



Rambling Willie

## Keeping Christ Alive in Harness Racing!

Since 1983

In God We Trust



Christian Harness Horsemen's Association Newsletter

March 2025

Remember,  
I pray for all  
our members  
every day.



*Chaplain Lee Alphen*

### God's Treasure

*By Chaplain Lee Alphen*

Have you ever had to look for something very important in a manure pile? Or have you sifted through the rubble that was your home looking for your treasures before a wildfire, hurricane or tornado or hit? Perhaps looters beat you to it, stealing away what belonged to you.

After creating the world and everything in it, God put Adam and Eve in a beautiful garden. It was theirs to enjoy and nurture. Then along came the slithering serpent, stealing them away from God. Thanks to the evil one, our first parents hid from God because they were afraid.

Over the centuries God never gave up on His people. He tried many times in many ways to encourage His people to come back to Him. Abraham was a godly man yet some of his own family abandoned him for the depravity of Sodom and Gomorrah. But God "remembered Abraham" (Genesis 19:29 NIV) and saved Abraham's nephew Lot and Lot's two daughters when God destroyed the city.

The Ten Commandments spelled out how to live a life that led to happiness, peace and God. The Bible tells us how God's people time and again lost their way and how the prophets kept calling them to repentance. When "the people [...] were exceedingly unfaithful, following all the abominations of the nations" (2 Chronicles 36:14 NIV), the Babylonians attacked Jerusalem, looted and burned the temple, and carried many of the people into exile. But the prophets promised that God "will redeem you out of the hand of your enemies" (Micah 4:10 NIV).

And, never tiring of forgiving, this is what God said: "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more" (Jeremiah 31:34 NIV). God's people are "my treasured possession" (Malachi 3:17 NIV).

Finally, God sent His Son to be born of Mary. Jesus grew up in the midst of His people as one of them. Through the years He kept in touch with His Father in heaven, always making sure they were working together.

In God's perfect time Jesus began to teach the people. One thing He taught them about was treasures. "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it" (Matthew 13:44-45 NIV).

Jesus also told about a shepherd who left ninety-nine sheep in the pasture to go after one who was lost. Then, finding it, went home, telling his friends, "Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep. I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent" (Luke 15:4-7 NIV).

Jesus met Zaccheus, a tax collector, on the road and went with him to his house. The people muttered about him going to the home of a sinner. Jesus replied that He had come "to seek and save the lost" (Luke 19:10 NIV).

Friends, Jesus, the Good Shepherd, has come to find us. He wants to rescue us from the snares of the evil one and bring us home one day to live with Him for all eternity. We are God's treasure.

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ideas please contact:*

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#### Wanted

**Praise Reports and Articles**

Please send to Chaplain Lee Alphen

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Or

157 North Main St · Salem, NH 03079

**God  
Is looking  
For you!**



**1 Peter 2:9**

### Earthen Vessels

by Jeffrey Honoré and John Foley

We hold a treasure  
 Not made of gold  
 In earthen vessels, wealth untold  
 One treasure only, the Lord, the Christ  
 In earthen vessels.

Light has shown in our darkness  
 God has shown in our hearts  
 With the light of the glory  
 Of Jesus the Lord.

He has chosen the lowly  
 Who are small in this world  
 In his weakness His Glory  
 In Jesus the Lord

**God  
 is our  
 Treasure**



### Psalm 130:1-6

Out of the depths I cry to You, Lord;  
 Lord, hear my voice.  
 Let Your ears be attentive  
 to my cry for mercy.  
 If You, Lord, kept a record of sins,  
     Lord, who could stand?  
 But with You there is forgiveness,  
     so that we can, with reverence, serve You.  
 I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits,  
     and in His Word I put my hope.  
 I wait for the Lord  
     more than watchmen wait for the morning.

### Psalm 6:8-10

Away from me, all You who do evil,  
 for the Lord has heard my weeping.  
 The Lord has heard my cry for mercy;  
 the Lord accepts my prayer.  
 All my enemies will be overwhelmed with shame  
 and anguish;  
 they will turn back and suddenly be put to  
 shame.

