Marc Bourgon

Longtime harness racing industry participant Marc Bourgon, 60, died July 7, 2017, in Wilkes-Barre, Pa.

Mr. Bourgon suffered cardiac arrest while jogging a horse at The Downs at Mohegan Sun Pocono on July 4. He was transported to Geisinger Medical Center where he passed peacefully three days later.

In 1956, Mr. Bourgon was born into a family of horsemen in Sudbury, Ont., and grew up under the tutelage of his father, Wilfred Bourgon, a horsemanship and blacksmith at Blue Bonnets Raceway in Montreal.

Mr. Bourgon dedicated his entire life to harness racing, working as a groom, trainer, driver and blacksmith at tracks all over Canada and the U.S. since the early 1970s right up until his death.

Mr. Bourgon is survived by his wife of 38 years, Tina (née Skulski); daughter, Jill; twin grandchildren, Henry and Jasmin; and sister, Judy (Michael) MacDonald. He was preceded in death by a brother, Gary; mother, Angie (née Kniski); and father, Wilfred.

Katherine Carey

Katherine L. Carey, 93, of Columbus Junction, Iowa, died June 16, 2017, at Colonial Manor senior center in Columbus Junction, where she had been a resident since October 2016.

Katherine Lovenia Pewitt was born Aug. 14, 1923, in Malta, Mont., to Robert A. and Katherine (Hartmann) Pewitt. The first years of her life were influential in her love of the open prairie and outdoors and being a lover of horses. Growing up in a log cabin and being the only child for miles created in her a sense of adventure and imagination. She rode a horse before she could walk and so began her life as a strong horsewoman. She later welcomed a brother, Robert Jr., and a sister, Roberta, who died in infancy. Bob and Katherine knew every inch of the open prairie, riding their ponies and hunting with their dogs.

When the Great Depression hit, they loaded up their belongings and headed to California. After a time there, things did not improve so they moved back to the mining town of Landusky, Mont. After some more hard times, they then moved to Mrs. Carey’s maternal family in Chicago. She loved her life at Sunset Farms where her father trained and showed five-gaited saddledbred horses. She showed at many prestigious events and won many awards.

In 1941 she graduated from Niles Township High School. During World War II, the family then moved to Wapello, Iowa, to rent a farm and train and show horses.

Mrs. Carey enlisted in the U.S. Naval Reserve as a WAVE (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service). She completed her basic training in New York City. She then completed her tech training in Oklahoma City. After completion, she was then stationed at Oakland Alameda as an airplane mechanic, then a tool room clerk. On Jan. 9, 1946, she was discharged to civilian life, returning to Wapello, Iowa. She then worked various jobs.
while training for her pilot’s license. Her love of horses brought her to the love of her life. While leading horses to post at the Wapello Homecoming harness races, she caught the eye of Keith Carey. They were married May 5, 1950, at the Methodist Church in Wapello. Their 67 years of marriage were spent working together on the family farm east of Columbus Junction.

That same year, Mr. Carey’s brother, Red, was injured in a racing accident, so the couple jumped in to help train and race the family horses. Thus began their involvement in Midwest harness racing.

In the early 1960s, Mrs. Carey and a group of other enthusiasts formed the Hawkeye Colt Stakes Association to promote the racing industry in the Midwest. She was the secretary/treasurer of this group for many years.

Her love for studying horse pedigrees led to her involvement with the forming of the Midwest Standardbred Sale in 1962 held annually at the Kalona Sales Barn. She had a strong reputation with her pedigrees and many sale companies employed her expertise.

In 1995, she was inducted into the Iowa Harness Racing Hall of Fame for her service to the industry.

Mrs. Carey is survived by her husband, Keith; daughter, Twyla (Dan) Peters and their children, Will (Keetra), Keagan, Kinleigh, Kelton, Mackenzie (Sam) Clark, Clay, and Banks; son, Jeff (Nancy) and their children, Mary (Keevyn Kilburg), Karlee, Kolton, Curtis, Allison (Ryan) Pearson, Kathlynn, and Newlyn; son, Bill (Debby) and their children, Truckie (Michelle) Harbison, Logan, Caedon, and Matthew Stauffer; daughter, Patti (Larry Fred Gerling) and their children, Saul, Emma, Akira (Adelaide) Gerling, Jon, Jessica (Jacob) Alvarez, and Freyja; stepbrother-in-law, Les Linendoll; and several close nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents; an infant sister; her brother in 2016; her stepmother, Isadene Drake Pewitt; a stepsister, Maxine Linendoll; and one great-grandson.

