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PENNSYLVANIA

RHODE ISLAND

VERMONT

VIRGINIA

WEST VIRGINIA

# Founding Fathers

BY TERRY CONWAY  
PHOTOS BY JEFF SNYDER

*Trainer and veterinarian John R.S. Fisher  
developed the Fair Hill Training Center*

**M**oving at a purposeful pace, John R.S. Fisher finishes up his daily duties, shadowed by a small, furry canine. A fluffy-haired Jack Russell, Uncas is named for one of Fisher's favorite characters from the classic book *The Last of the Mohicans*. Uncas wriggles under the trainer's chair, set up in back of his barn, that offers a striking view of strings of Thoroughbreds headed to Fair Hill's training tracks.

"As a puppy, he followed me up to the clockers' stand. Next thing I know, he's sitting alongside me," Fisher recalled. "Uncas doesn't bark or bite; he just hangs out. He has been sort of grandfathered in by the other horsemen here."

Twenty-five years ago, Fisher conceived the idea for the Fair Hill Training Center that straddles the borders of northeast Maryland and Chester County, Pa.

"If I had realized it was going to be as frustrating as it was putting the training center together, I never would have gone down that road," said Fisher, cracking a smile.

## *In This Section*

- Leading Maryland Sires by Earnings
- Leading Pennsylvania Sires by Earnings
- Leading New York Sires by Earnings
- Leading West Virginia Sires by Winners
- Leading New Jersey Sires by Winners

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Fair Hill, John Fisher said, was always about "finding a better place to train a horse"

# SIRE POWER IN PENNSYLVANIA



photo by Brandon Benson

## ECCELSIASTIC

Pulpit - Starry Dreamer, by Rubiano  
\$5,000 Live Foal, \$4,000 for PA foaling mares

*Multiple Graded stakes winner at Belmont  
6 furlongs in **1:07 3/5** • 7 furlongs in **1:20 3/5***

First foals arrive 2009

## EAVESDROPPER

Kingmambo-Weekend Surprise, by Secretariat  
\$5,000 Live Foal, \$4,000 for PA foaling mares

*Stakes winning half brother to **A.P. INDY***



photo by Adam Cogliandro

## ONE GREAT CAT

Storm Cat- Blissful, by Mr. Prospector  
\$4,500 Live Foal, \$3,500 for PA foaling mares

*A multiple Group stakes horse and the only  
son of **STORM CAT** in PA. Out of a sister to  
**FUSAICHI PEGASUS***

Enters stud in 2009



photo by Peter Mooney

## SENIOR SWINGER

El Prado - Smooth Swinger, by Kris S.  
\$4,000 Live Foal, \$2,500 for PA foaling mares

*Multiple Graded stakes winner of **\$964,537** -  
richest son of **EL PRADO** in the U.S.  
outside KY*

First foals arrive 2009



photo by Reed Palmer



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# 2008 Leading Sires in Maryland

State sire lists updated daily online.  
Go to <http://breeding.bloodhorse.com/sirelists.asp>

For stallions that stand, will stand, or stood (deceased) in Maryland (exported stallions are excluded), and have runners in North America. Listed below are all available statistics for the Northern Hemisphere through November 5, 2008. As supplied to The Blood-Horse by The Jockey Club Information Systems Inc., earnings exclude monies from Japan and Hong Kong. \*Foal counts include Southern Hemisphere. Cumulative stakes winners includes all countries. (A ♯) indicates a sire represented by his first crop to race.

Rank	Stallion (Foaling Year, Sire), Farm Standing	2009 Stud Fee	Rnrs/ Wnrs	Stakes Wnrs/ Wns	Rstrct SW/ BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	2008 Earnings	Cumulative			
								Foals	Stks Wnrs	*A-E Index	*Comp Index
1	<b>NOT FOR LOVE</b> (90, Mr. Prospector), Northview Stallion Station	\$25,000	189/115	10/14	6/10	(Cuba, \$392,530)	<b>\$5,676,500</b>	623	49	1.85	1.50
2	<b>OUTFLANKER</b> (94, Danzig), Maryland Stallion Station	\$4,000	126/79	7/12	3/7	(Bayou's Lassie, \$237,653)	<b>\$3,491,487</b>	355	17	1.46	1.18
3	<b>LION HEARTED</b> (96, Storm Cat), Northview Stallion Station	\$3,500	144/79	3/3	1/3	(Control System, \$150,990)	<b>\$2,754,780</b>	300	9	1.30	1.35
4	<b>LOUIS QUATORZE</b> (93, Sovereign Dancer), Murmur Farm	\$6,000	140/68	1/1	1/1	(Sweet Goodbye, \$146,400)	<b>\$2,048,307</b>	*741	17	1.22	1.49
5	<b>TWO PUNCH</b> (83, Mr. Prospector), Northview Stallion Station	N/A	123/49	1/1	1/1	(Reata's Quik Punch, \$103,196)	<b>\$1,749,387</b>	*918	51	1.50	1.46

