



Rambling Willie

Keeping Christ Alive in Harness Racing!

Since 1983

In God We Trust



Christian Harness Horsemen's Association Newsletter

April 2026

Remember,
I pray for all
our members
every day.



Chaplain Lee Alphen

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ideas please contact:*

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Wanted

Praise Reports and Articles

Please send to Chaplain Lee Alphen

leealphen@comcast.net

Or

157 North Main St · Salem, NH 03079

**Life and Prosperity
or
Death and Adversity**

Choose Good or Evil By Chaplain Lee Alphen

When the horsemen's association listens to and works with the horsemen and women, everyone is happier. A racing secretary who writes competitive races that fit the majority of the horses racing at the track gives all concerned, including the gamblers, a fair chance. Drivers and judges who follow the rules usually gain the respect of the racing community. Do you agree?

The world is in a struggle between good and evil, right and wrong. In the long story of the People of Israel, God has always been there in their midst, guiding them to "choose life so that you and your descendants may live" (Deuteronomy 30:19 NRSVue). At Mount Sinai God gave them and us the Ten Commandments to teach what is good and what is evil.

The Ten Commandments are much more than words on stone tablets; they form the basis of the covenant between God and Israel, God and us: "You have seen [...] how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. [...] If you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession" (Exodus 19:4-5 NRSVue).

But what does it mean to keep the covenant, to choose life? "You shall be holy, for I [...] your God am holy. [...] You shall not defraud your neighbor. [...] You shall not render an unjust judgment. [...] You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people. [...] You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself (Leviticus 19:2, 13, 15, 16, 18 NRSVue).

God gives us a choice between good and evil, between "life and prosperity, death and adversity" (Deuteronomy

30:15 NRSVue). "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil." (Isaiah 5:20 NRSVue). "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21 NRSVue).

Around our world today there are conflicts, rebellions, riots and revolts. Right now, our society is often bitterly divided. Fraud is rampant and behaviors that are against God are widely accepted. I believe someday soon God will expose all the evil for what it is.

It is time for us to take God seriously. Are we trusting in only ourselves? It is time to trust in God rather than politicians. Only Jesus can save us. This month we celebrate Easter; the day Jesus opened the gates of heaven for all who believe in Him.

As Jesus hung dying on the cross, "The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, 'He saved others; let him save himself if he is God's Messiah, the Chosen One'" (Luke 23:35 NIV)

"One of the criminals who hung there, hurled insults at Him: 'Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!' But the other criminal rebuked him. 'Don't you fear God,' he said, 'since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.' Then he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.' Jesus answered him, 'Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise'" (Luke 23:39-43 NIV).

The repentant criminal crucified with Jesus acknowledged his sins and put his faith and trust in God. Then Jesus assured him of his salvation.

As we celebrate this holy season of Easter, let's

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take the time to turn to the God who made us and ask Him to help us turn from all those things that separate us from Him. Be assured that God does indeed hear us and will help us in our earnest quest to grow in relationship with Him.

When we in the United States put our faith and trust in God like our founders did, our country will be a better place and gain the respect of other nations, setting an example for them. If the world turns to God, wars and insurrections will end and all God's people will know peace.

The same is true for the racing community. If we respectfully and with integrity work together and ask for God's help, we can trust the Lord to bless our sport.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding" (Proverbs 3:5 ESV).



*May the angels
lead you into paradise*

Memorials posted at www.chha.net

Memorial Contributions

In memory of **Rich Bartula** by: Ken Fierle
 In memory of **Bob and Viv Farrington** by: Debbie Farrington
 In memory of **Brad Farrington** by: Debbie Farrington
 In memory of **Dick and Dorothy Farrington** by: Debbie Farrington
 In memory of **Larry Farrington** by: Debbie Ferguson; Jim and Judy Ferguson;
 In memory of **Pat Farrington** by: Debbie Farrington; Jim and Judy Ferguson
 In memory of **Independent Act (Indy)** by: Suzanne D'Ambrose
 In memory of **Brian Judy** by: Susan and Alan Finn
 In memory of **Daryl Gager** by: Ed Gager
 In memory of **Sam, Melissa and Meagan McKee** by: Amy Bondon
 In memory of **Dr Paul Nolan** by: Arnold Williams III
 In memory of **Ray Romanetti** by: Mary Ellen Azar and Robert Kramer; Mitchell Azar; Georganna Brocco; Janet and John Campbell; Jody Haag; Constance Nicholson
 In memory of **Tom Shinn** by: Susan and Alan Finn

