

Quartet of Hall of Fame Drivers Announced for Goshen

The first four drivers to accept an invitation to compete in the Mr. and Mrs. Elbridge Gerry Memorial Trot on Sunday, July 5 at Goshen (NY) Historic Track have sent in their RSVPs.

The race, open by invitation to Hall of Fame horsemen, has eight available spots and the first four have been filled by John Campbell, Jim Doherty, Wally Hennessey and Ron Pierce. Drivers will be on hand to greet fans and autograph photos after the race. Post time is 1 p.m.

The Fourth of July celebration in Goshen, New York might be just 90 minutes from New York City, but it's 150 years back in time.

The county seat of Orange County, Goshen is home to the 28th annual Great American Weekend celebration - two days of activities that celebrate the nation's independence. Activities for the whole family are centered in and around the town's tree-ringed nine acre green, surrounded by stone office buildings, churches, and Queen Anne-style homes dating to the late 1700s.

Goshen is home to Historic Track (www.goshenhistorictrack.com), a harness



racing facility that opened in 1838 and is the country's oldest active horse racing track. There's been trotting horse racing on the streets of Goshen since the Revolutionary War era. True to history, there is no betting and stables are open to the public. The track, at 44 Park Place, is on the National Park Service's registry of historic landmarks.

There will be racing for prizes as big as \$20,000 at the track July 1st through 5th at 1 p.m. as part of Goshen's Fourth of July celebration. Admission is free for children, adults are \$5 and admission price includes a racing program. The stable area is open to visitors, to see the racehorses up close as they prepare for competition.

The rest of Goshen's Fourth of July celebration takes place on July 4 and 5. All events are on or a short walk from the town green, running from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, July 4 and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on July 5. Events include continuous musical entertainment, a 150 vendor craft show, book sale at the library, walking tour and food tent with all sorts of festive fare.

Adjacent to the racetrack is the Harness Racing Museum and Hall of Fame, at 240 Main Street. Housed in a Tudor carriage house, the museum interprets the history of harness racing throughout the world and is home to several priceless collections. Among them is sterling silver Faberge items created for Czar Nicholas of Russia and given to New Yorker C.K.G. Billings when he raced his fine trotters in Russia. Also at the museum is what is believed to be the largest single collection of Currier & Ives equine prints.

The museum's most popular exhibit is the racing simulator theater, where guests get a 3-D presentation of racing as if they're driving in a race, feeling the wind in their hair and jiggling along with every step of the speeding horse. Admission to the museum is free. Annual induction ceremonies for the Hall of Fame will be held the evening of July 5, admission is charged to that event.

For information on The Harness Racing Museum and Hall of Fame, call 845-294-6330 or visit www.harnessmuseum.com
For information on Great American Weekend activities, call the Goshen Chamber of Commerce, 845-294-7741 or visit www.goshenychamber.com.

DIRECTIONS: Goshen is about 65 miles north of New York City. It is accessible via the Shortline Bus from Port Authority in New York City. From the south, take the New York State Thruway to Exit 16 (Harriman) and Route 17 west to Exit 124. Left off the ramp and right at the next light will put you in front of the town green. From the north, take the Thruway south to I-84 and go west to Exit 4 and Route 17. Take Route 17 east to Exit 124.

LODGING: There are several national chains with lodging in the Goshen area. If you're looking for something different, there are a number of inns within 20 minutes of Goshen. Among those are the Hambletonian House B and B (www.hambletonian-house.com) in Chester. The Victorian inn is named for the Chester-born horse whose bloodlines exist in virtually every Standardbred horse in North America. For more visit www.new-york-inns.com
Most accommodations range from \$100 to \$150 a night.

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