

Pat Crowe

Fifteen years ago one name, perhaps more so than any other before, personified Canadian harness racing for an entire generation. Cam Fella became an unparalleled celebrity not only in horse racing but in sport at large.

The trainer/driver behind the horse was Orr Lake, Ontario, native Pat Crowe. Cam and Crowe will be back in the spotlight this summer as The Pacing Machine embarks on a North America-wide tour.

Now 59, Crowe has cemented his reputation as an accomplished horseman although his stable is much smaller than in the glory days of the early 1980s when it ranked among the best on the continent, anchored by Cam Fella and Justin Passing. The barn earned nearly \$3 million in the 1982-1983 seasons.

At the age of 12, Crowe launched his career grooming for Jack Waples, father of Hall of Fame horseman Keith Waples. He later worked for Clarence (Shorty) Lockhart before going on to race in Western Canada, on the Windsor-Detroit circuit and in Chicago. Known as an aggressive driver, before the modern day advent of catch-drivers, Crowe's career statistics show 1,284 races won and over \$8 million in purses.

His credits also list triumphs in many of harness racing's classic events including the Queen City Stakes (renamed North America Cup), Messenger Stake, Cane Pace, Canadian Pacing Derby, Prix d'Ete, Confederation Cup, Stewart Fraser Memorial, Driscoll Series and Graduate Series.

Today, Crowe has curtailed his driving to less than 100 starts a year but

still maintains a stable on the Ontario Jockey Club with his son Kevin.

In this interview with TROT Magazine's Harold Howe, Crowe reflects on his career, the exploits of Cam Fella and Justin Passing as well as his observations of the changes in harness racing since that time. (New Image Media photo)

What are your feelings on Cam Fella returning to your stable?

I'd been told by the people at Stonegate Farm that Cam could be pretty bad at times to be around at the stud so I figured he'd probably be a handful. Really, I didn't consider it that big a deal until the day he walked off the Doyle Transport truck. I found it pretty emotional but great.

There have been a lot of people coming into the barn to have a look at him and I'm proud to have him back again. Cam seems to enjoy it too. I've been doing some light jogging and aside from giving a kick or two when we first put him back in the harness he has loved being back on the track. Oh, he'll try to nibble at you if he gets the chance but I think he remembers that wasn't tolerated when he was here before so it's not a problem.

What has been the reaction of people who have come to the barn to see Cam Fella?

Many are disappointed at how small he is. I've always said that he doesn't look as small when he's in the harness.

I think he's weathered the years well especially considering that he has been under anesthetic six times.

There's no sign of arthritis but his breathing is a bit heavy right now. Stonegate did a good job looking after him but when Cam retired at the end of his four-year-old season he was more fit than at any time of his career. People won't believe that but it's true and a lot of that was because he took such good care of himself. Nothing ever seemed to bother him and he loved to eat — still does and there is no shortage of treats since he's been back.

Actually, Cam is a little calmer than I expected. Maybe being gelded has had an effect. He certainly won't be any problem around the people we meet on the tour this summer.

How did the idea for the Cam Fella tour come about?

I don't really know to be truthful. I know Norm Clements is more than a little excited about it. He's planning to bring back the Cam Fella Express bus and get shirts, caps and buttons made up again. He says he'll be there at every stop but I'm not sure if I will be.

The only sad part to all of this is that Norm Faulkner isn't still with us to enjoy it. We'll miss him.

(The two Norms shared ownership of Cam for the majority of his racing career. Norm Faulkner died of a heart attack a year ago.)

What expectations do you have of the tour?

I expect some of the stops will draw very well especially at Ontario's B-tracks like Elmira and the like. I'm not sure how much impact it will have at The Meadowlands but

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what might be a very special night is September 13th at Mohawk Raceway. We're trying to get all the prominent sons of Cam Fella that we can to appear at the track with Cam. We're hoping Camluck, Village Jiffy, Beastmaster and the like will all be on hand for what they are calling "Boys Night Out." It could be a lot of fun.

