

High Fiber

*John McKee and Cynthia O'Bannon
get rewarded by Fiber Sonde*

BY JOHN SCHEINMAN



CODY PHOTOGRAPHY

Cynthia O'Bannon and John McKee own and operate Beau Ridge Farm near Kearneysville, W. Va.

JOHN MCKEE and his partner, Cynthia O'Bannon, are bargain hunters in the Thoroughbred world, and their favorite outlet is the massive Keeneland November breeding stock sale.

"We don't miss too many November sales," O'Bannon said as the pair sat in their Beau Ridge Farm office near Kearneysville, W. Va. "One of us would have to be incapacitated. (John) had a hip replaced, and he was on a walker and I had to carry his chair, but he sat by the ring. We go about every year."

McKee, 76, has now had both hips replaced, and O'Bannon, 58, a knee, but they are far from incapacitated. Rather, they are tireless workers up at 4 a.m. to breed, raise, and train racehorses.

In 2007 McKee and O'Bannon made a purchase at the Keeneland sale that suggests fashion and commercial considerations can sometimes allow overlooked gems to fall through the cracks. They coveted and landed an unraced 2-year-old stallion prospect named Fiber Sonde, an Unbridled's Song half brother to leading sire and champion sprinter Speightstown, for a mere \$8,000. That's right, a 2-year-old stallion prospect.

The gray colt had gotten hung up in some fencing as a baby, and it ruined his chances for the track.

"He's got white scars on both of his front feet," McKee said.

The injury, however, didn't affect Fiber Sonde's ability to
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2016 LEADING SIRES IN NEW YORK

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Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled), (YOB,Sire), Where Stands	2016 Stud Fee	Rnrs/ Wnrs	Stakes Wnrs/ Wns	Rstrct SW/ BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	2016 Earnings	Cumulative			
								Foals	Stks Wnrs	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	BELLAMY ROAD (02, Concerto), Dutchess Views Farm	\$7,500	90/22	1/1	0/1	(Daisy Cutter, \$69,600)	\$625,285	*465	22	1.20	1.32
2	POSSE (00, Silver Deputy), Rockridge Stud	\$5,000	64/18	0/0	0/0	(Royal Posse, \$45,000)	\$498,351	*675	30	1.36	1.35
3	FREUD (98, Storm Cat), Sequel Stallions New York	\$10,000	66/14	0/0	0/0	(Perfect Freud, \$51,400)	\$466,028	*962	40	1.63	1.29
4	BIG BROWN (05, Boundary), Dutchess Views Farm	\$10,000	70/14	1/1	0/1	(Adore, \$84,600)	\$405,010	*494	14	1.34	1.77
5	HOLD ME BACK (06, Giant's Causeway), Irish Hill Century Farm	\$5,000	56/16	1/1	1/1	(My Chennai Xpress, \$44,300)	\$383,894	185	4	1.10	1.26
6	BUSTIN STONES (04, City Zip), Waldorf Farm	\$2,500	23/6	0/0	0/0	(Bust Another, \$64,200)	\$238,529	137	2	1.30	1.46
7	FROST GIANT (03, Giant's Causeway), Keane Stud Operations	\$7,500	22/4	1/1	1/1	(Frosty Margarita, \$85,000)	\$187,757	*210	6	1.69	1.17
8	DUBLIN (07, Afleet Alex), Keane Stud Operations	\$2,500	18/4	0/0	0/0	(Best Version, \$33,000)	\$151,797	94	0	0.71	1.26
9	HERE'S ZEALOUS (97, Dehere), Kaz Hill Farm	\$1,000	17/4	0/0	0/0	(Here's a Jetpack, \$35,400)	\$133,998	190	1	0.99	0.99
10	NOBLE CAUSEWAY (02, Giant's Causeway)	Died, 2014	32/4	0/0	0/0	(Noble and a Beauty, \$41,400)	\$107,441	233	7	0.82	1.10
11	GIANT SURPRISE (09, Giant's Causeway), Rockridge Stud	\$5,000	10/1	0/0	0/0	(Taken by Surprise, \$35,910)	\$103,471	29	2	3.05	1.25
12	DISCO RICO (97, Citedancer)	Died, 2014	19/2	0/0	0/0	(Marriedtothemusic, \$39,666)	\$93,152	260	11	1.38	1.22
13	DESERT PARTY (06, Street Cry), Sequel Stallions New York	\$4,000	28/4	0/0	0/0	(Arabian Queen, \$12,000)	\$79,191	130	3	0.94	1.46
14	MR. SEKIGUCHI (03, Storm Cat), Irish Hill Century Farm	\$2,500	13/4	0/0	0/0	(Little Daniella, \$15,227)	\$63,152	*90	2	0.95	1.24
15	SIR WHIMSEY (04, Jump Start), Mill Creek Farm	\$2,500	4/1	0/0	0/0	(Organic Gemini, \$33,228)	\$60,078	10	1	1.43	0.93
16	THE CLIFF'S EDGE (01, Gulch), McMahon of Saratoga Thoroughbreds	\$2,500	16/5	0/0	0/0	(The Edge of Wind, \$20,005)	\$59,626	242	4	0.82	1.18
17	TEUFLESBERG (04, Johannesburg), McMahon of Saratoga Thoroughbreds	\$5,000	12/4	0/0	0/0	(Crystal's Cantata, \$22,100)	\$57,014	83	4	1.60	1.16
18	RELATO DEL GATO (01, Tale of the Cat)	Died, 2014	3/2	0/0	0/0	(Down Town Kitty, \$40,200)	\$54,380	14	0	1.10	0.74
19	STONESIDER (03, Giant's Causeway), Keane Stud Operations	\$3,500	16/4	0/0	0/0	(Stoneheartedlover, \$23,413)	\$53,594	*189	4	1.17	1.20
20	MARSH SIDE (03, Gone West), Dutchess Views Farm	\$2,500	5/2	0/0	0/0	(Dr Luber's Kiss, \$41,000)	\$52,494	*119	0	0.20	1.25
21	D' FUNNYBONE (07, D'wildcat), Rockridge Stud	\$2,500	14/0	0/0	0/0	(Silly Face, \$10,230)	\$50,479	*39	0	0.62	1.35
22	COSMONAUT (02, Lemon Drop Kid), Keane Stud Operations	\$5,000	10/1	0/0	0/0	(Moldavite, \$12,900)	\$31,093	79	2	1.08	1.05
23	COURAGEOUS CAT (06, Storm Cat), Questroyal North	\$6,000	9/0	0/0	0/0	(Amber Louise, \$17,920)	\$29,794	56	1	0.85	1.21
24	MIRACLE MAN (02, Yankee Victor), Pucker Ridge Farm	Died, 2015	2/0	0/0	0/0	(Jc's Shooting Star, \$16,800)	\$23,000	8	1	1.94	1.59
25	GOLDEN MISSILE (95, A.P. Indy), Milfer Farm	\$3,500	9/1	0/0	0/0	(Estrada's Girl, \$17,100)	\$18,266	*640	13	1.04	1.51