\*A-E and COMPARABLE INDEX: The lifetime Average-Earnings Index indicates how much purse money the progeny of one sire has earned, on the average, in relation to the average earnings of all runners in the same years; average earnings of all runners in any year is represented by an index of 1.00. The Comparable Index indicates the average earnings of progeny produced from mares bred to one sire, when these same mares were bred to other sires. Only 32% of all sires have a lifetime AEI higher than their mares Comparable Index.

# 2008 Leading Sires in Pennsylvania

State sire lists updated daily online.  
Go to <http://breeding.bloodhorse.com/sirelists.asp>

For stallions that stand, will stand, or stood (deceased) in Pennsylvania (exported stallions are excluded), and have runners in North America. Listed below are all available statistics for the Northern Hemisphere through November 5, 2008. As supplied to The Blood-Horse by The Jockey Club Information Systems Inc., earnings exclude monies from Japan and Hong Kong. \*Foal counts include Southern Hemisphere. Cumulative stakes winners includes all countries. (A ♯) indicates a sire represented by his first crop to race.

Rank	Stallion (Foaling Year, Sire), Farm Standing	2009 Stud Fee	Rnrs/ Wnrs	Stakes Wnrs/ Wns	Rstrct SW/ BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	2008 Earnings	Cumulative			
								Foals	Stks Wnrs	*A-E Index	*Comp Index
1	<b>CAT THIEF</b> (96, Storm Cat), Penn Ridge Farms	N/A	161/93	5/7	0/5	(Swing That Cat, \$221,259)	<b>\$3,244,605</b>	*330	11	1.26	1.87
2	<b>PARTNER'S HERO</b> (94, Danzig), Northview, PA	\$2,500	111/54	3/5	2/3	(Heros Reward, \$367,600)	<b>\$2,622,010</b>	321	15	1.34	1.46
3	<b>REAL QUIET</b> (95, Quiet American), Penn Ridge Farms	\$10,000	105/41	3/3	0/3	(Midnight Lute, \$1,080,000)	<b>\$2,508,022</b>	*405	12	1.27	1.31
4	<b>ALBERT THE GREAT</b> (97, Go for Gin), Pin Oak Lane Farm	\$3,500	98/50	1/2	0/1	(Albertus Maximus, \$711,380)	<b>\$2,071,376</b>	*198	4	1.36	1.23
5	<b>BUDDHA</b> (99, Unbridled's Song), Pin Oak Lane Farm	\$3,500	176/75	1/1	1/1	(Miss Buddhafull, \$107,197)	<b>\$1,920,151</b>	*356	3	0.66	1.56

\*A-E and COMPARABLE INDEX: The lifetime Average-Earnings Index indicates how much purse money the progeny of one sire has earned, on the average, in relation to the average earnings of all runners in the same years; average earnings of all runners in any year is represented by an index of 1.00. The Comparable Index indicates the average earnings of progeny produced from mares bred to one sire, when these same mares were bred to other sires. Only 32% of all sires have a lifetime AEI higher than their mares Comparable Index.

"But in the end, it turned out great, and that's what really matters. It was always about finding a better place to train a horse."

A former steeplechase trainer, Fisher is one of racing's ordinary folks with extraordinary dreams. The 70-year-old is best known for grass horses that can get the distance, but it's been a turf sprinter that has delivered his greatest success.

Smart Enough is one of the nation's premier turf sprinters. He has won 10 times (eight stakes) and finished off the board just once in his 18-start career.

