



Rambling Willie

Keeping Christ Alive in Harness Racing!

Since 1983

In God We Trust



Christian Harness Horsemen's Association Newsletter

December 2025

Remember,  
I pray for all  
our members  
every day.



Chaplain Lee Alphen

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### Wanted

#### Praise Reports and Articles

Please send to Chaplain Lee Alphen

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Or

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Merry  
Christmas

## You Are Well Bred

By Chaplain Lee Alphen

Who does your horse take after? With the big sales behind us, the season for breeding and foaling is right around the corner. It's time to pore over pedigrees. We look back through the generations for preferred bloodlines. Bill Donovan, a well-known breeder who frequents the sales, told me three generations usually satisfies yearling buyers though sometimes they go back further. Breeders go back six, seven and even eight generations.

The gospel of Matthew begins, "This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham: Abraham was the father of Isaac" (Matthew 1:1-2 NIV). Fourteen generations later Jesse becomes the father of King David (Matthew 1:6). Twenty-eight generations after David we read, "and Jacob [was] the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, and Mary was the mother of Jesus who is called the Messiah" (Matthew 1:16 NIV).

David was a man after God's own heart, and Abraham is frequently referred to as "God's friend," a title highlighting the special intimacy and trust between them (2 Chronicles 20:7, Isaiah 41:8 and James 2:23).

While production and fertility are important, Bill says, "good stallions 'stamp' their foals. That is, the foals have the same look, body type and attitude—and, hopefully, speed and manners on the track. It's often a concern, when a stallion is a 'bad actor' on the track, that they pass that on, and many breeders and/or yearling buyers will be wary." Bill also said, "the maternal line founder's family often has certain traits that pass through all the generations." Of course, traits of both

parents are passed on.

Mathew's genealogy presents Jesus as the Messiah prophesied in the Old Testament and King David's heir through Joseph, his adoptive father, as well as through his mother, Mary. Some of Jesus' ancestors had scandalous pasts. Matthew includes these relatives, and also gentiles and women such as Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba in his genealogy. This signifies that all people are important to God. No one is denied God's love or a place in His family.

All Standardbreds trace their lineage back to the English Thoroughbred, Messenger, and to his son Hambletonian. "God created mankind in His own image, in the image of God He created them" (Genesis 1:27 NIV). So we know that God is the Father of all people. We all have good breeding.

The Hambletonian line includes some bad actors and poor performers who are shunned when they don't race well enough or are too difficult to handle. Sometimes, when a new owner takes them, they respond better and enjoy a good future. Others however, run out of chances and are abandoned. Thank God for the horse adoption programs that provide a safety net for some.

**God does not abandon His people.** He never stops loving them and giving them chances right up until their time on earth ends. They have all that time to accept God's love and turn to Him. They are never abandoned. In fact, this month we celebrate the birth of God's Son, Jesus, whom God sent to us to show us the way back to Him. Unfortunately, some still walk away from God and all His blessings. They abandon Him.

You cont. on page 2

## You cont. from page 1

Thankfully, the way back is easy: "The grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people" (Titus 2:11 NIV). God's Christmas gift to us is "eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23 NIV). Let's quickly accept God's generous gift before it is too late.



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

### Memorial Contributions

In memory of **Albert Adams** by: Dr Bob and Lisa Schwartz  
 In memory of **Joe Adamsky** by: Lyndel Adamsky  
 In memory of **Sarah Gehman Allen** by: CHHA-The Meadows  
 In memory of **Yves Breton** by: Lyse Breton  
 In memory of **Preston Burris, Jr** by: Rich and Sandy Thorstenson  
 In memory of **Karen Carter** by: Ken Carter  
 In memory of **Lois Combs** by: Paul and Loren Combs  
 In memory of **Beckie Davis** by: Dean Davis  
 In memory of **Dick DeSantis** by: Lyes Breton  
 In memory of **Bob and Viv Farrington** by: Rich and Sandy Thorstenson  
 In memory of **Daryl Gager** by: Ed Gager  
 In memory of **Bob Highfield** by: Dr Bob and Lisa Schwartz  
 In memory of **Harold and Sue Kelly** by: Linda and Tom Moyer  
 In memory of **Mique Malibashka** by: Gary and Corine McCandless  
 In memory of **The McKee Family** by: Amy Bondon  
 In memory of **Dan Murry** by: Connie Murry  
 In memory of **John Otrembiak** by: Mary Beth Wing  
 In memory of **Earl "Buck" Owings** by: Dr Bob and Lisa Schwartz,  
 Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association  
 In memory of **Donald Rinker** by: Kim Rinker  
 In memory of **Weldon and Nancy Stockwell** by: Marsh Townley  
 and prior board members  
 In memory of **Pat Wilson** by: Amy Bondon  
 In memory of **Betsy Wood** by: Longshot Stables

## Blessings from God

### From Steve Byrd...

Glen Byrd is in remission. Praise God! He thanks you for your prayers.