Scholarships

CHHA will be awarding at least two scholarships for the 2026/2027 school year. These are available to graduating high school seniors and/or students enrolled in an educational institution of higher learning.

Students, who demonstrate a strong commitment to their Christian faith and are involved in harness racing, are encouraged to apply.

Students must be full-time and may be enrolled in degree or certificate programs. Graduate students are not eligible.

Applications are available at www.chha.net and are due May 31.



Blessings from God

From Elaine Lagasse Burke...

I wanted to thank everyone for all their thoughts and prayers for my daughter and me. They have helped tremendously. I am recovering as well as an old lady could in Florida. And my daughter continues to amaze me in every step of her life. She is walking and talking, and I'm crying as I write this to share with you all...but thank you all again, for your thoughts and your prayers. They were answered for my family.

From Ken Wood...

Ken says his November eye project in Africa ended with 1905 eye surgeries, thousands of glasses and treatments. He got to see hundreds get their site back. Of course, Ken gives God all the credit saying "God is Good."

From Connie Polhamus...

As a true horsewoman, Connie went to the Little Brown Jug before following up on the reason for her shortness of breath. She thanks God for the shuttles to and from the grandstand. The stairs were a challenge though. Since Connie is a retired nurse, when she was home a few days, she finally realized she needed to get checked out and went to the hospital.

Turns out she had blood clots in both lungs and her lower leg. It was the dog's fault. He took off after a squirrel catching her leg in his leash. The bruise went away after a while so she forgot about it. Thank God they found the clots! She says, "Praise God! Those clots could have gone to my brain or heart and caused even bigger problems."

Then she had surgery on her face for a sore next to her nose that would not heal. The lesion was bigger and deeper than she expected. Now the right side of her nose is misshapen. It is getting a little better, thank God! They say it will continue to heal for about a year. She said she wasn't planning to be in any beauty contests anyway.

The new family joke is, "Mom may have a life-threatening health problem, but she didn't miss the Little Brown Jug."

Newsletter Articles Needed

Please send Praise reports, Articles, testimonies, etc. for the newsletter. Submissions can be a few words up to 300 words.

Please send to Chaplain Lee Alphen
 leealphen@comcast.net
 Or 157 North Main St · Salem, NH 03079

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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:
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Horseshoe Nail Item Order Form
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**Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life.
The one who believes in me will live, even though they die;
and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?” John 11:25-26**

Obituaries cont. from page 5

Eileen Connors, 74, died Jan 13. Eileen was the wife of Communicators Hall of Famer, Jerry Connors, and office manager for Hall of Famer, Max C. Hempt at Hempt Farms. During her career she held many other harness racing related administrative positions.



John T. Glair, 83, of Elma, NY, died Jan 20. John spent most of his years as a harness horse trainer. He also was the owner of Trottin Tack Harness Shop.



Franklin Russell Hartline, Jr, 82, of Douglassville, PA, died Dec 29. Frank owned, trained and bred harness horses. He trained his stable at his farm in Douglasville, Win-D Acres. Frank loved spending time with his family. He was a member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church.



Deirdre "Dee" Hotton, 62, of Wooster, OH, died Jan 6. Dee spent her life training and driving and owning Standardbred horses, a pursuit that was both her profession and her calling. She was known for her knowledge, perseverance, and deep respect for the animals she worked with,



Brian Keith Judy, 68, of Potomac, IL, died Sep 11, 2025. Brian was an active follower of Jesus and had a passion for God, his family, and his country. He retired from the Illinois Department of Transportation. He raised, trained and raced Standardbred pacers with his father, Jesse David, for over 25 years. Brian loved spending time with his family, especially his grandchildren, teaching them to drive, ride horses, and shoot. Passing along his love for America to the next generation was one of his passions.