What's been happening to Pat Crowe since Cam Fella retired at the end of 1982?

I get that question a lot. When Cam raced it was the best of the best and then he was gone. Life goes on. I'm glad to have had a great horse like him. Life has had its share of ups and downs and the memories I have of Cam are always there.

Having had Cam was something I enjoyed so much for those two years. He was just so good that all I had to do was keep him out of trouble. There were only two times that I ever felt pressure

racing him. The first was in the Messenger Stakes against Merger, because had he not won, there is no way he would have been named Three Year Old Pacing Colt of the Year let alone Horse of the Year. The second was the first meeting with Its Fritz because of the hype around the race.

Was there an emotional letdown for you after his retirement?

I missed him but I think Norm Clements felt it more than I did. Even when Cam was racing there was more pressure on them than on me. Since this tour has come about I pulled out some of Cam's old tapes and saw just how easy he did seem to win. We'd just let the field settle off the gate and then we'd flow to the front and that was that.

Do you think today's style of racing would allow that?

No way. There isn't a horse alive that today's catch drivers won't take a run at

no matter how fast they are. If Cam was around today everyone would be taking a run at him every week. Winning 20 some races in a row would not have earned him any more respect. That's just the way it is today.

If Cam was a young horse today I'm sure he'd have a much faster record than he has. You have to remember he didn't have to go faster than he did to win. A lot of people do forget too that Cam did set track records in Chicago, Pompano and Edmonton but the underlying idea throughout his career was to race him so that he could race the following week. There isn't much of that today although speed has come to mean much less than it once did. What matters is who you beat and how much money you win.

Back when Cam was racing and people would be critical of what he accomplished it did bother me. Much of the talk was about the fact that he did not win by large margins. The idea always

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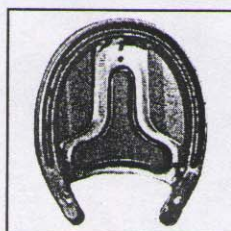
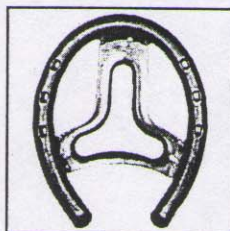
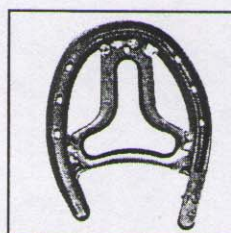
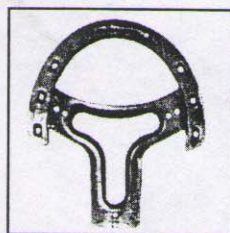
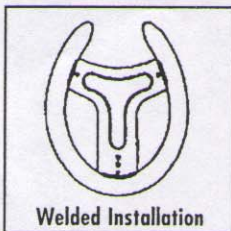
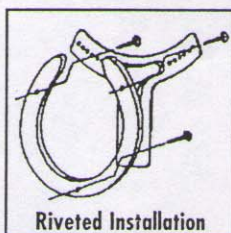
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was to try to win the races but always leave something for next week — race the horse like he was your own. That probably would not work with many of today's owners who seem to like to see their horses winning by eight or nine lengths. I hate seeing a driver having the race in the bag and still driving at the wire — it makes no sense. Personally, I haven't worked out how to satisfy those owners.

What are your best memories of Cam?

I suppose the Cane Pace win sticks out because it was my first major win. But then the old Queen City Stakes (now the North America Cup), Prix d'Ete and Confederation Cup were all important because they were Canadian races.

As a four-year-old I certainly remember him getting beaten at the start of the season and then finally coming around to win 28 in a row. No one will ever accomplish that again. To look back all these years later it was really something.

Sixteen years ago, when Norm Faulkner and Norm Clements paid \$140,000 US for Cam Fella, did it seem an exorbitant amount of money?

It was staggering money for a two-year-old that had not really beaten anyone to that point. But Norm Clements especially, was a guy who liked a gamble.