### From Brenda-Jo Dennon...

1. Brenda-Jo has health struggles. However, she says, "God blesses me and mine every day. He lets us live our best life, and I am so grateful."
2. JC followed up with his doctors. Bloodwork, etc. are within range. They scoped his throat and found only scar tissue, no new tumors. Brenda asks for prayers for her family.
3. Her granddaughter, Ashley Dennon-Coen, 34, has had many tumors removed and also has a pacemaker. She refuses to give in. She said of her 9-year-old daughter, "God didn't give her to me for no reason."

### From Tim Finley...

Tim says that thanks to your many prayers and medication there is no longer any sign of the meningitis. Praise God!

### From Lorrie Jones...

Mighty Miracle, a horse she had to sell for financial reasons about 10 years ago, is came back to her. She is very excited. It was noted that when he was ready to retire, she would like him back. Lorrie was delighted to hear from the owners and considers it a miracle.

### From Brenda Watson...

Kim Ortiz is still doing chemo. Some of the tumors are shrinking after about a year. She has a great attitude and is praising God. She had a few weeks off but started back up again. Please pray they continue to control the cancer and are bearable.

## How is your walk?

Yes, it's nice to get out and have a nice walk on a regular basis, it's good exercise and clears the head. A song by Greenday, "I Walk Alone" was a hit song in the recent past, but do you really want to walk alone? A walk with Jesus has immense benefits like eternal life, what more could you ask for. Yes, there will be trials, but Jesus is walking with you through the trials. The scriptures tell us.

*"I will never leave you; never will I forsake you."* -  
Hebrews 13:5

Also, *"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me."* -Psalms 23:4

Wherever, whenever you walk in the future let Jesus join you.

Blessings, peace out,  
Pastor Rick Smurdon



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## 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

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 ☐

Jack Levine's books are available FREE as downloads at:

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

Downloading God    Live A Life That Matters for God

My Addict Your Addict    Where the Rubber Meets the Road

Don't Blow It With God    **We do still have a few of Jack's print books left.***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

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

### MSOA 36th Annual Auction for Charity

The Meadows Standardbred Owners Association (MSOA) is hosting their 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Auction for Charity on Sunday, December 7, 2025 at the Hilton Garden Inn,Southpointe in Washington, PA. A large part of the proceeds will help fund Pastor Joe DiDonato's ministry at the Meadows. For information or to donate items for the silent auction, contact Janet Campbell at [jjcamp1@comcast.net](mailto:jjcamp1@comcast.net).



## Obituaries continued from page 5

**Beth Brown**, 82, of Marysville, OH, died Mar 23, 2024. Beth owned and bred a couple of harness horses. She spent 52 years as a cosmetologist and hairdresser. She taught Sunday school and sang in the choir at St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church. Beth was a CHHA member.



**G. Preston Burris, Jr**, 93, formerly of Smyrna, DE, died Oct 13. Preston was an owner/trainer/driver of Standardbred horses. The highlight of Preston's career was training and driving the world champion pacing filly, Silk Stockings.



**Dr. Michael Carinda, DVM**, 64, of Wellington, FL, died Sep 16. Michael started caring for animals by helping his father, Joe, at the Cape Cod MSPCA. He began his veterinary career at Foxboro Raceway before relocating to South Florida where he worked at Pompano Park and continued to care for horses throughout the state.

**Everett P. Crowe**, 93, of Eaton, OH, died Sep 20. Everett drove and trained horses for more than 30 years. He also worked for General Motors – Delco Moraine for 30 years.



**James Kent "Chip" Hastings**, 77, of Delaware, OH, died Oct 10. James worked for the USTA for 32 years over two stints. Beginning in 1976, he served as director of officials through 1984. In 1992 he became the liaison officer, a post he held until his retirement in 2017. He also served as presiding judge at many racetracks.



**Robert N. (Bob) Highfield**, 92, of Washington Court House, OH, died Aug 26. Bob was manager of the Pure Oil Bulk Plant and Case Power and Equipment before becoming a realtor and broker. He retired as Fayette County's first Economic Development Director. He also worked for Midland Acres, pursuing his love of horses. After retirement, Bob spent most of his time tending to his award-winning pure-bred, Dorset Sheep.



