



Rambling Willie

Keeping Christ Alive in Harness Racing!

Since 1983

In God We Trust



Christian Harness Horsemen's Association Newsletter

August 2026

Remember,
I pray for all
our members
every day.



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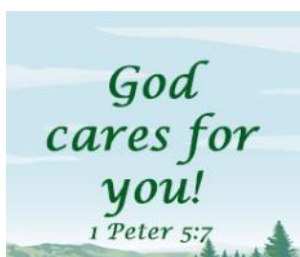
Praise Reports and Articles

Please send to Chaplain Lee Alphen

leealphen@comcast.net

Or

157 North Main St • Salem, NH 03079



Because God Cares for You By Chaplain Lee Alphen

Your trotter, frolicking around the pasture, is delighted to have time off from the track after a busy race season. However, Scooby the dog is bouncing off the walls and struggling to eat, thanks to the awkward cone around his neck. He wonders why he is being punished. He doesn't realize that if he keeps biting his sutures, he may need another trip to the vet. His sad eyes plead with you to remove the annoying collar. So, you try explaining to him why it is necessary for his own good.

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (Jeremiah 29:11 NIV).

We can take a lesson from the psalmists who pour their hearts out to God. A third of the psalms are laments, heart-wrenching cries out to God in the midst of personal or national struggles. Usually, they begin with grief and sorrow and end up expressing renewed trust in God. Others express sorrow for sins and ask God for mercy, forgiveness and help to do better. Sometimes the psalmists complain to God about how their enemies are mistreating them.

God and Abraham knew each other very well. They talked often and listened to each other. God told Abraham to move, leaving his country and father's family behind. God promised to bless him with a huge family of his own and help him establish a great nation, “I will make your name great and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and whoever curses you I will curse” (Genesis 15:2-3 NIV).

Abraham was not afraid to tell God exactly how he felt or to question God

when he didn't understand God's will or what was happening. One evening Abraham was sad and cried out to God, complaining that his servant would become his heir since he didn't have any children of his own.

God told him, “Look up at the heavens and count the stars—if indeed you can. [...] So shall your offspring be” (Genesis 15:5 NIV).

One day three visitors from God arrived where Abraham was sitting outside under the trees. The Lord then told Abraham that his wife, Sarah, would soon have a son. Sarah, who heard them from inside their tent, laughed because she and Abraham were both very old (Genesis 18:1-2; 11-12).

The Lord asked Abraham why Sarah laughed, “Is anything too hard for the Lord (Genesis 18: 13-14)? “Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age at the very time God promised” (Genesis 21:2 NIV). They called him Isaac. Their lineage through Isaac is very great, just as God promised.

Abraham accompanied his heavenly visitors to see them on their way towards Sodom. “The Lord said, “The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me” (Genesis 18:16, 20-21 NIV).

As the men began to walk away, Abraham boldly asked the Lord, “Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? Far be it from you to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far

Because cont. on page 2

Because cont. from page 1

be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Genesis 18:23-25 NIV)?

"The Lord said, 'If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake'" (Genesis 18:26 NIV).

"Then Abraham spoke up again: 'Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes, what if the number of the righteous is five less than fifty? Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five people'" (Genesis 18:27-28 NIV)?

"If I find forty-five there," He said, "I will not destroy it" (Genesis 18:28 NIV).

Abraham continued speaking with the Lord, his friend. He asked the Lord what if there are forty, then, thirty, twenty and finally ten righteous people in Sodom, would He still destroy it. Each time the Lord said that for the sake of the lower number of righteous people He would not destroy it (Genesis 18:29-32).

Abraham's questions went on and on. His conversations with God never ended. The psalmists had questions too. They asked for guidance, wisdom, mercy and forgiveness. Most importantly, they praised and thanked God.

We all have questions and need His guidance. We often don't understand why God allows certain things to happen. Remember, God does not want us to be sad or afraid. The scriptures often tell us not to worry but to trust God. Depending on our own understanding, we often can't help but worry. God knows that. He knows our hearts and our minds.

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God" (Philippians 4:6-7 ESV). Talking over our worries in conversation with God brings us peace. Remember, though, the peace comes when we listen to what God has to say. It is also important to allow the Holy Spirit to lead us in prayer, recognizing this may take our prayers in a different direction.

