



# August 2022 Newsletter

*Summer Edition*



# OHHA is proud to administer and provide The Ontario Equine Education and Employment Program

## Growing the Ontario Equine Industry

Find out about this  
free program that  
helps businesses  
develop local  
talent for the  
future of Ontario's  
equine industry.

Contact Ashley:  
[ashley@ohha.ca](mailto:ashley@ohha.ca)  
(905) 854-6442 x5



This Employment Ontario project is funded in part by the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario

## President's Message

Greetings,

OHHA is back. Back on solid ground. Back with a new vision. And back continuing to represent the interests of Ontario's Harness Horse People. It's an exciting time to be an OHHA member. And as your president I couldn't be prouder.

We are where we are now because of hard work, perseverance and a commitment to innovation and change. And none of this would have been possible without the support of Premier Doug Ford, Labour Minister Monte McNaughton, their staff and the many MPPs who backed us along the way. I sincerely thank Premier Ford for his unwavering support of the horse industry in Ontario and congratulate him and his team on their resounding June 2 victory.

I am so proud of the work OHHA has done founding and developing the Ontario Equine Education and Employment program (OEEEEP); a joint initiative sponsored by OHHA and the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development, delivered in partnership with VPI Employment, Equine Guelph and horse people from various breeds throughout the province. Without skilled, dedicated and qualified workers the industry can not be supported. OEEEEP is a major step towards ensuring industry viability in both the short and long term.

But anyone who knows me knows I don't sugarcoat things. There are some hard truths and challenges facing the harness horse industry. Issues around funding, promotion and long term prosperity are at the forefront. This year alone we have had 21 race date cancellations that were non-covid related.

Simply put, if we are going to save our industry we have to develop a long term plan that doesn't rely solely on government subsidies. While we truly appreciate the support we receive, relying on the government of the day to sustain horse racing is no plan at all. Having all our eggs in the WEG basket is no plan at all. Having no connection between mutuel handle and purses is no plan at all. In fact, I'm always shocked by the lack of industry awareness that not one dollar of mutual handle goes

towards purses in Ontario. It's time to examine ways mutuel handle, in fact all forms of sports wagering and gaming can be allocated to support Ontario's equine agricultural industry.

Now is the time to come together, to unite with one voice and to get busy. We need to immediately develop a path forward for horse people. Grass roots industry participants, not high priced race track executives should be the beneficiary of our labour and our efforts. Now is time to proudly make a stand for the things that matter to us; our families, rural Ontario, agriculture and the horses we all love and care for.

It won't be easy. Anything worthwhile never is. And it will take a concerted effort to be heard. We are up against some high powered people with fancy titles. I'm up for it, but I can't do it alone. Now's the time to come together. It's our time. Let's get it done.

Slainte

Jim Whelan





# Canada on Full Display

What a month it has been for Canadian horses and horse people! The highlight would have to be the World Record 1.45.4 mile by Bulldog Hanover, a son of the Ontario based sire Shadow Play. We also saw an unforgettable effort by Beach Glass and his Canadian born Hall of Fame driver Yannick Gingras in winning the Meadowlands Pace. Beach Glass is a son of Somebeachsomewhere, whose sire Mach Three stood in Ontario. Something for us all to be proud of for sure.

But what about the unsung heroes of our industry? The folks that get up day in and day out to feed, care, train, ship and race their horses all over. Long days. Long nights. And they do it because it's in their blood. For many it's the only way of life they've ever known.

## Bulldog Hanover

How it started...



How it's going...



So while we acknowledge the superstars I want to pay tribute to the everyday stars who make this industry tick. Not many of us will own a true champion in our lifetime but that doesn't stop us from getting up everyday and giving it everything we've got. Without the daily grinders no one would notice the superstars. So hats off to all our members who never quit. Thank you.

On a personal note, I want to thank all who reached out with words, thoughts and prayers as my son Garret faced some significant health challenges. It may be a medical miracle but things seem to be tracking very positively following his surgery. Please keep him in your thoughts and prayers.



