

LADIES LEGISLATORS RULE DURING FALL HARVEST FESTIVAL
BY FRANK DRUCKER, Publicity Director, Empire City @ Yonkers Raceway

YONKERS, NY, Saturday, October 22, 2011 -- Yonkers Raceway's third annual Fall Harvest Festival took place Saturday night, with an array of family-friendly events adorning the track apron. The Festival once again showcased the thriving relationship between agriculture and horse racing throughout New York State.

On the track, the third edition of the Legislators' Challenge grew to four divisions, with competitive spirit leapfrogging political decorum. Fourteen of New York's elected officials competed in four, pre-card, one-mile exhibition events, with the girls garnering the bulk of the glory.

Three women competed, and all showed the way home. Senator Ruth Hassell-Thompson (D-Mount Vernon) won the first division, guiding--with minimal assistance from Jordan Stratton--Daughtry Hanover to a handy victory in 2:08.3.

"If you heard what the guys were saying back in the paddock, you know I had to beat them," Hassell-Thompson said.

Assembly Member Naomi Rivera (D-Bronx) defended both gender and party in the third grouping, teaming with Angelino and Steve Smith to just edge Assemblyman Joseph Saladino (R-Massapequa) in 2:11.3.

"It was more fun and exhausting than I imagined," Rivera said.

Ladies Night was completed with Assembly Member Addie J. Russell (D-Theresa) closing from well out of it in the final event, escorting Cockney Hanover home in 2:11.2. Dan Dube was along for company.

"I recently found out my family used to be involved in horse racing and auto racing, so it was something I had to try," Russell said. "I can't wait to do it again."

The men-only second division was won by a catch-driver, as Assemblyman Gary Pretlow (D-Bronx)--a late sub for Assemblyman Nelson Castro (D-Bronx)--found the wire with Matt's Boy (and Pat Lachance) in 2:10.4.

"I enjoy it more and more every year," Pretlow said after winning a Legislators' Challenge heat for the third consecutive time.

On the wagering card, the \$42,000 Open Handicap Pace was won by Real Nice (Greg Merton, \$6) in 1:59.2 for the mile-and-one-sixteenth.

Yonkers' regular five-night-per-week schedule (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday) remains in effect. First post for all racing

programs is 7:10 PM. Evening simulcasting accompanies all live programs, with afternoon simulcasting available around the NYRA schedule.

-30-

(photos-Mike Lizzi/Tom Berg-accompany)

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