### Psalm 143:8-11

Let the morning bring me word of Your unfailing  
 love,  
     for I have put my trust in You.  
 Show me the way I should go,  
     for to You I entrust my life.  
 Rescue me from my enemies, Lord,  
     for I hide myself in You.  
 Teach me to do Your will,  
     for You are my God;  
 may Your good Spirit  
     lead me on level ground.  
 For Your Name's sake, Lord, preserve my life.



*May the angels  
 lead you into paradise*  
 Memorials posted at [www.chha.net](http://www.chha.net)

#### Memorial Contributions

- In memory of **Joe Adamsky** by: Lyndel Adamsky
- In memory of **Diana Ackley** by: Dr Bob and Lisa Schwartz
- In memory of **Ralph Beckstedt** by: Paul and Loren Combs
- In memory of **Pleasant Bruno** by: Patricia Cappotelli
- In memory of **Lois Combs** by: Paul and Loren Combs
- In memory of **Leigh Fitch** by: Jo-Dee Brown
- In memory of **Daryl Gager** by: Ed Gager
- In memory of **Bob Jones** by: Lori Jones
- In memory of **Sue and Harold Kelly** by: Linda and Thomas Moyer
- In memory of **John and Janet Klark** by: Joanne Mann
- In memory of **Ron Peacock** by: Jodi Peacock
- In memory of **Dixie Russell** by: Paul Russell
- In memory of **Wayne Shafer** by: Dr Bob and Lisa Schwartz
- In memory of **Sam, Meagan and Melissa McKee** by: Amy Bondon
- In memory of **Andy Wood** by: Longshot Stables

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Please accept my donation of \_\_\_\_\_. Check Cash   

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[To Donate Now—Click here](#)

### Choose a Free Gift with your \$20 donation

#### Gifts for Family and Friends

- 10 Rambling Willie Note Cards (see picture)
- Horseshoe Nail Cross necklaces and key rings—see below
- CHHA Hat



#### Books

- God Wants You Well* by Andrew Wommack  **New**
- Daily Oats* by Chaplain Sam Ed Spence
- Still: A Story of the Black Doctor of the Jersey Pines* by Edmund R Gager
- Sound Mouth—Sound Horse, The Gager Method of Equine Dental Care* by ER Gager and Bob “Dusty” Rhodes
- 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

Jack Levine’s books are also available FREE as downloads at:

<https://www.jackalanlevine.com/ebooks>



Rambling Willie Remembers

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

#### Horseshoe Nail Cross Necklaces and Keyrings

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

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

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

Roger Huston · 154 Vista Drive · Cannonsburg, PA 15317

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

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



## Obituaries continued from page 5

**Nathan F. Bower**, 73, died Nov 27. Like his father and both of his grandfathers, Nathan was a horseman who worked with Standardbred racehorses in his father's stable during high school and college summers. After college, he served as a racing official at Hollywood Park, Los Alamitos and Cal Expo.

**Pleasant "Plez" Bruno**, 70, died Jan 6. Pleasant trained Standardbreds for many years at the Hemlock Fairgrounds. In recent years he worked at Batavia Downs as assistant race secretary. He was presiding judge for various County Fair races through New York. Most recently, he drove the starting car for Buffalo Raceway and Batavia Downs.



**Ralph Ceward Calvert Jr**, 78, of Racine, OH, died Dec 23. Ralph owned, trained, drove and bred harness horses. He retired from the Mountaineer Power Plant.

**Ralph Canney**, 83, of Old Town, ME, died Dec 21. Ralph's true love was harness racing where he was a state regulator for decades. He never retired from the industry until health issues became overwhelming. He taught business math for many years in New York and Old Town, Maine.

**Phil Davies** had a fatal accident. His wife, Rhonda Patrick, misses him terribly. They were together all the time working with the horses. Please keep her in your prayers.

**Ralph DeMarco Sr**, 93, of Stamford, NJ, died Jan 14. Ralph began his harness racing career in 1962 at Roosevelt Raceway. He won his first Amateur Race in Goshen, NY and continued to train and drive his own stable for 30 years mainly in Freehold, Atlantic City, Meadowlands, Liberty Bell, Dover, Poconos, Monticello and Saratoga.



