Barn Girl wins Excelsior Series final at Vernon
by James Witherite, Vernon Downs racing media

**Vernon, NY**---Employing a first-over bid through the far turn, Barn Girl ($2.20) delivered as the prohibitive favorite in her $45,000 New York Excelsior Series final, one of four to headline Saturday (Sept. 19) evening’s program at Vernon Downs.

The 3-year-old trotting daughter of Cash Hall and Turquoise Sweetie earned her 14th career win in the first Excelsior event of the evening, angling first-over just as Miss B'ville J (Jim Morrill, Jr.) took the lead through a :57.3 half. Barn Girl progressed steadily through the far turn, making ground in the second flight through a :28.2 third quarter before collaring Miss B'ville J in deep stretch for a 1:54.2 triumph. Jeff Gregory drove Barn Girl for trainer Howard Okusko Sr. and owners Steven Pratt, Nancy Pratt, and the Out in the Country Stable.

Andy Ray ($9.10) took top honours among 3-year-old trotting colts and geldings in their Excelsior final, placed second-over by Andy Miller behind the live cover of 4-5 favorite Crazshana (Trond Smedshammer) before kicking cover to narrowly prevail in 1:54.1. Erv Miller trains the gelded son of Crazed and Crown N Lindy for Paymaq Racing, Ronald Michelon, and Harvey Eisman.

The 3-year-old filly pace saw Matt Kakaley slid second-over with Hey Kobe ($5.40) to track a live B Stern through a :55.2 half, only to be left uncovered on the far turn and sustain a bid to a deep-stretch lead. The daughter of Bettor's Delight and American West was able to wear down B Stern through a :27 final quarter for a 1:51.2 triumph. Jean Drolet trains Hey Kobe for Stephen Schneider and William Siegel.

In the 3-year-old pace for colts and geldings, Masterson ($3.50, part of entry) emerged late from a tracking trip, drawing clear for a 1:50 win to extend his win streak to five. Tracy Brainard trains the gelded son of Bettor's Delight and Tug River Princess for Blue Chip Bloodstock, and Jim Morrill, Jr. was aboard for the winning drive.

Morrill also captured two of the evening’s four $50,000 New York Sire Stakes consolations, teaming up with Fashion Creditor (3-year-old colt trot, 1:53.2) and Penji Hanover (3-year-old colt pace, 1:49.4). Also victorious were My Lucky Word (3-year-old filly trot, 1:56.2, Corey Callahan) and Luck Be a Lindy (3-year-old filly pace, 1:51, Gregory).

Live racing returns to Vernon Downs on Wednesday (Sept. 23) evening, with post time at 6:45 p.m. Eastern.