

Walner honored at NYSS-District 8 banquet in Goshen

By Tim Bojarski

Latham, NY---On Sunday (Nov. 13), the Agriculture and New York State Horse Breeding Development Fund and the United States Trotting Association held their annual New York Sire Stakes and District 8 awards banquet in Haughton Hall at the Harness Racing Museum and Hall of Fame in Goshen, N.Y.

The biggest names in Empire State racing that gathered to fete the accomplishments of their stars began the evening with a cocktail party sponsored by the District 8 member tracks (including Batavia Downs, Buffalo Raceway, Monticello Casino & Raceway, Saratoga Casino & Hotel, Tioga Downs, and Vernon Downs) before being seated for dinner and the awards presentations.

The big announcement of the night was that 2-year-old trotting colt Walner was named the District 8 Horse of the Year.

Walner (Chapter Seven-Random Destiny 1:51.3, \$484,037) is owned by Ken Jacobs, trained by Linda Toscano and driven in all of his starts by Tim Tetrick. Jacobs purchased Walner at the 2015 Lexington Selected Yearling Sale for \$90,000 and placed under the tutelage of his longtime trainer Linda Toscano. Since then, the New York bred colt has developed into the top 2-year-old male trotter in North America.

Having won seven of his eight starts in 2016, Walner was not shy to make headlines.

After winning two NYSS events over the summer, Walner won the \$280,000 International Stallion Stakes at the Red Mile in October, setting a world record of 1:51.3 for 2-year-old trotting colts, breaking the old standard of 1:52.2 set by Southwind Frank in 2015.

Three weeks later, he won the \$600,000 Breeders Crown at the Meadowlands in 1:53, trotting away from the field by 4-½ lengths. This performance was a track and stake record for 2-year-old trotting colts.

Then, to put an exclamation mark on his season, Walner was victorious in the \$200,600 Kindergarten Classic final at the Meadowlands in 1:53.2 by an overwhelming seven lengths.

Walner's achievements during his freshman campaign were both dominant and record breaking and have firmly entrenched him as the early favorite in the 2017 Hambletonian.

There were some outstanding seasons put together by those awarded for their performances in the New York Sire Stakes this year including some who impacted the Grand Circuit as well.

Smalltownthrowdown (Cash Hall-Ann's Promise) was named the NYSS 3-year-old trotting colt of the year.

After winning five legs of the NYSS during the year, Smalltownthrowdown was crowned the division champion after taking the final at Yonkers Raceway. On Saturday (Sept. 3), Smalltownthrowdown competed in the \$500,000 Yonkers Trot and was beaten only a head by Hambletonian winner Marion Marauder, who would go on to become the trotting Triple Crown winner.

Smalltownthrowdown had seven wins in 16 starts and earned \$446,263 in purses for his efforts. His seasonal (and lifetime) mark of 1:54.4 was taken at Saratoga Raceway.

Non Stick (Lucky Chucky-Meucci Madness) was named the NYSS 3-year-old trotting filly of the year.

After being crowned champion of the 2-year-old trotting filly division last year on the strength of an undefeated season, Non Stick repeated as 3-year-old champion this year after winning four NYSS events over the summer. The highlight of 2016 for her came at Vernon Downs on Sunday (June 19) when she won the \$225,000 Empire Breeders Classic wire to wire from post eight in 1:54, which was a new lifetime mark.

Non Stick won six starts in 12 attempts and banked \$363,787 in those outings.

Jim Morrill Jr. repeated as NYSS Driver of the Year after he posted a 28-26-26 record off of 144 starts, which equated to a .355 UDR. His drives earned his owners just under \$1.65 million in purses.

Ron Burke repeated as NYSS Trainer of the Year while campaigning 25 horses on the circuit. His students won 20 races and earned checks 70% of the time. Those added up to \$1.26 in earnings for their owners.

Winbak Farm was once again Breeder of the Year as 24 of their get started 84 times and earned just over \$1 million, getting purse checks 73% of the time.