(continued from page 32)

breed. McKee and O'Bannon brought the colt, along with another stallion prospect—a \$15,000 Storm Cat colt named Footnotes, a full brother to Yankee Gentleman—back to 53-acre Beau Ridge and set his stud fee at \$1,000.

(continued on page 36)

2016 NEW YORK SIRES BY WINNERS

Sire	Rnrs	Wnrs
Bellamy Road	90	22
Posse	64	18
Hold Me Back	56	16
Big Brown	70	14
Freud	66	14
Bustin Stones	23	6
The Cliff's Edge	16	5
Noble Causeway	32	4
Desert Party	28	4
Frost Giant	22	4
Dublin	18	4
Here's Zealous	17	4
Stonesider	16	4
Mr. Sekiguchi	13	4
Teuflesberg	12	4
Disco Rico	19	2
Marsh Side	5	2
Relato Del Gato	3	2
Cosmonaut	10	1
Giant Surprise	10	1
Golden Missile	9	1
Alex's Pal	7	1
Sir Whimsey	4	1
Wicked Rich	1	1



COURTESY BEAU RIDGE FARM

Fiber Sonde, an \$8,000 bargain buy and now a top sire in W. Va.

Special Note For Sire Lists:

For stallions that stand, will stand, or stood (deceased) in the states featured in this section (stallions that are dead or exported prior to 2012 are excluded), and have runners in North America. Listed below are all available statistics for the Northern Hemisphere through March 2, 2016. As supplied to Blood-Horse by The Jockey Club Information Systems Inc., include adjusted money from Japan, Hong Kong, and Singapore. Adjusted earnings are put on par with average North American earnings from the previous year. For example, the average North American purse in 2015 is \$21,782 or 50% of the 2015 average purse in Japan. To put earnings on par, all Japanese progeny earnings are multiplied by 50% before being credited to a sire's progeny earnings. Hong Kong earnings are adjusted by 17%; Singapore by 57%. Current year stakes winners include all N.H.-black-type stakes results from all available countries. *Foal counts include Southern Hemisphere. Cumulative stakes winners includes all countries. (A *) indicates a sire represented by his first crop to race.

*AVERAGE-EARNINGS INDEX and COMPARABLE INDEX: Lifetime AVERAGE-EARNINGS INDEX indicates how much purse money the progeny of one sire has earned 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; 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 AVERAGE-EARNINGS INDEX higher than their mares' COMPARABLE INDEX.

