

Maryland Horse

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Dark Hollow Farm: a true story of success



David and JoAnn Hayden market yearlings primarily in Kentucky. Although they produce nearly 100 percent Maryland-breds, many of the horses they sell eventually race out-of-state.

"People say to me all the time, you can't make money in the horse business. Everything we have—everything—is from the horse business"—David Hayden

Story by Sean Clancy

From the front seat of his pickup truck, halfway down the gravel driveway of his second farm, with horses naturally going through the motions of life on both sides of the drive, yes, it looks like you can make money in the horse business. And, it seems, you can have everything.

David Hayden and his wife JoAnn own and operate Dark Hollow Farm in Upperco, Md. A cornerstone from when they started the northern Baltimore County farm is embedded in

the stone wall right outside the main barn: June 14, 1974.

Another cornerstone will go up at the new farm—December 31, 1999. The original 65 acres they named Dark Hollow Farm after the name of the road it sits on. The second farm of 75 acres they named Safely Home, after the creator herself.

The Haydens claimed Safely Home for \$11,500 at Bowie Race Course in March 1980. They nearly missed her when they found out they



JOANN HAYDEN

Barn above is the first building to be completed at the Haydens' new Safely Home farm. It was constructed with old stone recycled from barns in Maryland and Pennsylvania.

needed sales tax on top of the claim price. Back then money was tighter than a tendon in an ice tub and they scraped up enough to drop the slip. It was high risk for a couple surviving on David's startup advertising agency and JoAnn's teaching salary. But it was part of the plan.

"I always had a passion for horses," David Hayden said. "When I was a kid, I'd take my two dollars made from mowing grass or painting fences and spend it on hack fences, two dollars for an hour. It was just a mission that if I ever had money, I'd own a horse."

First it was pleasure horses, and then show horses. In 1973, Hayden felt the wave of change. His interest in show horses waned and a new passion was about to begin.

"We had done the show circuit for five or six years and there was a red horse in 1973," Hayden said, remembering Secretariat's Belmont Stakes. "I saw him win and I said to JoAnn, 'That looks like more fun than this, I'm out of here.' I basically stopped doing the show horses then and we got a couple of inexpensive race horses."

Safely Home would keep the Haydens firmly in the race horse business. Not that they knew it at the time. Safely Home broke down the first time they ran her, which forced the Haydens into the breeding business. Her first foal, a Double Zeus colt named Safe On Second, raced for the Haydens and earned nearly \$225,000. Safely Home foaled a Double Zeus filly in 1984 whom the Haydens named Safe At the Plate. She was a stakes-placed winner of \$114,923 and later became part of their broodmare band. Safe At the Plate is the dam of Glide Home, a hard-knocking winner of \$365,683, and Kettle Won, a graded stakes-placed winner.

But it was 1986 that changed everything. Safely Home gave birth to a Horatius filly. Her name was Safely Kept.

The snowball was gathering speed.

Safely Kept won nearly \$100,000 for Dark Hollow as a 2-year-old. Then the Haydens sold her privately for \$300,000.

"When someone hands you \$300,000 and you've never seen that kind of money be-

fore—hell, that would have bought a block of houses where I grew up—believe me, there's a lot of things you can do with it," David Hayden said about the money that got pumped back into the operation.

Safely Kept would go on to be voted the Eclipse Award-winning sprinter in 1989, become the first Maryland-bred to win a Breeder's Cup race (the Sprint in 1990) and earn over \$2 million. Dark Hollow and the Haydens were on the map.

Eight years after Safely Kept came Partner's Hero, whom Dark Hollow sold as a yearling for \$390,000, and numerous other high-priced sales horses and high-class race horses. The latest in the line is New York Hero (co-bred with William Beatson of Annapolis, Md.), who won this year's \$500,000 Grade 2 Lane's End Stakes and competed in the Triple Crown, and a fast-running 2003 2-year-old named Old Kent Road, sold to Darley Stud for \$325,000 at this year's Ocala Breeders' Sales in March.

Safely Home would be proud these days. The operation has gone from one bro-

ken down mare to nearly 30 quality mares, half owned by clients and half owned by the Haydens. This year, they bred six mares to Two Punch, six to Not For Love, six to Partner's Hero, two to Lion Hearted, and parceled out 10 mares among the Kentucky-based stallions Street Cry (Ire), E Dubai, Dixie Union, Cherokee Run, Stephen Got Even and More Than Ready.

David Hayden unabashedly tells you he's lucky. He also unabashedly tells you he works hard at being lucky.

