

GEORGE BEAHON
**"In This
 Corner"**



The space cadets cliché it over their microphones as "The Run for the Roses." The sophisticates who stand up to be robbed each Kentucky Derby Day refer to it as "the first Saturday in May." The editors who okay the assignments call it unbelievable, once they get ripped by the expense accounts.

What's really unbelievable is what the equine combat correspondents endure this week each year in order to write about an athletic event for horses that consumes all of two minutes and a couple of seconds, give or take, depending on whether the track superintendent decides to manure the strip for sudden or slow.

Some kind of picnic with pay, it may appear from the reader's view; grown men spending a week on the cuff to shovel out fiction for a full week about a race for 3-year-olds that usually are not fit to run 1/4 miles this early in their careers. It's like asking high schoolers to play 48-minute basketball, or 60-minute football.

The more than 100 correspondents who toil this week in Louisville are mostly daily sports columnists or turf writers, "beat" men who cover thoroughbred horse racing.

They travel a survival course that bears inspection.

Unless you are one of the relatively few who happen to land in one of the better pads in Louisville, you will put up cash in advance — **NO CHECKS** — and pay double or triple the normal charge for what might compare with a furnished closet in a high class scatter. (One gentleman from Detroit, columnist Joe Falls, spent his precious allotment of sleeping time one Derby Eve swatting mice from his uncarpeted hotel room floor.) Privacy and security from all kinds of hustlers are such that the accepted way to take a shower is one hand holding the soap, and the other, high above the water fixture, clutching your money clip.

Hotel accommodations really don't matter that much, because the social and business agendas for the week keep a guy upright for about 20 of each 24 hours.

Example: It all started last Sunday for the writers. That's when they were on deck for a brunch at the High Hope Farm of owner-trainer Doug Davis, in Versailles, Ky., for a Steeplechase and Hunt meet. "Transportation and Bloody Marys will be provided," understated the invitation. This is just for warm-ups.

Aside from the lavish, almost continuous freeload in the Churchill Downs press box, there are other formal commitments for the ink-stained

wretches. You should attend the writers' meeting on Wednesday. This follows cocktails and lunch, and the price is right, courtesy of track president Lynn Stone.

On Thursday it's the Governor's Luncheon and if you get caught ordering a mint julep you are labeled a rookie, an amateur or a gate crasher. Then there is the annual Turf Writers Assn. Dinner — cocktails, dinner, booze, booze and more booze. There is a nice band playing this blast, for the careless few who brought their wives. Most of the active members assemble on a corner stage for one of the toughest all night crap games outside of your favorite country club. (Again, **NO CHECKS.**)

Other parties are sponsored by various commercial and sporting groups. And never forget the liquid and solid refreshment available in the press box all week long. If you happen to avoid the track during the week, to write your fiction downtown, fear not. There is, quote, "A week long hospitality room . . . hours for which will be arranged around the usual hectic Derby week schedule of work and parties. Unquote."

For the dedicated, there is always the early morning deal. Transportation is provided to deliver you right to the backstretch. This is where writers get to interview trainers, owners and jocks — and each other. While most of this talk is supposedly about the eighth at Churchill on the First Saturday in May, much more is calculated to digging out potential winners for today's racing card. Most writers would climb a mountain to bet on nine races. So they dig around the backstretch looking for a little help for their betting campaigns. (For pure gamble, how about former New York Tribune columnist Jimmy Breslin? He arrived at Kennedy International

one morning, after a long flight from Vietnam, and after six weeks of high pressure writing. A friend met Breslin at the airport with his six weekly paychecks. Since Aqueduct was closer to home, they went to the Big A, where Brez promptly destroyed his six weeks pay.)

Listening to owners is the worst trap, because while owners might know about their own pet plater, they are blissfully ignorant of what the other 11 stables are doing in the same race. Trainers are smarter but sneakier. If he is about to saddle a 20 to 1 "buzzball" in today's fifth race, do you expect him to advertise it? And knock down his own price? Most trainers are conditioned to hold out information on their own wives.

Jockeys? Take the word of Eddie Arcaro, the best rider in history. "I would gladly," insists Arcaro, "pay a fee of five big ones for the concession of booking the action that comes out of the jocks' room."

About riders and writers, incidentally, it is notable that even the less religious of the authors never fails on Derby Week to pray for two special intentions: That Bill ("Don't Call Me Willie") Hartack, 1 — Does not land a Derby mount; 2 — Does not finish anywhere near the leaders if he rides. Reason: Willie would rather take gas than stand for an interview by writers.