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2016 LEADING SIRE IN PENNSYLVANIA

Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled), (YOB,Sire), Where Stands	2016 Stud Fee	Rnrs/ Wnrs	Stakes Wnrs/ Wns	Rstrct SW/ BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	2016 Earnings	Cumulative			
								Foals	Stks Wnrs	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	ROCKPORT HARBOR (02, Unbridled's Song)	Died, 2013	92/21	2/2	1/2	(Weast Hill, \$107,600)	\$609,502	462	24	1.35	1.42
2	JUMP START (99, A.P. Indy), Northview PA	\$10,000	75/15	0/0	0/0	(Prayer for Relief, \$44,552)	\$526,666	*1161	38	1.52	1.34
3	SILVER TRAIN (02, Old Trieste)	Died, 2013	56/13	0/0	0/0	(Ogermeister, \$34,315)	\$231,798	*493	10	0.98	1.29
4	CORINTHIAN (03, Pulpit), Pin Oak Lane Farm	\$4,000	67/11	0/0	0/0	(Pancake, \$30,760)	\$202,523	*478	11	0.78	1.40
5	WEIGELIA (01, Safely's Mark), WynOaks Farm	\$3,500	21/4	0/0	0/0	(Secret Garden, \$48,488)	\$154,792	71	3	1.28	1.02
6	FAIRBANKS (03, Giant's Causeway), Northview PA	\$2,500	39/6	0/0	0/0	(Welcome Fairbanks, \$22,230)	\$126,795	204	3	1.10	1.28
7	MEDALLIST (01, Touch Gold), Northview PA	\$2,000	22/4	1/1	0/1	(Love Came to Town, \$45,000)	\$125,123	192	6	1.29	1.41
8	TALENT SEARCH (03, Catiemus), Diamond B Farm	\$2,500	20/5	0/0	0/0	(Taste for Talent, \$31,600)	\$114,890	*102	1	1.07	1.28
9	LORD SHANAKILL (06, Speightstown), Pin Oak Lane Farm	\$5,000	26/5	0/0	0/0	(Dark Kingdom, \$16,503)	\$77,535	106	1	0.89	0.94
10	GIMMEAWINK (00, Elusive Quality), Mountain Springs Racing Stable	\$2,500	15/3	0/0	0/0	(Gimmeaclue, \$29,669)	\$76,721	*222	1	0.78	1.05
11	ANDIRON (06, A.P. Indy), Xanthus Farms	\$2,000	10/3	0/0	0/0	(Busy Busy Busy, \$25,650)	\$55,802	37	0	0.91	0.56
12	CITY SHARPSTER (99, Carson City), Woodvale Farm	\$1,000	14/3	0/0	0/0	(Poderosa, \$17,640)	\$50,861	59	0	0.65	0.72
13	BULLSBAY (04, Tiznow), Northview PA	\$3,000	9/2	0/0	0/0	(Bronze Bull, \$9,900)	\$45,191	44	1	1.97	1.12
14	MORE SMOKE (02, Smoke Glacken), Pin Oak Lane Farm	\$1,500	5/1	0/0	0/0	(A Lil More A J, \$19,980)	\$39,938	52	1	1.01	1.21
15	RIMROD (00, Danzig), Castle Rock Farm	\$1,500	10/2	0/0	0/0	(Tiz Crafty, \$11,664)	\$36,345	101	2	1.35	1.17
16	WISEMAN'S FERRY (99, Hennessy)	Died, 2015	10/1	0/0	0/0	(Tough Weather, \$17,940)	\$33,505	*289	6	1.67	1.08
17	GOT THE LAST LAUGH (04, Distorted Humor), Diamond B Farm	\$2,500	5/1	0/0	0/0	(Big Foot Ben, \$12,717)	\$32,928	41	0	1.20	1.21
18	ALBERT THE GREAT (97, Go for Gin), Pin Oak Lane Farm	\$2,500	16/2	0/0	0/0	(Smooth Approach, \$11,565)	\$32,872	*378	8	1.14	1.14
19	LITE THE FUSE (91, Buckaroo)	N/A	6/1	0/0	0/0	(Haversack, \$12,321)	\$29,763	548	22	1.22	1.18
20	AISLE (99, Pulpit), Whirlwind Stables	Private	6/1	0/0	0/0	(Aisle Ring, \$11,733)	\$25,773	84	0	0.80	0.78
21	HARRY THE HAT (89, Seattle Slew)	Pnsd	3/1	0/0	0/0	(Mack the Knife, \$23,946)	\$24,360	165	5	1.01	0.78
22	EMPEROR TIBERIUS (04, Storm Cat), Mountain Springs Racing Stable	\$1,500	1/1	0/0	0/0	(Saratoga Jack, \$19,980)	\$19,980	12	0	1.19	0.76
23	IT'S A BIRD (03, Birdonthewire)	N/A	3/2	0/0	0/0	(Nancy Pants, \$10,374)	\$18,804	14	0	0.50	1.08
24	SNOW RIDGE (98, Tabasco Cat)	Died, 2012	9/1	0/0	0/0	(Monnie Mae, \$11,220)	\$18,566	*288	5	0.99	1.14
25	REVIVAL SONG (01, Unbridled's Song), Woodvale Farm	\$500	5/0	0/0	0/0	(Comisario, \$6,696)	\$16,970	43	0	0.61	0.87
26	CAPITANO (01, Belong to Me), Fox Tale Stud	\$1,250	4/1	0/0	0/0	(Eight Dancers, \$11,466)	\$15,847	29	0	0.58	1.10
27	POWER BY FAR (95, Power of Mind), Castle Rock Farm	\$1,500	1/1	0/0	0/0	(Powerful Sun, \$15,048)	\$15,048	109	2	1.23	1.17
28	SIR SHACKLETON (01, Miswaki), Dana Point Farm	\$1,000	6/1	0/0	0/0	(Star Shackleton, \$10,710)	\$14,890	*97	1	0.68	1.06
29	PARTNER'S HERO (94, Danzig), Castle Rock Farm	\$1,500	7/0	0/0	0/0	(Not for Fun, \$7,504)	\$13,516	451	15	1.19	1.32
30	ACTIVIST (94, Wild Again), Godstone Farm	Private	11/0	0/0	0/0	(Buttercup Gold, \$3,600)	\$11,610	178	3	0.93	0.84

(continued from page 34)

The West Virginia market initially ignored Fiber Sonde, but it doesn't now.