God's plans for us are perfect even though we don't always understand. Feel free to question God and to tell Him how you feel: stressed, anxious, sad, angry or that you just don't understand. Don't be afraid to say such things to Him. He already knows what is going on in our minds and hearts but can help us better when we bring our cares and concerns to Him.

In the long run, we just have to trust. "Cast all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7 NIV). In the end, we will see that God always gets it right.

Note: Title based on 1 Peter 5:7 NIV

Blessings from God

From Amy Bondon...

1. Hallelujah and bless the steadfast prayers of our beloved prayer partners. Nick Caras has gained back 23 of the 32 pounds he lost! And he's feeling amazing as they prepare for the demands of the upcoming Belmont at Saratoga. That's nothing short of a miracle. Thank You Jesus!
2. Bless your continued prayers for Pastor Sue at the Meadows. Pastor Joe says it's a long way to healing and she's taking it slow and steady, but she preached her first message at Chapel in May.
3. Overjoyed to report Marilyn is walking with a walker! She is so happy and thankful for the precious prayers of you and the Prayer Partners. And my brother has held up well in his caregiving by God's grace and those blessed prayers. All glory to Him!

From Barbara Reed...

Wonderful news! As of now my mother's last scan shows no cancer—Praise the Lord. She is still receiving Immunotherapy but is doing good and getting a little stronger every day. Thank you for always keeping us in your thoughts and prayers, it really helped us through. I hope that everything is well for you and God Bless.



Newsletter Articles Needed

Please send Praise reports, Articles, testimonies, etc. for the newsletter. Submissions can be a few or 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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Gifts for Family and Friends

10 Rambling Willie Note Cards (see picture) ☐

Horseshoe Nail Cross necklaces and key rings—see below

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Horseshoe Nail Cross Necklaces and Keyrings

Necklace Qty: Red ____ Blue ____ Turquoise ____ Fuchsia ____ Green ____

Keyring Qty: Red ____ Blue ____ Other cross color _____

*Rambling Willie Remembers*

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

250th Black Robe Regiment By Pastor Rick Smurdon



As we approach the 250th anniversary of the United States of America, we remember the events that sparked the American Revolution. History often points to taxation without representation, the Stamp Act, the Boston Tea Party, and the Boston Massacre as the catalysts that ignited the struggle for independence.

Less familiar to many is the role played by the "Black Robe Regiment." This name was given to the many pastors and chaplains who boldly preached the principles of liberty and self-government. While not all of these men took up arms, their sermons and their unwavering commitment to Scripture helped inspire the hearts and minds of those who fought for freedom.

They understood that true liberty is more than

political independence. It is rooted in the truth of God's Word. Their messages reminded the people that freedom comes with responsibility and that rights are ultimately granted by God, not by governments.

Two hundred and fifty years later, we still enjoy the blessings of liberty purchased at a great cost. As we celebrate our nation's founding, may we also remember the spiritual foundations that influenced many of our forefathers. May God's Word continue to set a fire within us—a fire to cherish, protect, and wisely use the freedoms we have been given.

"Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Corinthians 3:17).

As we commemorate America's 250th anniversary, may we seek the Lord, honor those who sacrificed for freedom, and remain grateful for the blessings He has bestowed upon our nation.

**"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."
Philippians 4:6-7 ESV**

Obituaries cont. from page 5

Glenn Elmon Congrove, 91, of Kingston, OH, died Apr 23. Glen owned many harness horses over the years and loved going to the races. He retired from Mead Paper Company after 50 years. He was a longtime member of the Mount Pleasant Presbyterian Church.



Ronald J. Coyne Sr., 85, died May 7. Ronald was a lifelong Standardbred horse owner, a passion that brought him great joy and a deep connection with his son throughout the years. After high school, he built a successful career as the owner of a collection agency.



Steve Desomer, 89, of Wilton, CA, died recently. Steve was a mainstay of California harness racing as a driver/trainer for six decades. Steve retired from the racetrack and enjoyed his time goldmining, making good use of his pilot's license and working on his tractors.

Ronnie "Duck" Gordon Foster, 79, of Lexington, KY, died May 9. Ron started his career at Walnut Hall Farm in Lexington, KY. Later he worked for Willow Spring Farm in Versailles, Castleton Farm in Ohio and Peninsula Farm in Kentucky. He retired as the manager of Dunroven Stud in Lexington, KY.