Here is a complete list of all the award winners.

2016 USTA DISTRICT 8 CHAMPIONS

2-YEAR-OLD FILLY TROTTER

Barn Bella

Owners: Steven Pratt, Nancy Pratt & Purple Haze Stables LLC

2-YEAR-OLD FILLY PACER

Planet Rock

Owners: Kenneth Jacobs

3-YEAR-OLD FILLY TROTTER

Fad Finance

Owners: Purple Haze Stables LLC, Marc Goldberg & Rojan Stables

3-YEAR-OLD FILLY PACER

No Clouds Bluechip

Owners: Richard Carney, Farrell Carney & Barbara Berger

2-YEAR-OLD COLT TROTTER

Walner

Owner: Kenneth Jacobs

2-YEAR-OLD COLT PACER

Funkwaffles

Owners: Crawford Farms Racing & Susan Oakes

3-YEAR-OLD COLT TROTTER

Smalltownthrowdown

Owners: Ann-Mari Daley, James Crawford IV, Donald Brenner & Richard Lombardo

3-YEAR-OLD COLT PACER

Missile J

Owners: KJ Stables LLC & Purple Haze Stable LLC

COUNTY FAIR DRIVER OF THE YEAR: **Mark Whitcroft**

RISING STAR AWARD: **Joseph Chindano Jr.**

PARI-MUTUEL DRIVER OF THE YEAR: **Jim Morrill Jr.**

TRAINER OF THE YEAR: **Linda Toscano**

2016 NEW YORK SIRE STAKES CHAMPIONS

2-YEAR-OLD FILLY TROT

Barn Bella Conway Hall — Bravissima

Owners: Steven Pratt, Nancy Pratt & Purple Haze Stables LLC

Breeder: Morrisville Col Fdn Inc.

Trainer: Steven Pratt

Driver: Jeff Gregory

NYSS Earnings: \$200,287

2-YEAR-OLD FILLY PACE

Tequila Monday American Ideal — Margarita Monday

Owners: Susan Oakes & Chuck Pompey

Breeder: Winbak Farm

Trainer: Chris Oakes

Driver: Brian Sears

NYSS Earnings: \$176,206

3-YEAR-OLD FILLY TROT

Non Stick Lucky Chucky — Meucci Madness

Owners: Ake Svanstedt Inc. & Little E LLC

Breeders: Michael Andrew & Steve Stewart

Trainer: Ake Svanstedt

Driver: Ake Svanstedt

NYSS Earnings: \$231,907

3-YEAR-OLD FILLY PACE

Wishy Washy Girl Roll With Joe — Wish All You Want

Owners: Michael Cimaglio & Stephen Demeter

Breeders: Scott Dillon & Thomas Dillon

Trainer: Tracy Brainard

Driver: Jim Morrill Jr.

NYSS Earnings: \$172,329

2-YEAR-OLD COLT TROT

Devious Man Credit Winner — Miss Garland

Owner: Stroy Inc

Breeder: Winbak Farm

Trainer: Julie Miller

Driver: Andy Miller

NYSS Earnings: \$264,647

2-YEAR-OLD COLT PACE

Funknwaffles American Ideal — Hatsoff Hanover

Owners: Crawford Farms Racing & Susan Oakes

Breeder: David McDuffee

Trainer: John Butenschoen

Driver: Jim Morrill Jr.