Beach Glass

“Year after year, Canadian Horse People prove that they are world leaders in the multi-billion dollar equine industry.

I'm calling on politicians and industry leaders to come together to not only celebrate our many accomplishments, but to plan, so that together, we can guarantee a bright future for all participants.”

- Jim Whelan  
OHHA President

# Did You Know?

1

The Ontario Harness Horse Association (OHHA) was formed in 1962 and is the only legitimate voice of Harness Horse people.

2

Historically, OHHA negotiated contracts between Standardbred racetrack operators, including the former Ontario Jockey Club (now WEG) and horse people until 2009. While there was no horseman's contract in early 2009, In order to be federally approved for a wagering permit WEG utilized access waivers with horse people. These waivers contained race date scheduling and revenue sharing language as proof that an agreement existed with horsepeople.

3

In 2009 WEG facilitated the establishment of a management friendly association, Central Ontario Standardbred Association (COSA) and strongly suggested horse people become members of COSA in order to race at the WEG tracks. OHHA continued to negotiate contracts with other Ontario standardbred race tracks until 2019.

4

The initial contract between WEG and COSA prohibited COSA from representing industry members in any legal proceeding, thereby eliminating representation rights for horse people.

5

In 2009, WEG directed the OHHA share of purse funds to COSA.

6

OHHA received revenue share from purse allocation from non WEG tracks until 2019.

7

In January 2019, Ontario Racing (OR) issued a notice to redirect those funds to COSA, in effect cutting off all revenue sources for OHHA.

8

In January 2021, OHHA was on the brink of insolvency, having exhausted all existing funds.

9

Faced with dissolving, OHHA entered into talks with the provincial government to establish a work and learn skills development program through the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development.

10

In July 2021, The Ontario Equine Education and Employment Program funded by the Ministry of Labour, Trade and Skills Development was launched by OHHA, supported by community partners, the University of Guelph and VPI employment.

11

OHHA is now working through its 6th cohort, successfully placing workers in various stables throughout the province.

12

Though liability insurance can no longer be offered to participants, OHHA continues to operate through its Campbellville, Ontario office.



— Thank You —  
**PREMIER FORD**

## OHHA Fundraiser

On August 3, 2022, OHHA held a political fundraiser for Ontario Premier Doug Ford. More than 50 folks attended the gala event to show their appreciation for the Premier's support of the Ontario Horse Industry and specifically our newly launched Ontario Equine Education and Employment program.

In his remarks, OHHA president Jim Whelan personally thanked the Premier, the Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Monte McNaughton and their dedicated staff for all of their support in making the project a reality. While congratulating the government on "getting it done", Whelan reminded the Premier that much more is needed on a go forward basis to support an industry so vital to rural Ontario and the Agricultural Industry. Whelan summed up the night in his closing remarks, "This is just the beginning Premier, but rest assured, we will work along side you to make sure the equine industry has a solid future in Ontario."



together we're getting it done.

**ONTARIO PC**



# New Website for OHHA

Exciting news.

The new OHHA website will soon be ready for members.

Features will include a more user friendly platform with an easy and organized navigation system, a secure “members only” area and a mobile app that can be accessed form your cell phone from anywhere anytime.

We are very proud of our new look and are confident that you will enjoy the new features as we move forward with developing better communication and networking tools. It is all part of our commitment to a better future for Ontario harness horse people.



Coming Soon  
ohha.ca

## Ontario Harness Horse Association Registered Retirement Savings Plan

OHHA continues to administer the industry RRSP on behalf of the owners, breeders, trainers, drivers, and grooms that participate in standardbred breeding and racing in Ontario.

### Eligibility for Program Membership:

You may join the OHHA retirement program at any time if you are an Ontario standardbred industry participant. When you make your annual contribution, you may be eligible for an industry contribution to your account. Annual contributions must be received by the OHHA office by December 1, 2022, to be eligible for the industry contribution.

