

# Tour Allegany County on a tank of gas

By Bob Timkey

Allegany County hosts enough outdoor attractions and activities to fill your family's vacation days for a week or a weekend. Spend less time travelling and more time relaxing on your next getaway and be sure to check out these attractions:

**Snowmobiling Trail**  
www.acfsnow.org

The Allegany County Snowmobiling trail boasts over 400 miles of terrain and is easily accessible from NYS Route 19. Rushford Snowmobiling Club maintains many of the trails as they weave through private property and the Hanging Bog Wild Life Management Area. Often, sled dog teams can be seen training on the trail. Snowmobiling is a destination sport that brings a welcome contribution to the local economy. A typical day of riding includes a big breakfast, a full day of exploring trails and an evening at a bed and breakfast or motel. Allegany County has invested in a fleet of 20 Class A grooming machines to groom select trails to provide the best riding conditions possible. You'll enjoy easy access to Allegany State Park and Letworth State Park from the sled routes. Trails open the day after muzzleload deer season ends and remain open until April 1.

**Tall Pines ATV Park**

www.TallPinesATVPark.com  
Formerly known as Kent Farms and famous for selling Christmas trees and wreaths, Tall Pines ATV Park is set upon a fourth generation working farm. The current generation recently built an



Photo by Bob Timkey

Moss Lake is one of the regions many natural attractions.

ATV ride park with 60 miles of groomed trails, all on their private property. Trails range from easy to intermediate to difficult. An obstacle course and motocross track has been built for expert riders and all ages are permitted to ride with parental consent. Free maps are distributed with every admission and patrons have access to grills and showers for their post riding leisure.

Tall Pines is now a fully equipped campground as well with tent sites and 11 cabins available for overnight stay. The highly successful Tough Mudder obstacle course running race selected Tall Pines as the site of their Buffalo area race this summer and built over a dozen military style obstacles, some of which will remain on the grounds year round.

**Wellsville Country Club**

www.WellsvilleCountryClub.com

Wellsville Country Club is one of four courses in Allegany County. The club boasts an 18-hole golf course with a fully complimented

club house, serving dinner on Friday and Saturday nights. A fully-staffed and furnished pro shop serves golfers throughout the season. The staff golf pro offers lessons, apparel, equipment tips and fittings. Despite the upscale name, Wellsville Country Club is a public course, fairly priced at \$25 for greens fee with cart. There are 40 new electric carts and new traps were added this season, providing excellent value to golfers. This walker friendly par 71 course is set upon fairly level terrain and features excellent scenery including the Genesee River flowing through beautiful greens and fairways. The course is centrally located just 85 miles from Buffalo or Rochester and has attracted many native Buffalo and Rochester residents to retire in the area. Plenty of tee times are available during the golf season on Saturday and Sunday afternoons and the club house is available for private parties such as hosting wedding receptions, graduation parties, proms, birthdays and

fund raising galas.

**Allegany County Pheasant Program**

www.AlleganyCountyPheasantProgram.com

The Allegany County pheasant program is supported by local inmates at Allegany County Jail who raise day old chicks to maturity, which are then stocked throughout the county. Pheasants are released on private property where hunting is allowed. Six years ago, when the program began, 250 birds were raised and released. The program has grown each year and over 1,600 birds were raised and released this year attracting hunters from Buffalo, Rochester and Syracuse. The program is a self-supporting, charitable organization. A \$30 associate fee is charged for membership and no county taxpayer money is used to fund its efforts. This year, an NRA grant allowed for construction of an additional brood house, allowing for more birds to be raised in each coming season.

**Lion's Club Trout Derby**

Every fishing season, the Genesee River is stocked with over 300 trout for the annual weekend tournament. Local businesses sponsor tagged fish and each tagged fish netted earns the fisherman a prize of up to \$3,000 per fish. With nearly \$30,000 in prize money swimming around a 10 mile stretch of the river as it flows south from Wellsville, this tournament is always a crowd pleaser.

**Hunting Program**

Allegany County boasts

some of the best small game hunting in New York State including pheasants, squirrel, rabbits and turkey. During White Tail Deer Season, 46,000 acres of state land are open for hunting. Hunters are attracted primarily from the Buffalo and Rochester areas.

