

Sprint Horse Racing news



Hard to believe but 12 months have passed since that incredible racing conference at Glenormiston in March 2008. The brain child of Allan Murnane, this historic gathering proved to be the catalyst for a renewed push for a sustainable Quarter Horse racing industry in this country.

Much has happened since then. An enormous amount of effort has gone on behind the scenes. Things are on the move in Queensland. Horses are racing in Victoria although numbers are less than some had hoped. That horses have fallen by the wayside due to a variety of reasons should demonstrate the fact that a considerable pool of horses in training, with access to regular trials and barrier training, is needed to support the races scheduled. We are working toward this but it takes time – a large number of horses ready to run, as well as people experienced in the preparation and riding of the sprinter, cannot be conjured up from virtually nothing in a short time frame. If we try to force the issue and get too big too soon there is a great danger that things will come unglued if the genuine numbers are not there to properly back it all up. The concept of moving slowly with haste has much to commend it while this fledgling industry gains momentum. While this is my personal opinion, I know it is shared by many who have experienced some of the disasters of the past.

New people are moving into the industry bringing a variety of talents for us to tap into. At the same time we have lost some who have given much, perhaps given too much. We hope that time will recharge their batteries and we can receive them back bigger and stronger than ever. The pressure on some of them has been immense and the

rewards negligible.

The problems involved in resurrecting short distance horse racing in Australia are enormous for the playing field is far from level and there is no road map. Along with some positives in this past 12 months there have been delays, detours and setbacks but slowly, very slowly, progress is being made. I believe that a foundation has been laid upon which the industry can now build. Again – slowly with haste, because we are not yet robust enough to survive a major stuff up. Together with many others I am not expecting immediate miracles but we are a little bit hopeful about what the future holds for our running horses.

So, lets have at it, and keep in mind the words of John Andreini, the senior American delegate at the 2008 Glenormiston. This elderly man of wisdom urged us to put our personal feelings aside as we strive toward the common goal of establishing Quarter Horse racing in this country. He made it clear that while we might not actually like some of the people we have to work with, that should not be taken into consideration when making decisions for the good of the industry. Can't spell it out much clearer than that!

As we struggle to get our racing scene moving it might be of interest to reflect on the history of the National Cutting Association of America. Now a vigorous and high profile Association, it was beset by early tribulations. Indeed, in 1964, when 63 year old Marion Flynt purchased the two year old Jewels Leo Bars (an unsuccessful racehorse who became "Freckles") he was president of an NCHA that was described as 'ailing'. In Sally Harrison's article in the 1993 NCHA Futurity program Flynt described

the situation thus "When I started with NCHA they were three months behind in the rent. I'd call for an executive meeting and maybe four [members] would show up. It was an uphill job." Flynt and his compadres hung in there and the results are out there now for all to see. Something similar happened with the NCHA in Australia.

The 1960s were, of course, vastly different to what we now encounter at the beginning of the 21st century with its attendant problems of bureaucracy, regulation, insurance etc. However, the human qualities of fortitude, tolerance and the ability to focus on the job in hand remain constant.

SECOND AUSTRALIAN QUARTER HORSE RACING INDUSTRY CONFERENCE

This will be held at the Lady Bay Resort in Warnambool, Victoria on 26th and 27th March 2009. Everyone interested in the future of sprint horse racing in Australia is strongly urged to attend.

A Workshop type gathering is planned with a strong focus on the way forward into the future. Information on the previous 12 months achievements will be presented and disseminated to bring delegates totally up to date on the situation in this country.

Depending on the support, a sale of running bred stock is also planned for this time.

The final VRQHA racemeeting for the season will be held on Sunday 29th March. This will be a gala affair and delegates are urged to stay over for it.

Details can be sourced, as they emerge, on the VRQHA website.

ON THE BREEDING SCENE

Several good Australian mares

are currently in foal to USA based running stallions. Max Dodds has Femmes a Fortune in foal to Eysa Special. Tamaroo Sheen is in foal to Scrutinizer for Superior Sprint Horses. Allan and Sheryl Sullivan have Better Chick in foal to Finding Nemo. Melinda Leong has Top Rambler safely in foal to Scrutinizer. There would be other mares in foal to USA stallions and we look forward to hearing about them.

