

Indira

The adage may be true that nice guys do finish last, but when that truth is applied to race horses you wonder if French chefs prowled around the post-race paddock area sizing up cheval steaks.

different vendors. It helps to bring your personal sommelier with you. Provided in the package was a plastic cocktail glass and some appetizer tickets to four food vendors set in a midway tent.

You could not get tipsy from the samples because the vendors only splashed a sip into one's glass. I still do not know the conversion chart of

Approximate Post Time: 5:02 PM

ARLINGTON INTERNATIONAL

The 37th Running of
The Purple Violet Stakes
\$100,000 Added

ILLINOIS STAKES

FOR FILLIES, THREE-YEARS-OLD (Illinois Registered, Conceived and/or Foaled). By subscription of \$75 each, which should accompany Supplementary Nomination of \$2,000 may be made on Wednesday, June 4, 2014, which includes entry and starting fees. Original nominees to pay \$50 box and an additional \$500 to start, with \$100,000 added which includes \$25,000 for Illinois Conceived and Foaled (IB); after payment of 1% to all owners three through last; 60% of the remaining purse shall be paid to the owner of the winner, 20% to second, 11% to third, 6% to fourth and 3% to fifth. Non-winners of \$30,000 once at one mile or over in 2014, allowed 2 lbs., \$20,000 twice at one mile or over or \$25,000 once at one mile in 2014, allow earnings. Failure to draw into the race at time of entry cancels all claims with the exception of the nominating fee(s). Starters to be named through the entry by closing. Two (2) horses having common ties through ownership. Trophy to the owner of the winner. Nominations Closed Saturday, May 24, 2014 with (Weather)

Track Record: Coragali Cat(4), 120 lbs.; 1:33.55 (5-3-08)

Program# Race Date	Odds Trk-Cdn	Owner/Silks/ Dist	Trainer/ Leader Times	Horse Name/Meds/ Class	Jockey	Weight	Eq/Med Odds	First 3 Finishers-Margin
1 Red	8-1	Owner: John Carver Silks: RED, white 'TS' sash and sleeves, red cap Trainer: Thomas H. Swearingen (16-4-34) 25.00% - Trn/Jky: (5-1-2) 20.00%	COUNTLESS CASHMERE (F) (L) Ch.13 Bellamy Road - Bankruptcy Babe by Vicar - Bred in Illinois by John Carver (Apr 21, 2011) 6/29 23Hr 45S1 1:17.8 31 (D)Hw 3800W 19Mar14 6Hw ft ♦ 5/14x 22Hr 45S4 1:05.74 31 (D)Hw 2700W 10May14 4Hw ft ♦ 5/14x 22Hr 45S7 5:01.1 31 (D)Hw 2700W Workouts: 31 May 14 AP ♀ 5F ft 1:03.80 25/28 30 May 14 AP ♀ 5F ft 1:01.50 18/42 3 May 14 AP ♀ 5F ft 1:01b 8/34 Trainer Last 365 days: All: 130 171 51.72 Dist/Surf: 32 195 51.92 Sprint/Route: 13 235 51.65 Zeffert-180: 19 40X 43.02 Won>LastStart: 21 105 90.80 Stakes: 9 335 52.91	C. H. Marquez, Jr. (40-6-27) 15.00%	2014 3 1 1 0 \$30.900 Turf 2013 0 0 0 0 Wt Turf Life: 3 1 1 1 \$30.900 Distance AP(A): 3 1 0 0 \$22.800 All Weather			
2 White	10-1	Owner: Rom Magers and Bob Marocchio Silks: ORANGE, black RM in diamond frame, black diamond stripe on sleeves, orange cap Trainer: Anthony J. Granitz (22-6-42) 0.00% - Trn/Jky: (3-4-10) 8.00%	BELLARDA (F) (L) Bellar da hu Summer Squall - Bred in Illinois by Rom Magers & Robert M. 10May14 10 AP 09Nov13 7 Hw 12Oct13 8 K 07Sep13 9 A 14Aug13 8 L 07Jul13 3 F Workouts: Trainer Last 3	Sheldon Russell (68-11-15) 13.18%	2014 1 0 0 0 \$257 Turf 2013 3 0 0 0 Wt Turf Life: 3 0 0 0 Distance All Weather \$33.77			

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1 Bet TOTAL
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Belmont Park DAY Perf 28
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Race 11

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2 California Chrome

3 Bets TOTAL
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Go Green! Try FAST BET MOBILE!

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400 sips to number of filled glasses of wine. There was also a few beer samples, in which at least one server was told to cut back on the amount liquid to thirsty consumer.

At a certain point, we decided to buy some actual cold drafts inside the race course food court. That hit the spot, as well as the breeze and partly cloudy skies which made the afternoon upscale college kegger.

To say it was an eclectic crowd would not do it justice. There was the gambol from beach crowd to the fancy hat and dress Kentucky bourbon heiress crowd. From young families sitting at tables under the grandstand decks, to frat boys huddled around large beer bong in a bar patio, to socialites in summer dresses and odd men wearing large bow-ties, people watching was as important as horse handicapping.