Gary "Leo" Leonardi, 70, of Perth, NY, died Jan 26. Saratoga track announcer Mike Sardella graciously commented on Gary's career: "Gary was one of the top trainers at Saratoga Raceway for several seasons. After bursting on the scene and winning the track's award for Up-and-Coming Trainer in 1982, Gary thrived at the Spa in the late 90s and after the turn of the century.



Peter Edwin Leu, 81, of Springfield, IL, died Dec 26. Peter owned, trained, drove and bred harness horses. He raced at many tracks in many states and also enjoyed Illinois county fair racing. He attended Northeast Missouri State University (now Truman State University) on a full football scholarship.



Marty McKenzie, 80, Of Pinehurst, NC, died Jan 17. Marty's love of horses became a passion through his friendship with Gary Cameron who wintered in Pinehurst with his dad, Del. One summer while still in school, McKenzie joined the Cameron's on the Grand Circuit and saw his first actual race at Brandywine Raceway, and he immediately became enamored with the business. He helped grow Pinehurst into a thriving community and worked hard to get National Historic Landmark status assigned to the track. Also, at his invitation, 45 Pinehurst residents became part of the fractional ownership syndicate, Pinehurst Racing Partners.



Donald "Donnie" Glen Raymond, 74, of Wolverine Lake, MI, died Jan 4. Donnie proudly owned several harness horses over the years. Even after he stepped away from racing, his heart never left the track. He remained a familiar face at Northville Downs, rarely missing a night.

Denna Renet (McLeod) Sattelberg, 65, of Byron, MI, died Jan 21. Denna and her husband, Lee Sattelberg, ran a successful stable for several years. She later began a puppy rehoming business after the loss of the stable in a fire. She worked as a travel coordinator for a worldwide carpet installation company retiring last spring.

Thomas Eugene Shinn, 78, of Newton, IL, died May 14, 2025. Tom bought his first broodmare when he was 16 and went on to breed 166 Standardbreds. He worked as a charter 50 years. He was also a columnist for Illinois Standardbred magazine and did pedigree research. He was inducted into the Illinois Harness Horse Hall of Fame for his lifetime of service. Tom taught grade school for over 30 years. He was a faithful member of the Newton Christian Church and a determined prayer warrior.

Sources for Obituary information include:

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

Obituaries

Gary Del Cameron II, 62, of Felton, DE, died Dec 2. Gary grew up under the tutelage of grandfather, Adelbert (Del) Cameron, and father, Gary Cameron, learning from a young age about the care and training of racehorses. Right after graduating from high school, he moved to Brandywine to begin his driving career. He trained many of the "Windswept" horses for John Swart over the years.



Robert J. Colasanti, 80, of Farmingdale, formerly of Colts Neck, NJ, died Jan 26. Robert was a well-known Standardbred harness driver, trainer and owner. He bred a good number of mares as well. His son, Chad, also owns harness horses.