Having said that we thought that we were buying a horse not for the premier races but for the secondary ones. If that had been the case he still would have turned out to be a good buy. None of us ever thought he'd become the super horse that he was.

The price started out at \$100,000 but by the time we got around to actually making a deal with Doug Arthur the price had gone up to \$140,000. Ken McNutt was acting on behalf of someone as well, which didn't help matters.

In a sense this was wild money that the two Norms had, but it still was taking a shot.

Many have said that Cam Fella was not as highly regarded in the United States as he was in Canada. Do you agree?

I don't think there was any question about it and I've always felt it was because he was Canadian owned. It bothered people within the industry that he was never a record setter and remember 1982 was supposed to be the year of Merger who was coming off a big two-year-old effort. Then there was No Nukes. Even now people talk about when he raced and he was anything but a good race horse.

I remember sensing this even in Montreal for the Prix d'Ete. The press all turned out to see McKinzie Almahurst and No Nukes train but Cam Fella was down the shedrow all on his own. He received very little attention.

The fans were different, especially at Yonkers Raceway. They considered Cam Fella their horse, probably because he started to gain some notoriety by winning the Hopeful Series and then the Cane Pace. As a four-year-old when Cam came on the track there would always be a roar from the fans.

What about his status as a ridgling?

Oh, I think that applied as well. Let's face it, to have a ridgling beat the supposed best in the game really wasn't supposed to happen. And then when efforts were made to place the horse at a farm and strike a syndicate there was a lot of indifference from the major players so I think it certainly played a role.

You were constantly pursued by the media for updates on Cam. Did that ever become burdensome?

Not really. It was good for the game. People like Stan Bergstein really promoted the horse. When Cam won Flamboro's Confederation Cup, track announcer Ken Warkentin called him The Pacing Machine and it stuck. From that point on Cam's popularity took off and I have to say we were a little overwhelmed by the treatment we received.

Especially when the 28 race streak was going on, the red carpet treatment applied everywhere we went. I remember when we went to Pompano the hotel we stayed in had a huge banner welcoming Cam Fella. It was nothing to spend an hour signing autographs. The

media was part of all that and I don't think we received any unfair press.

With regard to the indifference in the United States, could it have been because Cam Fella did not win the Meadowlands Pace and was ineligible to the Little Brown Jug?

I don't think so. In the Meadowlands Pace we caught a two-hole trip behind Coal Harbor who stopped and left us out in the cold. Cam also had a touch of the virus which may or may not have affected the way he raced.

As far as the Jug goes he was ineligible as you say. If he had been there chances are Merger would not have won it. After all, Merger tried him four times and never beat him so there is no reason to think it would have been any different there.

Earlier you were speaking about speed records. Time trialing was very much in vogue back then and you did put Cam Fella against the clock but it was not particularly impressive. Did that hurt his reputation at the time?

The two Norms wanted to do it at Lexington but I was dead against it. I said I hadn't put the work into Cam that he needed for an effort like that. I think he went in 1:54 which was no big deal and very disappointing for everyone.

The next week I brought him back for an actual race but it rained. Even so Cam went just as fast in the mud as he did in the time trial but it didn't impress anyone.

It always bothered me that The Red Mile never asked us to come back the next year. The same thing happened to Matts Scooter which again makes me think there is a bias against Canadian-owned stars in the United States.

One of the more interesting developments in Cam Fella's three-year-old season came at the Jug following Merger's win. Tell us about that.

As you know Merger won the race and in the winner's circle afterwards owner Mort Finder stated that he wanted a match race with Cam to settle who

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was the better horse. Dave Perkins, who was covering harness racing for *The Toronto Star* at the time, immediately ran to a telephone at the Delaware fairgrounds and called me.

Just as the call came Norm Clements walked in the barn so I let him talk to Dave. After hearing Finder's challenge Norm asked me what I thought. I said that in two weeks time we would be meeting Merger in the Messenger Stakes so why not just leave it until then and settle it in an actual horse race. That sounded good to Norm so that was the message he gave Dave.

