

Showing Horses at Chicago The Thrill of a Lifetime

(This article was specially written for Canadian Show News, by Ken McMillan, local farm machinery dealer and show horseman. It appeared in the January edition of Show News, which is edited and published by Garfield McGillivray of the Herald staff.)

On the final night of the Royal Winter Fair at Toronto, I was wishing we had not planned on going to the Chicago Exposition Horse Show. I did so want to see the closing ceremonies, but instead spent the whole evening in the customs office, eventually getting through, but still wishing I was going home to my own bed.

On returning to our "back room," I found it full of our friends and fellow exhibitors gathered round to wish us bon voyage and good luck. Just cannot forget it. Mrs. Bumble and Lance, Lillian and Mel Burden, Ida and Wallace Munro, Les and Mrs. Wright, and Cecil Stirling with the gift of a lovely carriage whip from a former exhibitor of hackney horses who wanted us to have his whip in Chicago, and in all the excitement did not catch the name of the donor. The disappointed look of Tory Gregg and Elmer Parden of radio station, CKNX, Wingham, who had ordered a pair of monogrammed blankets

and would be brought in to be polished about an hour before each class. We usually followed a saddle class, and of course the only place they could warm their horses up before going in was in the small hitching ring and you can imagine at least twenty to thirty saddle horses warming up and all the harness horses hitching at the same time; and along with this the general public were allowed in, too, and how they crowded in—but a horseman never loses his temper, does he?

Saturday night was opening night, and was confined wholly to Illinois owned horses, so we thought we had better watch the show and see just how they done things, so that we wouldn't appear too green when we started. Dr. Watson and Jimmy Pogue arrived. We had brought the Dr's beautiful mare "Dawn's-a-Pippin" over with us. Cannot help but say here that I have known Jimmy Pogue only through seeing him at different shows, but didn't really know him, but after spending over a week with him think he is one of the finest boys we have met in some time. The arena is really beautiful. Probably not as long as Toronto, but a little wider. In the centre is

Mr. Carlton Elms, President of the American Hackney Horse Association and the one and only "Billy" Plinch, manager of Hawthorne Farms, invited us out to see their respective estates. We went out north of Chicago about thirty-five miles to Libertyville, home of the internationally known Hawthorne Farms. I never saw such a place in my life—a "horseman's paradise"—over four thousand acres. I believe over three hundred Holstein cows and Clyde, Hackney horses and ponies, saddle horses and sp. arem, that would compare in size to the Coliseum in Toronto, and vehicles, all kinds of them. I could have spent days going over them all.

From there we went over to the country home of Mr. Carlton Elms at Golf, Ill., and while on a smaller scale than Hawthorne, it was really more impressive. The horse barn was beyond description. Mr. Elms is one of the "old school" hackney horses. He has trophies and ribbons dating back to 1902 and 1903. The horse barn is spotless—finished in maroon with a maroon tile floor—you could use the brass bars in the box stalls for mirrors, not a spot on anything. I can't understand why this man doesn't show his horses. He has six of the most beautiful hackney horses I have ever seen in my life. It really is a shame that the public does not have the opportunity of seeing these beautiful animals. Would have loved to have asked him for some pictures. He also has a marvellous collection of vehicles of every type—Lady's phaetons, male phaetons, large and small, two coaches for four in hand, large and small, a brake for a four, also gigs, runabout wagons and many others. After a grand dinner at Wheeling we arrived back in time for the evening show.

Tuesday evening Glad and I each had a class and we each succeeded in getting a ribbon. Dr. Watson's Dawn's Pippin went lovely and was most capably ridden by Miss Reardon. We in Ontario have known and watched "Dawn" being shown throughout the province and have been very proud of her; but she was never ridden better than in Chicago. The little Reardon girl found the "key" in the first workout and they really "clicked". She was never out of the money in every class shown.

Wednesday and Thursday were very uneventful, other than the general run of the show. Wednesday night was "4H"—or as we would call it Junior Farmers' Night. The most impressive ceremony I ever saw take place in any ring—members taking part from the forty-eight states, Alaska, some of the South American countries, and our own province of Ontario. In the Ontario delegation from our own community were Fraser McNabb and Bob Lawson, whom we had the pleasure of seeing several times during the week. Was very proud to see them in the parade and when Col. Hand stuck up the Maple Leaf they got a rousing reception.