### Criteria for the OHHA contribution to your account:

- To qualify as an owner, driver, or trainer you must make at least 10 Ontario racing starts in the previous calendar year, (multiple owners of a horse only qualify as per the percentage of the horse ownership).
- As an assistant trainer you must provide a T4 slip or equivalent proof of employment from your trainer of record/employer who has met the eligibility criteria.
- Caretakers must provide a T4 slip or equivalent proof of groom’s status from your trainer of record/employer who has met the eligibility criteria.
- Breeders qualify as the owner or lessee of a broodmare with racing offspring who have accumulated 10 Ontario racing starts in the previous year or are the signing officer of a registered Ontario Sires Stake eligible stallion standing in Ontario and nominated to the OSS program.
- If you cannot meet the qualifying standard of 10 starts in any given year, you should apply if you are close to meeting the criterion. Upon request of a member, OHHA will review each case on an individual basis to determine if the OHHA contribution will be made. However, even if you do not qualify for the OHHA contribution, you may still make your own contribution to the plan.
- At the end of the year in which you turn 71, you are excluded from the Plan in accordance with the Income Tax Act (Canada).

## Ontario Harness Horse Association Life, Health, and Dental Insurance Program

OHHA members may obtain Life, Health and Dental insurance through the group insurance plan provided by Canada Life. If you are interested in learning more about the coverage that is provided with this insurance, please contact the OHHA office for more information. See the chart below for monthly premium cost.

Class	Single/Family	Price	Tax	Total	Ages
Class 1	Single	\$105.73	\$8.46	\$114.19	Under 50
Class 1	Family	\$240.52	\$19.24	\$259.76	Under 50
Class 2	Single	\$107.12	\$8.57	\$115.69	Ages 50-64
Class 2	Family	\$250.19	\$20.02	\$270.21	Ages 50-64
Class 3	Single	\$154.68	\$12.37	\$167.05	Ages 65+
Class 3	Family	\$350.72	\$28.06	\$378.78	Ages 65+



# Goodbye to some Dear Friends

On January 18, 2022 just one day short of his 64th birthday Dave (Garney) Gibson passed away suddenly. Dave was a current director of the Ontario Harness Horse Association and had held that position for a number of years. A strong supporter of the racing industry and the OHHA, Dave's passion and advocacy for his fellow horse people will be missed.

On May 24, 2022 we lost a great friend and lover of standardbred racing, Robert (Bob) Carss. Bob served for many years as a Director of the Ontario Harness Horse Association as well as standardbred Canada representing Eastern Ontario for many years.

On June 6, 2022 we lost a dear friend and one hell of a horseman. Ken Hardy, former OHHA president passed away peacefully at his Lucan home. Beloved husband of Marilyn, and proud father of Glen and Angela.

Too many are passing too soon. Cherish those you love and live every day as though it may be your last. And raise a glass for these men. They would like that. Rest in peace my friends.



Ken Hardy steering 2 year old filly Cathedra to victory (1995)

## And Finally...

Thanks to all the members, Board of Directors and staff of OHHA for your loyalty and dedication through some very trying times. Together, we have persevered and are now on a good path forward. Each of us loves the horse industry and have given our entire lives to it. Your support has guided me and the Executive through some dark days. Together we've gone a tough, long mile but there isn't any quit in any one of us. See you in the winner's circle. Where we all belong.

Slainte

Jim Whelan



## OHHA Group Insurance Program

R.G.I. Brokers Inc. has been chosen as the Ontario Harness Horse Association's (OHHA) new Group Insurance Program Partner, and we could not be more excited to be of service to OHHA's members across Ontario!

Call or email us for Home, Auto or Mortgage Insurance and get your OHHA group rate and be entered into a monthly draw for \$5000

**CALL FOR A QUOTE TODAY!**  
**416-477-7687**  
**contact@rgigroup.ca**







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