



Rambling Willie

## Keeping Christ Alive in Harness Racing!

Since 1983

In God We Trust



Christian Harness Horsemen's Association Newsletter

February 2026

Remember,  
I pray for all  
our members  
every day.



*Chaplain Lee Alphen*

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## Prepare to Win the Race of Life

*By Chaplain Lee Alphen*

Jogging and training prepares our horses for the races. We start out easy and gradually increase the mileage and training times depending on the horse. Generally, Standardbreds jog three to five miles most days and train in between races. Thoroughbred workouts are much shorter.

"Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil" (Matthew 4:1 NIV). He fasted for forty days, praying and spending time with the Father. This was a period of preparation for his earthly ministry.

Parents and teachers prepare children to succeed in life by challenging them to be all God made them to be. My brothers and I each had a list of daily chores and were expected to help out in other ways. Our parents also taught us to water ski and encouraged us with other exciting opportunities for us to grow and experience new and stimulating challenges. This was all very good for us and helped us all develop good work ethics.

I believe our grandparents were the ones most involved in nurturing our faith. Our teachers and professors expected us to study, complete assignments and learn the work they presented. Towards the end of my formal studies, it occurred to me that the purpose of education was to learn how to learn in different disciplines. There is always something more to learn. We never really finish our time of preparation in any field.

Jesus learned the scriptures well and was able to use them in His battle against the evil one. Twice the devil

challenged Jesus, questioning His identity as the Son of God. "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." Jesus answered, 'It is written: "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God."' (Matthew 4:4 NIV).

Then the devil told Jesus that if He was the Son of God to throw Himself off the top of the temple, reminding Him of the scripture that said God would send His angels to help Him. "Jesus answered, 'It is also written: "Do not put the Lord your God to the test"' (Matthew 4:6-7 NIV).

The devil still didn't quit but showed Jesus the whole big, beautiful world and promised to give it to Him if He bowed down and worshipped Satan (Matthew 4:9). "Jesus said to him, 'Away from me Satan! For it is written: "Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only."' Then the devil left Him and angels came and attended Him" (Matthew 4:10-11 NIV).

Jesus was very well prepared. He ached the final and won the race.

We are still learning. Our time of preparation will continue until we reach the pearly gates. The season of Lent, beginning on Ash Wednesday, which is February 18th this year, is a good time to take stock of where we are in our relationships with God. Then, by setting time aside each day to study scripture and talk with God, we too will be better prepared to thwart the challenges of the evil one.

We set up daily training schedules for our horses. Jesus fasted in the desert for forty days and then continued to spend time seeking guidance from the Father. We are at least as important as our horses and more in need of improving

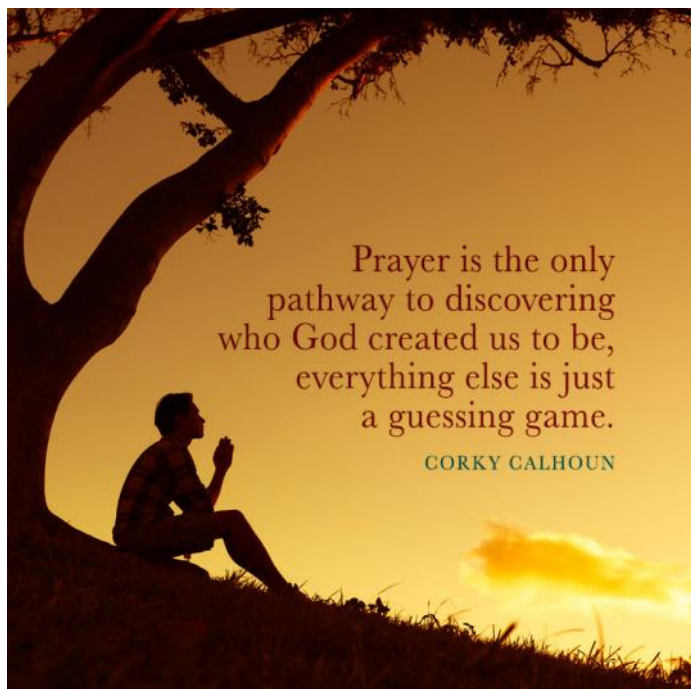
**Prepare cont. on page 2**

*Win  
The Race  
Of Life!*

## Prepare cont. from page 1

our relationships with God in heaven than Jesus was. It is important for us to follow an ongoing routine to grow closer to God and understand His will for us.

Remember when the devil comes knocking, call on the name of the Lord and remember your Bible passages. Then God will send His angels to help you too. Let's win the race of Life.