Memorial contributions can be made to Indian Creek Cemetery Association or to Colonial Manors of Columbus Community, Inc., at www.colonialmanors.com.

Clarence DeLong
Clarence “Sonny” DeLong, 76, died July 6, 2017. A longtime resident of Grove City, Ohio, Mr. DeLong was born July 17, 1940, and was a graduate of Central High School.

A retiree of the banking industry, Mr. DeLong was a member of the USTA and was an avid owner and breeder. He owned more than 60 horses, bred 17, and was a familiar face on the Ohio circuit.

Mr. DeLong was a Mason in the Grove City Masonic Lodge 689; treasurer of the Ohio Special Olympics for many years; on the board of directors and served as treasurer for the Grove City Kids Association; belonged to the Elks Lodge No. 37; and was a Lions Club member.

Mr. DeLong is survived by his children, Melissa Hawk, Lora Kerschner, and Kevin (Rebecca); grandchildren, K.C. (Chelsea) Carey, Katie (Ryan) Fullen, Andrew Hawk, and Alex Hawk; great-grandchildren, Owen, Sullivan, Shepherd, Hudson, and Evangeline; brother, Skip (Sarah) Martin; brother-in-law, Bill Anderson; and sister-in-law, Vicki

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Mr. Hagemeyer was the son of Fred J. Hagemeyer and Bessie E. Bevan. He attended elementary school at Spring Hill (a one-room schoolhouse) and graduated from high school at Massie Township School in Harveysburg in 1936. He also attended the University of Cincinnati, majoring in business administration.

He always loved horses, and in his youth showed Percheron and Belgian horses throughout the U.S. In 1940, he traveled through the Panama Canal, transporting draft horses to Chile.

Mr. Hagemeyer was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1941 and served almost five years during World War II, with 2½ years overseas. He attained the rank of captain and commanded a company in the 23rd replacement battalion in North Africa and Italy. He served under Gen. George Patton in North Africa and Gen. Mark Clark in Italy.

Before being shipped overseas, he was stationed at Camp Sutton in North Carolina where he first met Stella Adcox. Mr. Hagemeyer and his friend were on a weekend leave in Charlotte, N.C., when they randomly picked a name out of the phone book. It turned out to be Stella’s roommate. When Mr. Hagemeyer saw the beautiful girl in the doorway, he said, “That is my gal.”

Mr. Hagemeyer took over the family farm in 1948. In addition to farming, he owned and operated various business ventures, including an excavation business for 17 years, a feed mill in Clarksville for five years, an anhydrous ammonia and fertilizer business for 20 years, an egg business for nine years (with 6,000 laying hens), and a Standardbred racing and breeding business that he started in 1957 and that continues today.

He was active in county and state organizations. He was a member of the Clarksville Masonic Lodge since 1940, and a member of Scottish Rite and Shrine since 1946. He joined the Eastern Star in 1947 and served as Worthy Patron in 1952 and 1962. He was also a member of the Warren County School Board for 10 years.

Mr. Hagemeyer was active in politics, serving as Republican precinct chairman for 30 years and vice chairman of the
Warren County Republican Party for a few years. He was a township trustee of Washington Township for 32 years. After the death of his father in 1948, he completed the balance of his father’s term as Warren County Commissioner. He also had the privilege of being selected as a delegate from Ohio to the 2000 National Republican Convention in Philadelphia for George W. Bush.

He was on the Warren County Fair Board for 42 years and the Warren County Veterans Commission for 20 years. He also served as a director of the Ohio Harness Horsemen’s Association and was the first president of the Harness Horse Youth Foundation.

Mr. Hagemeyer has been recognized many times over the years. He received the Pacer Grass Roots award in 1989, was named a “Kentucky Colonel” at the age of 91, and received the Masonic Lodge 75-year award in 2016 and the Harveysburg alumni 80-year award in 2016.

