Examination with an endoscope is a routine procedure for racehorses. Scoping can reveal exercise-induced pulmonary hemorrhage (bleeding), airway obstructions, paralyzed arytenoid cartilage (flappers), gullet pouch infections, and the cause of coughs or nasal discharge. Pre-purchase examinations include scoping to assess the health and correctness of the throat and airways.

It is not unusual for a veterinarian, especially at horse sales, to scope a list of horses for multiple clients. As with any medical instrument, disinfection between uses and proper handling is paramount to prevent the spread of disease.

Former WinStar Farm co-owner Bill Casner suspects a dirty scope knocked 9-2 morning-line favorite Colonel John out of the Grade 1 Santa Anita Handicap in 2009.

“We cannot definitively be certain that the exposure came from the scope, but the timing was apparent,” Casner said. “There were no other horses in the entire barn, front and back, that had temps or got sick except him. He had his own bridle that was not used on other horses. Knowing that incubation periods are generally two to five days, we backtracked through his schedule. He worked five days before the Big ‘Cap and was scoped afterwards. This was four days before the fever spike. It was probably coming on the evening before the race.”

After that incident, Casner purchased an endoscope for his trainer, Eoin Harty, and he had all of Harty’s assistants who would handle the scope trained in the proper disinfection, handling, and storage of the instrument. All veterinarians who work on Casner’s horses are required to use only that endoscope on his horses.

“That was in 2009, and we have not experienced an infection since then that we could attribute to a contaminated scope,” Casner said. He also is concerned about the cavalier way some veterinarians handle endoscopes at horse sales, which he said is a huge concern of consignors.

“The general procedure is to wipe them off with a Handi-Wipe and then throw them back over the shoulder and handle them with unwashed hands – you will never see them use latex gloves,” he said.

Dr. Fairfield Bain, D.V.M., former clinical professor of equine internal medicine at Washington State University, is now equine technical services veterinarian for Merck Animal Health. Bain is board certified in veterinary internal medicine, veterinary pathology, and emergency and critical care.

“This is something that needs discussion in veterinary circles,” Bain said. “Most respiratory diseases can be transmitted by fomites, such as an endoscope, particularly equine herpesvirus, influenza, and strangies. Thus, it is extremely important to disinfect endoscopes between each patient.”

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Stallion Spotlight
Storm Cat
By Frank Mitchell

Where have all the Storm Cats gone? Just a few years ago, you couldn’t shake a stick, let alone go to a horse sale, without bumping into a horse by Storm Cat or one of his sons.

Today, that is much changed.

Most importantly, the Storm Cat stock has aged out of the population, and a good number of his sons are no longer with us either. As a result, the pedigrees of sales horses now look quite a bit different. In addition to the omnipresent A.P. Indy, there are lines of Danzig and other influences related to Storm Cat but not stemming from him.

And Harlan’s Holiday and his sons, especially his heir apparent Into Mischief, are so removed from Storm Cat in type and character that it’s almost surprising to recall that Harlan’s Holiday is a grandson of the great old stallion.

A quick reference through the OBS April catalog shows that a handful of Storm Cat sons are still with us, and the most recognizable is Giant’s Causeway, Storm Cat’s best stallion son who is represented by five 2-year-olds at the sale. The sire of multiple Grade 1 and Group 1 winners, as well as some noteworthy classic prospects this year, Giant’s Causeway is a headline sire.

In addition, Tale of the Cat, a fellow stallion with Giant’s Causeway at Ashford Stud in Kentucky, is prominent among the sires of 2-year-olds in training at Ocala, and Florida-based With Distinction continues his consistent work of siring big, athletic stock that show ability and make good sales horses.

Wildcat Heir has come up with another sterling set of quick juveniles for this sale that will continue his prominence as a late and much-lamented member of the elite sires who’ve stood in Florida. Another grandson of Storm Cat is Preakness Stakes winner Shackleford, whose first crop are 2.

One of the most interesting descendants of Storm Cat is the young sire Kantharos (by Lion Heart). He is a great-grandson of Storm Cat who was a lightning-fast 2-year-old himself; his racing career was unfortunately brief but sufficient to net a victory in the G2 Saratoga Special.

Although not a winner at the premium G1 level like Storm Cat, Kantharos has the strength, scope, bone, and natural athleticism of his male line. Now from three crops of racing age, Kantharos has gotten the G3 stakes winners Mr. Jordan and X Y Jet, as well as listed stakes winner Katie’s Kiss among his half-dozen stakes winners. With 38 winners from a relatively small sample of his offspring to date, Kantharos has total progeny earnings of nearly $3 million so far, and it is going to keep on rising.