It is also heartening that owners of some Australian based stallions have noted a bit of an increase in running bred mares going to stud. Melinda Leong's great old mare Gahtikas Lass is in foal to Des McDade's Makers Mark. Jodie Vanstone is excited about sending a daughter of her old stallion Lil Breeze Bar to stud – this is the first of his progeny that Jodie has converted into a broodmare.

Terry Chinner lists some of these breedings on his website www.sprinhorses.com (compulsory viewing for all those interested in the speed horse) together with all sorts of other racing information. There is also a photograph of Allan Sullivan's latest foal a filly by Eysa Special from Scootnfly (imp) on this site.

On his website Terry also mentioned Brenton Miller and his acquisition of two granddaughters of Scandal (The Ambassador x Allnightlong by Rocket Wrangler). This was quite a story. Late in 2008, for some inexplicable reason, Brenton answered an advertisement that merely stated "2 Quarter Horse mares for sale". As soon as he discovered the significance of the fully imported running bloodlines these mares carried, Brenton lost no time in sealing the deal and getting the two mares out of Victoria where they were



Tamale Q-38964.

paddocked with a palomino show horse stallion. After ascertaining that they were not in foal he sent Dunmuckle Little Deb Q-30304 and Dunmuckle Rascal Q-30303 straight over to Tamale Q-38964. The stallion "Tamale" would be unknown to most readers. As a two year old colt he was sold to a cattle station out of Halls Creek in the Kimberley where he remained for 8 years. The property was sold in 2007 and Tamale was returned to his breeders in SA. He is by Ole Sugar Daddy (Warning Flag x Junior Queen TB by Star Kingdom) and from Speed Queen (Jet Master x Campus Blair AA (imp). Several running bred mares, including Cat Dancin Woman Q-22620 (Go Far Bar Bob AAAT x Femme Fatale AAA), and some good TB mares, are currently in foal to this horse.

Some readers would recall Miss Goodspeed winning the 2006 All Australian Derby for Adrian Ireland. In 2007 this mare was consigned to NT for a stint of hard labor in stock camps. She was supposed to go to Doug Rand on her return in 2008. Before she could be trucked over to Doug it became obvious that she was in foal and at the end of December 2008 she dropped a filly.

After considerable head scratching and consulting of diaries etc the most likely blame was laid on a roan colt, a son of the famous EV Rooster (winner of NCHA Futurity and Derby). Should be a real fast cutting horse because Goodspeed is lethal on a cow.

If you turn to the pages From SA in this magazine mention is made of the passing of Donegal, a pioneer of the Sprint racing scene in Australia and a full brother to Tweed, who won the 1975 Golden Spread Futurity. Donegal was 36 years old. On the SA page, also, is a report on a cowhorse colt that Scrubber O'Brien has brought to the West Coast of SA. This colt carries the blood of two All American Futurity winners and the bottom line of his pedigree (always the most important in my opinion) goes back to Go Galla Go, dam of Rocket Wrangler and thus grand dam of Dash for Cash.



Regrettably, we must report the passing of 55 year old Paul Sproule on 16/12/07. Born in Tasmania Paul was a long time horse breeder and a successful rodeo competitor. He roped and steer wrestled and held several state titles in these events. Steer Wrestling was always



Battle Quarter Mile Q-25308 photographed not long after his arrival at Hollywood stud in WA.

his favorite event and in 2006 at the age of 53 he took out the APRA Steer Wrestling titles at Circuit Finals in Tasmania. When such activities did not interfere with horses and rodeo Paul farmed, and owned or operated earth moving equipment and long distance trucks.

Paul's first running bred stallion was Battle Golly Q-25305 who was gelded after a short period at stud and became a successful time event horse. In 1998 he brought Battle Quarter Mile Q-25308 to Tasmania from Tom Kennedy in Qld. This horse was bred by the late Len Ridsdale, a former sprint horse stalwart. In 2002 Paul bought a property at St Arnaud in Victoria and moved Battle Quarter Mile and the mares there from Tasmania.