**Jaxon Logan Hylton**, 8, of North Ridgeville, OH, died Sep 7. Jaxon was a guest at our 2019 Little Brown Jug prayer breakfast. He enjoyed seeing all the horses and found the breakfast very special. He was born with only one chamber in his heart. The Cleveland Clinic rebuilt it and considered him a "miracle baby". It sounds like Jaxon lived his short life to the fullest. His grandfather, Harold Hylton, is a CHHA member and faithful prayer partner.



**Francis LaCava**, 75, of Keokuk, Iowa, died Sep 2. In the 1970s, Francis worked as a harness horse trainer, a career that allowed him to follow his lifelong passion for horses and racing. He later worked in event security in Massachusetts. His love for horses remained a central part of his life.

**Earl "Buck" Owings**, 72, of Chillicothe, OH, died Oct 17. Earl owned, trained, drove and bred harness horses. He was a dedicated horseman and a respected mentor and friend to many in the harness racing community. In his final weeks, he made it known that he had accepted Jesus as his personal savior and was at peace knowing where he would spend eternity. It was also the help of a horse that led him to salvation through the words written in a devotional book *"100 Devotions From The Horse Farm."*



**Donald "Spanky" Rinker**, 97, of Springfield, OH, died Jan 18. Don played baseball for the Yankee's minor league team. Then, after 55 years working at Meek's Sporting Goods, he purchased the company. Besides owning and operating Meek's, Don was a well-respected basketball and football referee. In fact, he was very active in a variety of sports where he earned many titles. He attended the races many times at the Red Mile and traveled extensively with his wife, Ginger, and sometimes his daughter, CHHA member Kim Rinker.



**Arlie Tinder**, 91, of Ocala, FL, died recently. Arlie was a longtime Standardbred owner, breeder, trainer, driver, and since 1988 was the Golden Cross Farm manager. Dawn Allem said, "He was an invaluable part of our farm and racing stable with his unending work ethic and dedication. Arlie was a faithful CHHA member."



**Willard Paul Kirk White**, 79 of Batavia, NY, died Oct 6. Paul was a track photographer at Buffalo Raceway for 7 years and at Batavia Downs for almost 20 years. He was a flying enthusiast and loved to be in the air in either plane or parachute.



**Clayton James Woodley**, 20, of Milford, PA, died Sep 13. Clayton was an HVAC Technician. He enjoyed gaming, hiking, fixing up old vehicles and riding his motorcycle. His journey on this earth was one marked by love and compassion. Clayton was the son of John and Brandie Woodley.



### Sources for Obituary information include:

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

## Obituaries

**Albert Charles Adams**, 89, of Bellville, OH, died Sep 19. Albert worked for 30 years at Almahurst Farm in Nicholasville, KY making his way to vice president. In the 1980s he moved to Ohio and established Winterwood Farm where he enjoyed breeding, foaling and raising horses. He had a love for gray horses. At one time he had the largest number of gray mares registered with the USTA. Albert received a Service to Youth Award from the Harness Horse Youth Foundation. He was a CHHA member.



**Patricia "Pat" Ann Wilson**, 87, of Smiths Creek, MI, was called to rest with the Lord on Oct 18. Pat enjoyed training and driving her Standardbred horses both at fairs and racetracks throughout Michigan. Fiercely independent, Pat worked her entire adult life. She started out waitressing at fine dining restaurants and later opened a drapery business which she ran from her home. Pat was CHHA member, Christine McKee's, mother.



**Obituaries continued on page 4**

## Prayer Corner

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

Lew Arsenault, Emily Bier, Debbie Boardman, Amy Bondon, David Bower, Bob Briley, Georgianna Brocco, Jana Gary Bryant, Lore Burke, Rick Carson, Barbara Carter, Mike Carter, Sam Castimore, Candice Coleman, Loren Combs, Joe Crothers, Danny Daniel, Mike Deeters, Ashley Dennon-Coen, Declan Donaway, Scott Dube, Jerry Eby, Chaplain Tom Farley, Ray Farmer, Francine Federici, Tim Finley, Tiffany Fisher, Katie Folkins, Ron Fraker, Teresa Hubbard Givens, Holly Graffam, Pastor Bill Grant, Cody Greeno, Margaret Groce, Marilyn Hankins, Rose Hennessey, Morris Hoagland, Glenda Holloway, Audrey Henry, Layla Hundertpfund, Betty James, Rita Jacobs, Jennifer Jugg, AJ Keaton, Julie Kerr, Donnie Knight, David Kovach, Betsy Krantz, Rox Liles, Anabelle Lisi, Kevin Mack, Ricky Macomber, Nelson Malin, Kim Maples, Wilma Mattuci, Joyceann McClelland, Nelson Miller, Frank Mirahmadi, Paul Molnar, Bob Montane, Lalya Mosley, Corey Murphy, JC Napier, Howard Nields, 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, Dick Terrien, Brenda Tippin, Phillip Truitt, Gary Tyron, Brittanty Vondenhuevel, Roland Wardel, Teresa Willabus, Kate Williams, Steve Wiseman, Marty Woebkenberg, Bobby Williams, Alan Wroblewski, Allan Wright and 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, Anthony Coletta, Chet Crane, Karen Crothers, Brenda Jo Dennon, Richard Dunmire, Anna Farley, Scott Freck, Sylvain Gagnon, Greg Gehman, Richie Gillock, Bob Goth, Barbara and Brent Graham, Debbie Gray, 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, 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, Dick Terien, Al Terwilliger, Marsh Townley, Lorraine Truitt, Charlotte Truitt, Phillip Truitt, Mel Turcott, Vincenzo Villante, Justin Vance, Barry Vicroy, Steve Warner, Gregg 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 Petrullo, Sgt David Thomas, Elizabeth Welch and Nigel Willabus.