By the time the two weeks were up this had been blown up pretty good in the media and make no mistake, there were some very touchy feelings between the two groups. I always flew to wherever Cam was, to train him between races and this time I made the mistake of staying over in New York. All you heard that week was about the race. What this did was nothing but add pressure for me.

If I remember right we drew inside Merger and were favored. I knew we were going to the front and if we were going down it was with a fight. John Campbell gave Merger a second-over trip and around the last turn came three wide and actually had a neck ahead of us in the turn. But Cam would have none of that and just battled back to go on for the win as Merger backed through the field. Icarus Lobell slipped up along the inside to give us a bit of a scare but Cam won. You have no idea how good that one felt. I knew then that Cam would get Three Year Old of the Year honors in the U.S.

You created much discussion with the heavy training schedule that you placed upon Cam Fella. Tell us about that.

Cam generally raced every Saturday somewhere. Between races I would always train him either Tuesday or Wednesday and I found that he thrived on work. I discovered that if I treated

him kindly, like a mile in 2:12, for sure he'd get beaten.

Bill Haughton heard about this and told me I was crazy. When I had Cam Fella and Justin Passing in the barn they were treated so differently. Justin Passing was a big, strong, powerful brute but all we did was work him in 2:15 while the much smaller Cam might be worked in 1:58. Anybody who remembers watching him race will tell you that he was always as fat as you'd ever want a horse.

Every now and then Cam would get beaten and early on I was at fault for not having trained him enough. I really didn't discover this until the Prix d'Ete rolled around.

That time Bo Scots Blue Chip beat us in the Monticello Classic was just a freak thing. We had the eight hole and got behind some horses which allowed Bo Scots Blue Chip to get away from the field and we just had too far to come. History has shown that the Monticello race was Bo Scot's only claim to fame.

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In the early days of Cam Fella's three-year-old season was there ever any possibility that he would be sold?

There was only one overture and that was when Cam first went to The Meadowlands. This guy just asked me if he would be available and I said that I doubted it but if he was that the price probably would be in the \$250,000 US range. I don't know if he was serious or not but he never surfaced again.

After that the two Norms just said the horse was not for sale. Period.

Of course a deal subsequently was struck with Ed Freidberg's JEF's Country Club in New Jersey but the relationship got off to a rocky start when Cam came back to race as a four-year-old.

We sent Cam to The Meadowlands and on the trip down he was involved in a trucking accident. Then he picked up a cold and got sick. Eventually I got him ready to race and he qualified okay but then he got sick again.

I requalified him after he recovered and he qualified like a trooper. I put him in to race and he got beaten by a very ordinary bunch of horses — very disappointing.

I questioned what I did with him and everything seemed in order so we raced him at Brandywine and he got beaten again. Then we came back to Freehold and the filly JEF's Eternity beat him which really turned up the heat.

It's a matter of record that Ed Freidberg started to talk about stopping Cam's racing career rather than risk cheapening the horse. Once Norm Clements heard that he told Ed in no uncertain terms that if Ed wanted his money back he could have it but that the horse would continue racing.

Cam continued on and won his next start at Batavia but then got beaten at Buffalo. I wasn't able to get there soon enough to train him that week and the horse got worked in only 2:12 which as I said earlier was not what he needed.

We then came to Mohawk and won but we were disqualified and placed second. The judges ruled I waved my whip in the face of Perfect Out causing interference. I don't think it was a fair judgment but I imagine that Doug

Brown, who drove Perfect Out, still disagrees with me.

Perfect Out was a horse that Cam Fella had trouble with.

He came back at The Meadowlands in our next start and beat us again for a total of three times. I have to admit I was then starting to having my doubts about Cam. He was not doing it right in the turns despite racing reasonably well by the standards of most horses.

I'd just got a new car and had to drive to Vernon Downs to train some horses and on the drive I got to thinking about things. I started to wonder if his one testicle might be bothering him. It was larger than a normal one and I started to think that maybe it was pinching him.