Kantharos is out of the multiple stakes producer Contessa Halo, a top producer by the important sire and broodmare sire Southern Halo, whose best-known son in the United States is More Than Ready, who has been a top-end sire both in Kentucky and in Australia.

Bred with plenty of speed and class evident in both the top and bottom of his pedigree, Kantharos has been a welcome revelation for Florida breeding and for Storm Cat’s continuing influence.
Honor Roll
Paulina’s Love Makes Her Mark On The Turf
By Scott Jagow

2012 Chestnut Filly, Mizzen Mast—Electric Cove, by Spinning World. Consigned by Off the Hook to the 2014 OBS April Spring Sale of Two-Year-Olds, purchased by Gayle Van Leer, agt., for $100,000

For her sale price, Paulina’s Love has proven quite the bargain. In 13 starts, the 4-year-old Louisiana-bred has won four times and collected second or third purse money three times each. With a Grade 2 victory in her last start, the daughter of Mizzen Mast pushed her career earnings above $300,000.

“I mean, I would’ve bought her,” said trainer Richard Baltas, the conditioner for her four wins, all of which have come at a mile on the grass.

After being purchased for KM Racing Enterprise, Inc., Paulina’s Love began her career with trainer George Papaprodromou and showed early promise, finishing second in her first two starts as a juvenile. After she failed to move forward in subsequent races, the filly was transferred to Baltas. He liked what he saw.

“She’s a very good-looking filly, pretty basic size, correct,” Baltas said. “She’s laid back, quiet. She’s got a good temperament.”

First out for Baltas, Paulina’s Love finally put it all together and broke her maiden by 4 3/4 lengths, following up the score with a win in allowance company and a pair of top three finishes in graded stakes.

Prior to her last start, owner Sol Kumin bought into Paulina’s Love under Head of Plains Partners, one of his half a dozen partnerships. Head of Plains also has a stake in Breeders’ Cup Filly & Mare Sprint winner Wavell Avenue, and Kumin is invested in several other top horses, including Lady Eli and Undrafted.

In her first race with Kumin as a partner, Paulina’s Love scored by a neck in the G2 Buena Vista Stakes under jockey Gary Stevens.

“I’ve fallen in love with her,” Stevens said. “She lets me do what I want, whatever the pace scenario is. When she’s done, I’d like to take her home and put her in my backyard.”

But Paulina’s Love isn’t done racing, yet. Baltas said he’s planning to ship the California-based filly to Louisville for the G2 Churchill Distaff Turf Mile on Kentucky Derby day. If all goes well, the ultimate goal is see her in the winner’s circle after a Grade 1 race.

Paulina’s Love has a half-sibling in this week’s sale, a filly by Custom for Carlos listed as Hip Number 752.
How did you get into the horse business? My grandfather (the late television and movie director and producer Howard W. Koch) used to take me to the track as a kid. It seeped into my blood very quickly, and once it’s in your blood it stays forever. My grandfather loved making movies but his passion was horse racing. He was one of those guys everyone liked – a sweetheart of a guy – and he didn’t care if you were a parking attendant or CEO of a multi-million dollar company.

What’s your favorite horse racing movie? I’ve got three. For pure comedy, “Let It Ride.” My grandfather one was one of the producers and Richard Dreyfuss was brilliant. For actual movie making, I’d say “Phar Lap.” As a kid, I loved “Casey’s Shadow.”

What’s your favorite Howard Koch movie? “Airplane.” It’s one of the greatest comedies in the history of film.

When people ask what business are you in, what do you tell them? The horse racing business, and they look at me like I’m crazy. It’s my passion in life and I’m proud of it. I tell them I put together racing partnerships, give them my elevator pitch. I say you can get in the game at a fraction of the price through partnerships; it’s like owning a fractional interest in a jet.

Where do Little Red Feather investors come from? They come from anywhere and everywhere, from all over the country and from all walks of life. We’ve got plumbers, doctors, lawyers, sports figures and entertainment industry people. We treat Little Red Feather more like a family rather than as a corporation. That’s why people tend to join us and stay with us for a long time.

What’s the biggest hurdle in providing the enjoyment your investors are seeking? The horses. They don’t always work out. That’s just part of life and it’s the most unpredictable part of the game.

What can racetracks do better for racing partnerships? I work very closely with Santa Anita and Del Mar and as the largest partnership group in Southern California they treat us fantastically well. Looking at it globally, there needs to be more emphasis on taking care of horse owners, the same way gamblers have to be taken care of.

Do you have a go-to app on your iPhone? Waze (the traffic app). I live in LA. I like the voice options; I’m currently using Shaq – the Shaquille O’Neill voice. It cracks me up. I use it even if I know where I’m going.