***Special Intentions for this month:***

Becky has P.S.P. and has not accepted Christ.  
Steve Byrd's cousin has an erratic heartbeat.  
Nick Caras has a mass behind his esophagus.  
Stefano Cecere has health issues.  
Dan Cochel has an autoimmune disease.  
Stacey VanDyne has some health issues.  
Ray Farmer is hospitalized with prostate cancer.  
Loveda Finley has unidentified rapid weight loss.  
Reggie Herriott's sister has respiratory problems.  
Jorgen has a serious brain injury.  
Heddy Nelson has cancer.  
Jennifer Jugg, 36, has no immune system left.  
Dale Matthews has cancer and kidney failure.  
Shawn Messa has been dealing with infections.  
David Richard continues to battles health issues at home.  
Susy Roberts is recovering from a knee replacement.  
Ray Romanetti continues to decline.  
Alan Salyers has prostate cancer.  
Rae Ann Smith has histoplasmosis, an eye problem.  
Jody Townley has lupus.  
Kevin Wallis has pancreatic cancer.

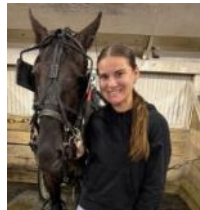
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Address corrections

## CHHA Scholars

Samantha Mayhugh was awarded the Rambling Willie scholarship to continue her studies at the Ohio State University in Columbus. She is majoring in agricultural business and applied economics with a minor in equine studies. She hopes to help shape the future of harness racing.



Sam is a third-generation horsewoman who works hard at her family's stable jogging and training the horses every evening. She also trucks them to the races and paddocks them. In addition, she has had a job with the Litt stable the last five years.

I met Sam at the Jug while she was working in the OHHA booth and was very impressed with her professionalism, comradery, knowledge and Christian attitude while helping the OHHA members.

Lisa Schwartz tells us the Pickaway County Fair is blessed to have Samantha as a volunteer.

Samantha says, "My involvement in church and community service has helped shape my character, grow my leadership skills and define my goals for the future. Faith has always been the foundation of who I am. It guides how I treat others, how I face challenges and how I view my purpose in life."

Samantha's goal is to work with a business or organization to promote and educate others about harness horse racing. She says, "This sport has been a lifelong passion of mine, and I want to dedicate my future to helping it grow and gain the recognition it deserves. I plan to begin my career in broadcasting or media with an organization or at a racetrack." Her ultimate career goal is to become an executive director for a harness racing organization where she would "focus on advocating for horsemen and women, building stronger community engagement." She hopes to shape the future of harness racing through outreach, education and development.

## Bible Study online

Our Advent/Christmas/Epiphany Bible study begins December 1st at 7:00 p.m. Each week is a new lesson that does not depend on prior weeks. You are welcome to register and then join us when you can.

Go to <https://chha.net/bible-studies> for information and to register. You can also reach the registration page from our home page at [www.chha.net](http://www.chha.net). Chaplain Lee will send you a confirmation and login information when you register. Please allow a day or longer for a response.



## Meadows 36th Annual Auction for Charity

See page 3 for information

## The Day He Was Born

*By Todd DuBois*

I love the pies and gifts we give in celebration of the Lord. I remember as kids the stockings that hung and the turkey in the fridge.

Sometimes I wonder if times have changed and people are starting to forget, but the joy of the season helps us realize that's just not it.

The Lord Jesus Christ is our savior, and this is the reason for it: the season of joy and hope, family and tradition. The reason to keep going and never quit.

Throw a log on the fire and enjoy time with your family, and please never forget that day on Calvary Hill or Bethlehem where the greatest miracle of all took place: the birth of Jesus Christ.

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, Amen.