## Blessings from God

### *From Omar Aracena*

Thank you very much for your faithful prayers for the people that find themselves in various needs in their lives, like my daughter Jordan; I appreciate it very much and it is really encouraging to know that we are not alone in our battles. Thank you! She has been doing well for the last couple of months, however, she is under the weather right now.

As a matter of fact, every member of my family is with the exception of my two sons. The prayer should be for her to continue to be as healthy as possible without mental, emotional or physical pain.

### *From Greg Gehman...*

Greg's grandson, infant Owen, came home from the hospital. They were able to connect his intestines. Praise God! He has just begun to eat liquid food and may never be able to eat regular food. He still requires a lot of specialized care. Please pray for a speedy and complete recovery and that he will indeed eat regular food at the proper time.



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

## Memorial Contributions

In memory of **Jack Baggitt** by: Bob and Christine Baggitt; Jill Norton  
 In memory of **Bonnie Battis** by: Paul Battis  
 In memory of **Yves Breton** by: Lyse Breton  
 In memory of **Loren Combs** by: Paul Combs; Ford and Joyce Cornett; Dean and Beckie Davis; Tracie and Jeff Fickert; Karen Gillis; Greg Menchover; Mercer County Harness Horsemen's Assoc; Joanne White  
 In memory of **Phil Cunningham** by: Melody Cunningham  
 In memory of **Skip DeMull** by: Ralph and Marjorie Deshetsky  
 In memory of **John Emonin** by: Emily Emonin  
 In memory of **Bob and Viv Farrington** by: Joe and Karen Ewing  
 In memory of **Larry Farrington** by: Jim and Judy Ferguson  
 In memory of **Pat Farrington** by: Joe and Karen Ewing  
 In memory of **Dr John Findley** by: Rev Mark McLennan  
 In memory of **Larry Flynn** by: Ohio Harness Horsemen's Assoc.  
 In memory of **Gale Franklin** by: Sharon Franklin  
 In memory of **Daryl Gager** by: Ed Gager  
 In memory of **Caroll "CD" Huffman** by: Emily Emonin  
 In memory of **Bob Jones** by: Loretta Jones  
 In memory of **Winnie Kaminga** by: Harriet and Bradley Ferris  
 In memory of **John and Janet Klark** by: Craig Holtermann, Joanne Mann  
 In memory of **Donna Lee** by: Chris Coyle  
 In memory of **Sam, Melissa and Meagan McKee** by: Amy Bondon and Christine McKee  
 In memory of **Don and Goldie McLennan** by: Rev Mark McLennan  
 In memory of **Wyatt Morrissey** by: Marilyn and Carthel Daulton  
 In memory of **Philip Morris** by: Jo-Dee Brown  
 In memory of **Dr Paul Nolan** by: Amy Bondon  
 In memory of **John Otrembiak** by: Mary Beth Wing  
 In memory of **Ron Peacock** by: Jodi Peacock  
 In memory of **Phil Peavyhouse** by: Ralph and Marjorie Deshetsky  
 In memory of **Paul E and Paul A Pollara** by: Paul Pollara  
 In memory of **Frank Utter** by: Ann Utter  
 In memory of **Roger Roland** by: Royal Rolund  
 In memory of **Ray Romanetti** by: Amy Bondon; Diane Haberman  
 In memory of **Weldon Stockwell** by: Jack Levine  
 In memory of **Walter and Pauline Warrington** by: Steven Warrington  
 In memory of **Lucille Wick** by: Kate and Ken Duell  
 In memory of **Wick Family** by: Susan Throm-White; Kimberly and Michele Throm  
 In memory of **Dr Dan Wilson** by: Jim Mayes; Bob Miller; Dr Bob and Lisa Schwartz  
 In memory of **Randy Williams** by: Dr Bob and Lisa Schwartz  
 In memory of **Dennis Youshock** by: Joyce Youshock

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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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Keyring Qty: Red \_\_\_\_ Blue \_\_\_\_ Other cross color \_\_\_\_\_

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

*"The LORD bless you and keep you;  
the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you;  
the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace" (Numbers 6:24-26).*



## Obituaries cont. from page 5

**Paul Joseph Abraytis**, 72, of Broadview, IL, died Dec 4. Paul was an avid harness racing fan who trained Standardbreds and worked with horses most of his life. During retirement he enjoyed spending time outside working around his farm, driving his tractor and spending quality time with his family and beloved animals.



**Alba Luz (Lucy) Bernardi**, 80, of Carleton, MI, died Oct 10. Lucy and her husband, Elpidio (Junior), raised their family and ran a racehorse business side by side. She built a beautiful life rooted in love, family, and faith. Lucy was known for her kindness.