I had not been to Arlington Park in a long time. The biggest change were the self-serve betting terminals that were all over the place, including in the wine tasting tents. I preferred to have the personal interaction with an actual person than misapplying a video screen option menu and winding up with a \$10,000 claimer after the race tethered to the bumper of my car in Parking Lot E.

The crowd was fairly subdued during the first two races. Where we were at in the wine area, there was only two jumps for joy when the first race favorite won. It seems that it is hard to win bets in a conventional way. The race fields were small, the odds narrow, and the betting pools were weak (under six figures all day long). The odds are calculated on the amount bet on kind of wager (with the track making its money on commission for each bet made). There were very few "value" bets because it was rare to have a race with a good horse carrying 15-1 odds. The favorites in each race were bumped together with payoffs on \$2 bets in a narrow range of \$1.60 to \$2.40 win premiums. I recall a time with much larger race fields and better betting options. But one can see that the massive growth in other forms of gambling (lottery, casinos, charity bingo) has made horse racing the ugly stepchild in the gambling industry.



Besides, you don't have to "feed" a slot machine anything but quarters. With the ponies, there are plenty of bills to pay --- win or lose.

So the short odds pulls the casual weekend bettor toward the exotic bets which pay off better than a win-place-show order wager. The daily double, trifecta, exacta, Pick 3, 4, 5, 6 and other weird combinations which come down to short hand for "multiple bets" which means doubling, tripling or quadrupling a standard wager. The lure of a chance at \$20 on a \$2 perfecta against the horse you know will win will only pay a profit of \$1.20 is tapping into base greed of human nature: how hard can it be to figure out the second horse when I know who is going to win?! When things seem easy, they are usually much more complex, hard.

We had several pleasant conversations with people in the wager lines who knew just enough to get us all into trouble. People understand the basics, but the application of knowledge is hard.

I was shut out on my eight bets on the day. I think that was fairly par for the course. I did not see a lot of Cheshire grins waving stacks of cash leaving the pay-out lines. In fact, I did not see that many people in line cashing in winners. And when they did, they just poured the money back into new bets.

Sociologists and mathematicians could probably write long studies on the dynamics of race patrons. During one race, we sat in the apron seats near the finish line. It was not very crowded, but after placing our bets for the next race inside the building, the section as filled standing room only. It seems the crowd turns into a human amoeba, slowly moving from section to section trying to find that mysterious superstitious luck.

Trying to defy luck is the intellectual speed bump that most of find ourselves. After a few races, the terms and concepts in the racing form started to return from the recesses of deep memory storage to the forefront of conscious analytical thinking. How did the horse finish in its last race? Has the horse raced at this length before?

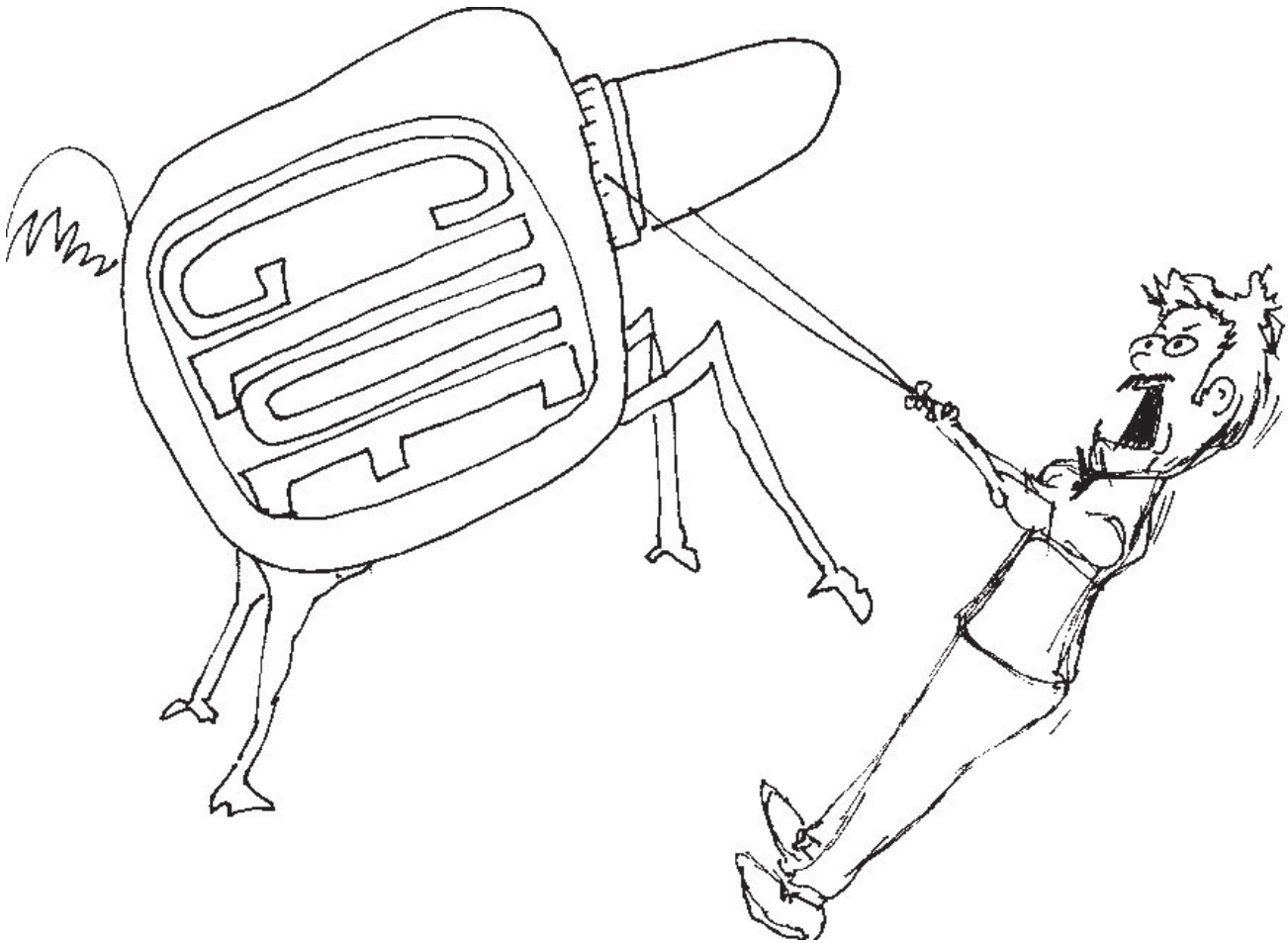
The first odd fact that caught our attention