Although it took some time for confidence to take hold, Fiber Sonde's babies can run, and the now 11-year-old stallion is not only ascending the ladder of Mid-Atlantic sires but ranks among the best in several critical categories.

In 2011—four years after his stud career

began—Fiber Sonde had just six runners, and four of them won. Last year he had 20 winners from 29 starters and the 69% success rate led all other Mid-Atlantic sires with 20 or more starters. Three of those 20 won a combined seven stakes races.

Seven of his 12 2-year-old starters in 2015 won, with four runners becoming stakes horses. No other stallion in West Virginia comes close to those percentages.

His runners last year made a total of 168 starts with 33 victories for a 19.3% strike rate.

Now, McKee said, breeders come not only from West Virginia but from all around the region, including across the mountains from Kentucky, for Fiber Sonde.

The sire covered 94 mares last year, a (continued on page 38)

MILLIONAIRE MULTIPLE GRADED STAKES WINNER

ALKHALI

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- Proven Grade I-ability
- Stamina
- Sharp turn of foot

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2016 LEADING SIRES IN MARYLAND

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Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled), (YOB,Sire), Where Stands	2016 Stud Fee	Rnrs/ Wnrs	Stakes Wnrs/ Wns	Rstrct SW/ BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	2016 Earnings	Cumulative			
								Foals	Stks Wnrs	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	NOT FOR LOVE (90, Mr. Prospector)	Pnsd	48/11	0/0	0/0	(Lovable Lady, \$45,630)	\$286,182	950	77	1.70	1.45
2	FRIESAN FIRE (06, A.P. Indy), Country Life Farm	\$4,000	25/7	1/1	0/1	(Tisdale, \$54,400)	\$276,835	90	1	0.97	1.32
3	LION HEARTED (96, Storm Cat)	Died, 2015	37/7	0/0	0/0	(Worthy Lion, \$28,509)	\$180,280	*606	18	1.21	1.29
4	ORIENTATE (98, Mt. Livermore), Northview Stallion Station	\$5,000	39/7	0/0	0/0	(Oh Baby Oh Baby, \$45,000)	\$157,665	*777	31	1.27	1.70
5	GREAT NOTION (00, Elusive Quality), Northview Stallion Station	\$3,500	17/4	1/1	0/1	(Great Soul, \$45,000)	\$152,612	232	13	1.53	1.23
6	PETIONVILLE (92, Seeking the Gold), Murmur Farm	\$5,000	33/7	0/0	0/0	(Rapid Rouge, \$24,800)	\$125,603	*707	41	1.31	1.28
7	LOUIS QUATORZE (93, Sovereign Dancer), Murmur Farm	\$2,500	28/5	0/0	0/0	(Dothat Dance, \$19,394)	\$107,328	*974	21	1.14	1.32
8	SCIPION (02, A.P. Indy), Murmur Farm	\$2,500	21/2	0/0	0/0	(Whiskey Sour, \$28,158)	\$105,958	123	3	1.08	1.06
9	ROCK SLIDE (98, A.P. Indy), Shamrock Farm	\$2,000	17/2	0/0	0/0	(Rocky Policy, \$16,560)	\$69,561	275	8	1.02	1.20
10	OUTFLANKER (94, Danzig), Shamrock Farm	\$3,000	17/4	0/0	0/0	(Andiemac, \$23,115)	\$61,163	*531	21	1.37	1.14
11	M EIGHTY (99, Lite the Fuse), Shamrock Farm	Private	3/2	0/0	0/0	(Fran's Buckaroo, \$26,583)	\$45,947	14	0	1.41	0.91
12	STREET MAGICIAN (04, Street Cry), Heritage Stallions	\$3,000	11/1	0/0	0/0	(Up Hill Battle, \$15,390)	\$40,109	74	2	1.13	1.23
13	PLAN (05, Storm Cat)	N/A	3/1	0/0	0/0	(Great Plan, \$33,900)	\$37,120	44	0	0.37	1.09
14	GATORS N BEARS (00, Stormy Atlantic)	Died, 2012	6/2	0/0	0/0	(Gator Gold, \$11,575)	\$20,575	151	5	1.04	1.19
15	ADMIRAL ALEX (07, Afleet Alex), Shamrock Farm	\$1,500	2/1	0/0	0/0	(Captain Alex, \$11,294)	\$19,694	9	0	0.70	0.97
16	CHEROKEE'S BOY (00, Citidancer), Murmur Farm	\$2,000	13/1	0/0	0/0	(Stylish Step, \$7,080)	\$18,787	98	1	1.13	1.02
17	GREEK SUN (01, Danzig), Marathon Farm	Private	5/0	0/0	0/0	(Tru Greek, \$5,476)	\$10,042	33	0	0.95	1.16

(continued from page 36)
record for a West Virginia stallion, according to statistics supplied by The Jockey Club, and McKee and O'Bannon expect at least that many this year although they admit to uncertainty.

