

**Thought Of The Week**  
By Ted Ecclestone

**Merry Christmas  
and  
Happy New Year**



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## Deerfields Stables bring Gypsy Vanner horses to Canada

By Constance Scrafield-Danby  
Freelance Contributor

DeerFields Stables, owned by Caledon businessman Jim Wilson is a place he built as an idyllic sanctuary from the wear and tear of day to day life. He has stocked it with a collection of kindly, smallish horses, called Vanners, who descend from the Dales Ponies and a number of draft horses in the U.K.

The result of the breeding is a beautiful, small horse that looks like a draft horse without the height and weight, but with the feathered fetlocks, that is, the long hair around the ankles. The temperament of these picturesque equines is another amiable feature for they are kind and affectionate, docile and intelligent.

It was Dennis Thompson, who, bringing some of the gypsy horses from the U.K. to his farm in Florida, named them Gypsy Vanners and registered the breed in North

America with all the trappings that such credentials occur.

In Ireland and the U.K., there are still gypsies who travel about in a variety of vehicles, with a few families continuing the use of the horse drawn wagons. The gypsy horses are distinguished by their long manes and tails and feathered fetlocks, their durability and reliability, as they are counted on to pull the family home, as it were, from place to place.

They are, in any event, a trade mark of the traditional gypsies, always paints as colour, very flashy but, still, calm horses and not given to flightiness. It is from this family horse that the now-named Gypsy Vanners have come to North America.

Jim Wilson was raised on a farm near Thornhill, where his family had regular saddle horses, so that Mr. Wilson was born with a love for them. During his life as a businessman, he lived for seven years in Las

Vegas, where he once again rode and enjoyed the company of horses. It was then that he began to look for the "perfect horse", an animal with charm and equitableness. He wanted beauty, reliability, a horse for

trail riding, that would be, as we say, "bomb proof." And he found exactly what he wanted in the Gypsy Vanner.

Along with Sandy Diamond, a Canadian trainer, Mr. Wilson went in

search of the best Gypsy Vanners he could find which were in Florida, where he also has a home, at the stables of Dennis Thompson.

So, he brought half a dozen or so horses to

Canada, to Caledon, where he owns a fabulous property. Determined to make a "perfect" place of it, Mr. Wilson has developed stabling, a club house, embellished the original residence and done extensive

landscaping. He has also planted grapes in the hopes of creating an "old world" ambience.

His ambition is to breed the Vanners and extend the line here in Canada. Altogether the best horse for trail riding and happy days in the saddle, so Mr. Wilson thinks, the Vanners that he brought to Canada, while still only two-year-olds, will be ready for use in the summer of next year.

Already, under the quiet guidance of Sandy Diamond, who advocates a natural training technique (remember horse whisperer), the young Vanners are becoming quite relaxed about being handled and ridden.

More than having all this pleasant luxury to himself, Mr. Wilson has been working on a plan for a private riding club, featuring the Vanners as the horse of choice.

However, Mr. Wilson is not looking for crowds, as he intends to invite a maximum of 12 members, with the associate memberships that those 12 would bring.

While there certainly are membership and associate membership fees, the venture is not primarily a business.

Members will get good value for their money. The renovated former out building, now the club house, gives a sweeping view of the property from the bank of windows from the large lounge and dining area upstairs. A study and elegant fireplace dominates one wall, while a long bar stands ready to serve lunch or munchies.

Without being over the top, every convenience has been considered, with a view to providing days of unravelling and restoring the soul.

Mr. Wilson's comment was: "I don't play golf — this is a hobby. I have always surrounded myself with great staff. I travel a lot and DeerFields is the perfect place to come back to. I want a location that is tranquil and stress free. And I want to share the dream."



ON THE RED CARPET: Last June 10, Burlington photographer Rachele Rousseau was on hand at the "Welcome to Canada Mystical Parade" — the arrival of nine Gypsy Vanner horses to Deerfields Stables near Palgrave. The magnificent breed was showcased on the red carpet and let loose to run free for everyone to enjoy.  
Photo/RACHELLE ROUSSEAU PHOTOGRAPHY

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## Back to back Crusher wins

By MIKE MALONEY  
Sports Editor

Orangeville Crushers are heading into a well deserved Christmas break firmly in control of the CCHL West division standings thanks in part to another pair of solid outings this past weekend, earning 5-4 wins over both the Seguin Bruins and Upper Canada Patriots.

