

## CHAPTER XX

# Proximate But No Panatela

## Cigar

The racing career of Cigar concluded in the Breeders' Cup Classic on October 26, 1996. This exceptional racehorse brought his sport to the attention of a public largely unaware of it since the seasons of Seattle Slew, Affirmed, and Alydar in the late Seventies. Many of Cigar's newer fans might not be able to name another racehorse other than, maybe, Secretariat.

Cigar's genes suggested that he run on grass, which he did at ages two and three without distinction. His frustrated trainer tried him on dirt at four, and a star was born. In the midst of winning nearly \$10 million, he put together a 16-race win streak in which he never ducked an opponent and was seldom threatened.

The metamorphosis of Cigar from journeyman to champion is analogous to a utility infielder moving to center field and becoming a Hall of Famer. His accomplishment is arguably the sports story of this generation.

That he lost two of his last three races (a second and a third) cannot dull his resume; with better racing luck, he might have won all three. He raced until age six, a time when most modern-day stars have long since retired to a life of improvement of the breed. Even in defeat, his skills diminished by time and toil, Cigar finished his races with courage and grit.

In August of 1996, a veteran racetracker witnessed the breaking of the table run that looked like forever. That race day was the most memorable sporting experience of the observer's life. An account of it follows.

From the San Diego airport, a 20-minute journey north on Interstate 5 leads to a road sign that advises "Del Mar next three exits." Taking the second exit and traveling a couple miles west brings a visitor to the door of the Del Mar Race Track, where thoroughbred racehorses compete each year from the end of July to early September.

For more than a century, Saratoga (New York), self-anointed as "the August place to be," has owned the limelight for this sport during the summer holiday season. The pleasures of Del Mar are largely unknown to racegoers outside California.

Saratoga evokes the ghosts of Man O'War, Citation, and Secretariat. The track is



© Photos by Z

*Cigar (1990-), Jerry Bailey up, finishes a perfect 1995 season with an easy win in the Breeders' Cup classic on October 28 at Belmont Park.*

known as the “graveyard of favorites”; Del Mar is “where the surf meets the turf.” Tradition is a hard-earned medal, and this oceanside village is still the second city of American summer racing. Saratoga predates the telephone; Del Mar predates e-mail.

In culture as well as aesthetics, the venues are as disparate as the two coasts on which they reside. Saratoga was the site of a key battle where the American Revolutionaries were successfully led by General Benedict Arnold. The track’s pedigree traces to the robber barons of the last century. It is the bastion of family names like Vanderbilt, Phipps, and Whitney. Eastern racetrackers know it simply as the spa, referring to the spring waters that supply the curative baths there.

Del Mar was the Depression-era creation of a Hollywood group led by Bing Crosby and Pat O’Brien, two performers whose most memorable roles were as priests. A major tract of land in the area, Fairbanks Ranch, was the retreat of film star Douglas Fairbanks.

Social prominence there can be earned from one successful film, or horse for that matter. First names are remembered better than last, if the last is remembered at all. Horses are ridden by Corey, Eddie, and Gary; they are trained by Charlie, Wayne, or Ron. West coast racetrackers know Del Mar as “the beach.”

Thoroughbred racetracks commonly name their turf course after significant persons in the track’s history. Thus, at Saratoga, grass races are held on the Mellon

Turf Course, named in honor of that storied family prominent in American business, politics, and racing. At Del Mar, grass racing is on the Jimmy Durante Turf Course, a regular beach habitué. The Mellon name recalls Gulf Oil, Mill Reef, and Sea Hero; the Durante name recalls Inka Dinka Doo and Goodnight Mrs. Calabash.

Never mind that the Del Mar weather is seldom less than perfect compared to Saratoga's steamy, often thunderous Augusts, or that local merchants don't inflate their prices during the season as the New Yorkers are wont to do.

Del Mar offers generous seating, post-race jazz concerts, and evening racing on Fridays. Head-for-head the horses at the beach are every bit as good as those quartered at the spa. Don't expect to see that heresy mentioned in the racing press.