"You never know until they show up here," O'Bannon said. "You have very few people who actually sign contracts. Some people will come in—we have an open house every year—and tell you, 'I'm going to breed to him,' and some of them you never see again. This is West Virginia. It's getting better. People tell us they're going to breed to him, and I would say 80% of them show."

The very first mare mated to Fiber

Sonde produced Grey Tiger, who won. Yet McKee and O'Bannon, who share a barn at Hollywood Casino at Charles Town Races, were as hesitant as the market with their young stallion.

McKee said he kept thinking about the failed sire Buddha, another big, gray son of Unbridled's Song, who won the Wood Memorial Stakes (gr. I) but was a disappointment in the breeding shed.

"I didn't want to breed a lot of my mares in case he was another Buddha," McKee said. "I didn't want a lot of slow horses running around the farm."

Gradually the couple got over their fears. Beau Ridge has a barn for 23 broodmares, and McKee and O'Bannon took the ones

they thought less of and bred them to Fiber Sonde and were amazed when the babies won.

Outside breeders waited until McKee and O'Bannon proved the sire's worth.

"There is a stigma around here," McKee said of the initial wariness to breed to Fiber Sonde. "You know, he doesn't have a lot of horses. We got him as a 2-year-old; we bred him at 3. He's 11 now. So, you've got to prove that they are going to throw runners. Because \$8,000 (his purchase price) is public information. We started him at \$1,000 and that's where we're still at, and I get questioned, 'Why do you keep it at \$1,000?' And the reason is we want as many runners as possible for our breeders' program."

Mark Taylor, vice president of marketing and public sales operations with the Taylor Made Sales Agency in Kentucky, marvels at Fiber Sonde.

"He's probably turned out to be the
(continued on page 40)



GADY PHOTOGRAPHY PHOTOS

Hidden Canyon, by Fiber Sonde, has won nine of 14 starts and \$313,695

2016 MARYLAND SIRES BY WINNERS

Sire	Rnrs	Wnrs
Not For Love	48	11
Orientate	39	7
Lion Hearted	38	7
Petionville	33	7
Friesan Fire	25	7
Louis Quatorze	28	5
Great Notion	17	4
Outflanker	17	4
Scipion	21	2
Rock Slide	17	2
Gators N Bears	6	2
M Eighty	3	2

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2016 LEADING SIRES IN WEST VIRGINIA

Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled), (YOB,Sire), Where Stands	2016 Stud Fee	Rnrs/ Wnrs	Stakes Wnrs/ Wns	Rstrct SW/ BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	2016 Earnings	Cumulative			
								Foals	Stks Wnrs	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	LIMEHOUSE (01, Grand Slam), O'Sullivan Farms	\$2,500	43/12	0/0	0/0	(Just Kissing Buck, \$53,400)	\$246,611	*385	19	1.23	1.20
2	SWISS YODELER (94, Eastern Echo), O'Sullivan Farms	\$2,000	32/10	0/0	0/0	(W. Giles, \$69,600)	\$244,255	757	15	1.01	1.04
3	BOP (97, Rahy)	Died, 2012	26/9	0/0	0/0	(Summer Frock, \$15,820)	\$132,134	*192	4	0.93	0.88
4	BROTHER DEREK (03, Benchmark), Naylee Farm	\$3,500	37/5	0/0	0/0	(Sibling War, \$23,700)	\$130,101	*129	4	1.20	1.22
5	WINDSOR CASTLE (98, Lord Carson), Taylor Mountain Farm	\$3,500	40/4	0/0	0/0	(Castle's Boy, \$13,440)	\$91,982	291	10	1.07	1.03
6	CHARITABLE MAN (06, Lemon Drop Kid), Taylor Mountain Farm	\$4,000	28/3	0/0	0/0	(Gonna Coast, \$17,040)	\$77,104	112	2	1.07	1.15
7	LUFTIKUS (96, Meadowlake), Taylor Mountain Farm	\$750	18/4	0/0	0/0	(Blisstikus, \$31,290)	\$73,591	284	8	0.99	1.09
8	FIBER SONDE (05, Unbridled's Song), Beau Ridge Farm	\$1,000	17/4	0/0	0/0	(Gianna Bella, \$19,220)	\$70,034	116	6	1.41	0.79
9	DURING (00, Cherokee Run), O'Sullivan Farms	\$1,500	6/1	1/1	0/1	(Lucy N Ethel, \$61,380)	\$65,741	193	4	0.84	1.10
10	PROSPECT BAY (92, Crafty Prospector)	N/A	7/5	0/0	0/0	(Forty One and Out, \$17,210)	\$65,162	286	7	0.93	1.47
11	PEAK DANCER (97, Mt. Livermore)	N/A	16/5	0/0	0/0	(Baleroom Dancer, \$14,340)	\$63,113	90	4	0.93	0.87
12	DENIS OF CORK (05, Harlan's Holiday), Taylor Mountain Farm	\$500	18/3	0/0	0/0	(Madeitouttahrilan, \$10,880)	\$51,842	88	0	0.63	1.18
13	REAL ESTATE (04, High Yield), Flamingo Run Farm	\$1,000	8/2	0/0	0/0	(March Wind, \$19,380)	\$35,610	38	0	0.65	0.84
14	XCHANGER (04, Exchange Rate), O'Sullivan Farms	\$500	11/2	0/0	0/0	(Xtra Blue, \$13,110)	\$34,214	54	0	0.31	1.13
15	OFFICER ROCKET (GB) (04, Officer), Bybee Road Farm	Private	5/1	0/0	0/0	(A. P. Rocket, \$30,440)	\$31,672	20	0	0.70	0.66
16	YARROW BRAE (95, Deputy Minister), O'Sullivan Farms	\$750	7/1	0/0	0/0	(Mr. Prosecutor, \$20,310)	\$27,110	299	6	1.09	0.99
17	FOREST GROVE (01, Forestry)	N/A	5/2	0/0	0/0	(Arborville, \$14,800)	\$22,205	111	2	0.83	1.18
18	GRAND RESERVE (02, Theatrical), One Sparrow Farm	\$1,000	11/2	0/0	0/0	(Mighty Grand, \$7,780)	\$20,034	47	0	0.34	0.77
19	SIENTE EL TRUENO (07, City Zip), Stehr's Farm	\$500	2/1	0/0	0/0	(Siente El Viento, \$14,775)	\$19,695	7	0	0.51	0.62
20	GHOSTLY MINISTER (97, Deputy Minister), Buckstud	\$2,500	9/3	0/0	0/0	(Garlic Jack, \$6,237)	\$19,327	69	1	0.88	0.95
21	GHOSTLY NUMBERS (98, Polish Numbers)	N/A	2/1	0/0	0/0	(Unbridled Ghost, \$13,760)	\$14,255	19	0	0.35	1.08
22	BALLADO'S GOLD (03, Saint Ballado), Witherow Farm	\$1,000	3/1	0/0	0/0	(Soulful King, \$10,200)	\$13,717	46	0	0.35	0.44
23	BAILERO (ARG) (99, Roy)	Died, 2012	7/1	0/0	0/0	(Sterlings Drama, \$9,150)	\$12,306	14	0	0.31	1.07
24	REPARATIONS (96, Forty Niner), Blue Spruce Farm	\$1,500	6/0	0/0	0/0	(That's Gold Jerry, \$6,720)	\$10,502	141	3	0.94	0.81

(continued from page 38)

best sire in the Mid-Atlantic,” said Taylor, who has a long working relationship with McKee, offering him client horses that aren’t going to pan out as successful runners on the major racing circuits but might fit in at Charles Town.

“The bottom line is there is a fine line between being worth a million and being worth a bid,” said Taylor, who stood Unbridled’s Song on his family’s Taylor Made Stallions. “Unbridled’s Song had been a mainstay of ours and Fiber Sonde is out of Silken Cat, who is one of the most unbelievable mares we had on the farm. He was damaged goods going through the sale and people just ignored him.

“If you look at it now, it’s very hard for a grade III winner to make it as a stallion. The big grade I winners get the huge books—they breed 175 mares apiece. If you get a horse that wasn’t a good racehorse, people don’t want to breed to them.

“Back in the ‘60s, ‘70s, ‘80s, the average book of the top sires in the country was maybe 48 mares. Now it’s three or four times that. In the past three years in Kentucky, the average book size for all sires has gone from 60 to 80. It’s a concentration of mares going to the top horses. We sold a horse a couple of years back, Stately Victor, who won the (Toyota) Blue Grass Stakes (gr. I), and there was hardly any market at all, and that’s a grade I winner.

2016 WEST VIRGINIA SIRES BY WINNERS

Sire	Rnrs	Wnrs
Limehouse	43	12
Swiss Yodeler	32	10
Bop	26	9
Brother Derek	37	5
Peak Dancer	16	5
Prospect Bay	7	5
Windsor Castle	40	4
Luftikus	18	4
Fiber Sonde	17	4
Charitable Man	28	3
Denis of Cork	18	3
Ghostly Minister	9	3
Grand Reserve	11	2
Xchanger	11	2
Real Estate	8	2
Forest Grove	5	2
Bailero (ARG)	7	1
Yarrow Brae	7	1
During	6	1
Officer Rocket (GB)	5	1
Ballado's Gold	3	1
Ghostly Numbers	2	1
Siente El Trueno	2	1
Spreebee	2	1



Fiber Sonde’s stakes-winning Aye a Song

You go down to Fiber Sonde, who doesn't even have stakes wins, and as far as stallion possibilities, it's very slim. That's why we have regional programs, and some of these horses can get a chance and climb their way to the top."

