

THOROUGHBRED

D • A • I • L • Y N • E • W • S



TUESDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1993

N • E • W • S
T O D A Y



SOUTHERN
C • A • L • I • F • O • R • N • I • A
R E P O R T

KEENELAND CONTRIBUTIONS TOTAL

\$402,863 Keeneland's charitable contributions for 1993 totaled \$402,863 following the distribution Monday of funds to 48 area organizations. The largest grant, \$150,000, went to the University of Kentucky for the Keeneland Professorship at UK's Gluck Equine Research Center. Also receiving contributions from \$30,000 to \$10,000 were the United Way of the Blue Grass, the Child Development Centers of the Blue Grass, Transylvania University, the Grayson-Jockey Club Research Foundation, the Lexington Hearing and Speech Center and the American Parkinson Disease Association. An additional 41 charities received donations from \$7,500 to \$1,000.

HOLLYWOOD MEET PRODUCES RECORD

DAILY HANDLE Hollywood Park's 1993 Autumn Festival, which ended a 26-day run Monday, produced a record average daily handle of nearly \$7.2 million. The '93 average handle of \$7,164,695 a day marked a 13.5 increase over the '92 average. A doubling of out-of-state commingled simulcast wagering accounted for big gains. Average on-track attendance rose slightly at 9,898 a day, up .2 percent, while average total attendance dropped 2 percent.

SANTA ANITA OPENS SUNDAY WITH

MALIBU STAKES The 90-day Santa Anita meet opens Sunday, December 26 with the \$100,000a Malibu Stakes for 3-year-olds. Pointing for the 7-furlong event are **Gilded Time** (Timeless Moment) and **River Special** (Riverman), the 1st and 3rd finishers, respectively, in the '92 Breeders' Cup Juvenile. Gilded Time returned to the races after a year layoff to finish 3rd in the BC Sprint; River Special was 3rd in the Bedside Promise S. last out after 8 months off.

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Yesterday's Results:

DAHLIA H.-G2, Hol, 12-20, \$109,500, 3yo/up, f and m, 8.5fT, 1:44 3/5, yl.

1--**KALITA MELODY (GB)**, m, 5, **Chief Singer (Hauptgestut Graditz-Ger)** --**Belle Reef**, by **Mill Reef**. O-Ken Porter; B-Clanville Lodge Stud (GB.); T-Neil French; \$64,500.

2--**Vinista**, f, 3, **Jade Hunter** (Brookside Farm-KY) --**Sky Ninski**, by **Nijinsky II**. O-Allen E. Paulson; \$20,000.

3--**Gumpher**, m, 5, **Tentiltwo** (Las Flores Ranch-CA) --**Robin's Sonnet**, by **Great Sun**. O-3 + U Stable and Kenis; \$15,000.

Margins: 3/4, 2, 2 1/2.

Stakes-placed last out and in the G2-Palomar H. earlier this year, **Kalita Melody (GB)** chased down the field and grabbed the lead at the wire, stealing the victory by 3/4 from **Vinista**, SP in 2 G3 events this year. Third-place **Gumpher**, a SW of \$246,895, had the lead early, but weakened in the final strides.

7th-Hol, \$32,000 Alw., 3yo/up, 8.5f, 1:43, ft. **CARO'S WHISPER** (c, 4, **Cozzene--Native Whisper**, by **Exclusive Native**) picked up his 1st Alw. victory in a strong stretch drive, that took him from last to the lead and under the wire in front by 3/4. Money rises to \$58,450, record to 11-2-2-3.

O-Dollase, Oliver, & Rickabaugh. T-F.Nor. B-J.Nor (Ky.).

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1st-Hol, Mdn., 2yo, 6f, 1:09, ft. + **POLLOCK'S LUCK** (c, 2, **Polish Navy--Lucky Us**, by **Nijinsky II**), a 1/2 brother to **BID US** (\$272,275, by **Bold Bidder**) making his career debut against a field of 8, took the lead early and went on to a 1 3/4 length victory with **Chris McCarron** aboard. O-Lucky Me Stable. T-R. Cross. B-V. Bender (Ky.).