Outstanding jockeys and trainers populate both, but we give a nod to the west coast on depth. Saratoga boasts the riding triumvirate of Bailey, Day, and Smith, as good as any three anywhere. But Del Mar has McCarron, Stevens, Delahoussaye, Nakatani, Pincay, Desormeaux, Valenzuela, Solis, and Antley.

The colonies of competitors are not geographic monoliths. Trainers, jockeys, and even horses are as bicoastal as media moguls. But just as it is harder to win on the road in professional team sports, so do horses compromise their chances when shipped long distances to compete in unfamiliar surroundings.

The arrival of one Saratoga denizen has caused San Diego's television news to abandon the upcoming Republican Convention in favor of helicoptered coverage remindful of the O. J. Simpson low speed follow.

The horse, Cigar, is being vanned from Ontario Airport to the barn of Bill Shoemaker at Del Mar Race Track. Breathless reports chart his progress to the track where, 48 hours later, he will seek to break the record of 16 consecutive wins, co-held with Citation.

Racing celebrity is normally exclusive to its community of competitors and a shrinking core of determined fans. These fans ignore the fringe benefits of casino entertainment in favor of racetracks, where the fans are either ignored by management or treated as trespassers. The amiability of most trainers and jockeys to these constituents may be in part due to the fact that the demands are so few. Apart from the Kentucky Derby and, to a lesser degree, the Breeders' Cup, racing's millionaires ply their trade anonymous to the general population.

That rule is being excepted by the arrival of Cigar at Del Mar. For this event, the tradition-seeking venue is casting a shadow on venerable Saratoga. Parents, with passing or no interest in horse racing, are packing up the kids so they will be able to tell and retell the story of seeing the great Cigar. On this day, Del Mar has made it to the big show.

By 8:30 on race day morning, the parking lots are teeming. Fans have heeded the publicity agent's advice to arrive early. The backside entrance to the track is

a quarter-mile from the ocean and provides an elevated view of the complex. The grandstand and clubhouse are modernized facilities built in the Spanish tradition common to Southern California. The complex includes a satellite wagering theater and an outdoor arena for horse shows and rodeos. The rusty-colored stucco buildings with tile roofs would fit neatly on the campuses of Stanford or L.S.U. Seagulls float over the infield, open daily to picnickers and less-obsessed handicappers.

Morning training hours are in routine as a steady trickle of horse flesh flows between the track and barn area. The Big Horse, long since back from pre-dawn calisthenics, rests in solitude backstage at the Shoemaker barn.

The witnesses to the anticipated ceremony are as motley a group as Chaucer's Canterbury pilgrims; their common interest is a coronation. Bodybuilders, cyclists, and surfers have all adjusted their schedules to accommodate the star.

Even on a weekday, the crowd at Del Mar is unlike that of any other track. Go to most racetracks in this country, and the admits look like a group attending the fortieth reunion of an all-boys high school. A Del Mar crowd always looks younger, more wholesome, and affluent. Retirees wear Nikes and board shorts; serious horseplayers move in disguise as normal humans, their polyester uniforms seldom seen.

On Cigar Day the track is crammed with folks who don't know a filly from a furlong. The sport needs these fledgling fans, but most will not be back unless another Cigar appears. If a casino had a shot at this many new customers, they'd find a way to take names and addresses. Del Mar will tell its first-timers to have a nice day, and nearly all will. Sadly, few will return for another.

Most tracks on big days have itinerant Dixieland bands meandering through the property; Del Mar is no exception. But this track is less than an hour from Tijuana, Mexico, and appropriately a mariachi band stakes out non-conflicting territory in contretemps to the tuba and banjo group.

The Mexican music is as at home alongside the fish tacos and trays of jalapenos that accompany the hot dog condiments. In fact, most of the backstretch employees are of Mexican descent, as are many riders and a few trainers.

Before there was Del Mar, there was Agua Caliente, the Mexican track just across the border that attracted American high rollers and Pancho Villa himself early in this century.