**FESTIVALS & EVENTS**

**Wellsville Balloon Rally**

The annual balloon rally features over 40 hot air balloons. At 35 years, it is the longest running balloon rally in the eastern half of the United States. There is no charge for licensed balloon owners to attend and private or commercial balloons are welcome. Four flights are scheduled during the course of the weekend along with a crowd-pleasing balloon glow. Hot air balloon rides are available to the public and sure to delight the thrill seeker in you.

**Cuba Garlic Festival**

If you haven't tasted garlic ice cream, you haven't lived. Seven live bands, cooking shows and historical presentations make the Cuba Garlic Festival an event you don't want to miss.

**Wellsville Ridgewalk & Run**

This challenging walk and running race features 5k, 10k, and half marathon distance running competitions. Over 1,200 participants typically register to attempt the feat. Beginning at the base of Alma Hill, the event culminates at the summit, which is the highest peak in Western New York. Aid stations along the route provide water and snacks to runners and hikers. Incredible autumn scenery

and magnificent views make this charitable event a favorite among runners and outdoor enthusiasts.

**Civil War Reenactment**

An annual Civil War period reenactment is performed to the 1812 Overture live. Actors prepare for their roles by dressing in authentic, handmade wardrobes and eating, sleeping and living as though they are actually in the Civil War Era during the days of preparation leading up to the reenactment event. This is a must see event for history buffs.

**Lodging:**

A trip to Allegany is an opportunity to stay in the area's premier bed and breakfast, **The Lodge**. The inn's owners came to Allegany County six years ago because of its natural beauty: the hills, valleys, lakes, and rivers. Houghton College sports fans typically stay when visiting for games and equestrian events and motorcyclists, hunters and hot air balloon enthusiasts fill most of the other weekend vacancies. The main room at The Lodge is available for breakfast and lunch meetings and is often utilized by local businesses for its warmth and charm. The Lodge has attracted visitors from 37 states and from around the world. Please note: no children under 16 are allowed as The Lodge remains a quiet retreat for adults. Pets are also not allowed.

One visit to Allegany County is only enough to fall in love...you'll be back.

# Enjoy Cattaraugus County this Fall

Community Sports Report

Looking for something to do for a day or an evening? How about a getaway for the night or the weekend? Where do you want to play today? Make your plans to visit the Enchanted Mountains of Cattaraugus County.

Immerse yourself in a simpler way of life along New York's Amish Trail. Enjoy the autumn beauty as you drive the country highways and byways through this Old Order Amish community. You will come upon Amish bug-

gies that go a comfortable speed of 10 mph. — don't be in a hurry, slow down and appreciate the countryside. See information below on obtaining a free map of Amish Country.

Then, as Mother Nature paints the hillsides with her brushstrokes of autumn's colors, and as we reach the annual passing of the harvest moon, The Enchanted Mountains of Cattaraugus County offers sunny, crisp days and cool nights filled with exciting opportunities that await the adventuresome

in spirit. Vibrant hillsides of ever changing hues add to an already exciting Enchanted Mountains Fall experience. Are you looking for someplace for a scenic view of the autumn hills? Visit **Sky High Adventure Park**, **Griffis Sculpture Park**, **Rock City Park**, **Bear Mountain Resort** and **Pfeiffer Nature Center** for views that will take your breath away!

**Must see events:**

**Ellicottville:** Rock 'n Oldies Weekend, September 21 - 22; Fall Festival, October 12 and 13. Become a "Night

Crawler" at Sky High Adventure Park, as they offer climbs in the evening or relax and enjoy the colors on a fall chair lift ride at Holiday Valley, the last weekend in September and first three weekends of October.

**Nightmare**

**Hayrides:** Get the scare of your life riding on this spooky hayride.

Then walk through the maze and barn as live scary creatures all around you go bump in the night. This runs weekends during October.

**Pumpkinville** in Great Valley will officially open on September 14. Enjoy the spirit of the harvest, the beauty of the Enchanted Mountains and a day of family fun at the farm. They will be having their fall festival from October 12-14. Watch freshly picked apples being washed and squeezed to create the greatest cider you've ever tasted, perfect for washing down homemade pumpkin doughnuts. Pumpkinville is open daily, 9am - 7pm, through October 31.