Richard William "Dick" Geyer, 73, of Xenia, OH, died Apr 20. Dick owned, trained and drove harness horses. He stabled mostly at the Greene County Fairgrounds but raced all over Ohio. He also served as head greenskeeper at some prestigious golf clubs, including for an LPGA tour.



Danny D. "Frog" Handley, 77, of Mayfield Heights, OH, formerly of Celina, died May 15. Danny was a groom at Northfield Park. He worked with horses his whole life. Danny enjoyed bingo and loved playing cards.

Richard Eugene Kelley Jr., 79, of Washington CH, OH, died Apr 19. Rick was a second-generation horseman who trained and drove harness horses. His son, Brian, followed him into the business as an owner. Rick also worked for Morris Bean & Co., Armco, Mac Tools and retired from ABX Air. He was a member of Heritage Church.



John Henry Kirkwood, 72, of Berea, OH, died May 1. He spent his life working and caring for racehorses. His career took him to work at racetracks in Ohio and Indiana. John had a passion for golf and was known for his quick wit and humor.



Archibald "Archie" John McNeil, 80, of Westborough, MA, died May 14. Archie owned, trained, and drove harness horses for many years in Canada and across the United States. He was active as an owner up until his death. He also spent more than 35 years working with equine veterinarians. He was a beloved horseman and highly regarded by the veterinary customers.

John F. "Sonny" Patterson Jr., 81, of Dalton, GA, died Apr 16. John's success in the sulky included winning two Breeders Crowns, the Hambletonian Oaks as well as many other stakes races. He was one of the top drivers at Monticello, Yonkers and Roosevelt for many years.



Dayle D. Roof, 88, of Lockbourne, OH, died May 2. Dayle was a successful businessman who loved harness racing and was an avid gardener. Being outside camping, fishing, golfing, or hunting were things he enjoyed. He even enjoyed cooking. Downtime was spent watching college ball. He lived a great and eventful life. His wife of over 70 years, Alene, died Apr 17, just a few weeks before him.

Melvin Paul Segal died Apr 9. Mel worked the family business, Pic 'N Pay Shoes, contributing to its real estate operations. At 35 he retired and dedicated his time pursuing his passions including harness racing, a love passed down from his father.

William Joseph ("Doc") Solomon, 84, died May 5. Doc founded Pin Oak Lane Farm and Equine Clinic. Among other accomplishments, he held the rare distinction of nurturing top horses in both the Thoroughbred and Standardbred industries, including both a Kentucky Derby winner and a Hambletonian winner. Doc emphasized education, family, faith, and a love of nature.



Alvin Warrington Stafford, 82, of Carneys Point, NJ, died May 14. Alvin began his career of driving, training and owning Standardbred racehorses as soon as he graduated from high school. His favorite hobbies were watching his horses race and watching his kids and grandkids race their stable of horses.



Newton E (Newt) Thomas, 93, died recently. Newt spent 50 years owning, training and driving Standardbreds and also owned Thoroughbred race horses. You could always find him and Katie in Box 23 at Scioto Downs enjoying the races with friends. His son, Doug, serves as presiding judge at Scioto Downs, Hollywood Dayton and Miami Valley.



The Rev. Kermit Edward Travis, 88, of Dresden, TN, went to be with his Lord and Savior on Mar 24. Buddy was the pastor of the New Salem Cumberland Presbyterian Church. He, along with his extended family, trained and raced harness horses. Over the years, he pastored many churches and served as a prison chaplain and a hospital chaplain.



John Adam Walker, 43, died Apr 14. John was a man of God. He was not a preacher, but he spoke up boldly for the Lord at any opportunity he could find. He had a strong work ethic and loved working outdoors doing a variety of farm related jobs. He spent most of his work life at ODOT. He also had a saw shop business at the farm. John was CHHA member Paul Combs' nephew.



Obituaries

Gary Dwayne Chamblee, 78, of Philadelphia, MS, died May 26. Gary was a deacon of New Harmony Baptist Church. He bought a farm and ventured into the poultry industry. He was awarded Outstanding Farmer of the Year in 1986. He was a member of the Neshoba County Fair Board and also served as the official race timer for the harness races at the fair.



Thelma June Chrisman, 94, died Apr 28. Thelma was a co-owner of Chrisman Enterprises, a metal fabrication business. She was known not only for her strong work ethic but also for the pride she took in helping build a family business. Thelma was CHHA member, Cathy Webb of Ivy Lane Farm's mother.