One of the castoffs McKee bought from Taylor Made was the Indian Charlie filly Ghost Canyon. Taylor had her consigned as a broodmare prospect but told McKee she could still run. The filly finished second in a 4½-furlong restricted stakes before bowing a tendon and being retired.

They bred her to Fiber Sonde and watched the offspring, Hidden Canyon, win nine of 14 starts and earn \$313,695 for trainer Javier Contreras. At one stage Hidden Canyon reeled off seven wins in a row.

Other good Fiber Sonde runners include 3-year-old filly Aye a Song, a winner of five of eight starts and third in January in the open-company Marshua Stakes at Laurel Park. Another is Flirting Song, a winner of two stakes and \$186,798.

McKee says Fiber Sonde has responded to mares whose sires are established broodmare sires. Some of his best winners have come from mating with daughters of Indian Charlie, With Approval,



REED PALMER

Multiple stakes winner Master Rick stands at Beau Ridge

Kris S., and Langfuhr. He just doesn't see enough of them.

Asked if he looks for lesser-priced mares out of proven broodmare sires, regardless how crooked their legs, McKee

quipped, "Doesn't everybody?"

McKee dreams about how Fiber Sonde would do with quality mares.

"The only 'A' (nick) mare we've got is right there in front of the house," he said,

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2016 LEADING SIREs IN VIRGINIA



Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled), (YOB,Sire), Where Stands	2016 Stud Fee	Rnrs/ Wnrs	Stakes Wnrs/ Wns	Rstrct SW/ BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	Cumulative				
							2016 Earnings	Foals	Stks Wnrs	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	COSA VERA (05, Dynaformer), North Cliff Farms	Private	2/1	0/0	0/0	(Max Crown, \$25,650)	\$26,210	24	0	0.57	1.43
2	REBELLION (GB) (03, Mozart), Hickory Tree Farm	\$3,500	3/1	0/0	0/0	(Volstead, \$12,128)	\$17,053	*42	1	1.18	1.31

2016 LEADING SIREs IN NEW JERSEY

Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled), (YOB,Sire), Where Stands	2016 Stud Fee	Rnrs/ Wnrs	Stakes Wnrs/ Wns	Rstrct SW/ BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	Cumulative				
							2016 Earnings	Foals	Stks Wnrs	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	DEFERRE (92, Deputy Minister)	N/A	13/3	0/0	0/0	(Maybe Tonight, \$23,940)	\$59,349	*585	22	1.23	1.18
2	CABLE BOY (04, Jump Start), Colonial Farms	\$1,000	2/1	0/0	0/0	(She's Hot Wired, \$28,560)	\$28,560	16	0	0.94	0.89
3	DON SIX (00, Wild Escapade), Greenfields Farm	Private	4/0	0/0	0/0	(One for Don, \$4,675)	\$9,445	78	3	1.17	1.26

pointing to Ghost Canyon.

So far, McKee and O'Bannon haven't brought any Fiber Sonde babies to the Fasig-Tipton Midlantic sales at Timonium in Maryland because "they won't bring what we want," McKee said. "But we might test the waters at any time when we get a little more established than we are. People don't believe they can get that kind of horse in West Virginia. In time, I think he will do OK in a sale."

"We don't have to sell them," O'Bannon added. "We can always bring them home. We've been so successful running them. What's the old saying? If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

Plus, the West Virginia Thoroughbred Development Fund distributes 60% to breeders and those who raise the foals, 25% to owners, and 15% to sire owners.

"A lot of women like Valentine's Day; I like the day after—that's when we get our breeders checks," O'Bannon said, laughing.

At one time McKee and O'Bannon stood as many as 10 stallions, including Arromanches and Explosive Red, buoyed by the advent of video lottery terminals at Charles Town supplementing the state's racing program. Now they're down to two.

They sold their underperforming stallion On Eagles Wings last year to interests in Korea, which they have done with other horses in the past, and Footnotes followed him out the door when a buyer from Argentina showed up at the farm.

"He wanted to buy him," O'Bannon recalled. "He said, 'Is he for sale?' I said, 'Buddy, (John will) sell anything, me included, if the price is right.'"

Fiber Sonde is joined at Beau Ridge by one other stallion, Master Rick, a multiple graded stakes-winning son of the A.P. Indy stallion Master Command. His first crop are yearlings this year.

The operation spans three properties.

Along with Beau Ridge, there is a 60-acre farm near Boyce, Va., called The Hunting Box, where broodmares and some cattle are kept; they also have 60 acres they call the Beau Ridge Annex near Rippon, W. Va., where they raise young horses.

"She has her own horses, and I have mine," McKee said.

Beau Ridge has a 23-stall barn for



McKee: "I get questioned, 'Why do you keep it (Fiber Sonde's fee) at \$1,000?' And the reason is we want as many runners as possible for our breeders' program."

broodmares and a barn for 22 2-year-olds in training. By April the young horses will be at the track and broodmares will fill up the barn.