**Olean:** Gem, Mineral & Fossil Show, October 11 - 13



Photo courtesy Cattaraugus County Tourism

Picked to perfection at Pumpkinville.

at Rock City Park, Rte 16 South, Olean.

**Salamanca:** Falling Leaves Festival, October 5-6.

**Little valley:** First annual WILMA (We Invite Local Manufacturers and Artisans) event October 19 and 20. Come out and see what local businesses have to offer and shop their one-of-a-kind products. Local businesses are welcome to sign up and display their wares during this event.

**Leon:** 2013 Annual AQHA Trail Challenge Family Event (Formerly Extreme Cowboy Family Event), September 28.

**South dayton:** Make a Difference Day, October 26. To include movies, crafts, games, Halloween costume contest and A Taste of South

Dayton.

**Gowanda:** Historic Hollywood Theater in Gowanda is haunted! Discover why October 25-27 and October 31.

Discover what's naturally yours in Cattaraugus County: The Enchanted Mountains of Cattaraugus County in Western New York... Where Do You Want to Play Today?

For more information on these and many other fall activities and events or if you would like a free copy of the Enchanted Mountains of Cattaraugus County Activities Guide; please call 1-800-331-0543 or e-mail info@enchantedmountains.com. Also, visit www.EnchantedMountains.com or on their Facebook Page.

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## Autumn angling action heating up now

The seasons are changing and local fisheries start to feel the need to feed in advance of winter. Fall is perhaps the best time of year for fishing, with just about every species of game fish and panfish alike gorging before water temperatures head directly south.

### Salmon and Trout

Salmon have moved into the shallows around their spawning streams on Lake Ontario, with fish now well in range of pier casters and shore anglers alike. When a good cold rain occurs, expect fish to start heading into the streams to vie for the best spawning sites and the action should only get better as September moves to October. Oak Orchard Creek, Eighteen Mile Creek from Burt Dam to the mouth at Olcott harbor and the Lower Niagara River get most mention, but do not overlook the smaller feeders when water levels are right. Casters working large Cleo spoons or ripping large Rat-L-Traps experience vicious strikes and hard-charging runs from big Chinooks during transitional light periods, but do not overlook salmon skein drifted below a float through slower moving, deeper waters of streams and near creek mouths. Salmon capitalize on every morsel they can eat before enduring the rigors of spawning and the end of their lifecycle.

This year DEC biologists and field technicians will be working the streams in an effort to collect information to determine effectiveness of the pen-rearing programs, a method of raising fish stocks that is believed to create stronger stream imprints on the growing smolts. Officials will be seeking to collect scale and snout samples to determine origin of fish caught by anglers, so if you are approached, please help out in this important study endeavor.

Lake Erie streams start seeing the annual fall run of rainbow trout in major tributaries, with larger fish showing more abundance as the fall wears on. This is perhaps the best time of year for steelhead action, as fish are fresh from the lake and still full of feistiness, something diminished as fish hold in streams through winter. Cattaraugus Creek, Canadaway Creek and Chautauqua Creek all show



Photo by John Maloney

Rich Davenport (left) and Mike Rinallo show off a couple impressive bass caught while fishing Cassadaga Lakes.

strongest activity, but smaller streams like Big Sister, Delaware and Eighteen Mile Creek in Derby provide great action in a smaller setting.

### Perch and Walleye

According to Lake Erie Fisheries unit chief Don Einhouse, abundance of yellow perch and walleye in Lake Erie's eastern basin has never shown stronger. Trawl surveys show high abundance of 2010 and 2012 year class walleye inhabiting waters between Buffalo and Barcelona, which bodes very well for strong walleye fishing for years to come. Although seasonal movements westward certainly have begun, a growing resident population on the eastern side still offers strong opportunity for walleye anglers through October. Slow trolling stick baits along the bottom in waters exceeding 40 feet, or bottom bouncing worm harnesses can deliver good catches when weather permits.