When I got back I put a stud support on him and went to the regular lift harness. The equipment judge at The Meadowlands asked me that next start why I did it and I told him because it would make him win and he did — 28 consecutive times.

That night he had post 12 in the World Cup mile and half race. It poured and I used Cam three if not four times and he was awesome. When we went

under the wire I knew we were back and he never lost a race the rest of his career.

No doubt you have a bias but among the all-time greats where do you feel Cam Fella deserves to be ranked?

Number One — right on top. We will never again see a horse win 28 straight races against the best in the world while travelling from one side of the continent to the other. Who else ever raced in the heat of Florida one week and the frigid temperatures of Toronto in December the next without missing a step?

Sure I'm biased but who wouldn't be? Niatross never did what Cam did and neither did Nihilator. If we're talking about real racehorses probably Rambling Willie was much closer than the other two. Willie was a better all-around racehorse as was Albatross, Nansemond and Isle Of Wight.

I will always think of Cam as the greatest.

Which of Cam Fella's rivals did you fear the most on the racetrack?

When Cam started off his four-year-

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Canadian Standardbred Horse Society

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June 4	Clinton Raceway	12:00 - 2:00 p.m.
June 5	Sarnia	9:00 - 11:00 a.m.
June 5	Woodstock Raceway	1:30 - 3:00 p.m.
June 10	Mohawk Raceway	10:00 - 12:00 Noon
June 10	Rideau Carleton Raceway	10:00 - 12:00 Noon
June 11	Kingston Raceway	10:00 - 12:00 Noon
June 11	Quinte Raceway	2:00 - 4:00 p.m.
June 12	Kawartha Raceway	10:00 - 12:00 Noon
June 24	Hippodrome Trois Rivieres	10:00 - 12:00 Noon
June 25	Quebec City	10:00 - 12:00 Noon
June 26	Hippodrome de Montreal	10:00 - 12:00 Noon
June 26	Flamboro Downs	9:00 - 11:00 p.m.

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old career there was no question it was Millers Scout and in the end he finished second to Cam more times than any other horse.

The horse I would have feared had he still been racing would have been his stablemate Justin Passing. Had the two met I'm sure they would have finished one-two but I'm not sure in what order.

How was it decided to race Cam at so many different locations during his four-year-old season?

You have to remember everything in the lives of the two Norms and me was done around Cam Fella. Everyone enjoyed the trips and all that surrounded them so much.

When we made the stop at Kingston to train Cam Fella with Millers Scout, that was all Norm Clements' doing. No money changed hands but it was good for the game so he did it.

What about going all the way to Cloverdale Raceway?

Again, the track wanted to show the people of British Columbia the great Cam Fella. They had a race for him so we went.

The thing I remember was that every day we were in Vancouver it rained. Not until 10:00 on race day did it stop. Murray Waples did an amazing job to have the track surface in great condition. The fans were just fantastic as well.

It was the same at Edmonton when we went there. The grandstand seemed full and gave us the greatest ovation. It all was great.

What expectations did you have for Cam Fella as a sire?

I had very little to do with the arrangements after his retirement but it would have been my opinion that Justin Passing would have been the horse that was more successful. The reason I felt that was because Justin Passing was better gaited, had higher speed and was just a big, powerful, long-striding horse. When you spoke to him he could just fly. I never saw a horse that had the engine he had.

Bear in mind they were two different-

ly made horses altogether. Justin Passing wore a 62 inch hopple while Cam went with 53 1/2 inches. Having said that though, Cam didn't have the size but everything was in proportion — he was made right. The only criticism of him was that he was a little back on his knees and I've noticed that many of his offspring don't develop as quickly as they should. You have to be prepared to wait on them.

When I went to the yearling sales when Cam's first crop was offered I wasn't overly impressed with what I saw. They tended to be small, big, medium — all shapes and sizes. Some looked like Cam, others didn't and I wasn't sure what to think. I didn't buy any.