**Ben Bolon**, 79, of Washington, PA, died Dec 9. Ben began racing horses with his dad at Ohio fairs then followed his father to the Meadows. Ben established himself as a talented driver, picking up catch-drives to win three straight Meadows driving titles in the 1970s, while also operating his own public stable.

**Dr. Malcolm J "Jim" Borthwick Jr, VMD**, 84, died Oct 21. Jim started his career with harness horses at Yonkers and Roosevelt Raceways. He and his wife, Mary, moved to New Hope, PA, in 1971, and he continued his career as an equine veterinarian. He enjoyed driving his own horses, many of which he bred and trained.



**Raymond M. Farmer**, 69, of Toledo, OH, died Oct 17. After high school, Ray worked for Steel Castings before dedicating his life to owning, training, and racing horses. He was recognized several times as "Top Trainer" at the former Raceway Park in Toledo.



**Gary Gregory**, 81, of Churchville, NY, died Oct 22. Gary started working around horses with his father. Eventually he started his own public stable and was a premier trainer.

**Paul Douglas Gsell**, 87, of Crumpton, MD, died Nov 17. Paul started working at Winfield Farms as a horse handler in the stallion barn. After his retirement, he and his wife, Carolyn, owned, trained, and raced Standardbreds. He had an amazing way with horses.



**Caroll Dean "C.D." Huffman**, 81, of Sigourney, IA, died Nov 9. CD was always into racehorses. Along with his family he owned Huffman Racing Stables and raced horses throughout the country. He was also passionate about livestock sales and over the years he owned several sales barns. CD was a member of Sigourney United Methodist Church.

**Larry E. Lynn**, 87, of Salem, OH, died Sep 14. Larry was an owner, trainer and driver whose life revolved around horse racing. He was employed at Everflow Eastern as a Drilling Superintendent and retired in 1999. Larry was a member of the Austintown Community Church.



**Willard (Bill) Miller**, 83, of Jamestown, OH, died Dec 5. After graduating from farrier school, Bill began his career shoeing horses. He was well known for his ability to assess and provide corrective shoeing for racehorses. After retiring, he raised and competed quarter horses before he began training and racing Standardbreds.



**Dr. Paul Nolan**, 81, died recently. Dr Nolan is a well-known Standardbred veterinarian. He began working at Vernon Downs with Dr John Steele and later established his own practice.

**Thomas James (Tom) Peragine**, 69, of Sacramento, CA, died Oct 25. Tom raced a stable of horses in California from 1988 to 1991 doing especially well with older horses. Tom loved his family, bird watching, antiques and Christmas.



**Wayne A. Rakshys**, 76, of Lindenhurst, NY, died Nov 28. His wife, Louise Rakshys, also of Lindenhurst, died Dec 2. Wayne and Louise were small business owners of Global Horse Transport in Lindenhurst for over 40 years. Louise passed away Dec 2. Wayne also owned Standardbreds.

**Elmer C. Roehm**, 82, of Willshire, OH, died Oct 24. Elmer owned and bred harness horses for about 30 years. His son, Kerry, is an owner, trainer and driver. Elmer was a truck driver and maintenance worker. He enjoyed fishing and his beloved cat, Putty. But most of all he enjoyed spending time with his family.



**Bonnie Jeanne Rush** of Plainville, MA, died Oct 30. Bonnie's racing career began at Foxboro Raceway in 1970 when she became one of the first women drivers. She was also an owner, trainer and breeder. She was the first woman ever to win a race at Pocono Downs. She also competed with Quarter Horses in barrel racing, trained Thoroughbreds and was an outrider in Florida.



**Randy Miles Williams, Sr**, 69, of Pataskala, OH, died Nov 21. Horses were a huge part of Randy's life. He retired as a driver, trainer, and associate judge of Standardbreds at Scioto Downs and Dayton Raceway.



**Dr. Dan Wilson**, 76, of Hudson, OH, died Nov 17. Doc Wilson began his veterinary practice in 1975 at Northfield Park retiring almost 50 years later. Then he and his wife, Barbara, bought some horses and enjoyed watching them race. He received a Special Service to Harness Racing Award from the Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association.



**Emma Young**, 77, of Pennington, NJ, died Nov 29. Emma was a breeder, owner and beloved member of Southwind Farm for over 20 years. She was a lover of not only horses but also wildlife and hunting adventures. She was a prominent fixture in the taxidermy industry in New Jersey.