"If you talk to anybody in Maryland, they'll say I'm the luckiest guy in the world. I can fall into a pile of manure and come out with a bucket of gold," Hayden said.

Adds Hayden: "JoAnn is the greatest wife and partner. She retired three years ago, after teaching fifth grade in Baltimore County for 32 years, to help run the operation. She's the best pair of eyes on the farm. She doesn't just look at the horses every day, she observes them, and believe me there's a helluva difference between looking and observing. She can see a gnat on an elephant's butt from three miles away. . . it drives the help crazy.

"I agree, we are the luckiest people in the world, but this is a 24/7 job and I'm in this business 24/7. I'm following the stallions, I'm following the race horses, I'm following pedigree, I'm following what sells."

What sells are Dark Hollow's horses. Hayden believes in diversity, so he sells weanlings, yearlings, 2-year-olds. . . in Maryland, New York, Florida and Kentucky. And they'll race them if that's the best alternative.

"Most people in Maryland won't go out of the envelope. We try to expose our horses to a broader market, which is yearlings in Kentucky and 2-year-olds in Florida," Hayden said. "If you look at our horse roster we've sold—we have five horses in California, two in Canada, three in Chicago, a couple in Kentucky, Delaware and New Jersey, some

here and some in New York. Yes, they're Maryland-breds but they're not here. The only Maryland-breds that are here are the ones we race here."

Like anybody in the horse business, especially in the sales part, they make mistakes. They sold New York Hero, a son of Partner's Hero, for \$6,000 at the 2001 Keeneland September Yearling sale. "A very bad marketing decision on my part," said Hayden. "Partner's Hero broke his maiden at Churchill and set a track record at Turfway, so I thought he'd get some respect from Kentucky horsemen. Boy was I wrong. However, the objective got accomplished. He was purchased by a true horseman, Pat Hoppel, and later sold to one of the best in the business, Buzz Chace, for \$135,000 at the Fasig-Tipton Midlantic 2-year-olds in training sale the next year. In the end it all worked out because we still own the mare. That's part of the luck factor."

Hayden says he's a risk taker and knows he'll make mistakes as well as good decisions.

"We claimed Safely Home and she broke down the first time we ran her. What looked like a disaster turned out to be a fortuitous situation," Hayden said. "A lot of people try to force a lot of stuff; we let things happen the way they're supposed to happen naturally. You can't make things happen if they're not meant to happen. That's how our whole lives have evolved, being fortunate to be in the right spot at the right time."

The Haydens' first right spot was when they bought a little stone house and five acres. The man who owned the open land across the street took a liking to the young couple and offered them 65 acres of farmland.

"We had no money. We bought this 75 acres for \$1,000 an acre and he held the mortgage," Hayden said. "We paid him one time a year, \$7,500, with income tax refund money, until it was paid off. Interest was 5 percent. It's been one fortunate thing after another

and it's rolled into whatever we have today."

The farm produces quality horseflesh, the ad agency handles a few select clients including Northview Stallion Station, the Haydens' house is filled with their collection of horse and salvage art. Life is good.

Hayden is fanatical about the presentation of it all. He notices everything on the farm, from the position of the sign at the end of the driveway to a foal who's not with his mother. He sends more people home for not doing it his way than a high school principal.

But it's a heck of a view.

"We're very thankful. It's very difficult to get in a bad mood for an extended period of time around here," Hayden said. "When you wake up in the morning and look over the farm and see the sun rise and the babies running around the field—there's always great hope, great anticipation." 🐾

Breeding on a budget

David and JoAnn Hayden bred or co-bred six of the 11 graded stakes performers who have been raised at Dark Hollow Farm.

They include Safely Kept (by Horatius), Partner's Hero (Danzig), K. O. Punch (Two Punch), Sheila's Prospect (Not For Love), New York Hero (Partner's Hero) and Kettle Won (Colonial Affair).

"What's hard to believe," acknowledged David Hayden, "is that the collective purchase prices of the five mares who produced those six graded stakes horses is \$53,500. With the exception of Partner's Hero, produced on a foal share to Danzig, all of the graded stakes horses were bred on stallion shares that we own. At the time they were bred, the most expensive stud fee was \$7,500." 🐾




MARYLAND FUND STAKES RECAPS



DOUBLE J PHOTO/JIM MCCUE

Certantee

 Find Handicap
\$75,000-guaranteed, 1½ mi., turf,
registered Maryland-breds, 3 & up.
Laurel Park, Aug. 22.