was a horse owned by “Jim Edgar.” Could it be the former Illinois governor who did not go to prison like his brethren? We had no clue.

But then in the 9th Race, we found a kindred journalism colleague. I was well aware that the Chicago television and media community was heavily into horse racing, especially horse ownership. In the 9th, the #2 horse was owned by Chicago news anchor Ron Magers. We could tell from the program track record it was not a very good horse. And the fact that this race was the first big stakes race of the year at Arlington Park, the Purple Violet Stakes (\$100,000 added), which meant higher level of competition. It was a pre-race day long shot at 15-1 and climbed higher before the post. But thinking it could be a sign, I placed a bet on #2 to show. In a celebrity culture, celebrities don’t let people down, right?

I think this was one of my horses that still has not finished the race. It may have changed silks and wore sunglasses in order to leave the track. It probably in some witness protection program today.





You do have to have some patience to stand in lines. There were long lines at the inside betting stations. There were long lines in the inside air conditioned bars. There were long lines at the beer station in the food court. With races every 25 minutes or so, you can miss one just by standing in line.

That is why the touch screen and flat screen monitors are everywhere. You cannot turn your head without noticing one. It was odd to see a self-serve betting terminal in the family section, just feet away from little children who have the technical skills to bet their inheritance if left unsupervised (considering there was no security personnel stationed at these kiosks.)

The race day experience is a chance to wander the grounds. If one part was crowded, you can float to a less crowded area. The wine tasting area was pretty well packed all day long.

The food were small samples, like the wine, with a pulled pork slider being good, but a slice of sausage roll better. We convinced a young couple to use a food ticket on one. Afterward, they said we did not steer them wrong.

The wine servers tried their best to get their 15 second sales pitch out of their mouths prior to the end of pour splash hit the bottom of the glass. The wine list was longer than the racing program. And, there was a tent for those people who really, really, really found something they like, to order a case or two from the retail liquor store sponsor.

Alcohol, food, sunny weather, cool breeze, laid back crowd are the elements of an Americana weekend. Add the fact that one is at the track away from their own weekday bosses cracking the whip, hoping a jockey will whip their win ticket home is the twisted circle of life that is our modern times. Norman Rockwell may have kicked over his can-

was once or twice during the race day. It is not that I have any ill will toward the horses. Even if the bettor's strategy is purely a name game, that may succeed one in ten times. (FYI, King's Fortune does not pay out in a "King's fortune;" it was another one of my selections who I begged just to "show up" near the finish line while the crowds were shouting out the numbers of potential winner.)

And even betting one jockey with a strange name did not seem to work. It seems my riders were all under the employ of Mr. Grim Reaper, who delighted in killing off any chance to collect a return on investment. That is the wrong term. Betting is not an investment, it is entertainment. You go to a gambling venue with a set budget in your wallet and that is your daily allowance. An early victory gives some the illusion that they are playing with house money, but they are not. By getting swept up with the simple but glamorous

life-style of the professional gambler in an old story in American literature.

It comes to pass as habit that we gamble each and every day. In the morning, men gamble that their subconscious evil twin will not use that sharp razor blade for a permanent neck massage. Men and women gamble every day in trying to balance their family, their careers and their relationships. Even though our nation is becoming more and more a Nanny State, we as individuals are still risk takers. It is the various degrees of risk to reward that makes each of us different.

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