In speaking of our own Georgetown community, I was very proud to sit in that large arena and when the champion cattle were paraded around the ring to hear over the public address system, to the twenty thousand people there. The World's Champion Shorthorn Bull, "Scotdale Bombardier", owned and exhibited by Mr. S. G. Bennett, Georgetown, Ontario, Canada. I was also very proud, in our own classes. The announcer would announce the name of our horse and driven by Mrs. McMillan or myself of Georgetown, Ontario, Canada. While on the subject of publicity for my home town, when we parked our trailer, all the available drive-in space was taken, so we had to parallel park along the inside of the fence on Holstead St., a busy thoroughfare. The fence was about five feet high and above the fence was the top of the trailer with large letters—Ken McMillan, Georgetown, Ont. So a few in Chicago will know of Georgetown, Ontario.

Before leaving Toronto Lance Kumble told us to be sure and have a meal at the Saddle and Sirtain Club. He said it would cost us a lot, but would be well worth it. Well, Lance, we had many enjoyable meals at the club. We had invitations we had to refuse for lack of time.

Friday night was the exhibition party night and what a party. Wonderful food and lots of it—a grand floor show and a wonderful dance. Above all, we were made so welcome and everyone was so good to us. It broke up at 4 a.m. and we really didn't want to go to bed.

Saturday was the final day and by this time we had got around to knowing most everyone, and while we were anxious about home, we were kind of sorry it was over. We had a tandem class Saturday afternoon and the stake at night. I apparently made quite a hit in the tandem Saturday afternoon, as they literally pulled me out of the gig in the hitching ring after the class was over.

After the show Saturday night when our thoughts were naturally of home, it was just grand to have a gathering of Ontario people in our tack room. It made the dis-

lance home seem a lot shorter. Mrs. Herblinson, Dr. and Mrs. Watson, Mrs. Hamill and her two charming daughters, Marie and Marjorie, and Miss Yvonne McMullen and the one and only Jimmy Pogue.

We packed what we could and I left a call for seven o'clock Sunday morning which I didn't hear. We were out to the barn around nine-thirty. Jack and Murray had everything loaded and we said good-bye to Chicago. We stayed in Lansing again Sunday night and arrived back home in Georgetown early Monday evening.

Now we had a grand trip, but I couldn't close without thanking those who made it so enjoyable. First there was Mr. and Mrs. Holt and their staff. I don't know how we could have come through without them; they were simply wonderful. Mr. and Mrs. S. J. Campbell were equally good to us. Just did everything possible for us to enjoy ourselves. Our own Billy and Mrs. Plinch. I say our own because he is so well known to us all over here. The one, and only Russell Abdill. (I still have the dingy Russell you gave me to give to Mrs. Cox.) Mr. Carlton Elms who just couldn't do enough for us; Mrs. Jean Thompson—how we enjoyed her and her hats—everyone in Chicago was her friend. Bill Simpson of Saddle and Bridle; never met anyone who could give you the family history of horses like he could. Mr. and Mrs. Parish Lewis so glad to see us there. / Mr. and Mrs. James Gilchrist got a big kick out of sitting and looking at "Jimmy and his pipe" watching a class. "Marilyn" of the Popular Horsemen, although I did get her fixed up with someone else. Please forgive me Marilyn, Iona Heyl, and we just couldn't forget Russell Stone. Will get even with you yet Russ. The one and only R. C. (Doc) Flannery; the Huntoon Boys, how they could drive road horses; and last but not least Mr. William J. O'Connor, Secretary of the Horse Show, who really did everything in his power to make our visit a most enjoyable one. And so we say good-bye to the Chicago International. We learned a lot, we made a lot of friends, and above all we hope to go back again.

HEART SEIZURE FATAL TO LONDON MAN

John Nelson Sage of 6 Clemens Street, London, died suddenly on Friday, January 28th, of a heart attack suffered just as he stepped outside of his home. Mr. Sage, retired for the past 16 years, previously worked for Silverwood's