Bred in Kentucky by Eugene "Fitz" Dixon Jr., the 5-year old Horse Chestnut gelding is out of the Polish Numbers mare Quick 'n Smart. He has set a remarkable six different course records, four of them coming at the five-furlong distance, while amassing \$714,543 in lifetime earnings.

In his first race of the year at a rainy Keeneland, Smart Enough finished in the runner-up position in the \$125,000 Shaker-town Stakes (gr. IIIT) in April. He clipped heels with another horse, and a week or so later Fisher discovered a problem with his left front ankle.

The injury was confirmed after speaking with Dr. Dean Richardson during a chance meeting at the Maryland Hunt Cup.

"There was no heat, no pain after the race, but later I noticed a swelling," Fisher explained. "Dean said it could lead to a much bigger problem, so I sent him to New Bolton for an MRI, then an ultrasound that

found a tearing in the soft tissue around the ankle."

The injury sidelined the talented sprinter until early October. In his return, Smart Enough finished second to Chamberlain Bridge in the \$150,000 Woodford Stakes,



Fisher's canine friend Uncas was named for a book character

a 5½-furlong sprint on the turf at Keeneland.

"He got tired, but I knew he would with the small window of workouts he had coming back from the injury," Fisher said. "I think he'll be right from here on out."

## STEEPLECHASE ROOTS

The world of horses has deep roots in the Fisher family. His maternal grandfather, John Rush Street, started the Harford (Md.) Hunt Club, and today the family home is the site of the Elkridge-Harford Hunt Club. On his father's side, Fisher's uncle Janon bred, owned, and trained racehorses, and was the master of the hunt for the Green Spring Valley Hunt Club in the Worthington Valley.

Fisher grew up in the Worthington Valley, located southwest of Baltimore. Its rural atmosphere hasn't changed much in 200 years. Celebrated for its famed steeplechase families, the Smithwicks led the way there. The leading money-winning trainer a dozen times, Mikey Smithwick was inducted into the Racing Hall of Fame in 1971. For Fisher and his pal Fritz Burkhardt, now a steward at Delaware Park, the 1950s were glorious times.

Smithwick stabled his horses at the Elkridge-Harford Hunt Club. Sparkplug, half-Thoroughbred and half-draft horse, was a notorious foxhunter.

"He was known to take off running, and that's the last we'd see him that day," recalled Burkhardt. "Mikey would have owners and trainers show up to look at



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Broke his maiden in New York by 7 lengths . . .

. . . and never saw the back of another horse, winning every start in his career wire-to-wire!  
(6-6-0-0, \$480,150)

### BUSTIN STONES

City Zip - Shesasurething, by Prospectors Gamble  
2009 Fee: \$6,500  
Live foal, stands and nurses

# ROCK SOLID BUSTIN STONES

## TO NEW YORK IN 2009

Racing Form DRF.com

Individual Horse Past Performances - Lifetime: Bustin Stones

**Bustin Stones**  
Own: Valente Roddy J

Ch. c. 4 (May)  
Sire: City Zip (Carson City) \$15,000  
Dam: Shesasurething (Prospectors Gamble)  
Br: Roddy J. Valente (NY)  
Tr: Levine Bruce N

Life	6	6	0	0	\$480,150	100	D.Fit	5	5	0	0	\$345,150	109
2006	3	3	0	0	\$355,000	109	Wet(304)	1	1	0	0	\$135,000	103
2007	3	3	0	0	\$124,650	100	Turf(318)	0	0	0	0	\$0	-

Date	Track	Dist	Class	Finish	Time	Speed	Notes
5Apr08-10A	qst	7f	22 <sup>nd</sup>	45	1:09.1	224	3 <sup>rd</sup> Carter H-G1
18Feb08-8L	qd	7f	23 <sup>rd</sup>	46	1:11.1	247	3 <sup>rd</sup> GerGrge H-G2
21Jan08-3A	qst	6f	22 <sup>nd</sup>	44	59.4	1:09.4	4 <sup>th</sup> Pramonro67k
9Nov07-8B	qst	6f	22 <sup>nd</sup>	45	1:08.4	1:152	5 <sup>th</sup> Screenland66k
22Apr07-8A	qst	7f	22 <sup>nd</sup>	44	1:08.4	1:221	6 <sup>th</sup> NYSUTmScr100k
20Mar07-3A	qst	6f	23 <sup>rd</sup>	46	58.9	1:10.4	3 <sup>rd</sup> Md Sp Wt 41k