In spite of California's immigration disputes, racetrack communities always seem to overcome societal and racial division. It is not a true melting pot, since stratification of class exists; but it is in an atmosphere of common interest, the racehorse.

More than two hours before the first race, Cigar's jockey, Jerry Bailey, is signing autographs in the plaza in front of the grandstand. Hundreds are waiting in line as he sits patiently, clad in the red, white, and blue racing silks of Cigar's owner, Allen Paulson. Bailey is perched on a makeshift dais that makes him look like a third-world



© Anne Eberhardt Krogh

*Cigar, Jerry Bailey up, greets his fans after tying Citation's record of 16 consecutive wins in the Citation Challenge Stakes at Arlington Park, July 13, 1996.*

potentate. He is certainly a racing potentate. No rider in the land has been hotter the last few years than this man. Aboard two outsiders, Sea Hero and Grindstone, he won the Kentucky Derby in '93 and '96.

Bailey has dominated America's richest race, the Breeders' Cup Classic, the last three years running. One of those wins was aboard a 99-1 shot that he was riding for the first time. Outside the limelight, in ordinary races on ordinary horses, he gets the job done day in and day out. On the New York and Florida circuit, he is a perennial at the top of the jockey standings.

On this day there is a \$2 charge for his autograph, a lady in line explains to her friend. "But it goes to some charity," she carefully notes with approval. The charity is the Disabled Jockey's Fund, a cause that Bailey champions tirelessly.

Race-riding is the most dangerous job in sport; every time the gate opens, death and disability for horse and rider are a misstep away. Today, Ron Turcotte, partner to Secretariat, rides a wheelchair instead of a horse. The Disabled Jockey's Fund is a lifeline to the many no-name riders whose injuries have robbed them of a livelihood.

Some 30 minutes past the appropriated time, Bailey is still signing away, greeting the final signature-seekers with the same exuberance as the first. He wears the perpetual smile of a Rubens cherub. Racing has no better envoy than he.

On a routine day, the Del Mar program begins with a recording of Bing Crosby's

“Down at old Del Mar.” But in this country, it is *de rigueur* to commence major sports happenings with a live rendition of the national anthem. Many events are remembered by them. Canadian Robert Goulet forgetting the words at the Liston-Clay championship at Lewiston, Maine, is a favorite of triviaistas.

In the 1968 World Series, Jose Feliciano delivered the first improvisation of the anthem. His mild riff was controversial during that tense time, but in retrospect was most reverent. Improvisation is now the norm. For the most part they are successful; the Whitney Houstons far outnumber the Roseanne Barrs.

This day, the honor falls to country singer Juice Newton, who does not disappoint. At the conclusion of her anthem, the audience erupts in cheer.

The fans are ready but five races remain before the main event. When the horses for the first race break from the gate, the crowd of nearly 40,000 roars as if it has just witnessed the first strike in a World Series or the first tackle in a Super Bowl. It is a tension breaker that completes the setting for what is to follow.

And what is to follow is the \$1 million Grade I Pacific Classic. From the name to the race itself, the Classic is California hyperbole at its best. Though only five years old, it's the richest race of the Del Mar meeting. Grade I means just what it implies; the term defines this country's richest and most important races.

The Travers, Saratoga's richest race, is a \$750,000 Grade I event. It was first contested in 1864. The Whitney is a prominent Saratoga stakes fixture, as is the Jim Dandy; the latter named for the 99-1 upsetter of Gallant Fox in the 1930 Travers, whose name entered the American lexicon as a result of that performance.

A prominent Del Mar stakes race, the Eddie Read, is named for a beloved California sports writer. Saratoga stakes are named after bluebloods, biped and quadruped. The beaches of Del Mar may be the provenance of *surf's up*, *dude*, and *hodad*, but those terms are less anchored to the American vernacular than Jim Dandy. Tradition is hard-earned.