What’s the last thing you Googled? Healthy restaurants in Ocala.
Bain said effective disinfection is easier to manage in a hospital setting than it is at the sales, on the track, or at a training center, where it is more likely that large numbers of horses would be scoped in succession.

He explained the proper procedure veterinarians should follow for disinfecting endoscopes:

“In situations where multiple patients are being examined, as in a production line, chlorhexidine cleaning of the external aspect, as well as flushing the channel should be done,” he said. “Scopes usually have a small channel that runs the length for passage of catheters, biopsy devices, etc. Chlorhexidine is considered the ‘standard of care’ in most situations, but true disinfection would require more extensive, time-consuming sterilization using other products requiring prolonged contact time. Most institutions would likely use a glutaraldehyde solution.”

After receiving reports of cross-contamination with human bronchoscopes, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration issued a safety communication in September 2015 that emphasized the failures in cleaning and disinfecting that could spread disease:

- Lack of pre-cleaning at point of use. Pre-cleaning typically includes surface wiping and channel flushing to prevent drying of blood, tissue and other biological debris;
- Failure to perform thorough manual cleaning before high-level disinfection or sterilization;
- Failure to flush or brush channels;
- Use of expired detergent or high-level disinfectant;
- Insufficient flushing, rinsing, and/or drying after high-level disinfection.
- Continued use of devices despite integrity, maintenance, and mechanical issues, including:
  - Persistent device channel kinks or bends;
  - Channel wall scratches, divots, or crevices;
  - Holes, cracks, or other imperfections in the distal end;
  - Use of repaired or refurbished devices using out-of-specification parts; and
  - Use of devices despite residual material in the instrument or suction channels.

In human medicine, disposable plastic sleeves for endoscopes are used to avoid the spread of disease, but no such sleeve is available for equine endoscopes. Trainer Glenn Thompson and veterinarian Heidi Homze are developing such a sleeve to protect horses.

“For years it has bothered me a great deal that veterinarians are called to scope horses when they are sick or to check for bleeding,” Thompson said. “After the horses are scoped, the scope is quickly wiped down with disinfectant and put back in the case. I cannot imagine the germs and infections that are spread from horse to horse using this method.

“Our sleeve is a disposable one that slides over the scope, and when the job is completed, you slide it off and throw it away.”

Thompson and Homze have applied for a patent and are working on a prototype to submit to veterinary experts for evaluation.
Five to Watch
A look at some of the sale’s top hips
By Frank Mitchell

Hip 640 Bay filly by Union Rags x Classic Strike, by Smart Strike: A half-sister to G2 Pennsylvania Derby winner Handsome Mike (Scat Daddy), this filly is a mature-looking February foal. Dam is a winner and half-sister to stakes winner From Away (Gulch). Sire was a top 2-year-old who developed into a classic winner at 3 with his success in the Belmont Stakes over 1 1/2 furlongs.

Hip 648 Dark bay colt by Stay Thirsty x Comedy, by Theatrical: From the first crop by Travers winner Stay Thirsty (Bernardini), this colt is a late May foal. He is out of the excellent producer Comedy, the dam of three stakes winners, including multiple G2 stakes winner Taris (Flatter), her full sister Stoweshoe, and their half-sister Theatre Star (War Front).

Hip 789 Bay filly by Awesome of Course x Express Fashion, by Private Express: A daughter of the modest-sized stakes-winner Awesome of Course, a son of leading sire Awesome Again, this filly is a half-sister to a pair of stakes winners: G2 stakes winner Express Tour (Tour d’Or), winner of the G2 Jerome and G3 UAE Derby, and listed stakes winner Kitty Cat Express (Cat Thief). Sire Awesome of Course has sired most famously national champion 2-year-old filly Awesome Feather (Breeders’ Cup Juvenile Fillies) and nine other stakes winners.

Hip 875 Chestnut colt by Giant’s Causeway x Golden Antigua, by Hansel: Top stallion son of mighty Storm Cat has sired 160 stakes winners worldwide, and this colt is a full brother to two of them: Tableaux (G2 Prix Noailles and G2 Prix Hocquart) and Giant Gizmo (G3 Lone Star Park Handicap and Alysheba Stakes). Their dam is stakes winner Golden Antigua, one of the best performers by Preakness and Belmont Stakes winner Hansel (Woodman).

Hip 1043 Chestnut colt by Hansen x La Riviera, by Affirmed: From the first and only U.S. crop by champion 2-year-old colt Hansen (Tapit), who won the Breeders’ Cup Juvenile, this likeable juvenile is out of a daughter of Triple Crown winner Affirmed. This colt is a half-brother to G2-placed Frenchglen (Forestry) and G3-placed Dr. Nick (Authenticate). Second dam produced two stakes winners, including dam of current stakes winner Red Rifle.