When Paul was diagnosed with terminal cancer in November 2007 he sold this stallion and most of his mares to Hollywood Stud in WA. Being the sort of person he was, Paul loaded up his truck and drove his horses over to WA himself in between sessions of radiation therapy. Paul Sproule was one of those generous, larger than life characters to whom the Quarter Horse industry owes much. Many people mourned his passing and the running horse industry in Victoria is among the losers.

The AQHA amnesty on registration remains in force until the end of May. There have already been an overwhelming number of applications to register horses of sprinting blood, which is a great result.

By now Queenslander Rebecca Knudsen should have her Dash Ta Fame colts in Australia. I have been unable to contact Rebecca in recent days but hope to have a report for the next issue. This is very exciting stuff and the bloodlines of the horses she is bringing in will greatly benefit the sprint racing industry.



Dashtafame - sire of colts that Rebecca Knudsen is importing into Queensland.

NOTE: I was unable to meet the original deadline for these pages so had to cancel out. A few days later Jenna rang to say printing had been delayed and if I could get something to them in 24 hours it could get in. I decided to try, as work had leveled out here a bit. It was a rushed job and a lot of information was not forthcoming. Apologies for the omissions and the oversupply of SA stuff.

Here is my phone number - 08 8893 2244 - please start feeding information to me for the next issue just as soon as possible.

VRQHA PRESIDENT ALLAN MURNANE'S FINAL REPORT

Dear racing enthusiasts.

As you may now be aware, there have been resignations from myself (President), Secretary Kate Murnane and Office Manager Lindy Watson. These resignations have taken place immediately.

In leaving the industry, as President I feel it only proper that I make some statement to all those people that race their horses, invest in breeding, ride the horses, or have whatever involvement that brings us all at some time to the excitement of racing quarter horses down a race track.

Over the three years that I have been at the helm, I have been privileged to lead the industry into a new era of racing that sees;

- A new relationship with the AQHA
- Strong support from the American Racing Industry
- An acceptance and smooth relationship with the Victorian TB racing industry.
- Establishment of an Australian Network.

When we took over the roles of

administering and the leading the industry there was very little activity, not only in Victoria but in the rest of Australia. We now find that many people have come to the table, and while there is an enormous challenge still ahead, the key tools are now in place to take the industry forward. The VRQHA have come from finance wilderness to being in the black; a difficult task while a major re-build has been underway.

We have built three race tracks in Victoria, and formed great relationships with a number of community's who now understand and support sprint racing. The VRQHA have also played a role in inspiring the efforts of those in other states, especially Queensland, and we believe that racing will soon start to occur in these places.

It would remiss of me to depart without acknowledging the efforts of those in the VRQHA who have made major contributions. I would therefore like to personally thank Kate Murnane and Lindy

Watson who over the past 2 years have contributed countless hours, often at great personal and financial costs. Their efforts will never be understood, because unless you have been standing there listening to the nightly midnight phone calls and the sharing of tasks for the next day, it is impossible to fully understand the enormity of the effort.

This year we attracted the support and friendship of an amazing Head Steward, who through difficult times has retained the respect of all in the industry. Graeme Brumley has made a fantastic contribution and we will miss his calm judgement and support.

I understand that the VRQHA will continue to run with the plans that have been laid out, and we wish them all the best with their efforts. I am sure that with the pieces in place, and with a strong commitment, that the season in place and the future of racing in Victoria can be progressive. Finally, I must make comment that as we are all aware, this industry has

passion and it has feeling, and there will be times when people do not agree all the time.

But my parting advice is that everyone in the industry needs to understand that this industry can flourish, and the only thing really stopping it is the industry itself.

It is time now for everyone to put their own personal goals and plans to the back of the line and ask how they can assist the industry.

Without an industry, your goals cannot be achieved.

So put all your efforts and resources into the future development of the industry and this thing will fly. One day when the industry is strong, then and only then can you really begin to reap the rewards personally that you would have deserved.

I wish you all good luck, and Kate, Lindy and myself walk away with pride in our achievements, and confident and trusting that those that remain will continue the work we have started.

Sincerely, Allan Murnane