NYSS Earnings: \$234,785

3-YEAR-OLD COLT TROT

Smalltownthrowdown Cash Hall — Ann's Promise

Owners: Ann-Mari Daley, James Crawford IV, Donald Brenner & Richard Lombardo

Breeder: David Firmstone

Trainer: Dan Daley

Driver: Dan Daley

NYSS Earnings: \$304,447

3-YEAR-OLD COLT PACE

Roll Away Joe Roll With Joe — Chatelaine

Owners: Howard Taylor, Stephen Demeter & Thomas Lazzaro

Breeder: Twinbrook Limited

Trainer: Tracy Brainard

Driver: Jason Bartlett

NYSS Earnings: \$312,382

BREEDER OF THE YEAR: **Winbak Farm**

TRAINER OF THE YEAR: **Ron Burke**

DRIVER OF THE YEAR: **Jim Morrill Jr.**

2016 NYSS CONSOLATION WINNERS

2-YEAR-OLD FILLY TROT

Teasin N Pleasin CR Excalibur – Brontease

Owners: Edward Reich, Thomas Corelli & Fred Corelli
Breeder: Winbak Farm
Trainer: Thomas Corelli
Driver: Jeff Gregory
NYSS Earnings: \$63,296

3-YEAR-OLD FILLY TROT

Zette Starlet Credit Winner – Scottish Starlet
Owner: Cozette McAvoy
Breeder: William Donovan
Trainer: Cozette McAvoy
Driver: Charlie Norris
NYSS Earnings: \$54,280

3-YEAR-OLD FILLY PACE

Major Millie Art Major – Gravity
Owner: SSG Stables
Breeder: Flintlock Farm Inc
Trainer: Steve Elliott
Driver: John MacDonald
NYSS Earnings: \$58,650

2-YEAR-OLD COLT TROT

Top Flight Angel Archangel – Top Photo
Owner: Legendary Standardbred Farm
Breeder: Alan Hainsworth
Trainer: Megan Wilson
Driver: John Cummings Jr
NYSS Earnings: \$28,756

3-YEAR-OLD COLT TROT

Royal Bachelor RC Royalty – Becca J
Owners: Ann-Mari Daley, James Crawford IV & Michael White
Breeder: Kenneth Jacobs
Trainer: Dan Daley
Driver: Dan Daley
NYSS Earnings: \$50,800

3-YEAR-OLD COLT PACE

JK Heaven Sent Rock N Roll Heaven – JK Owhatanite
Owners: Michi Abday, Barbara & Donald Arnstine
Breeder: 3 Brothers Stables
Trainer: Gilbert Garcia-Herrera
Driver: John MacDonald
NYSS Earnings: \$41,850

2016 NEW YORK-BRED EXCELSIOR CHAMPIONS

2-YEAR-OLD FILLY TROT

Royal Oaks RC Royalty — Mystical Oaks
Owners: Jessica Okusko & Ronald LaClair
Breeder: Dunroven Stud LLC
Trainer: Jessica Okusko
Driver: Stephane Bouchard
NYSS Earnings: \$41,250

2-YEAR-OLD FILLY PACE

Pirinea's Princess Roll With Joe — Chant-A-Nuka
Owner: Latz A Luck Stable
Breeder: Joseph Pirinea
Trainer: Dennis Laterza
Driver: Stephane Bouchard
NYSS Earnings: \$49,100

3-YEAR-OLD FILLY TROT

Wendy's Girl Lucky Chucky — East Creek Wendy
Owners: Howard Taylor & Edwin Gold
Breeder: East Creek Stable
Trainer: Tracy Brainard
Driver: Jim Morrill Jr.
NYSS Earnings: \$64,950

3-YEAR-OLD FILLY PACE

Ghost Runner Art Major — Spirit Of The West
Owners: Dr. Scott Leaf, Deborah Mackenzie, Gerald Fielding & Tom Jackson
Breeder: Stonegate Standardbred Farms
Trainer: Erv Miller
Driver: Marcus Miller
NYSS Earnings: \$43,050

2-YEAR-OLD COLT TROT

Barn Winner Credit Winner — Hallmarker T
Owners: Steven Pratt, Nancy Pratt & Out In The Country Stable
Breeders: Moni Market Breeders & Jeffery Ruch
Trainer: Steven Pratt
Driver: Jeff Gregory
NYSS Earnings: \$45,000