Yellow perch abundance offshore is about as high as it has ever been, and large ringbacks packed in schools feeding on emerald shiners means hot action when anglers can find the right bait. Areas west of Sturgeon Point and east of Sunset Bay in waters between 60 to 70 feet get most mention. Electronics are a must to find the schools, which can move about from day to day, making reconnaissance runs during the day necessary, but once you find the schools action is fast and furious throughout the day.

### Bass

Inland bass fishing peaks as weeds begin to recede and offer tremendous forage for grass crabs and minnows alike, and big largemouth bass key on this in advance of winter. Although most docks will be out of the water on lakes like Chautauqua and Conesus, reducing the visible structure bass anglers love to target, outside weed edges and points this time of year are hard to beat for rod-bending action. Jig

and pig presentations worked along such areas work well when fish are holding tight, while a spinnerbait works great to cover water and trigger the more aggressive fish into strikes. Action happens throughout the day, with hot times driven by weather and light levels.

Smallmouth bass on Chautauqua start schooling into feeding packs around creek mouths across this "lost" finger lake, with small Rat-L-Traps taking top mention when encountering such phenomenon. Cassadaga Lakes and Honeoye also show great action for bass anglers looking to get into the last open water follies of the year.

### New License Structure coming

NYS Sporting licenses will be restructured starting February 2014, as a new license system and season dates are implemented as part of the Governor's 2013 executive budget. Season-long fishing licenses purchases starting in February will carry a 365-day from date of purchase validity, vs. the current October 1 to September 30 structure. Expect to start hearing more information on this change starting around the first of the year.

*Remember, take a kid fishing, and give the gift that lasts a lifetime.*

Rich Davenport is co-founder of WeLoveOutdoors.com, an avid Outdoorsman and member of the NYSOWA. His works are also published in NY Outdoor News, Walleye.com and the Buffalo News. Rich is also the Recording Secretary for the Erie County Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs, Secretary of the Western NY Environmental Federation, member of the Erie County Fisheries Advisory Board and is the Co-Chairman and Region 9 Rep NYSCC Big Game Committee.

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Photo courtesy Niagara County Parks

Trail runners of all experience levels will surely enjoy the spectacular view at Bond Lake.

## Where the pavement ends and the fun begins

By Kevin Bonk

Trail running may be perceived as difficult and dangerous compared to the flat terrain of your local running route. However, running off the pavement can be a very rewarding and fun experience. The first time I was introduced to trail running was at the 2011 Boston, NY Mud Run; full of mud (obviously), hills, rocks, and a few other obstacles. Ever since, I make it a point to enjoy the serenity and challenge of a trail run as often as possible.

While your body will get a great workout using new muscles to adjust to the terrain, the benefits reach beyond the physical. Replacing speeding cars and crowded running paths with chirping birds and trees provides a relaxing workout experience to help you forget the day's worries. Trails don't have to be overly challenging or messy to be considered a trail but, if pounding the pavement with your running shoes has been your normal routine here are a few tips for getting started on the trail.

Even though there are risks for injury with any type of exercise, trail running must be approached with a slightly greater level of caution. If this is your first trail run, test your skills on flat easy terrain. Many local parks have short trails running through the

woods, alter your normal running route and give them a try. If it leaves you wanting more, step it up to more challenging terrain. However, don't push it in the beginning, run slower than your normal pace and start off with one trail run a week slowly increasing the distances and frequency of your runs. Trail running puts greater stress on your leg muscles and ankles so don't be afraid to walk some parts either. If hurdling logs and rocks like you're in an action film doesn't meet your skill level, slow down and walk around any obstructions on the trail.

Paying attention to a few key points will make hitting the trail manageable and safer. Adjusting your stride will help you keep the ground beneath your feet and not in your face. Lift your feet a little higher than you normally would on the road or treadmill. When tackling a steep hill bring your stride in about a third of the normal distance but, try to keep a rhythm. Avoid looking straight down at your feet; keep looking straight ahead three or four steps. This will allow you know what's coming and give you time to react. Don't forget to take a look around once and a while either, with Fall upon us, nature provides a colorful tapestry for your eyes to feast on. Just keep focused on the hard parts of the trail and

slow down to take in Mother Nature.