The Pacific Classic is for older horses and is a weight-for-age event rather than a handicap. This means that all horses carry the same weight, except for formulated age and sex allowances. Consequently, three-year-olds are conceded weight from older horses, and fillies and mares are conceded weight from colts.

Today's field comprises six older male horses; all will carry 124 pounds.

In a handicap race the racing secretary assigns weight to each horse in an attempt to equalize the outcome. Political liberals prefer handicaps; conservatives prefer weight-for-age. The conditions of the race seemingly add to Cigar's position, as he has had to make major weight concessions to opponents in handicaps.

When Cigar's connections chose the Pacific Classic as the spot to shoot at breaking the record for consecutive wins, they chose the most difficult one available. But it must be said that Allen Paulson is a sportsman in the tradition of the first half of this

century and the last one. The Paulsons reside in nearby Rancho Santa Fe, but any number of tracks would have gladly created a race with a well-endowed purse and softer competition.

Mr. Paulson's wealth would certainly permit him to bid on even terms for the most highly-valued horses at auction; after all, his Gulfstream Aviation concern sold for a sum that would fund the annual budget of a good-sized municipality. Yet he has built his powerful racing stable through a breeding operation populated with moderately-priced stock.

During the win streak, Paulson has shipped his charge all over the U. S. and as far away as Dubai. Neither has dodged the competition to keep the streak alive.

Cigar is not Paulson's first brush with equine greatness; he owned the sensational two-year-old Arazi, who parachuted in from France in the 1991 Breeders' Cup Juvenile and simply galloped away from the field. His precocity did not carry to his three-year-old year; he was a soundly beaten favorite when he returned to the scene of his memorable run, in the 1992 Kentucky Derby.

Throughout the good and the bad, Paulson's sportsmanship shone through. With only one start and surgery for the colt between those two races, both Paulson and the late trainer of Arazi, Francois Boutin, must have known they were running a short horse in the Derby. Still, they carried on with dignity, notwithstanding Boutin's Gallic shrugs to the carping press after the defeat.

Most of Paulson's horses are named after aeronautical checkpoints. Arazi is in the American southwest, Cigar lies in the Gulf of Mexico between New Orleans and Tampa. It will not be long before there are more Paulson horses than checkpoints.

As soon as the fifth race is declared official, the odds' board is cleared, and the first line on the Pacific Classic shows Cigar at one to nine. This is the shortest price the tote can reflect. The board says that \$600,000 has been bet on Cigar to win; a total of \$100,000 has been bet on the rest of the field. Cigar's win pool quickly climbs to \$1 million, which causes the space below his number to go dark, since bettors have surpassed the technological limits of the display's calculus.

At this point a normal-looking but clearly novice observer a couple rows in front rises and inquires whether this is Cigar's race. Trying to be an ambassador for the sport, I mask my condescension as I assure him that it is.

Two floors below, the horses are being prepared in the paddock, or, as the Europeans say, the "saddling enclosure." The area is packed with racing professionals and the schmoozies. In the melee, Bo Derek wanders as anonymously as Jerry Bailey would outside of the confines of the track.

It's showtime. The paddock judge cries "riders to your mounts," pauses, and follows with "riders up." Like synchronized swimmers, the jockeys get a leg up and proceed to the racetrack. The expectant hoard of non-contestants begins its slow



*Cigar's win streak ends in the 1996 Pacific Classic at Del Mar as Dare And Go delivers a shocker.*

migration to vantage points for the race.

Leading the six horses onto the track is probably the second-most-loved horse to run in California. Best Pal, the retired multi-millionaire gelding, is surpassed only by John Henry in the hearts of Golden State racegoers. Hall of Famer Chris McCarron is aboard the old boy, riding with stirrups long to provide additional control. McCarron is clearly enjoying the moment, as is Best Pal himself.

While horses are not gifted with notable intellect, their cavernous memories make them the ultimate creatures of habit. It is impossible to explain to Best Pal, well into retirement, that today is not race day for him. Put him at the head of the parade, with his accustomed partner up, and he puts on his game face. He prances onto the track, neck bowed, amid admiring cheers.