Dk.b./br.g., 1997, by Known Fact—Foufa, by Storm Bird. Bred by Sondra Bender and Howard M. Bender; owned by Sondra D. Bender; trained by Lawrence E. Murray. Foaled at Glade Valley Farms, Frederick, Md.

	Lifetime				
starts	1st	2nd	3rd	earnings	
26	7 (2)	5 (1)	3 (1)	\$273,160	(through Aug. 22)

2000: 2nd Humphrey S. Finney S; 3rd Japan Racing Association S. **2002:** 1st \$150,000 John D. Schapiro Memorial Breeders' Cup Fund, 1½ mi. (off turf), 3 & up, Laurel, Oct. 12. **2003:** 1st \$75,000 Find H, 1½ mi., turf, registered Md.-breds, 3 & up, Laurel, Aug. 22.

The stakes wins continue to roll in for Sondra and Howard Bender. The Benders celebrated their sixth stakes win of the season—and fifth stakes winner—when Certantee got up for a narrow victory in the Find Handicap on August 22.

Sent off as 1.6-1 favorite in a field of eight Maryland-breds, Certantee scored by a neck in a dramatic, come-from-behind finish over front-runner Love to Tango, who was followed (in order of finish) by Move Those Chains,

Private Slip, Full Brush, Prado Power, Kenny's Crossing and Nick Mitchell. Final time for the mile and an eighth over a yielding turf course was 1:52.12.

Certantee, a 6-year-old gelding by Known Fact, was winless in three earlier starts this season, but had already proven himself in stakes company, with a victory in last year's John D. Schapiro Memorial Breeders' Cup Handicap and two stakes placings at 3 in 2000.

The Find boosted his earnings to \$273,160 from 26 starts and 15 wins or placings.

Certantee is a half-brother to one of the Benders' other current stars, Foufa's Warrior, and three additional Bender-bred stakes winners: Maryland Moon (\$420,223), Full Brush (\$377,382) and Media Access (\$187,042).

Foufa's Warrior, a 3-year-old Jade Hunter gelding, won the Grade 3 Kent Breeders' Cup Stakes in new course record time at Delaware Park on July 20 and returned on August 16 to finish fifth in Arlington Park's Grade 1 Secretariat Stakes won by Kicken

Kris. Foufa's Warrior has earned \$325,008 from nine career starts.

The mare responsible for producing those five stakes winners is Foufa, a 1983 daughter of Storm Bird whom the Benders purchased for \$90,000 (with Maryland Moon, by Al Mamoon, in utero) at the 1989 Keeneland January sale. Still a member of the broodmare band at the Benders' Glade Valley Farms in Frederick, Md., Foufa has a 2-year-old colt by Grand Slam named Finally Home, and a yearling filly by Jade Hunter. She aborted a 2003 Jade Hunter foal late in her pregnancy and failed to conceive when bred back to Carson City.

Perfect Blue

Pearl Necklace Stakes
\$60,000-guaranteed, 1 $\frac{1}{16}$ mi., turf, registered Maryland-bred 3-year-old fillies. Laurel Park, Aug. 16. B.f., 2000, by Perfecting—China Blue, by Gentleman Gene. Bred by Thornmar; owned by Mason Dixon Stables; trained by Roger Werneth. Foaled at Thornmar, Chestertown, Md.

Lifetime				
starts	1st	2nd	3rd	earnings
7	3	(1)	0	\$80,515
(through Aug. 16)				

2003: 1st \$60,000 Pearl Necklace S, 1 $\frac{1}{16}$ mi., turf, registered Md.-bred 3-year-old fillies, Laurel, Aug. 16.

It's no surprise to Cynthia and Charles McGinnes that their 18-year-old mare China Blue (by Gentleman Gene) has come up with a stakes winner. Only they didn't expect it to take so long.

Pedigree, looks, and a bargain to boot. That's what the McGinneses, longtime



DOUBLE PHOTO/JIM MCCUE

proprietors of Thornmar Farm in Chestertown, Md., found when they bought China Blue for \$1,100 (in foal to High Gold) from the Briardale Farm (Anthony Imbesi) dispersal at the 1992 Fasig-Tipton Midlantic December Mixed sale.

China Blue (out of Royal Dux, by Dr. Fager) is a winning full sister to multiple stakes winners Hi Ideal (\$336,148) and Brave Adventure (\$263,996) and half-sister to multiple stakes winner Wind Drinker (\$210,755). She is also a "beautiful mare with a wonderful disposition," in the words of Cynthia McGinnes.