There is nothing more important than  
**Your Eternal Salvation**

Kirk Cameron

## Obituaries

**Loren Ira Combs**, 89, of Celina, OH, died Nov 5. Loren was a blacksmith and also owned, trained and drove harness horses. He loved horses and enjoyed harness racing and horse pulling. He often quoted Winston Churchill, "The outside of a horse is good for the inside of a man." He loved the Lord and lived his faith. Loren, his late wife, Lois, son Paul and other family members are all CHHA members.



**Patricia Barnhart Farrington**, 94, died Sep 20. Pat dedicated several years to Heartland Nursing Home as a dietician where her unmatched work ethic was only surpassed by her compassion for those she served. Above all, she treasured time spent with her family. Pat's late husband was harness racing's Brad Farrington. She is also the mother of CHHA members Judy Ferguson and the late Larry Farrington.



**Cory (16), Stephanie (56), and Roger Haynos (56)**, passed from this earthly life to heaven on Jan 29. Roger and his wife, Stephanie, owned Standardbreds. Roger trained a little and drove in matinees. Cory ranked #1 in the country in intermediate men for 2024-25 U.S. figure skating. The entire family were devoted Christians, and put God above all. Stephanie was a CHHA member.

**Dale C. Matthews**, 75, of Salisbury, MD, died Nov 28. Dale enjoyed working on cars in his garage. He loved "tinkering" with things to bring them back to life. His cousin and friend, CHHA member Dennis Crane, moved to Maryland to care for him towards the end of his life.

**Ray Romanetti**, a former Meadows owner, trainer and driver, went home to be with the Lord Dec 30. Ray and his wife, Lori are CHHA members. More information will be published when it is available.



Obituaries continued on page 4

### Sources for Obituary information include:

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

## 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, Nick Caras, 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, 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 Woeckenberg, 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, Dan Cocherl, 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 Petruzzo, Sgt David Thomas, Elizabeth Welch and Nigel Willabus.

**Special Intentions for this month:**

Anonymous is suffering with many health issues and feels she is under attack.

Deniece Brecount has cancer.

Elaine Burke is recovering from multiple surgeries.

Kristen Burke is emerging slowly from the coma.

Stephen Otrembiak's Parkinson's is very debilitating.

Frank Reinhardt is preparing to meet the Lord.

David Richard has many physical challenges.

Christine Stiles is recovering from carotid artery surgery.

Pray for all our members who need hope.

157 North Main St  
Salem, NH 03079  
USA



Please indicate  
Address corrections

## A Listening Ear

By Chaplain Sam Spence

If you are a believer, you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Creator and Savior, but there is one other position or title you may not have afforded Him... Best Friend, which He very much desires to be in your life. (If you are *not* a believer, you can pull aside, invite Jesus into your heart and be born again...and that does not have to be done in a church or some meeting; it can be done at your desk, or living room, or breakfast table.)

Most all "religion" is about keeping rules and regulations; but true Christianity is about relationship -- a one-on-one relationship between you and the Creator of the universe, and that's where the awesomeness of this Best Friend position comes into play. Think about a relationship or meeting you've had recently, maybe even today, with a good friend. You both talked and you both listened to what each other had to say. I'm convinced that Jesus wants to have that same type relationship with each of us -- there's talking (we call that *praying*), but there should also be *listening* on our part. Too often, I think, we voice our requests (prayers), ending with "in Jesus' name, amen." and we're out of the throne room without ever giving the Lord an opportunity to speak. He may have the answer to our prayer or some very relevant wisdom immediately available...if we'd only take the time to *listen*.

Developing a listening spiritual ear takes practice. Most of us have been caught up in a rapid-moving, often stress-filled world that does not lend itself to "quiet time with the Lord." We have to diligently set aside time to "learn to listen." Mine is the first thing in the morning... first thing after a little wake-up exercise and a cup of java. And I must tell you that it took many mornings before I began to hear that "still small voice."

A wonderful Bible teacher and personal friend of mine, Andrew Wommack, told me years ago, "God is



always talking." We just need to develop an "always-listening" spiritual ear. That includes spending time in His word and quiet time with Him. A listening ear can change your life.

**Scripture:** And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice (*1 Kings 19: 11, 12*).



Photo by Monica Thors

## Thank You!

Thank you so much for your generosity in response to our plea for donations. Your support will help us continue working to **Keep Christ Alive in Harness Racing!** We will keep publishing the newsletter every other month and continue most of our other outreach efforts. Praise God!

## Bible Study online

Please join our Monday night online Bible Studies. On January 12<sup>th</sup> we will begin studying Paul: His Life and Teachings.

For more information and to register, go to our website at <https://chha.net/bible-studies>. 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.