**James Craig Koehler**, 91, of Findlay, OH, died Jan 6. James was involved in the horse business for over 60 years, owning hundreds of top Standardbreds. He began working in his family's nursery and landscaping business when he was eight years old. After college and earning his brokerage license, he began a very successful 75 year real estate career which included developing 85 subdivision plats over 3,000 acres.



**McKayla Lavery**, 18, had a single car accident driving back from Florida that took her life. She works for the Racing Commission at Northfield Park. Please keep her family in your prayers.

**Pete Medhurst**, 55, of Shady Side, MD, died Jan 20. Pete had a passion for horse racing and was considered one of the top harness racing track announcers in the nation, calling races at Rosecroft Raceway and Ocean Downs. He was also the longtime voice of the Navy Midshipmen on the Navy Radio Network and WBAL radio.



**John H. Menges**, 93, died Dec 24. John was the architect who designed Louisville Downs, in Louisville, KY. He specialized in harness and dog tracks and was a leading consultant in race track design as well as winterizing grandstands for year-round racing. When he retired, he raced a small stable of Standardbreds

**Bernard Eugene Nanke**, 95, of Waterloo, IA, died Jan 1. Bernard was passionate about breeding, raising, and training his own horses. His children and grandchildren followed in his footsteps. Bernard was inducted into the Iowa Harness Horsemen's Hall of Fame. He worked as a lithographer before beginning a career in the foundry at John Deere. He was strong believer in agriculture, believing it was the cornerstone of a vital society.

**Randy Ross**, 67, died Dec 25, Christmas day, while celebrating Christmas with his family. Randy was a long time Standardbred owner and breeder and the CEO of Ross Bicycles. He raced his horses under his own name and the Cheyenne Racing Stable. During his life he manufactured, built and sold over 25 million bikes. He was widely considered the father of mountain bike racing.

**Wayne A. "Bud" Shaffer III**, 54, of McClellandtown, PA, died Dec 23. Bud's love for farming and dedication for hard work helped him in establishing Shaffer Standardbreds. He bred, owned and raced harness horses. He was also the owner of Shaffer & Sons and spent many years on the road hauling horses. In addition, Bud served as an ID technician for the USTA.



**Alice "Kathleen" Sutton**, 83, of Washington, PA, died Dec 24. Most her life she was involved in the horse racing industry. Her husband worked for Delvin Miller and her home was on a piece of land surrounded by baby yearlings and horses getting ready for the races. Kathleen spent over 30 years as Clerk of Course at the Meadows Racetrack.

**Barbara Ann Wagner**, 81, died Dec 20. Barbara was a realtor who brokered the sale of many New Jersey horse farms and training centers. She became an advocate to the horse farm and racing industry. In her last weeks, she received countless phone calls from those seeking her advice and connections to find a way to continue racing at Freehold Raceway. Her knowledge made her the "go to" broker for anyone buying or selling property in the Standardbred world.

## Obituaries

**Diana Elaine Ackley**, 71, of Washington CH, OH, died Dec 9. Diana owned harness horses in the past. She was a retired teacher who touched the lives of many children during her career. She was a memorable presence at sporting events, donated to numerous charities, and loved animals.



**Rodney Allums Sr**, 59, of Crown Point, IN, died Jan 1. Rodney owned trained and drove harness horses throughout the Great Lakes region, primarily on the Chicago circuit. His son, Rodney, Jr, also races Standardbreds.

**Ralph W. Beckstedt**, 99, of Celina, OH, died Nov 18. Ralph owned harness horses in years past. He was a daily fixture at the Mercer County Fairgrounds. He received an award from the Mercer County Fair Board for his outstanding service. He also attended the Little Brown Jug for 60 consecutive years. Ralph retired from his lifelong career as a painter on his 86th birthday. He was a member of Immaculate Conception Catholic Church.



**Obituaries continued on page 4**

**Sources for Obituary information include:**

[www.ustrotting.com](http://www.ustrotting.com), [www.harnesslink.com](http://www.harnesslink.com)

*Please send Praise reports,  
Articles, testimonies, etc.  
for the newsletter.*

**Wanted**

Submissions can be a few words up to 300 words.

