

In Harness

by Stanley F. Bergstein

Start Shopping

There are only 177 shopping days until Christmas. Get going!

Avoid the last-minute crowds and panic and indecision and snow and cold.

Act now. We can help.

On my desk are four handsomely packaged DVDs, and a mammoth 50-page, single-spaced printed index of past treasures that will blow the mind of any true-blooded harness racing aficionado—man, woman or child.

They represent the hugely impressive collection of harness racing videos assembled by Jack Elliott, harness racing video historian extraordinaire, known better in the trade by his corporate name of Colorigation.

We do not do commercials in this space, unless the message they carry, or the product they offer, represents major contributions to the sport. Colorigation does, and the sport owes Jack Elliott a debt of gratitude. If you are not familiar with what he assembles, on an annual basis and for posterity, let me offer a small smattering.

But where to start?

Since Ohio is his base, he has every Little Brown Jug from Bret Hanover's 1965 victory to Mr Feelgood's win in 2006. He has pieces on "Great American Trotters," from Messenger through Hambletonian and Greyhound to Speedy Crown and Super Bowl to Peace Corps and Mack Lobell and on.

His year-end reviews start in 1993 and run annually to the present, and include, starting in 1997, "Canada's Best Races." Thirteen years ago he began compiling and producing a "Year End Review," top trotters and pacers, packaged together or separately.

He has great features, including Nevele Pride breaking Greyhound's world record in 1969, Mack Lobell's record mile at Springfield in 1987, and the great March of Dimes Trot at Garden State Park in 1988. Starting in 1995, he broke down his year-end reviews by age, gait and sex, so that you can find Continentalvictory and S J's Photo and Tagliabue and a piece called "Suzie Takes On the Boys," chronicling CR Kay Suzie and the late Carl Allen.

He endears himself to me by including a section on older horses that he calls "Senior Trotters," avoiding the stupidity and counter-productivity of calling them aged. Horses



like Balanced Image and Moni Maker, Magician and Fool's Goal and Victory Tilly, Lyell Creek and Plesac.

What do these jewels cost?

His "Little Brown Jug" runs three hours, and sells for \$44. "Great American Trotters," from Greyhound to Mack Lobell, has a running time of 1 hour 45 minutes, also selling for \$44. The DVD on Mack Lobell alone, with most of his world and track records, sells for \$23.95 and runs an hour and 45 minutes. A tape of accidents and track falls which Jack calls "Bloopers" should entertain the hockey, auto racing and mayhem crowd, at \$24.

Most currently, his "Best Trotters of 2006," by age and sex, includes Pampered Princess and Possess The Magic, Donato Hanover and Laddie, Passionate Glide and Pure Ivory, Glidemaster and Majestic Son, and Peaceful Way and Sand Vic and Vivid Photo.

For the European and Australasian fanciers of the trotter and pacer, the tapes are available in PAL format.

You get the idea by now, but who is Jack Elliott? His e-mail address gives a clue: harnessvideoman@big-foot.com.

If you like watching great horses and great races—scads of them—Jack Elliott turns them out wholesale.

Elliott came out of Buffalo, N.Y., fought as a teenager with the 79th infantry in the Battle of the Bulge, returned and went to broadcasting school in Kansas City, and wound up with WBEN-TV in Buffalo,

and later with NBC's WNBK in Cleveland, as technical director.

He sold Northfield Park its first TV system in 1967, then moved to Scioto Downs in 1974, installing that track's first color cameras. A year later, realizing the sport was short on filmed history, he started by picking up Jug and Hambletonian films with the USTA's blessing and converting them to videotape.

It was a happy moment for the sport, and Elliott has never stopped. He lost his lovely wife, Kay—his camera-woman at Scioto and the Jug for 30 years—eight years ago, and he retired this year from Scioto after 32 years as director of television production. He stays busy these days with worldwide orders for Colorigation.

If you like watching great horses and great races—scads of them—Jack Elliott turns them out wholesale. Ask him for his 50-page catalogue, relive harness history, and get your Christmas shopping done early.

Stanley F. Bergstein is the executive vice president of Harness Tracks of America and a member of the Living Hall of Fame in Goshen, N.Y. To comment on this column, e-mail us at readerforum@ustrotting.com.