praise God with the beautiful music of the Truitt Family. Come and pray with us for good racing and the safety of everyone at the fairgrounds.

