

**February 23, 2003 – The Baltimore Sun**

**Not all horses named for frivolous reasons**

By: Tom Keyser

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Reprinted from The Baltimore Sun

Dale Capuano remembers the man walking up to him outside the winner's circle at Laurel Park, shortly after the Capuano-trained Search For A Cure had broken her maiden last fall.

The man asked about the filly's name, and Capuano explained. Interesting, the man said. His son had had cancer, and so, because of the filly's name, he had bet on her. She won and paid \$6.

That's one way to pick a winner.

Sure enough, the name was inspired by an experience with cancer. Lou Ulman, chairman of the Maryland Racing Commission, bought the filly as a yearling at Timonium. Ulman's son, Doug, had survived cancer as a teen-ager, and then the Ulman family started the **Ulman Cancer Fund** for Young Adults.

"I decided to name the filly Search For A Cure," Lou Ulman said. "I just thought this might help raise the awareness of the importance of cancer research."

Ulman donates a portion of the filly's earnings to the fund. Now 3, the daughter of In Case has won three of six races at Laurel and earned \$46,320. Capuano said she might run again one week from today.

Doug Ulman was 19 when doctors identified a malignant cartilage tumor in his ribcage. They surgically removed the tumor and part of his ribcage, and then twice later that year they removed melanomas.

Afterward, Doug Ulman said, "We just felt there was a big void in helping young people with cancer between the ages of 15 and 30. We just felt it was our responsibility to do something."

Doug, his brother, Ken, and his parents, Diana and Lou, founded the **Ulman Cancer Fund** for Young Adults ([www.ulmanfund.org](http://www.ulmanfund.org)). Out of an office in Columbia donated by the Rouse Co., the fund manages support groups throughout the country, publishes a cancer guidebook, awards college scholarships to cancer victims and provides various other services.

Doug Ulman managed the fund for four years, and then he accepted a job with the Lance Armstrong Foundation ([www.laf.org](http://www.laf.org)) in Austin, Texas. He oversees a wide range of programs for the foundation created by the famed cyclist who overcame testicular cancer.

The younger Ulman, 25, speaks often about cancer at such places as hospitals and conventions. "It's no longer a question of life or death to a lot of people," he said. "It's a question of living a good quality of life after surviving cancer."

Lou Ulman has owned racehorses for 17 years. He owns eight himself, including Search For A Cure, and 10 in partnership as Fortunate Stable and See You Stable. Capuano trains them all.

Doug Ulman has seen Search For A Cure race once. She won.

Back in the saddle

Veteran jockey Mark Johnston returned to riding in Maryland after what he described as "a crazy scenario of events" gained him the mount on Dream Run yesterday in the General George Handicap.

Johnston, who has ridden 3,038 winners, ended his self-imposed, seven-week break and plans on riding himself back into shape. He took the break after losing the spark to compete, he said. He had been on vacation with his wife. While visiting fellow jockey Seth Martinez at Turf Paradise in Arizona, Johnston rode 32 races and won six.

The 32-year-old jockey said he and his wife were on their way home Thursday when Dream Run's owner and trainer "called and asked if I was interested in picking up the mount since Rene Douglas couldn't make the trip."

Johnston accepted. Paul McGee trains Dream Run.

"The break was something I needed to do, and I'm happy with the decision," Johnston said. "I'm not fit enough to ride a lot of horses in one day right now. We'll see what develops, but I'll start to pick up some horses."

`Magic' works out

For the first time since contracting West Nile virus last September, Magic Weisner breezed Thursday at Laurel Park -- "if you want to call it that," said Nancy Alberts, the 4-year-old gelding's owner, breeder, trainer and exercise rider.

Magic Weisner completed three furlongs in 39 3/5 seconds.

"I just steered three-eighths of a mile and didn't ask him to go any faster," Alberts said. "He's been so ornery, he needed to do something. He really wasn't sure I was letting him go."

After a storybook 3-year-old season, highlighted by a charging second in the Preakness, Magic Weisner fell ill in late summer. His racing career wasn't the only thing in doubt. So was his survival.

His return to racing has been hampered by weakness in his hind end. Alberts said he "feels perfect under me. I don't have any doubt" he'll race again.

She said it's too early to consider when or where. He'll have to breeze another 10 or 12 times before he's racing fit, she said.

"He's just an amazing horse," she said, "It's my pleasure to go see him each morning."

The Maryland Racing Media Association honored Magic Weisner yesterday at Laurel as its Maryland-based Horse of the Year for 2002.

Visitor for Hadry

Kent Desormeaux, the California jockey who first gained fame in Maryland, planned on visiting trainer Charles Hadry yesterday before riding at Laurel Park. Hadry is recuperating from cancer treatments at his farm in Westminster.

"Mr. Hadry is very special to me," said Desormeaux, who won 1,183 races at Pimlico and Laurel from 1987 to 1989. "He is a very respected trainer, and as I look back he was a big reason for my success. He took me under his wing and allowed me to ride his good horses."

Tocet looks mended

Tocet, the outstanding colt sidelined for two months with sore shins, began jogging and galloping last week at Laurel Park, according to his trainer, John Scanlan.

"Right now, everything is good," Scanlan said.

Plans call for Tocet to make his 3-year-old debut in the Private Terms Stakes March 29 at Laurel. After that, Scanlan said, Tocet would run in the Wood Memorial Stakes and then the Kentucky Derby. Doug Ulman, who survived cancer as a teen-ager, is the reason his father named a filly Search For A Cure.