Most writers would prefer to predict the 1-2-3 order of finish on The First Saturday in May, than share a Pulitzer. Those who simply survive the week should win awards from other than their banks, credit unions and finance companies. But for writing, pre-race fiction or otherwise, this corner's vote for the all time greatest piece out of Louisville went to the late, great Joe Palmer. His priceless delivery to his loyal readers one morning out of Louisville was a sensational recipe for jellied Martinis.

JOHN DOSER
**Scholastic
 Notebook**



Ninth football game rumors abound but as of this writing no schools have firmed up the extra game now allowed, with permission, by Section 5.

It's unlikely that any championship of any sort will result from the additional game. Most Monroe County League schools because of the odd number of teams in it, have bye dates scattered among their nine game period.

We understand that, for example, East Rochester is trying to work out a game with Jefferson or some other City-Catholic opponent; Rush-Henrietta failed to land a date with Auburn; and at least one other county opponent is seeking a C-C match if it can shift another league game and its bye date around.

THE BASEBALL-BASKETBALL Oldtimers committee is in the process of picking the five best Catholic-Public schoolboy cagers who played in Rochester prior to 1946.

In the early voting according to Oldtimers' co-chairmen John W. Molinari and John (Doc) Herring the leader is ex-Aquinas great Joe (Flash) Kennedy who played on the 1922-26 Little Irish squads.

Kennedy, now retired, went with Aquinas to the national high school tournament three times including 1926 when Aquinas lost the national title to Louisville by two points.

Only oldtimers can vote and those votes should go to Herring, 131 Wilbur Ave., Rochester.

The all-stars will be announced Sept 30 at the Oldtimers Reunion

at the Mapledale Party House.

NOT A SINGLE player from the Rochester area, not even Rush-Henrietta's John Smith, made the Cage All-America Top 100 players in the nation.

Not even the State Sports Writer's Association's player-of-the-year, Mt. Vernon's Bill Tatum, made it. "See what we mean about all-star teams not satisfying everybody?" asked basketball poll editor Neil Kerr in the association's weekly bulletin.

NYSSWA member Lou Hansen, Middletown Times, reports that the State Public High School Athletic Association may permit some leagues to play a 20 game schedule (instead of present limit of 18) plus regional play-offs as an experiment next year.

Glenn E. Manning, chairman, intersectional policy committee, said, "We're close to the return of state tournaments in basketball for the first time since they were abolished in 1932."

Manning also pointed out that the basketball committee and the NYSPHSAA's executive committee are headed in different directions regarding future post-season play.

It's apparently a muddy situation but Manning added that the basketball committee may have killed the whole thing by its independent pursuit of the post-season play-offs. The executive committee reportedly had been drawing up post-season play plans for the past two years in secret.

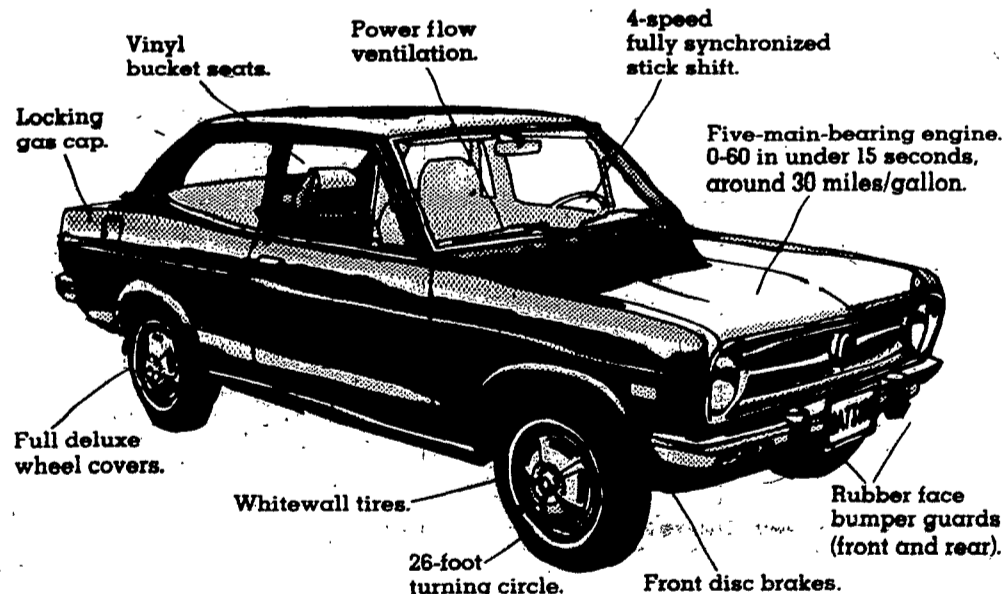
The man who really holds the decision in his power is State Commissioner of Education Ewald B. Nyquist.

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