Running off the beaten path takes patience, focus and a good pair of running shoes. Buying specialized shoes are not necessarily required, but having a good supportive shoe with traction and tread are definitely required. Remember you'll be running over uneven and sometimes slippery terrain, pick a shoe that's flexible and will protect your feet.

Any hiking or nature trail provides the perfect opportunity to run, if you can walk it you can run it! A local favorite of mine is Bond Lake Park in Niagara County. With numerous loops and routes, you can vary your distances and difficulty. With mainly gentle inclines and a few steeper hills and turns it's a good place for beginners. The landscape of open fields, orchards, and pine forests provide a diverse environment to escape the bustle of the city.

Trail running is a unique experience for the runner looking to get more out of their workout. With added care and the right equipment your off road experience will be safe and rewarding. So if your looking to shake up your normal running routine don't stop at the end of the pavement, keep going you might be surprised were the trail will take you.

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# Batavia Country Club provides that golf in the country experience

By Ron Montesano

At the time of the year when leaves turn color, Western New York's golf courses come alive with beauty and savings. Batavia country club, located midway between Buffalo and Rochester on Batavia-Byron road, will no doubt offer both pleasures, to the delight of Niagara frontier golfers.

When paying a green fee, golfers will easily recognize a brand-new look to the Batavia country club clubhouse.

"We worked for three months last winter to renovate the entire lower level," noted club manager Chris Pompa.

"The restaurant, bar and rest rooms all have an updated appearance, to provide a better experience to our golfers." In addition to the clubhouse improvements,

a fleet of brand-new Club Cart golf carts arrived at the course in 2013, enhancing the trip around Batavia's 7200-yard course.

Superintendent Nick Pompa, part of the owning family and a lifer at the course, has the fairways, tees and greens in extraordinary shape. 2013 was kind to the course and Pompa took advantage to ensure the health of grasses throughout both nines. Appropriate aeration and care ensured that the course played fast, firm and true throughout the entire season.

Batavia gets its golfers off to a memorable start. Back-to-back par fives offer birdie chances at each of the first two holes. If you're up for a test, march all the way to the back of the 2nd hole, from where you'll travel 580 yards before you reach the green. Batavia's front nine has the ability to stretch to 3800 yards, the longest side in the region. The third hole is a beautiful par three over water. Enjoy the view but don't forget to hit your best shot or you'll come up short and wet.

Hole four makes a monumental climb, albeit a gentle one, up a slope to the shelf where the remainder of the front nine awaits. Four and five are stout par-four efforts and demand strong drives to leave manageable approach shots. Six through eight feature a challenging



Photo by Ron Montesano

The bucolic, foothills setting of Batavia Country Club still has its perils.

triangle of 4-3-4, where a golfer will approach the greens with a mid-iron on most days. The home hole on the outward nine scrambles along a ridge to a green sighted adjacent to the clubhouse.

Each side blends a few holes over flat terrain with a majority that ascend and descend the hills that define the property. It's not uncommon to watch your ball rise and bench into an elevated fairway or cascade down from an elevated tee.

The back nine is played entirely across Batavia-Byron Road. Ten and eleven ease the golfer into the inward half, playing as mid-length, par four holes. The fun begins with the march up the par-five twelfth. The fairway on this three-shot hole climbs up to a ledge near the 13th hole and 16th tee, the highest point on the entire property. Thirteen is a brilliant, one-shot hole, slightly uphill to a green disguised behind a seeing-eye bunker. Holes 14 and 16 share the same, tumble-down tee ball, separated only by fifteen, a par four that again rises upward to the ledge.

Sixteen is the most memorable hole on the course, in the eyes of many. A curvy three-shotter that bends eternally right before settling at a green ensconced in a hollow, the par five

demands three great strikes for a chance at birdie. Seventeen and eighteen bring a golfer home to a well-deserved stop at the 19th hole.

For golfers interested in an extra bit of bang for the buck, Fall rates go into effect on September 23rd. Green fees will drop to \$15 on

weekdays, \$15 on weekends, for 18 holes of golf and one of those new carts.