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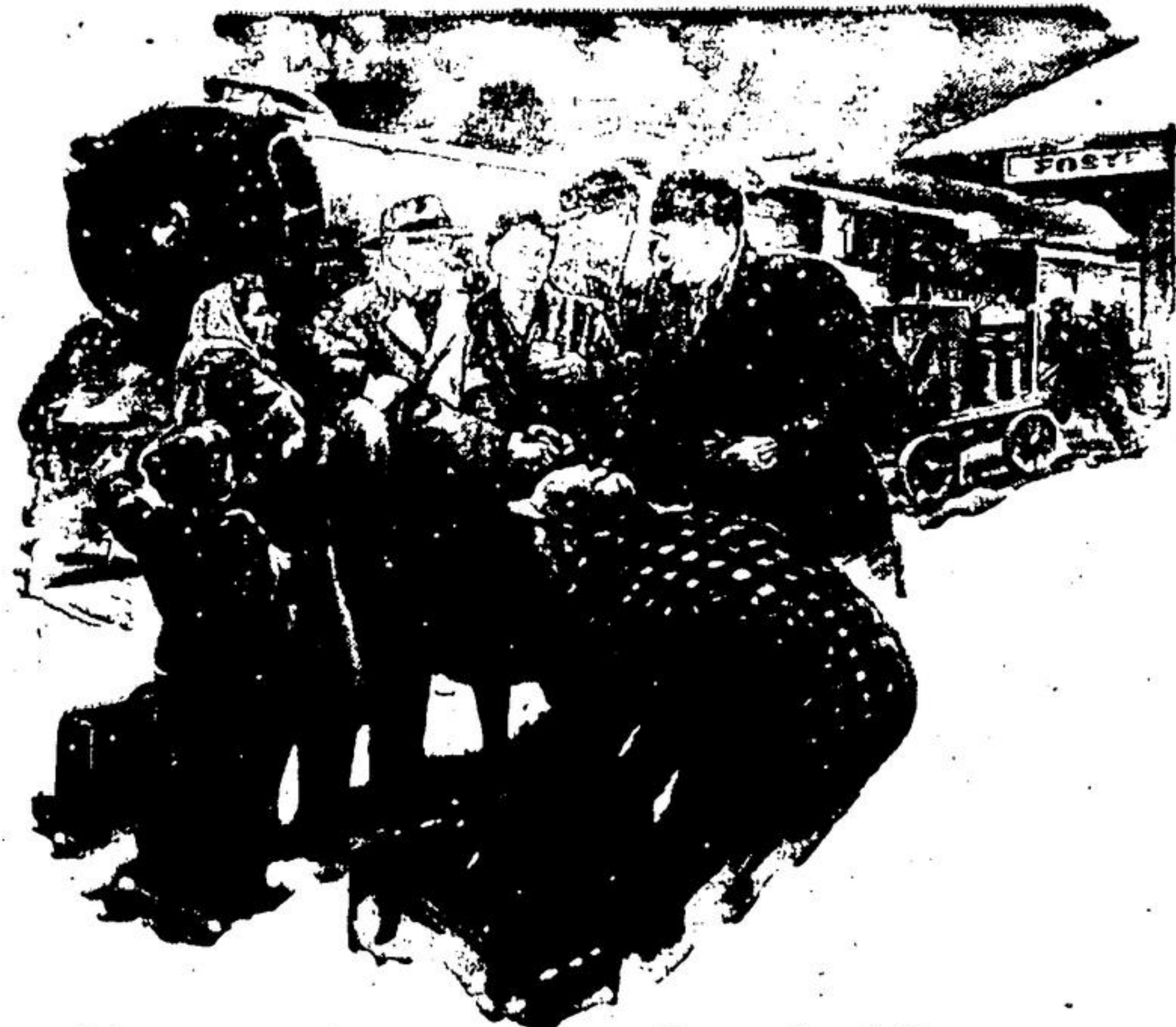
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YOUR Kem-Tone DEALER

Dairies. He was a grocer and caterer by trade. Born in Nilestown, he had lived in London for the past 70 years.

His widow, formerly Alberta M. Walker as a former Georgetown resident, and a relative of the Cleave families. He also leaves a son, Harold, of London, and a sister Mrs. Victoria Rettenmier of Birmingham, Michigan.

A private met a sergeant and asked: "Suppose a private should say to a sergeant, 'You've got the manners of a donkey,' what should happen?" "He'd be sent to the guardhouse," replied the sergeant. "Suppose the private didn't say it, but just thought it, what would happen?" "Nothing would happen." Then said the private as he walked away, "I'll leave it at that."



"Have a good trip!"

The whole family has been planning for this. Yes, and saving for it. The bank manager has been in on it right along, arranging financial details right down to handing them their Travellers Cheques.