W • R • I • T • E • R • S U P

A BETTER MOUSETRAP?

By Bill Finley

Paul Bergen asked himself a simple question one day: is there a better way to train a race horse, something preferable to the same methods used by virtually everyone in the country?

The former Olympic swim coach believes the answer is equally simple--with little improvement seen in the breed in the last 50 years and with injuries being such a severe problem, there has to be. The harder part will be proving that he is right.

But Bergen, 52, is committed to that goal. Still an obscure trainer who has yet to win a race, some day he would like to be not just a success, but someone who changed the way we think.

Bergen's logic and methods are largely borrowed from swimming, a field in which he has excelled as a coach. An assistant coach with the 1980 U.S. Olympic team and the coach of the 1988 Canadian Olympic team, he saw his athletes get stronger and their times get faster. The reasons were new and better training methods, tactics that made past styles obsolete. In the meantime, he realized that horses are basically trained the same way in North America as they were at the turn of the century.

"In swimming, what we have been trying to do is create a better athlete, partly through cross-training," he said. "I'm trying to apply some of the same principles to thoroughbreds. I'm hoping I see a lot wrong with the way we train horses in North America."

There is nothing routine about Bergen's training routines. On the first day of a two-day cycle, the horses warm up with arena and dressage work. They then pull a sled loaded down with logs. Later, the horses will swim or work on an underwater treadmill. On the second day, the horses gallop three miles up and down hills, working the inclines, relaxing on the way down.

He repeats the cycle twice more before giving the horses a complete rest on the seventh day. On an intermittent basis, his horses will also spend time at Golden Gate Fields, where they adjust to racetrack life and are put through a more standard training regimen.

"What seemed to be happening was that we were attaining a higher level of fitness," he said. "A horse's central and cardiovascular system respond fast. What takes so long is their legs. Horses get too fit, so they almost run into their injuries. That didn't seem to be the case with us. By going up the hills, they were getting quite a bit of strength and extra use out of their fetlocks. You see some of the same things in European training methods. The legs develop fitness

at the same rate as the total body."

Bergen began his pursuit in earnest in the fall of 1992 with three horses. One, Sunny's Merit, was able to start and had a record of two thirds from three starts. At the time, Bergen was leasing a training center owned by a person who had filed for Chapter 11. Shortly after he began, the farm was seized by the IRS because its owner ran into further financial problems. Bergen had to start all over again. He has found new backers and hopes to resume training full-time this April, eventually working up to a 16-horse stable.

While he was active, he was pleasantly surprised by the reception he received from other trainers on the Northern California circuit. He feared that he was going to be looked upon as an eccentric bound to fail.

"There was a lot of support from guys who had been around for a while, like Jerry Hollendorfer," he said. "I thought they might be laughing at us, but instead they were encouraging us. I bumped into Jerry in the saddling enclosure and he said, 'keep it up, you're on the right track.' Of course, his horse won and our's lost."

He realizes that what he's doing isn't for everyone. For one thing, a trainer cannot possibly be stabled at a racetrack and use his methods. Still, he wonders why racing doesn't try some simple and obvious things to create a fitter horse that is less injury-prone.

"We are losing a lot of credibility with the general public and maybe there are some things that we can do differently," Bergen said. "There are some simple things that we can do to reduce injuries. Why don't we require horses to train in the other direction every Monday, Wednesday and Friday? Couldn't we make the tracks a little deeper? With some of the high-profile breakdowns we've had, I've noticed that the industry is all ears. Before, you couldn't even bring these things up."

He says that he has a lot to learn, particularly about horsemanship. Or is it more so that the sport has a lot to learn about new ideas and new attitudes? Paul Bergen cannot answer that, not yet, anyway. In time, perhaps his odd band of horses will.

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