Tom Moynihan, the teaching professional on staff, will continue to offer lessons throughout the remainder of the season. From the physical (putting, short game, full swing) to the mental (pre-shot routine, course management), Moynihan passes on to his students his expertise in all areas of the game of golf.

Batavia country club is a true member's course. The club offers leagues four days a week, with times and levels to offer a place for golfers of every ability. Junior golfers benefit from the chance to attend a week-long junior clinic and compete in a junior championship at the end of each season.

If you're a fan of the fare at the Lodge at Batavia country club, get your fill this Fall. The Lodge will remain open this off-season for parties, banquets and weddings alone. Batavia country club is currently offering a value-packed membership package for 2014. If you register and pay now, you'll play for free through the end of the 2013 season, a bonus of at least two months of golf.

Visit the Batavia country club website at <http://bataviacc.com>. Sign up for the club's weekly newsletter for free and receive a free bucket of range balls when you play your next 18 holes. Newsletter subscribers are automatically entered into weekly drawings for prizes ranging from rounds of golf to a full season membership. There's nothing to lose and everything to gain! For information on parties and banquets, visit <http://thelodgeatbataviacc.com>.

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# At 77, Charlie Bacon still enjoying harness racing

By Brian J. Mazurek

One would think at the age of 77, it would be time to sit back and enjoy life. Just sit around and watch the days drift away.

For trainer/driver Charlie Bacon, that is exactly what he is doing right at Batavia Downs, right behind a sulky, and enjoying life, enjoying the feeling he gets working with the horses. And the days, well, every one is a cherished one.

Bacon, at the age of 77, the oldest trainer/driver in Western New York, could be second in North America behind Mark Aubin, who is 79, and still is driving currently at Pompano Park.

Bacon, who has been driving with a pari-mutual license since 1978, still has a small stable of two horses and that's more than enough to keep his hand in harness racing, a sport he loves so much.

"My wife says I'm stupid," Bacon responded when asked about still being involved in harness racing at the ripe age of 77. "We've raised our kids...all turned out pretty good...but I just love the game and don't want to leave. I couldn't stay at home and not be at the track and do this anymore. It would drive me crazy not to do this."

Bacon currently trains and occasionally drives Sheza Pacific Barb and Yankee Elizabeth. These two are more than enough to keep him going and energized, but he added, "Sometimes I let the young



Charlie Bacon warming up a horse.

Photos by Jon Cramer

kids take over the driving. Not always, but sometimes."

While never being mistaken for a driver like John Campbell or Tim Tetrick, Bacon never had the luxury of driving for any powerful stables or driving full-time. Bacon has won more than 700 times in his career and earned over \$1.4 million in earnings. But it's not about the glory, it's about the sport that he loves so much. "If I ever had done this full-time, I wouldn't have been able to feed our family. It's always just been a hobby of mine," he said.

"I started working with horses in Georgia with my grandfather back in the 1960s," Bacon said as he reflected on how he was introduced to the horses. "I then came north and

worked on some farms with horses. I worked for the Rapones, Fred Griffin and Woodrow Henderson. I remember Woodrow telling me, 'Charlie, go get your license to drive.' And in 1978, I got it."

Bacon said of the first few years of driving, "We didn't have the fancy statistics and all that. You had to have your horse ready to race back then. You used to see horses run as 13 and 14 year olds. You don't see that much anymore. The breeding, the track and the equipment is so different now than it was back then. You used to train a horse to his ability...now it's just speed because there is money to be made. But it wears on a horse more than it did a few years back."

And while harness racing

has evolved to what it is now, Bacon still recalls his first several years on the track.

"Dave Vance and John Schroeder," Bacon said with an obvious tone of respect in his voice, "Those two really gave me some lessons. They'd never tell you when you did something right, but they sure did make it known when you did something wrong. Ken Ball and Fred Haslip I have respected throughout the years and still do. They helped me along too."

Bacon went on to say, "I really did love racing against Dave Vance. I'll never forget one time when I first started out and I was sitting second behind Vance's favored horse in a race. I pulled out and along side him at the half-mile and he looked at me and said, 'Get back in that hole where you belong.' Of course, I dropped back in. When we got back into the paddock, Vance came up to me and said, 'When the best horse in the race is in front of you and the second best horse in the race is behind you, don't pull out until the end.' I still keep that lesson

with me."