2-YEAR-OLD COLT PACE

Percy's Z Tam American Ideal — Mintjulep Bluechip
Owners: Pat Lachance, Z Tam Stbs LLC, M&M Harness Rcg LLC & Royal Flush Stb LLC
Breeder: Michael Parisi
Trainer/ Driver: Pat Lachance
NYSS Earnings: \$58,650

3-YEAR-OLD COLT TROT

Just For Today Credit Winner — Brandnewgirlfriend
Owners: Patricia Stable, Joe Sbrocco & Hatfield Stables
Breeder: Valley High Stable
Trainer: Paul Kelley
Driver: Matt Kakaley
NYSS Earnings: \$46,800

3-YEAR-OLD COLT PACE
Endeavor American Ideal — Jett Diamond
Owner: Helene Fillion
Breeder: Barbara Muschera
Trainer: Pat Lachance
Driver: John MacDonald
NYSS Earnings: \$41,850

BREEDER OF THE YEAR: **Winbak Farm**
TRAINER OF THE YEAR: **Erv Miller**
DRIVER OF THE YEAR: **Jim Morrill Jr.**

2016 NEW YORK COUNTY FAIR CHAMPIONS

2-YEAR-OLD FILLY TROT
Too Cool To Fool Conway Hall—Travelin Deal
Owner: Angela Jackson
Breeders: Matthew Gartland & Beryl Taylor
Trainer: David Dewhurst
Driver: Jim Morrill Jr.
NYSS Earnings: \$9,550

2-YEAR-OLD FILLY PACE
Bonita Island Artiscape — Malita Island
Owner: Robert Gale
Breeder: White Birch Farm
Trainer: Robert Gale
Driver: Truman Gale
NYSS Earnings: \$7,943

3 -YEAR-OLD FILLY TROT
KZ Crazee Crazyed — Lindy's Almond Joy
Owner: Beth Smith
Breeder: Lindy Farms Of Conn
Trainer: Cheryl Whitcroft
Driver: Mark Whitcroft
NYSS Earnings: \$10,527

3-YEAR-OLD FILLY PACE
Niche Blue Chip Art Major — PW Spare
Owners: Elizabeth & Dyce Spalluto, Veronica Dylo & David Widzinski

Breeder: Blue Chip Bloodstock Inc.
Trainer: Mihajlo Zdjelar Jr.
Driver: Drew Monti
NYSS Earnings: \$10,365

2-YEAR-OLD COLT TROT

DW's Revenge Archangel — Princess Maddie
Owner: Sally Cartier
Breeder: WD LaPage Stable
Trainer: Sally Cartier
Driver: Mark Whitcroft
NYSS Earnings: \$11,520

2-YEAR-OLD COLT PACE

Napper Tandy Art Major — Cammara
Owner: Donald Cosgrove
Breeder: Donald Cosgrove
Trainer: Angus MacDonald
Driver: Chris Lems
NYSS Earnings: \$11,025

3-YEAR-OLD COLT TROT

Trooper Jim Conway Hall — Alpine Goal
Owners: Heather & Barry White
Breeder: Barry White
Trainer: Barry White
Driver: Truman Gale
NYSS Earnings: \$12,617

3-YEAR-OLD COLT PACE

Midnite Pass Kenneth J — The Company Store
Owner: Gary Cartier
Breeders: Michelle & Albert Crawford
Trainer: Sally Cartier
Driver: Mark Whitcroft
NYSS Earnings: \$17,367

BREEDER OF THE YEAR: **Steuben Farms**
TRAINER OF THE YEAR: **David Dewhurst**
DRIVER OF THE YEAR: Mark Whitcroft

RACING UNDER SADDLE

CHAMPION

Vanessa Karlewicz riding **Admirable Hanover**

HIGH POINT HORSE

Jeanie Marie

Rider: Heather Reese
Trainer: Jennifer Sansone
Owner: Mo Choo Inc. & Jonathan Klee Racing

TRAINER OF THE YEAR
Michael Miller