Announcer Trevor Denman seems to be speaking to his own muse when he refers to Best Pal as "that wondrous competitor."

Best Pal is now becoming a bit unruly, bucking mischievously as he acknowledges the applause. Apart from a bit more fullness in the girth, he looks like the same horse that fought to a valiant second in the 1991 Kentucky Derby and, later that year, beat older horses in the inaugural running of the Pacific Classic.

As the field walks by the tote board, the six entrants, all shiny of coat, complete their procession. Number one in the mutuels is Tinner's Way, a six-year-old son of Secretariat whose physical makeup is a pretty good replica of the great champion's.

Tinner's Way has won this race two years in a row, though most smarts think he has lost a couple steps through age and injury.

His trainer, Bobby Frankel, has trained the winner of this race four years in a row, a remarkable feat. Frankel operates a public stable, but his principal owner is Juddmonte Farm, a powerful Saudi racing enterprise that owns Tinner's Way. A Jewish guy from New York who went west seeking opportunity, Frankel's successful partnership with an Arab owner underscores the blind ethnicity of the racetrack.

The great horse himself, number four in the mutuels, is Cigar. He seems to lack his usual composure, looking a little edgy and wet around the neck and girth. Unfamiliar surroundings explain part of it. Del Mar's sea air falls unequally on the shoulders of shippers; some thrive on it, some don't. As grand a specimen as Cigar cuts in the post parade, he is not completely at ease.

Number two is Dare And Go, an in-and-out son of Alydar. His injuries have exacerbated his inconsistency. This colt is trained by the highly successful young trainer Dick Mandella and will be ridden by Alex Solis, the most underrated rider in America.

Mandella also trained Soul of the Matter until that colt's final prep for the Pacific Classic produced a career-ending injury. Soul of the Matter gave Cigar a duel to the wire in Dubai and would have been a strong second choice in the betting.

Dare And Go seems but an afterthought as Mandella also trains the three horse, Siphon. The bettors hold Dare And Go's chances at no better than 40 to 1; Siphon is the second choice at 7-1.

If Cigar is to be upset, it is Siphon that is expected to do the business, and to do it from the front end. The Brazilian-bred is riding a four race win streak, the most recent of which was an upset of Paulson's number two, Geri, in the Hollywood Gold Cup. Cigar's connections are wary of Siphon's speed. They are determined to keep him from purloining another one from them. Siphon will be ridden by David Flores, a competent competitor on the Southern California circuit.

Number six is Dramatic Gold, a legitimate Grade I performer, fresh from an 8-length thumping by Cigar in Chicago. His chances are remote and the odds reflect them. If the popular Corey Nakatani were not aboard, his odds would be even greater.

Number five is Luthier Fever, a winner of a war of attrition if ever there was. His racing bumps and bruises rule out any chance of his being competitive, but his presence serves a mighty purpose. You see, the good folks at the MGM Grand Casino offered a \$500k bonus to the horse with the best overall performance in the Hollywood Gold Cup, the Santa Anita Handicap, and the Pacific Classic.

In a childhood lecture on punctuality, my maternal grandmother pointed out that, "Half of life is just showing up." As the only horse to start in all three races, Luthier Fever will collect the bonus simply by answering the bell, proving grandma right

again.

The noise rises expectedly as the horses move to the starting gate. The Del Mar crowd knows this to be a day like no other. Trevor Denman, the voice of southern California racing, is an amiable South African who is a master at describing what is happening in a race.

Early in his American career, he had a tendency to embellish the goings on, an annoyance he has abandoned to the betterment of his talent. He prepares the racegoer with California cheer and optimism for the upcoming contest.

The voice of east coast racing (and the Breeders' Cup) is Tom Durkin. Durkin reports the loading of the horses into the starting gate with the intensity of a reporter describing a hostage crisis. His races unfold into a crescendo of poetic exclamation. Denman heralds a race like a weatherman announcing favorable surf conditions. If either says your horse is out of it, tear up your ticket.