That following March I went to Florida to see how they were going and all I heard was how wonderful the Ralph Hanover two-year-olds were. Very little was being said about Cam so I came back figuring his chances of making it weren't good.

But then out popped Camtastic and Cam never looked back although there were still some who weren't convinced until Precious Bunny came along. While his prominent sons tend to all be a bit different, Presidential Ball is the one that most resembles Cam and I have very high hopes for his two-year-olds.

Will Cam Fella be looked upon as a pivotal horse for the breed?

I'm not sure but it is looking like that. When you see sons like Camluck who is headed to becoming the dominant sire in Ontario and possibly able to compete with the U.S. horses one starts to think that way. Camluck's filly Whenuwish-uponastar may be the best filly in North America.

Everything Cam has done he has done largely on his own. Let's face it, there were a large number of mares that were bred to Cam in the early years that should never have been. You have to wonder what Cam would have accomplished if he'd had access to the top mares from the start of his career.

If ever a farm was ready made for a horse it was Blue Chip Farms for Cam Fella with Most Happy Fella (Cam's sire)

having just died and their broodmare band ideally suited for him. However, he went to JEFs in New Jersey and in the end it worked out fine for everyone.

There are still lingering comments about Cam Fella's ability to produce top fillies.

Ellamony, Cammies Lady, C R Daniella and Camourous are four that come to mind which would dispute that. There are others too but bear in mind that some of Cam Fella's crops were not the size of No Nukes for example.

I don't think negative comments like that are accurate now.

I'll go further in saying that Cam Fella will also distinguish himself as a broodmare sire. Already he has Jennas Beach Boy to his credit and more will come.

What I find interesting is the success Camtastic is having with his fillies. Cami Whitestocking and Aparte are both at the top of their games and overall Camtastic has been a pretty decent filly sire — far more so than people give him credit for.

I refer to Cam Fella as the Northern Dancer of harness racing and I think the proof is there to back it up. The Americans may still have reservations but they all line up to own his colts.

You've mentioned Justin Passing on several occasions. Tell us more about your involvement with him.

Doug Arthur selected and developed Justin Passing as he did Cam Fella. Justin Passing's misfortune was racing the same year Niatross did although he still won the Confederation Cup and time-trialed free-legged in 1:53 and a bit.

I had admired the horse for some time and with Cam making the money he was, the two Norms wanted to buy Justin Passing too. We tried early on to buy him but Doug wanted to race him in the World Cup which didn't go that well for the horse. Even so we wanted to get the horse but just couldn't make a deal until fall.

Justin Passing was in to race at Rideau Carleton Raceway in the Des Smith

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Classic in September. Finally it looked like a deal was done but I asked to drive him in that race. We had the eight hole in a nine horse field. When the gate left I was in front like right now.

Glen Garnsey said after the race that the dirt was just flying over his head because Justin Passing was digging so hard. In the end Millers Scout got to us, barely, and that didn't happen again.

Doug ended up retaining a 50 percent interest in the horse who was valued at \$300,000. All he did after that was win and took in over \$300,000 in 14 starts and won 11 in a row. He sold at the end of the year for \$1 million to Castleton Farm.

You have to remember it was a great bunch of horses he was racing against every week — J Ds Buck, Willow Wiper and the like. It was tough company but Justin Passing was just a monster and in my opinion a great, great horse.

While I think of it, I'm in the process of arranging for Doug Arthur to parade Cam Fella at Woodstock Raceway when the horse goes there this summer. Coming from Norwich I think it only fair that he do that in his own backyard.

What some people may not be aware of is that your stable has also campaigned notable horses other than Cam Fella and Justin Passing. Let's talk about a few of those starting with Ludell Hanover.

Another horse that was developed by Doug Arthur. Turned out to be an over-achiever. At the start I thought he was a top colt but after every good race he'd disappoint you. He did win a division of the Prix d'Ete but was basically just a horse.

Elarfus. A horse we paid a lot of money for at public auction. High, high speed but no brains. He was a Steady Star and I think he tripped over his pedigree. One I'd rather forget.