Whatever your plans, if they involve money, drop in and talk them over with your bank manager. There are so many ways in which he can help.

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Halton Performer and Sir David "step high" as Ken McMillan puts them through their paces in the phaeton class at Georgetown fall fair.

especially for the trip and they had not arrived. Never mind boys, we'll take them next year.

Seems as though we had just got into bed when the phone rang and it was Murray (Taylor) to say everything was loaded and that Jack (McKay) and he were leaving; so it meant gathering up what clean clothes we could find and on our way again.

A very fast trip to Port Huron but at that we were just about half an hour ahead of the horses. At the U.S. customs it was just like an old boy's reunion. The Curtiss Candy ponies, Hawthorne Farms, and many others, all through together and away again. We arrived at the beautiful "Red Cedar Stables" of Chris Reardon at Lansing, Mich., around six o'clock. Where three very tired horses found three large comfortable box stalls awaiting them after over three hundred miles in the van.

Next morning we were away from "Red Cedar" about nine-thirty with just a little over two hundred miles to go. Glad and I went on thinking Murray and Jack would be in sometime during the night and we could have the stalls ready and the tack room up when they arrived.

We arrived at the hotel about five-thirty, unpacked our bags and headed out to the stables. We had just found our stalls when in drove Jack and Murray with the horses. What a relief! We were all in Chicago safe and sound, just getting settled down when the ABC boys arrived. They were directly across the aisle, so it was just like home. The very first to arrive to welcome us and settle us down, was the one and only Mrs. Mary K. Holt "no Chan." I do not know how we ever could have come through this show without the Holts. Saturday we met the genial secretary of the show, Mr. Wm. J. O'Connor, and he certainly made us feel at home. Would like to say here that almost every day of the show he would be around to see if there was something he could do to make things more pleasant for us.

We had ample time on Saturday to look things over and can't help but say here that outside of the arena it does not compare at all with Toronto. All too crowded—the North Side heavy horses, cattle and the large wagons of the various six and eight horse hitchers, all in together. Along the South Side are more heavy horses, saddle horses, jumpers, harness horses road horses and ponies; south of this again are two more buildings crowded with various breeds of horses. We were stabled along the south wall of the main building, just to the west of the hitching ring. The box stalls are removable ring, about eight by eight, with four foot aisles between them. The hitching ring is about one hundred and fifty feet long by about thirty feet wide. Our rigs were kept in a large tent outside

a flower-be-decked island for the show announcer and ring attendants. The seating arrangement is similar to the Coliseum only with the addition of a balcony all the way round. This is all finished in polished steel. The seats are all individual permanent seats leather covered and very comfortable.

I was really impressed with Col. Armin F. Hand's band. It really helped made the show. The Col. knows his horses. In a gaited class when the horses were cantering, the music was appropriate. When they trotted the music was faster, and when they "racked" he really turned it on. The road classes were similar, slow music for a road gait, and when the boys turned on the heat his band really turned it on too. For our own classes we usually had a band that just made you forget where you were. As happens at any show, you will have a dead spot when the audience becomes a little restless, the band immediately swing into some popular ditty that has everyone on the edge of their seats.

Sitting in this large auditorium with twenty thousand others on this Saturday night, I wondered how in the world I was ever going to get into this wonderful ring. Couldn't express my feeling to Gladys as I knew she had to go through it too.

Sunday morning I was up and out to the show around nine thirty. It seemed so strange. In the main ring they were judging cattle and heavy horses; walking through there and into the horse barns, the radios in the different tack rooms were all carrying church services—at the same time preparing for the different classes. Came three thirty, the time of our first class. Just about then I was wishing we were back in Georgetown; however we weren't. I think about three o'clock all the people in Chicago were there. I had never been in the ring, but I had nothing on our horses, neither had they and a tandem class at that. Didn't know whether I was sitting in the gig or on "Davy's" back; got into the ring as a unit. Halton took one look at the flower-be-decked island. He didn't like the looks of it so headed for the boards. Davy saw all the lights reflecting on the polished steel and he didn't like it over there. By this time Halton realized we were in a show ring and away we went. Don't remember much about this class, but we managed to get through it and safely out again. From then on it was much easier. Sunday night was the ladies' phaeton pairs. Won't say much about that other than that Halton was the bad boy again. Heard later that one of the road horse judges couldn't understand such a high-spirited horse having such good manners and when they stood like a statue without being held.

Monday was an off day for us, so