Denman's voice rises in anticipation as the horses load into the gate:

*The excitement's really there; Cigar has just gone forward. Cigar, a little unsure of himself, looking all round. They're all set; there's the roar from the crowd, the Pacific Classic field is underway. Cigar began beautifully. As expected, Siphon's gonna sprint up to lead them. Cigar is tracking him comfortably in second. The pace just a good one; they're not flying and they're not crawling.*

The normally impeccable Denman, as well as the master, Mr. Bailey, have both underestimated Siphon's speed. He is dictating a pace that will reach the mile mark in track-record time.

Siphon's move is expected and Flores nestles him to a comfortable spot along the rail. The lessons of the Hollywood Gold Cup well in mind, Jerry Bailey has Cigar in close pursuit of the Brazilian comet. Siphon will not pull another heist on the Paulson firm.

Predictably, Dare And Go, Tinner's Way, and Luthier Fever are well back of the leaders. Dramatic Gold, in the hands of Corey Nakatani, inexplicably is positioned directly outside Cigar's flank.

*Dramatic Gold is pestering Cigar.*

In fact Bailey and Nakatani proceed down the backside virtually boot-heel-to-boot-heel. Bailey cannot move on the rail for Siphon's presence. He's trapped on the outside by Dramatic Gold. In track language, Bailey and Cigar are in a blind switch. Bailey's hope is that Nakatani's move is as suicidal as it appears.

To more than one observer, the tactic seems a ploy to bother Cigar, not to further the chances of Dramatic Gold. Nakatani is a very savvy rider; he must know his move has reduced Dramatic Gold's chances from remote to nil.

Leaving the half-mile pole, it is clear Dramatic Gold cannot keep up. As he fades, Bailey moves Cigar a bit outside and begins to measure Siphon. Dare And Go is



*Cigar at play in what was previously John Henry's paddock at the Kentucky Horse Park, 2006*

progressing, but with little note, as Cigar has moved on even terms with Siphon and looks capable of taking the lead whenever Bailey asks.

With a quarter-mile to go, Siphon has relinquished the lead. It will soon become apparent that the pace that has been a dagger in Siphon's heart will be an arrow in Cigar's heel. The weariness of Siphon conceals the fatigue that sets into Cigar as the latter seizes the lead. The fresh Dare And Go has found another gear as he menaces the leader.

*They go to the quarter pole. Can Siphon run the biggest race of his life and keep Cigar away? Dramatic Gold cannot keep up ... Cigar's in front; Dare And Go in the white cap now looming a danger! Dare And Go's gonna look for the upset. Cigar takes the lead; Dare And Go's got dead aim on him. Cigar's gotta dig deep, he's had to run pretty fast early and he can't find.*

When a horse in a Denman-reported race tires, the announcer is fond of saying that the horse can find no more. He stops with find, his incredulity at Cigar's coming defeat making him unable to complete the customary phrase.

*And Dare And Go has gone right on by Cigar! A sixteenth of a mile to go. And you can never underestimate a classy horse and this is one classy guy on his day. Dare And Go and Alex Solis win the Pacific Classic!*

To the rear, Tinner's Way has reinjured an ankle and Eddie Delahoussaye is pulling

him up for the last time. The ghost of Secretariat has withdrawn from the proceedings, and Tinner's Way will only be able to carry the genes forward in breeding. Luthier Fever is going through the motions and will be no factor, but his owners will be a half-million richer for it.

In describing Cigar's win in the 1995 Breeders' Cup Classic, announcer Tom Durkin declared him "*the unconquerable, invincible, unbeatable Cigar!*" And so he has been. There is an old track saying that horses are not machines. And so it is with Cigar.

The first signs of diminished skill that have met every athlete from Apollo to Ali have suddenly presented themselves to the horse that has dominated racing for over two years.