Date	Track	Dist	Class	Finish	Time	Speed	Notes
109	0	1	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	Prado E S
103	2	1	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	Dominguez R A
105	6	1	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	Dominguez R A
100	6	1	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	Prado E S
90	4	2	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	Dominguez R A
80	7	1	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	Dominguez R A

L116 2.75 88-16 BustinStones116 ExecutiveFt1114k PrmlmWt1152<sup>nd</sup> Resolutely on rail 9  
 115 \*2.18 91-18 BustinStones115 LordSnowdon1151<sup>st</sup> PrmmWt113<sup>rd</sup> Pressured ins,previld 7  
 118 \* .85 97-12 BustinStones118 Whistlin'1215<sup>th</sup> GoldandRoses1231<sup>st</sup> Gamedy on rail, clea6  
 122 \* .60 95-15 BustinStones122<sup>nd</sup> IrdenCamp1181<sup>st</sup> ChiefLLake122<sup>nd</sup> Shown whip stretch  
 116 2.45 90-11 BustinStones116 SmithEmSm122<sup>nd</sup> MktPsch1181<sup>st</sup> Stumbled start, sharo 7  
 116 5.00 90-09 BustinStones116 Jacks Away1231<sup>st</sup> Daneme1155<sup>th</sup> Drew away when asked

WORKS: Aug28 Sar br.14f fct 48<sup>th</sup> B 472 Jly18 Sar 5f fct 1:00 B 207 Jly12 Bel tr.15f fct 1:00 B 210 Jly6 Bel tr.15f fct 1:02<sup>nd</sup> B 1107 Jun20 Bel tr.15f fct 1:01 B 210 Jun24 Bel tr.14f fct 47<sup>th</sup> B 1107

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# 2008 Leading Sires in New York

State sire lists updated daily online.  
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For stallions that stand, will stand, or stood (deceased) in New York (exported stallions are excluded), and have runners in North America. Listed below are all available statistics for the Northern Hemisphere through November 5, 2008. As supplied to The Blood-Horse by The Jockey Club Information Systems Inc., earnings exclude monies from Japan and Hong Kong. \*Foal counts include Southern Hemisphere. Cumulative stakes winners includes all countries. (A ♀ indicates a sire represented by his first crop to race).