Stone Sober. That was a horse that Norm and I bought because we were anything but stone sober at that yearling sale. Not a bad horse but nothing tremendous either.

Greener Pastures. Just a horse with some ability. I raced him against On The Road Again to pick up cheques. Buddy

Gilmour taught the horse and me what it was like to always finish behind a top horse.

B Crafty. Not a champion but just a good hard-knocking horse that every trainer would love to have in his barn.

Village Advocate. A bit of a loon when I got him but went on to win several hundred thousand for Dr. Bernie Brennan, a good friend of mine for many years. A good trotter that would steadily put money in the bank.

J P Cam. Another rugged sort. I called him a good poor man's horse that you could make money with.

Poplar Larry. Much like J P Cam and an Illinois-bred to boot. He knew what it was like to rough it.

DeSantis. Never sound but a good, honest horse. Every start would give you 100 percent.

Jotario. A nice Ontario Sires mare who got into a wreck early in her career and still went on to be a nice breadwinner.

Parafe. I bought her from Brian Webster for \$6,000 but should have never given him \$600 based on her conformation. But, she was all heart and proved to be a good, solid mare.

Lancer Gauman. Came from Rheel Bourgeois' barn and was around a \$75,000 claim if I remember. A nice, honest claimer.

Mays Victor. Still a touchy subject. We claimed him from Paula Wellwood for \$100,000 at Greenwood and I heard it did not go over very well. Hey, the horse was in there to be claimed and we had the money to do it so isn't that the name of the game? We eventually lost the horse in a claimer but he made us a nice bit of money.

And what about High Ideal?

Russ Miller had High Ideal and Keith Waples was his regular driver. From time to time Keith wasn't available and I got to drive him. I'm proud to say that happened five times and we won all five.

Coming back to Cam Fella, tell us about the famous matchup with Its Fritz in 1983 at The Meadowlands.

Carl Allen had brought Its Fritz to The Meadowlands as a green four-year-old

and let me tell you this horse could fly. I was stabled there with a few and Its Fritz could just circle horses — was undefeated.

Joe DeFrank (Meadowlands director of racing) approached me to see if I would agree to having the two meet in a race. Cam Fella was in the top class and Its Fritz was the challenger.

It turned out to be quite a production by The Meadowlands. It was a six-horse field with a purse of \$50,000 if I remember right. We had no misgivings about going into the race because Cam never ducked anyone and wasn't about to start.

The way the race evolved allowed Cam to get to the front relatively easy and at the half we weren't going that much. Marty Allen was driving Its Fritz and came with a rush. We went head-to-head to near the five-eighths pole and he circled us. When he went by I thought we were history and at one point we were three lengths out of it. My only hope was that I had noticed in the previous miles by Its Fritz that he had got a little weak at the end of the race.

Anyway Cam just never gave up and all the way down the stretch just kept coming. Up to that point I had figured we were racing for second money but losing just wasn't in Cam's book. He collared Its Fritz and went on to win easily. Remember things like this were not supposed to happen at this level of racing. I still marvel at the way Cam came back — it was great for The Meadowlands. The fans that day went crazy and I remember coming up to the press box being applauded by the mutuel staff on the way.

Were there hard feelings between you and Carl Allen?

It started out as a rivalry that got more serious and there was a lot of tension between us. There shouldn't have been because Carl and I raced together and actually were stabled together in Michigan. The problem stems back to a client of Carl's who moved a horse to my stable. I learned he was very upset over that but even back then it was the

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nature of the horse business.

I admit I didn't help matters when after the race and we pulled up I said that I guess we know who the champ is now. It did not go over well and I should have kept my mouth shut.

The two horses met again in Montreal.

That's right and Carl drove this time because he thought the result would be different. He went right to the front but it didn't make any difference. When I pulled we went right to the front and Its Fritz never hit the board.

People might forget that we met a third time at Yonkers. I wasn't able to park him but at the half we went at it and I think that time Cam took the heart out of Its Fritz because he never did much afterwards.