The farm has 12 paddocks and a three-eighths-mile training track. Charles Town management gave them the dirt during a resurfacing. All they had to do was pick it up.

A staff of five, not counting exercise riders, works on the grounds, and the farm grows its own hay and most of its own straw, according to McKee.

The couple are lifers to the area, having

grown up in the shadow of Charles Town Races. O'Bannon's late father, Charles, worked there 39 years, 30 of them as track superintendent.

"She was raised about three blocks from the racetrack, and I was probably raised five blocks, although my family didn't have anything to do with racing," McKee said.

"I've been around racing all my life," O'Bannon said. "I galloped horses as a kid, pony horses."

When they met 38 years ago McKee was running a farm he owned near Bunker Hill, W. Va., living in a single-wide trailer and in the second year of training horses under his own name after racing from 1969-76 under the name of his stepfather, Kenneth Boyd.

"My show ponies were at the racetrack," O'Bannon said. "He said to me one day, 'Wouldn't you like to have your show horses on a nice farm?' He wanted my stalls! I said, 'Yeah, but I don't have a farm.' He said, 'You can take them up to my farm,' and that's how it happened."

O'Bannon laughs now about moving into the trailer, which had a hole in the floor.

"He'd go to Penn National or somewhere, and I'd be at Charles Town," she said. "Back then I still ponied all our horses. Oh, God, that was back in the early '80s. I'd come home and he wouldn't be there, and I'd have to rip the sheets off the bed before I'd get in it for fear of a snake or a rat because of the hole in the floor."

McKee and O'Bannon love to laugh and their conversation is tightly woven, the mark of a couple that gets along happily in close quarters. Both agree Fiber Sonde has renewed them with his success.

"Oh, yes," O'Bannon said. "We probably would be doing something else if it wasn't for him."

"I don't know about that," McKee said. 

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Sunshine Western

Stroud's Lane Farm boasts promising stallion roster

BY JULIE HAZELWOOD CASTRO

“**‘WILD BILL HICKOK,’** ‘The Sagebrush Trail...,’” real estate attorney Murray Stroud said. “There is not a Western that I haven’t seen.”

Stroud still has the programs from when Roy Rogers, Gene Autry, and their trusted sidekicks Trigger and Champion performed at Maple Leaf Gardens hockey arena. “I’ve loved horses since I was a little kid.”

Having grown up watching thundering horses and virtuous heroes on the silver screen, it is only fitting that Stroud has partnered with straight-shooter Ryan Barbazon in establishing a commercial breeding operation at his Stroud’s Lane Farm near Ocala, Fla.—now home to a treble of sire power in grade I winners Seek Again and Admiral Kitten and multiple group II winner Daddy Long Legs.

General manager and trainer Barbazon describes the recent acquisitions as “a hell of a stallion roster for Florida.”

All three are sired by trending stallions whose fees were set at \$100,000 for 2016.

Starting Out

Murray Stroud Law Office in Pickering, Ontario, is located due north across Lake Ontario from Niagara Falls and 30 miles east of Woodbine, where up until a few years ago, Stroud raced his horses almost exclusively. He was first involved with show cattle. His Aberdeen-Angus took Supreme Champion Bull and Grand Champion Cow honors at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in Toronto in the 1980s. Through his association with cattle, he met Bob Anderson, who had a horse farm near London, Ontario. It was Anderson who put forward the idea of owning a racehorse.

“I bought a quarter-interest in a filly named Star Reputation,” Stroud said. The filly placed in the Star Shoot and Victoria stakes.

Stroud’s best horse to date is homebred Sovereign Award winner Youcan’tcatchme (The Daddy—Poppy’s Baby Girl, by Yankee Victor). Conditioned by a close friend, Sam DiPasquale, Youcan’tcatchme was Canada’s top female sprinter of 2013. She earned \$425,710 and was later sold to CandyLand Farm at the 2015 Keeneland January sale for \$225,000.

Barbazon was born into Ocala’s Thoroughbred business and set out to cultivate his own aspirations. At one point though, he sought a change after objecting to industry politics and what he called “sugar-coated” explanations from trainers whom he had employed. Fortunate enough to be financially stable, it seemed the perfect opportunity to



JOE DIBRO

Murray Stroud, owner of the 140-acre Stroud’s Lane Farm near Ocala, Fla.

pursue a childhood dream of becoming a policeman. Barbazon served the city of Gainesville, Fla., in its police department for nearly four years and moved to the Marion County force. The time away made him realize how much he missed the horses.

“I knew what I wanted to do for the rest of my life,” he said.

The break made him a better person and more determined to produce a better horse. A man of integrity and faith, Barbazon believes “Everything happens for a reason.”

He spent five years at Forever Spring Farm near Danville, Ky., transforming from what appeared more of a cow pasture into a viable Thoroughbred nursery and equestrian center. From drilling the first fence post to building a substantial client base, the farm was on its feet within a year.

Like many native Floridians, however, he wasn’t built for the snow and chose to return to his roots, training for his family at Pleasant Acres Farm, where he and Stroud’s trails aligned.

(continued on page 46)

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