Renee "Ruth" Cohen, 92, died Apr 10. Ruth was the brains behind her late husband Eddy Cohen's Algonquin Farms and Anju Farms in Montreal in the 1970s and, decades later, a font of knowledge guiding the ups and downs of The Bay's Stable, Radio Racing Stable, the Four

Horsemen Stable, Cherry Creek Stable, and TMR Stable. **Ivan Sugg**, 83, of Deshler, OH, died Jun 9. Ivan had a storied career in harness racing as a trainer-driver. He was inducted into the Ohio Harness Racing Hall of Fame in 2006. He is the last trainer to have a Pacing Triple Crown winner in No Pan Intended who also won the Little Brown Jug. No Pan Intended will be inducted into the Harness Racing Hall of Fame in 2027. His sons, Kurt, Duke and the late Steve, all found success in the sulky. Ivan and his wife, Patty, are CHHA members.



Obituaries continued on page 4

Sources for Obituary information include:

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

There is nothing more important than
Your Eternal Salvation

Kirk Cameron

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, Marylou Dodge, 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, Kevin Wallis, Roland Wardel, Teresa Willabus, Kate Williams, Steve Wiseman, Bobby Williams, Marty Woebkenberg, Ken Wood, 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, 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, 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 Petrullo, Sgt David Thomas, Elizabeth Welch and Nigel Willabus.

Special Intentions for this month:

Steve Byrd is recovering from a bad burn.
Tamarra Carlstrom - for God to intervene in her life.
Danny Daniel has digestive issues.
Jim Donnelly is recovering from shoulder surgery.
Dennis Nadon is having treatment for his aggressive brain tumor.
Scott Klark has multiple cancers.
Mickie McNickle has many medical issues.
Doc Parry is recovering from hand surgery.
Dennis Paver's wife has terminal cancer.
Nickki Richards is under a lot of stress.
Karen Sawyer is recovering from surgery for a broken leg.
Stephen is struggling with drugs and suicidal thoughts.

157 North Main St
Salem, NH 03079
USA



Please indicate
Address corrections

The Sarah Gehman Allen Keep Christ Alive in Harness Racing Award

Dr Bob and Lisa Schwartz will be the first recipients of our newly established award in memory of our CHHA vice president, Greg Gehman, and his wife, Karolyn's, daughter, Sarah Gehman Allen. Sarah was truly on fire for the Lord drawing people's hearts to Him to her dying day. She died last summer following a courageous battle with cancer. She was 32. As part of the Youth with a Mission (YWAM) organization, Sarah helped spread God's word, love and mercy around the world.



Sarah Gehman Allen

Dr Bob and Lisa constantly go out of their way to help and encourage others and have always been very supportive of our CHHA ministries. This Christ like couple have been an integral part of our Jug Prayer Breakfasts. They spread the joy of the Lord everywhere they go. Lisa heads up our scholarship committee and always seems to be looking for ways to make others shine. Dr Bob provides a good number of the memorials posted on our CHHA website and in our newsletters to remember many Ohio horsemen and women when they leave this world. The people in the Ohio racing community continually praise Dr Bob and Lisa.



Lisa and Dr Bob Schwartz

This \$100 award will be given each year at the Jug to recognize a person or persons with a strong commitment to **Keep Christ Alive in Harness Racing!**

Bible Study online

Please join our Monday night online Bible Studies. September 14th at 7:00 pm we will begin studying James.

James is practical. He knows nobody's life is perfect. Instead of telling us to live trouble free, he tells us how to live when troubles hits.

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.



*May the angels
lead you into paradise*
Memorials posted at www.chha.net

Memorial Contributions

In memory of **Joe Adamsky** by: Lyndel Adamsky
In memory of **Loren and Lois Combs** by: Paul Combs
In memory of **Phyllis Plante Copeland** by: Perley and Jane Plante
In memory of **Jack Dailey** by: Brenda Jo Dennon
In memory of **Daryl Gager** by: Ed Gager
In memory of **Rick Kelley** by: Dr Bob and Lisa Schwartz
In memory of **Sam, Melissa and Meagan McKee** by: Amy Bondon
In memory of **Ray Romanetti** by: Amy Bondon
In memory of **Ivan Sugg** by: Al and Kendra Casselman
In memory of **Newt Thomas** by Dr Bob and Lisa Schwartz
In memory of **Lincoln Wadsworth** by: Gary and Corine McCandless
In memory of **John Walker** by: Paul Combs