And now, Bacon sees young drivers today and noticed a difference compared when he first started out. "It's different now. Some guys get their license and they think they know everything and that isn't the case. You gotta keep learning, read the racing program to see what your horse can do. It prevents you from doing something stupid. But some guys don't bother."

He added in disbelief, "I saw someone bring six whips to drive with. I couldn't believe it...you only need one. Plus you have to learn how to drive without one...there's no need for a whip...you gotta use your hands and mouth. I can usually tell if a young guy is going to make it or not and we've got a few here (at Buffalo Raceway) who look good and have their heads on straight. They are going to make it."

While the horses go faster now than in years past, Bacon said that doesn't bother him. "You just have to deal with it. It's the name of the game now.

Looking back over his

driving career, which spans over 35 years and 7,100 races, Bacon recalled his most memorable race, and it was one he'd like to forget.

"Oh, that was a bad night in the early 1990s at Vernon Downs," Bacon said. "I've been probably involved in 20-25 accidents over the years, but it was once said it was one of the worst in harness racing history. It was actually shown on CNN. I was sitting second behind Jack Bailey Jr. I believe and we went to the half in like 58 seconds. Well, Bailey's horse broke and I was sitting second. My horse went down and I was pitched so high in the air that three horses went underneath me. I ended up with a broken collarbone, dislocated shoulder and torn rotator cuff. I remember Tim Lanpher broke his hip in that accident. It was bad, really bad."

And over the years, the trademark of Charlie Bacon has been the toothpick. Whether he's warming up a horse, working in the stalls, paddocking or driving in a race, the toothpick is just as noticeable as his red, black and white driving colors.

"I've always had one in my mouth," he said laughing. "I think it started back when I was young with a piece of straw. Always have to have something in my mouth. I even go to sleep with one in my mouth. It doesn't please my wife Ada too much either. She's woken up on more than one occasion with a toothpick jabbing in her."

Charlie Bacon may have not been the top trainer or driver over the years on the Western New York circuit, but one thing is for certain, he loves what he's always enjoyed doing and that's something that makes him a winner and young at heart...even at the age of 77.

## Buffalo Raceway completes 2013 season on good note

By Brian J. Mazurek

The 2013 harness racing season at Buffalo Raceway was deemed a success as the handle for the year increased 21 percent from 2012, the third straight season it showed double-digit increases.

"We were very pleased that the harness racing players have taken notice of Buffalo Raceway," Jon Cramer, Buffalo Raceway director of operations, explained. "The improvements we have made over the years including the new video system and our relationships with our simulcast sites have been very beneficial. Our on-track patrons enjoyed the grandstand renovations and we know that a few of our promotions worked well and will be back in 2014."

The backstretch renovations over the past couple of years have included the building of six new barns. The purses for the horse-men increased five percent and averaged over \$80,000 per night.

Ray Fisher Jr., who was



Photo by Jon Cramer

Ray Fisher Jr. won the 2013 Buffalo Raceway driving title.

involved in a serious spill on July 12th, still managed to take the driver's title with 149 victories and over \$750,000 in earnings. John Cummings Jr. was second with 145 wins and made just over \$850,000.

In the training race, JD Perrin took the title with 78 victories, beating Gerry

Sarama who finished with 70.

A total of six track records were either equaled or lowered including the all-age trotting mark that was set by Crazy About Pat with a 1:56.3 time.

Buffalo Raceway will be hosting a Handicapping Challenge each Saturday beginning in October as simulcasting takes place Tuesday through Sundays in the clubhouse area.

The track will be hosting a Breeder's Cup festivities on November 1-2, thoroughbred racing's biggest weekend of the year.

Also, Buffalo Raceway will have a new race announcer in 2014 as Gabe Prewitt has moved from the Hamburg oval's booth. Prewitt will now be calling the action from Pompano Park in Florida.

The racing is expected to resume in early January at Buffalo Raceway, pending New York State Racing and Wagering Board approval. For more information on the track including promotions and simulcast schedule, go to <http://buffaloraceway.com>.

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