Now she is a stakes producer as well, as the dam of Perfect Blue (by Perfecting), who captured the Pearl Necklace Stakes on August 16.

Although going for her second win in a row, following an allowance score on July 20 at Delaware Park, Perfect Blue was a lightly regarded fifth choice in the field of seven 3-year-old fillies contesting

the Maryland Fund stakes at a mile and a sixteenth on the turf.

But the bettors overlooked her to their peril. After allowing Linda Rice-trained Impolite, the even-money favorite, to set the early pace, Perfect Blue made her move on the outside leaving the far turn, drew off to a definitive lead in midstretch, and held on to prevail by a length and a half despite the best efforts of runner-up A Queen's Smile. Arab Miss was third, followed by (in order of finish) Impolite, Worldly Pleasure, Chrusciki and Niclie. Final time was 1:48.90 over a soft course. Winning two-dollar tickets were worth \$18.80.

Perfect Blue campaigns for Mason Dixon Racing, a partnership of her trainer Roger Werneth of Oxford, Pa., and Michigan residents Paul and Kathy Smoke. Werneth purchased the filly from the Thornmar consignment at the 2001 Fasig-Tipton Midlantic Eastern Fall Yearling sale for

\$7,200, and attempted to resell her at the 2002 Fasig-Tipton Midlantic Two-Year-Olds in Training sale. When she failed to meet her reserve, he bought her back for \$30,000.

Werneth sent the filly out to break her maiden, at first asking, in impressive style at Delaware Park in October of her 2-year-old season. Then, in her very next start, Perfect Blue became one of the Maryland representatives in the inaugural NTRA Great State Challenge at Sam Houston Race Park (on December 7). She rallied but finished a well-beaten sixth in the Great State Challenge Juvenile Fillies.

Out of action until June, Perfect Blue logged three consecutive fourth-place finishes in allowance company at Delaware Park until Werneth made some changes—adding blinkers, employing jockey Juan Umana and slightly altering her training routine.

The results speak for themselves. Perfect Blue has earned \$80,515 from seven lifetime starts (three wins). Werneth considers Perfect Blue the best horse he's trained in 16 years in the business.

Meanwhile, the McGinneses are looking for more good things from China Blue. The mare has a "gorgeous" yearling filly by Meadow Monster named Monster Blues, whom the McGinneses have consigned to this year's Eastern Fall sale. She also has a 2003 Storm Broker colt, but was not bred for 2004.

Breeders, horsemen stage successful PAC fundraiser

Thanks to all who supported the Breeders' and Horsemen's joint Political Action Committee fundraiser held July 28 at Timonium.

The event, chaired by MHBA director Frank P. Wright, was a huge success—drawing several hundred people. Proceeds will support

the election efforts of state officials who support the racing industry.

Following is a list of individuals and businesses who

have made contributions to the PAC between January 1 and September 3, 2003. If you made a donation and your name is not on this list, please contact the MHBA at (410) 252-2100 so that we may acknowledge it in a future newsletter.

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Maryland's top 20 earners in 2003

(through September 9)

1. New York Hero . . \$417,300
2. Dr. Brendler 259,935
3. Foufa's Warrior . . 250,758
4. Cherokee's Boy . . 228,500
5. Shine Again 223,920
6. Slew Valley 186,880
7. Perfect Moon 183,870
8. P Day 141,000
9. Finally Here 140,490
10. All the Boys 139,400
11. For Rubies 135,873
12. Shiny Sheet 133,520
13. Love Happy 127,080
14. Baby Shark 126,000
15. Attainable 122,370
16. Aggadan 122,230
17. Carnie's Dancer . . 120,525
18. Private City 117,430
19. Willa On the Move 111,390
20. Crossing Point . . . 102,374

Maryland State Fair



AMY M. BRUCE (2)

Thoroughbred grand champion and top Maryland-bred: Leslie Long's 2003 filly by Judge T C out of Wilhemina's Flight (by Aaron's Concorde), handled by Victoria Abb. MHBA's Brian Magness presented the trophy.

Non-Thoroughbred grand champion: Lisa Ensor's yearling colt Rembrandt, by State of the Art out of Keiki. MHBA's Brian Magness made the presentation to the winning owner (pictured).

Maryland's leading sires

Supplied by Bloodstock Research Information Services (BRIS), these statistics were compiled on August 9. † denotes freshman sire.