Please send to Chaplain Lee Alphen  
[leealphen@comcast.net](mailto:leealphen@comcast.net)

Or 157 North Main St · Salem, NH 03079

## Prayer Corner

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

Lynn Antonelli, Lew Arsenault, Emily Bier, Debbie Boardman, Amy Bondon, Dianne Boyken, David Bower, Bob Briley, Georgianna Brocco, Jana Brocco, Gary Bryant, Lore Burke, Glenn Byrd, Rick Carson, Barbara Carter, Mike Carter, Sam Castimore, Candice Coleman, Joe Crothers, Danny Daniel, Thomas Daniel, Mike Deeters, Brenda Jo Dennon, Ashley Dennon-Coen, Declan Donaway, Scott Dube, Jerry Eby, Chaplain Tom Farley, Francine Federici, Tim Finley, Tiffany Fisher, Katie Folkins, Sarah Gehman, Teresa Hubbard Givens, Holly Graffam, Pastor Bill Grant, Cody Greeno, Margaret Groce, Rose Hennessey, Morris Hoagland, Glenda Holloway, Audrey Henry, Layla Hundertpfund, Barb Huston, Betty James, Rita Jacobs, Bob Jones, Jennifer Jugg, AJ Keaton, Julie Kerr, Donnie Knight, David Kovach, Betsy Krantz, Larry Lederman, Rox Liles, Anabelle Lisi, Tommy Long, Kevin Mack, Ricky Macomber, Nelson Malin, Kim Maples, Wilma Mattuci, Joyceann McClelland, Nelson Miller, Frank Mirahmadi, Paul Molnar, Bob Montane, Lalya Mosley, Linda Moyer, Corey Murphy, JC Napier, Howard Niels, Jay O'Neil, John Panetta, Carol Parker, Margie Polhamus, Valerie Prescott, Leigh Raymer, Robyn Rembleski, Ray Romanetti, Emily Roper, Daren Richner, Del Smart, Larry Smith, Cheri Stambaugh, Doug Stringer, Jimmy Takter, Bobbi Tanner, Ellen Taylor, Jack Taylor, Brenda Tippin, Gary Tyron, Brittany Vondenhuevel, Roland Wardel, Lucille Wick, Teresa Willabus, Kate Williams, Steve Wiseman, Marty Woebkenberg, Alan Wroblewski, Allan Wright, Joyce Zeasapolowski.

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

Dennis Albert, Jason Apperti, Jordan Aracena, Ken Bartels, Ellen Beinhauer, Gary Bennett, John Berry, Peter Blood, Marilyn Bondon, Stephanie Bouchard, Danny Breton, Lillie Brown, Kevin Burns, Mary Burton, Bob Cain, Carol Ann Case, Thelma Chrisman, Robin Cino, Melisa Cino, Anthony Coletta, Chet Crane, Karen Crothers, Richard Dunmire, Anna Farley, Scott Freck, Sylvain Gagnon, Greg Gehman, Sarah Gehman, Richie Gillock, Bob Goth, Barbara and Brent Graham, Debbie Gray, Bob Jones, Janice

Hankins, Jimmy Hart, Joyce Hart, Rich Heffington, Bob Hilliard, Vickie Howard, Ruby Hensley, Miguel Hernandez, Paul and Mrs Hershey, Carol Heusinkveld, Trudy Hite, Jerry Hissam, Joyce Hollingsworth, John Hostler, Jason Hughes, Jesse Hughes, Don James, Kenny Kane, Dave Kelly, Michael Klark, Victor Kiss, Larry Lawter, Ray Levay, Sam Lilli, Art Lisi, Jr, Lowell Lockhart, Diane Long, Katherine Lonager, Diane Long, Ernie Lowell, Sharon Lowell, Tommy Luchento, Faye Mackey, Terry Mahar, Joanne Maiorca, Pedro Martinez, Jr, Cheryl Mauran, Dean Miller, Peg Miller, Raymond Miller, Nancy Miner, John Morris, Mike Murphy, Doug Nash, Elaine Parlin, Ronnie Parker, Waverly Parsons, Susan Parks, Doc Parry, Donna Phillips, Rita Polese, Noreen Paulen, Frank Profaci, Del Richards, Donnie Richards, Denis Rogers, Tori Scott, Jody Sexton, Lynn Silver, Delma Smart, Rev Edward Smith, Madisyn Smith, Ryan Stahl, Caryn Stellino, Brad Strawser, Lee Anne Taylor, Carol Tebo, Dick Terien, Myra and Al Terwilliger, Marsh Townley, Lorraine Truitt, Charlotte Truitt, Phillip Truitt, Mel Turcott, Vincenzo Villante, Justin Vance, Barry Vicroy, Steve Warner, Reggie Welch, Jr, Charles Weiss, Alice Williams, Pat Wilson, 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, Chris Petruzzo, Sgt David Thomas, Elizabeth Welch and Nigel Willabus.

