

THE SPORTS BEAT

By Glen May



A visit to Saratoga

During our holidays we visited fabled Saratoga Race Track, the oldest thoroughbred oval in America.

The track is located on the outskirts of the upper New York State town of Saratoga Springs, a quaint and colonial mixture of residents and swinging tourists.

The town itself is geared toward tourism. It is within a short drive from Lake George and Lake Placid, two fairylands of the New York tourist trade. Eating spots, entertainment, food and accommodation in the area are all superb.

Before entering the track you can visit the Saratoga Museum of Thoroughbred Racing. Although the admission is free, a \$1 entrance fee wouldn't cut down attendance. The museum is a treat whether you're a racing fan or not. Paintings, jockey silks, trophies and tools of the trade are excellently displayed with vivid and concise descriptions.

Surrounding the track there are countless watering spots and small restaurants with ideal menus.

When you finish touring the museum and downing a few pints of refreshment, it's on to a parking place. If you arrive with an hour to spare you can squeeze into one of the many lots around the track within a five minute walk. If not, then it's a 10 minute hike.

We arrived after the first race and wound up entrusting our car to a private enterpriser who parked us on the street, five minutes from the track entrance. His charge was \$1 and an assurance that he'd "look after things."

It was \$2 per person for grandstand admittance. Thirty-five cents for a program. Remember, you can't tell the players without a program, or so the saying goes.

The second race had just ended and the daily double

paid around \$300. It appeared a day of longshots was in store. During lunch a New York newspaper carrying the days racing card had Canadian Ron Turcotte riding in the second, fifth, sixth and eighth races.

I made a mental note to bet Mr. Turcotte in the fifth race no matter what the odds were. Losing the third and fourth races must have done something to my memory . . . or at least that is the only reason I can give for not betting him in the fifth.

Anyhow, his horse went off a 17-1. As the track announcer called the race I glanced at my program to find who was riding Prince Somethingorother. The horse was leading by eight lengths at the top of the stretch.

Naturally, the jockey was Ron Turcotte.

He was a winner by almost two lengths and returned almost \$37 for a \$2 bet. Why, I wondered, didn't I put the five on Turcotte rather than my fourth place finisher?

Well, three races, no winners.

The sixth race had a horse by the name of "Plane" which was an overwhelming favorite. I think it closed at 9-5. My \$10 bet seemed like a solid investment. After all, I had to get my money back.

At the half-mile pole my horse was running an easy third. I was almost ready to head for the payoff booth.

At the top of the stretch he was running second and appeared to be making a move. Unfortunately, so were three other horses. They all passed him and he never caught the one which was ahead. Plane finished fifth.

We left Saratoga Race Track after the sixth race.

Oh yes, the car was in the same spot when we returned.

SUGAR AND SPICE
by Bili Smiley



They eat anything

I've never raised pigs, but there can't be too much to it, according to what I've seen in the past week.

You merely give them all they can eat, and then clean up after them. And there's no trouble at all in preparing their food.

One of the great advantages is that there's no garbage. Apparently the only thing pigs won't eat is returnable bottles.

This is a fine way to talk about my son Hugh and his friend Alex, but it's the solemn truth. It's not meant in a disparaging way. I'm not full of disparagement, but of despair.

When I was their age, I was a pretty fair trencherman. On one occasion, as I recall, I set a new family record for corn on the cob. I ate 13 cobs. On another, I ate 12 baked apples.

But these were individual feats. They pale alongside the stuff Hugh and his mate put away.

They start off slowly. "Just a cup of tea, Mrs. Smiley, if you like. Oh, well, maybe I'll have a fresh peach, if they're turning bad and you want to get rid of them."

Half a basket of peaches later, they might succumb to a few cobs of corn (it's noon by now, because they never get up until it). Before the corn, they've had a can or two of cold beans and a half-loaf of toast "just to be sociable".

When the corn is gone, they look up with their little, beady eyes glittering and absolutely refuse dessert, "Unless you have some old cake and ice-cream that's maybe going bad." There always seems to be some old cake or pie that's on its last legs, and some ice-cream that's going bad unless you eat it the day it's bought.

They manage to get through the afternoon with the odd hamburger and a few bags of chips and a couple of beers. But by dinner time, their snouts are prying the lids off pots and their little, feverish paws are stirring the gravy and the saliva is running so fast you have to wear rubber boots in the dining-room.

It's not the food I mind. I've bought moose pastures in Northern Ontario that were guaranteed gold mines. I've dropped \$5,000 bombs in fields in Holland, a slaughtering of 10,000 turnips. I've tried for 20 years to make my wife base her arguments on reason, not emotion. I know what it is to lose.

No, I don't expect any return. It's just pure fascination. Where in the name of the Holy Old Jumpin' Jehosophat do they put it?

They're not big, fat, fellas. They're young and slim. I give them a plate of steak or turkey and spuds and vegetables and salad that would make a lumberjack ill.

And I start to eat my own. And I look up, and there they are, twiddling their hoofs, plates licked clean, eyes fixed on the main platter.

That's not the worst thing. If I eat too much, maybe at Christmas or New Year, I have enough sense to subside in a corner and belch amiably as I watch television.

Not these piggies. One hour after a meal that would put the fat lady in the circus on her back for a week, they can be seen peering into the refrigerator.

They eat from six to eight. And when they get in, at three a.m., they have to have a little nite-cap: half a pound of cheese and a pound of bacon and a half-loaf of bread and two cans of soup to wash it down.

Perhaps it's explainable when they tell you that they often go for days, weeks, living on bologna sandwiches and coffee, chips and milk, hot dogs and pop. Sometimes nothing.

Ever try that nothing? I have I've gone for three days with nothing and then eaten so much cabbage soup it was coming out my ears and my belly was touching my chin.

It's not that I don't like to see young people eat heartily. It's just that if I want to raise pigs, I'd like to have some pork.

RECREATION TIPS

Guns should be rested in a safe and secure position where the movement of the boat or dogs could not cause them to fall down and discharge.