The commentary of Trevor Denman, briefly rendered inaudible by cheering, suddenly sounds loud. The crowd noise has been turned off like a light switch. Dare And Go has passed Cigar. Alex Solis, aboard the leader, is mindful of Frog One waving goodbye to Popeye Doyle in *The French Connection*. Apart from Denman's stunned utterances, Del Mar is a very quiet place. So this is what history looks like as 40,000 versions of "oh my God!" are exchanged.

The crowd rights itself quickly enough to deliver a perfunctory politician's boo as Governor Pete Wilson is announced as the presenter of the trophy. About a third of the attendees pack up the kids and the ice chests and head for the exits. The procession looks like the midway point of a fourth quarter in a New Orleans Saints football game when it has become clear that the locals have blown another one.

Few are focused on the high-fiving connections of Dare And Go as the disconsolate Bailey pulls up the confused Cigar, who seems to sense that there will be no stroll to the winner's circle with flashing bulbs and garlands of flowers on his withers.

Bailey salutes the stewards with his whip, secures his tack, and is in animated description of his failed effort to the equally disappointed trainer, Bill Mott. Mott has risen spectacularly in a few short years, from training claimers in New Orleans to horses capable of winning the Classic—horses that mark the pinnacle of a trainer's career.

It is said that anyone can train a good horse, but Mott has excelled in his care of Cigar, keeping him healthy and sharp throughout a long campaign. It was said that Roger Maris lost his hair in 1961 during his successful pursuit of Babe Ruth's single-season home run record. Mott's performance has also been Ruthian under great pressure.

In the post-race news conference, the 30-something jockey of Cigar accepts the second-guessing with grace. He gives nothing but praise to the winner.

The resignation of jockey and trainer to the day that almost had to come is apparent. The pressure has receded but so has the wonderment. Even Cigar feels the pain. It

is an adage of the track that horses know when they win or lose. In reality, some do and some don't. But the great horse uncharacteristically refuses his customary post-race peppermint from the owner, and it's clear that Cigar shares the disappointment of the day.

The Pacific Classic was the sixth race to accommodate a national television audience. The remainder of the day's card has been rendered anticlimactic. A horse with the chance of a rebel in Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg has ended a win streak that will tie Citation's record but not break it. The ghost of Secretariat, which seemed to exit with the injury to Tinner's Way, has reappeared; Secretariat is the sire of Partygoer, dam of Dare And Go.

On Sunday, a pre-dawn jogger circles the Del Mar property. The trainers' Lexuses and Mercedes file into the track, alternating with the dented Corollas of the grooms for just another day at the office.

My mind's ear replays Trevor Denman's call overlaid with the melody to the old standard, "After the ball is over." The reverie ends with the closing words to the song, "many's the heart that's broken, after the ball." The empty stands offer no clue to the event now only 14 hours past.

As Omar Khayyam wrote (before even the Battle of Saratoga), "The moving finger writes; and, having writ moves on: nor all your piety nor wit shall lure it back to cancel half a line. Nor all your tears wash out a word of it."

Del Mar looks a little older now, a bit more seasoned. It is someplace, not just a racetrack. The bearers of folding chairs and ice chests will have a story to tell. Over the years they will tell it and retell it. History has been made—not the history most would have predicted, but history nonetheless.

—1996



#### 2010 UPDATE

Allen E. Paulson—Cigar's owner and breeder died at age 78 in 2000.

Bill Mott—In 1998 Cigar's trainer became, at age 45, the second youngest trainer inducted into the Racing Hall of Fame. He continues to operate at the pinnacle of the sport. He is the trainer of Drosselmeyer, winner of the 2010 Belmont.

Jerry Bailey—Cigar's rider retired at age 48 in 2006. Also a Hall of Fame inductee, he appears frequently as a television commentator on horse racing broadcasts.

Cigar—The horse was retired at the conclusion of the 1996 season. He was ranked #18 in the *Blood Horse Magazine's* top 100 champions of the twentieth century. In 2002, the National Museum of Racing inducted Cigar into its Hall of Fame. Infertility negated his much anticipated stud career and Cigar was relocated to the Kentucky Horse Park where he is a much-visited resident in the Hall of Champions.