**Special Intentions for this month:**

Lyndel Adamsky has shoulder problems.  
Allen developed an intolerance to his chemo meds.  
Becky – please pray for her salvation.  
Jerry Bookmeyer was moved to a nursing home.  
Mary Jo Bross is recovering from knee surgery.  
Ron Fraker has bladder cancer.  
Sarah Gehman's tumors grew again.  
Julie Manchester is recovering from cancer surgery.  
Joanne Mann's granddaughter has anorexia.  
Freeman Parker fell and broke his hip.  
Jeremi Sensky is recovering from surgery.  
Lorraine Truitt lost her mobile home in a fire.  
Betsy Wood is recovering from a stroke.

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USA



Please indicate  
Address corrections

## What is Lent

Many Christians take time during lent to pursue a closer relationship with God. Remembering the 40 days Jesus fasted in the desert, the season provides 40 days for us to deepen our prayer lives, fast and give alms.

Holy Week follows lent beginning with Palm Sunday. Many Christian denominations celebrate Jesus’ Last Supper on Maundy Thursday. On Good Friday we remember Jesus being arrested, mocked and whipped and then forced to carry His cross up Calvary Hill where He was crucified to pay the price for our sins. Then on Easter Sunday we are truly ready to celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord.

Fasting is what we make of it and can be an incredible time of prayer that helps us unite with God in a very deep way. Everyone is free to choose their own fast. It can be anything from a particular food or food group or certain meals during the week. Fasting from things like our phones, smoking or alcohol and even swearing are good ideas. Please remember if you fast from meals to drink plenty of water or fruit juice. Since Sunday is the Lord’s Day, it is not a fast day.

Almsgiving is, according to the dictionary, the practice of giving money or food to poor people. In the context of Lent, it can be donating to charity or volunteering to help others. It is a form of showing love to those in need.

A good way to deepen our prayer lives is by reading and studying our Bibles. CHHA is offering a Lenten online Bible study Monday nights at 7:00 from March 10th through April 14th. For more information and to register visit [www.chha.net/bible-studies](http://www.chha.net/bible-studies). You can also reach the registration information from [www.chha.net](http://www.chha.net).



## Lenten Online Bible Study

Prepare to celebrate The Resurrection of the Lord, Easter Sunday, with our Lenten Bible study. This study will meet Monday nights March 10 through April 14 at 7:00 PM on Zoom. Chaplain Lee Alphen and Pastor Bob Holet will lead this study together. Register at [www.chha.net/bible-studies](http://www.chha.net/bible-studies) so we can send you login information and materials. You can also reach the registration information from [www.chha.net](http://www.chha.net).

## CHHA Scholars

**Aubrey Schwartz** was awarded the Rambling Willie Scholarship to complete her degree in agriculture, agricultural business and education at Wilmington College. Her goal is to become an agricultural educator or a 4-H extension agent.

While Aubrey served as an officer (first secretary and then president) of FFA (Future Farmers of America), she used her position to promote harness racing. Growing up helping with her father’s stable, she is very familiar with our industry.

Aubrey tells us in her essay that her faith grew during her school years by attending youth groups with her friends in middle school. In high school, her Fellowship of Christian Athletes group was a great source of strength in tough times. In college she studied the bible with her sorority sisters and her FFA state officer teammates brought her closer to God in many ways.

She says, “My faith accomplishments and achievements have shaped my character tremendously. I have been blessed to be surrounded by amazing people who have allowed me to achieve great things.”