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								Foals	Stks Wnrs	*A-E Index	*Comp Index
1	FREUD (98, Storm Cat), Sequel Stallions New York	\$7,500	97/48	5/8	4/5	(Dagnabit, \$242,814)	\$2,844,441	187	8	1.72	1.39
2	GOLDEN MISSILE (95, A.P. Indy), Miller Farm	\$7,500	166/79	5/11	1/5	(Going Wild, \$154,020)	\$2,551,465	399	10	1.14	1.91
3	CHIEF SEATTLE (97, Seattle Slew), Empire Stud	\$5,000	145/82	2/6	0/2	(Bold Chieftain, \$362,552)	\$2,527,415	*293	9	1.24	1.40
4	ELTISH (92, Cox's Ridge), Keane Stud Operations	\$3,500	88/49	2/3	1/2	(Shes All Eltish, \$265,780)	\$1,906,092	229	12	1.25	1.43
5	WESTERN EXPRESSION (96, Gone West), Highcliff Farm	\$5,000	87/45	1/2	0/1	(I Lost My Choo, \$274,550)	\$1,778,482	235	4	1.27	1.31
6	ARTAX (95, Marquetry), Fever Stallions	N/A	115/51	2/3	1/2	(Diabolical, \$422,900)	\$1,744,051	343	6	1.13	1.47
7	DISCO RICO (97, Citidancer), Keane Stud Operations	\$5,000	68/40	3/6	1/3	(La Chica Rica, \$233,526)	\$1,724,907	119	6	1.61	1.22
8	KING CUGAT (97, Kingmambo), Questroyal at Dutchess Views Farm	N/A	73/38	3/4	0/3	(Seaside Retreat, \$548,288)	\$1,624,863	*327	7	1.35	1.20
9	HOOK AND LADDER (97, Dixieland Band), Sequel Stallions New York	\$7,500	67/30	4/4	3/4	(Big Truck, \$250,657)	\$1,614,446	97	5	1.51	1.59
10	WHEELAWAY (97, Unbridled), McMahon of Saratoga	\$3,000	84/44	3/3	3/3	(Doc N Roll, \$146,865)	\$1,576,860	167	4	0.99	1.23
11	REGAL CLASSIC (85, Vice Regent)	Pnsd	96/43	2/2	2/2	(Mr. Windjammer, \$83,992)	\$1,509,241	*937	44	1.44	1.56
12	GOLD TOKEN (93, Mr. Prospector)	Died, 2006	75/38	1/1	1/1	(Critical Cathy, \$94,230)	\$1,285,003	*251	6	1.37	1.15
13	AMERICAN CHANCE (89, Cure the Blues)	Died, 2004	57/31	0/1	0/0	(Methodtomymadness, \$120,733)	\$1,213,169	*409	29	1.49	1.29
14	PRIME TIMBER (96, Sultry Song), Sez Who Thoroughbreds North	\$3,000	70/34	2/3	0/2	(Premium Wine, \$117,350)	\$1,180,507	126	4	1.26	1.41
15	SMOOTH JAZZ (99, Storm Boot), Buckridge Farm	\$3,000	37/20	1/3	0/1	(Smooth Air, \$661,700)	\$1,122,807	67	1	1.62	1.15
16	JADE HUNTER (84, Mr. Prospector), Questroyal at Dutchess Views Farm	\$5,000	77/44	3/3	1/3	(Global Hunter, \$135,765)	\$1,094,557	*908	44	1.43	1.65
17	A. P. JET (89, Fappiano), Sugar Maple Farm	N/A	81/32	1/1	1/1	(Reyana's Jet, \$129,783)	\$1,085,205	427	13	1.15	1.34
18	OUTOF THEBOX (98, Montbrook), Sez Who Thoroughbreds North	\$2,500	83/43	2/3	0/2	(Hypocrite, \$95,385)	\$1,016,231	172	3	0.71	1.51
19	RIZZI (91, Afleet), Sez Who Thoroughbreds North	\$2,000	60/33	1/1	1/1	(Ahvee's Destiny, \$138,010)	\$954,236	*351	17	1.26	1.28
20	RAFFIE'S MAJESTY (95, Cormorant), Sugar Maple Farm	\$3,000	31/15	4/5	4/4	(Stud Muffin, \$272,449)	\$949,618	93	8	1.71	1.13

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horses. That was Johnny's and my cue to jump on Sparkplug with only a halter and a shank. We'd flip a coin to see who got the front or back. Then we'd jump him in and out of the paddock fences. Cheap entertainment for Mikey's pals."

"We worked 12-hour days, seven days a week, but we had plenty of fun," Fisher remembered. "I rode a lot of green horses, schooled anything. When I was 17, I started riding in timber races. Mikey was such a superb horseman and a terrific teacher, even though he didn't realize he was teaching us."

After graduating from the Gilman School in Baltimore, Fisher attended Cornell University majoring in pre-veterinary studies, then earned his V.M.D. at the University of Pennsylvania. A year before graduating, Fisher married Dolly O'Donovan, a foxhunter from the Worthington Valley.

"I liked medicine; it was a big challenge," Fisher explained. "I knew I could become a much better horseman by learning everything I could about them."

## WRIGHT MENTOR

Fisher earned a fellowship at the New Bolton Center near Kennett Square, Pa., where he was an instructor in equine pulmonary disease. After a couple of years, he got the racetrack itch and teamed up with a prominent veterinarian at Belmont Park.

"I knew medicine, I didn't know the ways of the racetrack," Fisher recalled. "To me, it seemed it was all about marketing your services. There was a horse that had hurt his hock very badly in a van accident. We were not really treating it, and

the horse got worse and worse. I suspected there must have been a deal between the trainer and the head vet. Sure enough, they put him down at the end of the meet.

"I became very disenchanted. There were a lot of things going on that I couldn't morally condone. I left the track after three months and never went back."

In the early 1960s, Fisher landed a resident vet position with Allaire du Pont at her farm near Chesapeake City, Md., though he never worked with the only five-time Horse of the Year, Kelso.