Hosting Seguin Friday night at the Alder Street Community Centre, Orangeville

knew better than to underestimate the last-place Bruins who have started to show some signs of life in recent games.

Philip Teri opened the scoring, teaming up with Mike Arnold and Calvin Higley to give Orangeville a 1-0 lead at the end of one period of play.

Seguin cashed in a power-play opportunity nearing the halfway point of the second to tie it up for a few minutes before Tyson Fawcett

and Trent Hawke answered back for the Crushers with Griffen Lacey adding the helper on both goals.

Trailing by two heading into the final frame, Seguin caught Orangeville's power-play unit flat footed, scoring shorthanded at 3:13 then slipping another past Crushers goalie Mike Santaguida just under a minute later to knot it up once again with the score set at 3-3.

Mike Arnold continued to pick up where he

left off before injury side lined him for the better part of a month. Teaming up with Alex Guptill and Norm Ezekiel, Arnold wired home his 24th goal of the season before Nicholas Vassos would score what proved to be the game winner, unassisted with eight minutes left to play.

Like any bear in a corner, Seguin continued to claw away at the Crushers. With their goalie pulled in favour of the extra attacker a goal from Chris Marinakos drew them back within one; but that was all they could get past Santaguida as Orangeville hung on to post the 5-4 victory.

Taking to the road Sunday night in Etobicoke against Upper Canada, a scoreless game was cracked open early in the second on a goal by Hawke.

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ORANGEVILLE NOVICE SELECTS again had all the right moves, blanking Georgetown Raiders 5-0 in minor hockey action at the Tony Rose Memorial Sports Complex on Monday night.  
Photo/MIKE MALONEY



HIGH POINT AWARDS and Perfect Conditions were equally determined to finish 2009 on a winning note as the two squads played to a 5-5 draw in Orangeville Storm U18 indoor soccer action under the dome at ACTS this past Sunday.  
Photo/MIKE MALONEY

## Muskies put Drayton on ice again

After a few bumps, bruises and disappointing finishes over the last few weeks, the Shelburne Muskies head into the Christmas break on the right note, defeating Drayton 7-2 at home this past weekend.

Hooking up for the second time in two weeks against the Icemen, the Muskies needed a win if they wanted to hold onto their second place position in the WAAA North division standings.

Jamie Tardiff again received the nod to start in goal for Shelburne and for the second game in a row, was more than up to the

challenge, turning away 26 of 28 shots sent in his direction.

With injuries and holiday schedules playing havoc with the Muskies roster, Drayton was able to keep pace with the Fish through the first forty minutes of play, starting the third tied at 2-2. A five-goal flurry off the top of three, however, proved to be the difference for Shelburne as they cruised on to a 7-2 win over the Icemen.

Ted Butcher and Josh Duerden lead the way for Muskies scorers, each adding two to their season tallies while Chris Ritchie, Tristan Fairbairn and Zac Duerden counted for

singles. The team now has a break in the schedule

until they trek north to Durham on January 8. Not only will it be a

chance to heal up a few injured bodies but also

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## 'Great finish' for Hinbest

Life is anything but a drag for Orangeville racer Mike Hinbest

The year may be drawing to a close but it is one that this local race car driver and the crew of Hinbest Racing won't soon be forgetting.

It's only been four years since Hinbest started drag racing but the "need for speed" has caught hold of this young driver.

For the 2009 season, he and his team stepped it up a notch with a new car, competing in the

Top Dragster class where the team was able to place seventh in the NAPA sponsored Quick 32 Sportsman Series Championship Point Awards for the inaugural year of the new drag race series.

"It was a big step up for us," said Hinbest. "To finish seventh out of 28 in our first season at that level really was quite an accomplishment but it couldn't have happened without the hard work of everyone on the team and great support

from our sponsors."

Hinbest Racing's NAPA Auto Parts Top Dragster qualified well in the six-race series, including the number one spot in three races, at Grand Bend June 27 and Cayuga September 19 and 20.

Hinbest also qualified number two during May 16 at Cayuga, and at Grand Bend August 15, and again during the Labor Day meet at Grand Bend.

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