Other survivors include four children, Mel (Pam), Della Aylor, Fred (Debbie), and Ted (Pam); grandchildren, Scott, Tiffany Linville, Kyle Aylor, Ashlee Johnson, Captain Steven, Cheryl Hanna, Nick, and Shana; and great-grandchildren, Hunter, Brandi Hanna, Riley Hanna, Lyndsay, Carlee Johnson, Jenny-Lynn Johnson, Mayree Johnson, Isaac Linville, Evan Linville, and Owen Linville.

Sherie Hankins
Sherie Hankins, 62, of Canonsburg, Pa., died July 25, 2017, after a long illness.

She was the beloved wife of Kim Hankins, a longtime horseman who raced extensively in California and Illinois before becoming the executive director of the Meadows Standardbred Owners Association.

In addition to her husband, she is survived by her two children, Staff Sgt. Joshua (Melonie) and Neva; grandchildren, Jackson and Rebekah Murray; and brother, Michael (Eva) Cotton.

She was a member of the Christian Harness Horsemen’s Association.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Christian Harness Horsemen’s Association, 157 North Main St., Salem, NH 03079 or at www.chha.net.

John D. Hubbell, M.D., of Lima, Ohio, died June 27, 2017, at home. He was 93.

Born April 19, 1924, in Centerburg, Ohio, he was a 1942 graduate of Centerburg High School. Dr. Hubbell married Norma L. Miller on June 25, 1949, recently celebrating 68 years of marriage. The union of John and Norma was blessed with three children, Susan L., M.D., John A.E., DVM (Shelley), and David D., M.D. (Alice); grandchildren, Meghan M. and James A.E. (Andrea); and great-grandchildren, Connor and Charlotte.

Dr. Hubbell was called to the service of his country during World War II and served in the U.S. Army’s Pennsylvania Engineers in the European Theatre. He enrolled at The Ohio State University after the war and received his Bachelor of Science and Doctor of Medicine degrees in 1952.

In 1955, he established an anesthesia practice in Lima, serving the community until his retirement at the age of 77.

Dr. Hubbell had two great sporting passions—Ohio State Buckeye football and harness racing. He purchased his first
trotting horse, Nite Call, from David L. Steiner of Steiner Stock Farm in 1955. He bred, owned, and raced trotters throughout his life, usually giving the horses the surname “Adonno” so they would be easy to find in the program.

Primarily racing on the Ohio fair circuit, Dr. Hubbell developed lifelong friendships with many in the industry including the David Steiner family, the Herb Levan family, the Ed Greeno family, Denzil Berry, Robert J. Brown, Gus Kaser, Dave Koch, Mark Grismore, and Harold Dick. His favorite horses were Dave Adonno, Carmen Adonno, Dr J Adonno, Chiere Adonno, and most recently, Blueridge Tornado.

He was a member of a number of organizations, including the Allen County Harness Horsemen’s Association, the Ohio Harness Horsemen’s Association, and the USTA.

Dwayne Pletcher

Dwayne Pletcher, 85, of Shipshewana, Ind., died July 5, 2017, at Parkview LaGrange Hospital in LaGrange, Ind.

Mr. Pletcher was one of the nation’s top drivers and developers of colts and a member of one of Chicago’s most famous harness racing families.

Mr. Pletcher was born in Goshen, Ind., on July 27, 1931, to Lester and Irma Pletcher. He drove his first race the day before he turned 15 in 1946 at the Cassopolis, Mich., county fair, where in three heats with P. J. Volo he finished 2-2-1, including his first win.

He graduated from Shipshewana High School in 1949 and served in the U.S. Army as a sergeant in Korea. Upon his return, he resumed harness racing as his career and passion.

Mr. Pletcher won 1,477 races in his lifetime, including the Sportsman’s Park Midwest Derby three times with Transient in 1966, Teffe in 1970, and Overcast in 1973. He campaigned Chaw, the 1972 Illinois Horse of the Year.

Others in the long line of top horses he handled include Pacing Boy, Pepe Dancer, Shady Counsel, Right Honor, Galahad, Nemma Hanover, Sherry’s Honor, H.D.Counsel, Shady Mile, Sluf, and Tuit, plus stakes-winning Butter Up, Vieta, Miss Yankee Doodle, and Perfect Illusion.

He earned just under $5 million during his driving career and $1.4 million as a conditioner.

Mr. Pletcher was the leading driver at Maywood Park in 1958, and eighth in the national ranking in 1959.