"I can't take any credit for Kelso's good health, as much as I would like to," noted Fisher. "Allaire had much more experienced vets. I gave her a lot of advice, though I'm not sure she was listening. We were great friends until the time of her death."

He did come under the wing of legendary veterinarian William Wright.

"We'd meet often for breakfast and chat about racehorses, medicine, and life," Fisher related. "I would approach a clinical problem in a set series of steps while Dr. Wright would observe it from a practical horseman's viewpoint. His solution was often different from mine, so it really broadened my outlook on being a veterinarian."

In 1965, Fisher took a position as director of research for a feed company near Lancaster, Pa., and he and Dolly bought an old farm in southern Chester County, Pa. To hear him tell it, he got started as a trainer by dumb luck.

"I borrowed money and bought an unraced 4-year-old colt," Fisher recalled. "First time I got on him, he ran off uphill

and bled out his nostrils. When I had Dr. Wright gallop him up, naturally, he didn't bleed. He said to me, 'I wouldn't get rid of him; he's quite a nice horse.'"

Long story short, Landing Party turned into a superb timber horse. Fisher piloted the horse to victory in the 1969 Maryland Hunt Cup, and the horse won it again in 1971.

"I bought a second horse for a client, and Island Stream became another very good steeplechase horse," he said. "But after a while, I went into flat racing."

The trainer got his first stakes win in the Chrysanthemum Handicap at Laurel Race Course in 1972 with the mare Ancient Line, who was trained at his Gumtree Farm. Fisher decided on a training career in the mid-Atlantic states.

"I had some horses racing in New York, but I wanted an enjoyable life with my family rather than chasing after racing's brass ring."

Today, Fisher's son, Jack, is the 2008 National Steeplechase Association's leading trainer, as Fisher was three previous seasons. Jack trains 2007 Eclipse Award winner and 2008 Grand National Hurdle Stakes (NSA-I) victor Good Night Shirt and rode and trained Saluter, a champion jumper who won the Virginia Gold Cup six consecutive years. An older son, Rush, is an orthopedic spine surgeon in Wilmington, Del., while daughter Katherine is married, raising three young boys in Chadds Ford, Pa.

## LAUNCHING FAIR HILL

Spurred by an ongoing battle in the early

# UTOPIA

Forty Niner–Dream Vision, by Northern Taste

Barbara Livingston

## *Only 2YO G1 SW by Forty Niner at stud in North America*

Compare with Distorted Humor (\$225,000 fee)

**Utopia** (GSW by Forty Niner)

Damsire a leading son of Northern Dancer

Won 9 races

Avg. winning weight carried – 122.2 lbs.

Avg. winning margin – 3.8 lengths

Highest Beyer Figure – 114

Number of wins at 2 – 3 (including G1)

Total G1 wins – 4

**Distorted Humor** (GSW by Forty Niner)

Damsire a leading son of Northern Dancer

Won 8 races

Avg. winning weight carried – 117.25 lbs.

Avg. winning margin – 3.8 lengths

Highest Beyer Figure – 117

Number of wins at 2 – 0 (unraced)

Total G1 wins – 0

“We’re shareholders in Utopia, and we think this horse has great prospects.

He’s bred a lot like Distorted Humor. He’s a Grade I winner.

I’ve checked with my Japanese contacts, and he was a very good runner.”

*-Doug Cauthen, President of WinStar*

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1980s with the general manager of Philadelphia Park, Fisher followed his dream.

"I was being continually hassled by the racing secretary about running my horses," said Fisher. "There had to be a better way to train."

Originally he approached the New Bolton Center about a training center, but the adjoining property proved to be too expensive. He turned to Fair Hill.

The former foxhunting estate of William du Pont, Fair Hill was being used for a couple of steeplechase race cards and the county fair each year. Fisher, with the help of Maryland attorney John Clark, negotiated a 98-year lease on the 350 acres with the state in 1982. Early barn owners included Fisher, racehorse breeder/owner George Strawbridge Jr., and Gene Weymouth, who still trains at Fair Hill.

A lack of new investors stalled the training center's progress. Additional barns and a much-needed dirt track were put on hold. Still, its all-weather wood chip track was a winner, and Fair Hill earned a reputation for turning out quality turf runners.