After the race Carl was a man about it and said it was like a boxing match — there is a winner and a loser. It was very good for the business.

In recent years you became involved with Jim Bullock (owner of Glengate Farms).

Jim was new to the business and was introduced to me around 1990. He became involved in a number of horses and then became a partner in Cantario Farms. I trained from his own farm north of Milton.

We were together for three years I guess and then he bought all of Cantario Farms which he has since renamed Glengate Farms. There is no business relationship any longer but we certainly still speak and there's no animosity.

Forty years ago you were involved in a serious mishap which changed your life. Elaborate on that for us.

I was 20 years old and went to Cornerbrook, Newfoundland, with Jack Tipping, a friend of mine. On the return trip we were driving back at night. I was sleeping after having driven a while and he was at the wheel when we hit a transport trailer. Jack was killed and I was injured.

I smashed my ankle and foot and was told at the hospital in Cornwall that I would never walk again.

Being that age I wasn't prepared to accept that. I was moved to St. Joseph's Hospital and started rehabilitation. I never gave up and was in a cast for two and a half years, bit by bit rebuilding the strength in the leg and relearning how to walk. So much of what I did I had to do on my own too. I just made up my mind I was going to do it.

Today I still have some effects from it especially if I'm on my feet all day as we all do at a horse sale.

An interesting little aside is that I wear a magnetic chain on my bad leg. That came about as a result of Cam Fella wearing the magnetic blanket when he raced. I don't understand how it works but Cam loved it and if nothing else it helped relax him — he'd fall asleep in the crossties.

You raced for a period in Western Canada.

I read an advertisement that a gentleman in Calgary wanted someone to train horses there for him. That was Freeman Lamb and he hired me for a year. From there I raced all over Western Canada and learned a lot.

From there I came home to Orr Lake, Ontario, before racing at Western Fair Raceway and then to Windsor when it opened.

I also went to Chicago for a period and really enjoyed it. It was a place I wanted to try and while I was there it treated me very well.

It was brief but I also was one of those who raced at Canterbury Downs in Minnesota when it first opened and in fact won the very first race there with a horse called Yours To Discover. That goes along with another first — I won the first race held at Mohawk Raceway with a horse called David Hal B.

In more recent times you were quite involved with the Ontario Harness Horse Association.

I served on two different negotiating committees that struck contracts with the Ontario Jockey Club. Some might ask why would I want all the grief but I quite enjoyed it. It was important work and I'm quite proud to say that we made

good deals for the horsemen.

One development which gets very little recognition is the pension plan. You would not believe how difficult it was to get that through and in the end it managed to come to pass by a single vote. Particularly for these young guys, that is a huge development.

You have six children but only your son Kevin became involved with the horses. He recently married and is making a career as an assistant trainer in your stable. What is the future for a young man today?

I'm glad I'm not looking at it. Kevin wants to train — driving doesn't interest him. He's dedicated and I wish him all the luck in the world. Other than that I haven't much advice to offer him because I don't know what direction the game is going. He's got a great personality and works hard. Like every horseman, what he needs is a break.

Cam Fella was an enormous break for you but did his presence do anything for your stable other than the commission and notoriety?

Absolutely nothing. I'm still amazed but it was the same for Ray Remmen after Beach Towel and there have been other horsemen too. The game today has little respect for good, solid horsemen. As I said earlier it seems that long-term relationships are a thing of the past. Everything is expected immediately and so often horse racing just isn't like that.

You're 59 years old. Some people have said old horsemen don't die they just fade away. What lies ahead for Pat Crowe?

I can't believe I'm 60 this month and can't see myself retiring. I have to do something. Right now the stable has eight head and I still get a lot of satisfaction from working with both raceway horses and the young ones.

It is a young man's game and I hope to see Kevin set up and running his own show. It has always been and probably always will be a game that you have to live. It's the only way if you want to be involved in racing horses and I don't see that changing even for me.