Earnings in 2003

	Strs	Starts	Wnrs	Wins	Earnings
Not For Love	139	777	74	138	\$3,168,550
Allen's Prospect	170	902	74	119	2,322,690
Two Punch	143	665	69	107	2,247,620
Polish Numbers	132	561	57	83	1,793,100
Eastern Echo	91	509	41	63	1,591,120
Citidancer	72	410	43	75	1,469,730
Partner's Hero	52	252	26	41	1,305,150
Waquoit	86	457	36	73	1,194,570
Norquestor	72	414	38	61	1,028,680
Carnivalay	78	462	40	58	981,912
Concern	63	337	27	51	968,703
Appealing Skier	59	320	31	42	841,334
Meadow Monster	36	195	26	42	836,852
Wayne County (Ire)	63	304	27	47	825,433
Ameri Valay	43	258	22	34	567,469

2-year-old earnings in 2003

	Strs	Starts	Wnrs	Wins	Earnings
Appealing Skier	13	31	6	6	\$136,079
Ameri Valay	3	8	1	1	120,101
Allen's Prospect	10	21	3	3	97,311
Not For Love	7	17	1	1	95,813
Eastern Echo	11	27	2	4	89,418
Polish Numbers	13	18	2	2	60,230
Meadow Monster	5	10	2	2	57,500
Two Punch	9	15	2	2	50,780
Larrupin'	8	22	2	3	49,442
Partner's Hero	6	12	2	2	47,916
†Diamond	5	7	1	1	35,380
†Rubiyat	1	3	1	1	32,380
Carnivalay	6	13	2	2	32,166
Wayne County (Ire)	5	8	2	2	26,300
Storm Broker	5	7	1	2	24,323

Earnings lifetime

	Strs	Starts	Wnrs	Wins	Earnings
Allen's Prospect	694	16,707	563	2,516	\$38,708,600
Two Punch	543	10,670	434	1,671	32,429,900
Smarten	507	12,191	387	1,675	26,851,700
Caveat	365	10,889	294	1,327	25,725,700
Horatius	580	14,573	460	1,866	25,488,800
Carnivalay	443	11,166	353	1,580	24,743,900
Polish Numbers	356	6,010	269	916	22,083,300
Waquoit	377	8,869	291	1,247	21,216,600
Norquestor	290	7,735	248	1,151	19,138,600
Deputed Testamony	325	9,381	251	1,306	16,860,800
Citidancer	219	4,633	184	858	16,705,900
Eastern Echo	295	5,449	202	738	16,577,900
Oh Say	407	9,578	340	1,418	16,480,800
Shelter Half	295	8,153	241	1,134	13,881,600
Not For Love	194	3,063	149	516	13,867,500

2-year-old earnings lifetime

	Strs	Starts	Wnrs	Wins	Earnings
Allen's Prospect	354	1,230	143	200	\$4,576,700
Smarten	278	1,195	112	157	3,769,760
Two Punch	281	908	113	147	3,653,900
Polish Numbers	198	580	71	103	2,947,790
Eastern Echo	189	676	61	86	2,696,210
Citidancer	122	472	67	102	2,442,670
Carnivalay	237	959	83	117	2,357,480
Not For Love	97	333	50	66	1,944,320
Waquoit	176	619	51	75	1,726,340
Horatius	265	983	99	134	1,634,960
Caveat	199	847	61	78	1,624,820
Oh Say	148	566	65	90	1,450,770
Baederwood	147	639	65	94	1,424,130
Shelter Half	140	562	67	105	1,383,870
Norquestor	136	508	47	64	1,316,410

2003 freshman sires

	Strs	Starts	Wnrs	Wins	Earnings
†Diamond	5	7	1	1	\$35,380
†Rubiyat	1	3	1	1	32,380
†Crypto Star	4	8	1	1	21,944
†One Golf Sierra	1	2	0	0	3,240

Join the MHBA today!

Annual membership dues \$100.

Since 1929, the Maryland Horse Breeders Association (MHBA) has been the leading horse industry advocate within the state of Maryland. It functions as an informational resource for horse breeders and owners, the media, community and governmental organizations, and the general public.

As a service organization, the MHBA provides industry information, educational opportunities and legislative representation to its members, who include Thoroughbred breeders, owners of race horses, steeplechase and hunt enthusiasts, and others with horse involvement.

The main purposes of the MHBA have always been to encourage, promote, protect and improve the horse breeding industry in Maryland. While emphasis traditionally has been placed on the production of Thoroughbred race horses, the MHBA encourages all sports relating to the use of horses.

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