Obituaries continued on page 4

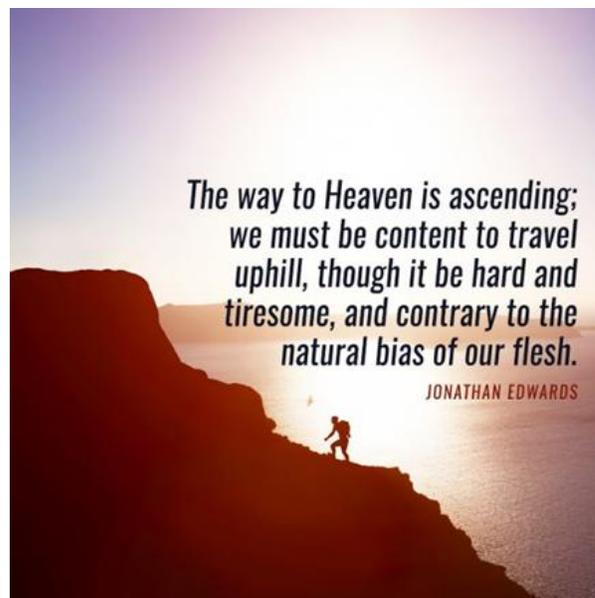
Prayer Corner

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, 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, Lyla 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 Niels, 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 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 Beinbauer, Gary Bennett, John Berry, Peter Blood, Marilyn Bondon, Stephanie Bouchard, Danny Breton, Lillie Brown, Elaine Burke, Kristen Burke, 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, Joyce 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, Dick 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, Ronnie Norman, Stephen Otrembiak, 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, Greggie 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:

Jordan Aracena-prayers for health and relief from pain
Declan Donoway lost feeling in his legs. His cancer is back.
Rob Fredrickson has blood cancer and memory issues.
Kim Hankins had heart surgery for 6 by-passes.
Marilyn Hankins has autoimmune and cancer issues.
Marylou has a large precancerous lesion and blood abnormalities.
Connie Polhamus is recovering from blood clots & surgery.
Ronnie Truitt has many health issues.
Ken Wood's cancer has returned.
A young man is battling depression and substance abuse.
Jim Ferguson is recovering from two mini strokes and other health issues.
Pray for all who help us **Keep Christ Alive in Harness Racing.**

157 North Main St
Salem, NH 03079
USA



Please indicate
Address corrections

A Clean Start

By Chaplain Sam Spence

Some of the most important folks at a race track are the starter and his assistants -- the gate crew. It's their job to see that each horse in the race gets a fair and equal chance out of the gate. The starter wants every horse to have all four feet on the ground before he mashes that little button that blasts the gate open.



Regardless of any horse's track record, the starter wants every individual to have a clean break from the gate. That's the same way Jesus is about you and me in this *race of life*. He *gave* His life and actually became our sin so that we could have a clean start. The moment we accepted Jesus as our Savior, He totally eradicated all the sin from our chart book -- then led us into the starting gate and made sure we were standing on all fours, with the best opportunity possible to make it to the winner's circle.

Probably no horse is really aware of all the painstaking care the starter and his crew take in making sure the runners get a clean start. Likewise, few Christians realize the price God paid for our fresh, clean starts. However, unlike the gate crew (who job is basically over once the horses leave the gate), Jesus -- in the person of the Holy Spirit -- stays with us all the way to the finish line.

Whenever we make a bobble, He's there to pick us up . . . to encourage us . . . to be the strength in the midst of our weakness. Again, too few of us realize He is so available, so willing, so forgiving, so desiring to be our help in the time of need. Too often our pride, guilt, or feelings of unworthiness rob us from running directly to Him, confessing our shortcoming and getting our need met.

Jesus wants us to know that regardless of how we performed on our last out, we can walk into the gate with

our head held high, ready to go again. I can hear Him saying, "Come on, son, because of the blood I shed, you're getting a clean start . . . let's go win this one."*

Scripture: So let's walk right up to him and get what he is so ready to give. Take the mercy, accept the help. *Hebrews 4:16 The Message Bible*

Bible Study online

Please join our Monday night online Bible Studies. April 13th at 7:00 pm we begin a short six week study, **Excellence: Run With the Horses.**



The lessons come from the book of Jeremiah. Jeremiah was arguing with God about the way of the world when God answered;

"If you have raced with men on foot and they have worn you out, how can you compete with horses?"

If you stumble in safe country, how will you manage in the thickets by the Jordan?"

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. Chaplain Lee will send you a confirmation and login information when you register. please allow a day or longer for a response.

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CHHA will be awarding at least two scholarships for the 2026/2027 school year.

See page 2 for more information.



Scholarships