Fasig-Tipton stepped up and managed the Fair Hill project in 1985 with grand plans that included more barns, a veterinary hospital, and sale pavilion.

"They helped save Fair Hill, but ran into the same problems we did: lack of facilities, more investors," Fisher explained. "By then the bottom had fallen out of the Thoroughbred market, so the barns weren't selling. There weren't enough horses to make it economically viable."

Mike and Sally Goswell were early pioneers. He trained, while she helped out in the barn. They sold their barn in 1996 and now Sally is the training center manager, while Mike oversees morning workouts and the starting gate at the track.

**2008 West Virginia Sires  
By Winners**

Sire	Rnrs	Wnrs
Housebuster.....	81.....	38
Kokand.....	69.....	35
Prized.....	57.....	29
Meadow Monster.....	73.....	28
Luftikus.....	61.....	27
Way West (FR).....	51.....	27
Family Calling.....	67.....	24
Civilisation.....	49.....	24
Makin.....	60.....	20
Black Tie Affair (IRE).....	57.....	19
Prospect Bay.....	33.....	14
Eastover Court.....	33.....	13
Emancipator.....	24.....	11
Valiant Nature.....	27.....	9

**2008 New Jersey Sires  
By Winners**

Sire	Rnrs	Wnrs
Defrere.....	88.....	41
Crafty Friend.....	73.....	39
Unbridled Jet.....	65.....	29
Private Interview.....	53.....	23
Evening Kris.....	23.....	10
Mr. Nugget.....	25.....	9
Sailor's Warning.....	11.....	8

"It was a vision before its time," said Sally. "There were some tough times in many different ways. Johnny sank a lot of money into it, and it didn't go well for quite a while. He's had a lot of positive input. He helped us tremendously when we had a herpesvirus scare.

"Today, most of the barn owners make their living here. They can control their

own destinies, and that is the way it should be."

By the mid-1990s, Delaware Park's racing was on the upswing, thanks to the slots-fueled purses and Arabian racing. Demand for Fair Hill's stalls soared.

"We hit that critical mass of horses to make us economically viable," Fisher explained. "Folks in the industry have always known about us, but thanks to Barbaro the general public discovered us. The last few years we've had horses that have done well in the Derby. Back in the '80s, people would have asked, 'What Derby? The Cecil County Derby?'"

It took Fisher three decades to get to Churchill Downs. Once he got under the Twin Spires, it only took him 1:47.90 to earn a trip to the winner's circle in November 2001.

Owned by Dixon, Dr. Kashnikow flew by the entire field in the stretch to take the River City Handicap (gr. IIIT). He joined a long string of Fisher-trained stakes winners, including Quick 'n Smart (Smart Enough's dam), Play Bingo, Hear the Bells, Futurist, Buying Rain, Brave Note, Short Stay, Scottsville, Sangria, and Plenty of Sugar. Distaffers Royalties placed in two stakes and Wilderness Trace is a multiple allowance winner this year.

"Mr. Dixon gave them time and allowed them to run at their best," Fisher related. "The older geldings that won stakes for him, he wouldn't let them slide into the claiming ranks even though he might have made more money. He had me give them away to good homes and they all went on to have marvelous second careers."

Gina McElhinney has been Fisher's assistant at his Fair Hill barn for 20 years.

"Doc Fisher is very patient; if something is wrong, he backs off," McElhinney noted. "We have a small barn, but have been able to produce a stakes winner nearly every year."


One race stands out for Fisher—Smart Enough's course-record-setting triumph in the 2007 Turf Monster Handicap at Philadelphia Park shortly after Dixon passed away from cancer.

"One of his best races ever," Fisher recalled. "It was very special, since Mr. Dixon was the head of the Pennsylvania Racing Commission for two decades and so instrumental in racing succeeding. It was a very poignant moment for both myself and Mrs. Dixon."

Smart Enough possesses more innate ability than any horse Fisher has ever trained.

"He's very good at six furlongs and devastating at five," Fisher noted. "He'll still have that same speed and dominance over the next two or three years. When I lead him over to the track, he's the horse to beat. I've never had that experience before.

"For a trainer, that's the ultimate feeling. Come beat me, if you think you can." 🐾



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