He was a member of the Illinois Harness Horsemen’s Association, the Indiana Standardbred Association, and the USTA. He raced in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky, New York, Pennsylvania, and California.

He mentored both of his sons, Steve and Jeff, who also made harness racing their life’s work.

Mr. Pletcher is survived by his wife of 63 years, Areta; sons, Steve (Vickie) and Jeff; grandson, Brett (Amber); great-grandchildren, Ethan, Landon, and Baily; and brother, Delmer. He was preceded in death by his father, Lester; mother, Irma; and brother, Donald.

Please send condolences to P.O. Box 6, Shipshewana, IN 46565 or memorial contributions to the Food and Clothes Basket, 413 S. Railroad St., LaGrange, IN 46761.

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Margaret Ann Phillips Cherrix Rodgers, 87, died July 12, 2017.

Nicknamed “Sunshine” as an infant, she continued to spread that her entire life. She was a wife, mother, friend, teacher, businesswoman, beauty queen, advocate—the list could go on.

Upon graduation from Snow Hill High School and then Salisbury State Teacher's College, she married Robert P. Cherrix, who always said he knew he would marry her when he was in first grade. Together they built a successful harness horse racing stable until his untimely death at 43 years old.

Overcoming obstacles was part of Mrs. Rodgers' DNA. She reinvented her life, turned to her education and began teaching at Worcester Country School. Never to have only one job, she could also be found in the summers at Ocean Downs, where she met her second husband, Roscoe Rodgers Jr. She blazed the way for women in a primarily male sport by becoming the first female assistant race secretary. She also could be found welcoming patrons at her favorite Italian restaurant in Ocean City.

After teaching second grade for 16 years and stressing the value of a good education, she relocated to Pompano Beach, Fla., to semi-retire with her second husband.

She continued spreading sunshine in the Sunshine State, helping friends manage several beauty salons, and supporting her husband's racing stable.

Final retirement came—after several health challenges—in Prescott Valley, Ariz., in 2010, where she continued to enjoy her full life. Many lives were touched with her genuine kindness.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Standardbred Retirement Foundation, 353 Sweetmans Lane, Millstone Township, NJ 08535 (www.adoptahorse.org).

Earl Short

Earl Wayne Short, 71, of Greenwood, Del., died July 4, 2017, at Christiana Hospital after a lengthy illness.

Mr. Short was born Nov. 13, 1945, in Federalsburg, Md.

He was always happy to help someone in need and volunteer his time,
without expecting anything in return.

He enjoyed farming, working in the produce market, training and racing Standardbred horses, and riding the golf cart with his dog, Sophie, around the family farm.

He loved spending time and talking on the phone with his family. He was always the person that everybody loved to be around because he made them laugh.

Mr. Short is survived by his wife, Di Ann, after (almost) 47 years of marriage; sons, Mark and Ronald (Shannon Trader); brother, Donnie (Debra); special nephew and chauffeur, James Pollard; Shannon’s children, Amanda Malone and Deacon Keim; and nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by a son, Michael Wayne; and his parents, Earl H. and Betty M.

Memorial contributions may be made to Mark Short, 78 Clark St., Harrington, DE 19952 to help with medical expenses.

Kelly Staten
West Virginia horseman Kelly Staten, 71, died July 23, 2017, after a brief illness.

Mr. Staten, who learned to work with plow horses as a young child, got his first glimpse of harness racing after sneaking off to the West Virginia State Fair when he was just 8 years old.

Though he served in the U.S. Army and worked for many years as a machinist, Mr. Staten bought his first racehorse in 1969. He went on to spend much of his life in the horse business, training and driving his own Standardbreds as well as those for outside owners.

Mr. Staten, who raced in Ohio and Pennsylvania as well as on the East Coast, was known for his success with problem horses. Horses that went on to become family favorites included Grace Of Hearts, Samsliptoneldorado, and Satin Maple.

Memorial contributions may be made to a horse rescue of the donor’s choice in Mr. Staten’s name.

Please send obituaries to In Memoriam, Hoof Beats, 6130 S. Sunbury Rd., Westerville, OH 43081-9309. You can also send them by email to news@ustrotting.com, or by fax to 844.229.1338 (toll free U.S. and Canada) or 614.224.4575 (outside the U.S. and Canada). Obituaries are subject to editing for clarity and space.