

## **NEWS LETTER NO. 4 - RACE DAY 7, MARCH 7, 2020**

### **RACING**

*In the feature race on Day 3 for horses rated 90-70, Awesome April displayed her class with a comfortable win over Juice Man over a trip of 1300m on the main track, which is not her preferred surface. Unfortunately the daughter of Will Take Charge has since suffered a setback and will not be taking part in the Sandy Lane Gold Cup. Juice Man who appeared not to be fully wound up in that race came back on Day 6 to take advantage of a pull in the weights and beat a good field of horses rated 80 and over.*

*As expected, on Day 4 Bella Riva took the Royal Colours Classic in relatively easy fashion. Wise Guy, her stable companion, ran a decent race to finish second and he is one to note for the future. On the same day Trini Aviator won on the turf over 1300m conquering a field that included Stockyard, 2019 Champion Imported Stayer and Early Bird, winner of the Sian's Gold Sprint on New Year's Day. He will be travelling to Barbados to compete in the Gold Cup.*

*"Carnival Thursday Lime at The Races" on Day 5 turned out to be a very enjoyable day, from all reports. There was a noticeable increase in attendance and an increase in betting. Various artistes performed their 2020 carnival hits and a popular DJ supplied music during the day. On the day, Rio Ponti won the feature 70-55 Modified Benchmark Handicap over 1500m (Turf) to show that she is progressing and will be a force with which to reckon later in the year, particularly on the lawn. The ARC expresses its appreciation to the Race Horse Owners Association and Mr. Hugh Lee King for sponsoring the day's entertainment. The ARC takes the opportunity to also thank Mr. Deo Maharaj for his support in hosting Mr. Michael Bernard during last race day.*

### **JETSAM AWARDS CEREMONY**

*The Jetsam Award Ceremony, which was held at the Queens Park Cricket Club on Friday 28 February 2020, was an unrivalled success. It was well attended and the Minister of Trade and Industry as well as the Chairman of the Opposition Party were among the guests. A number of owners, trainers, jockeys and avid race fans also attended the event. A list of the awardees has been reprinted in today's race program. The hotly contested First Citizens Horse of the Year award went to Juice Man which also walked away with the Champion*

*W.I. Bred 3 Y.O. Colt/Gelding, Champion W.I. Bred Stayer and Champion W. I. Bred 3 Y. O. awards.*

*In her address the Minister pledged her support for the industry and expressed the hope that the Gambling (Betting and Gaming) Bill, which is presently being debated in Parliament, will receive the support of the Opposition Members of Parliament so that it may be enacted. In his speech, Mr. Robert Bernard, President of the ARC, provided a road map for the sustainability of the ARC and growth of the industry, pledging to pay a substantial amount of the outstanding stakes within a reasonably short period. He also pointed out some of the benefits that will be derived by the industry from the enactment and implementation of the Gambling Bill.*

*The keynote speaker was Mr. Michael Bernard, Harvard Graduate, captain of industry, former top administrator of Caymanas Racing and Entertainment Ltd, Supreme Ventures Racing and Entertainment Ltd., breeder and owner of numerous race horses and philanthropist. He had insightful recommendations for local stakeholders with clear strategies for returning racing in Trinidad and the other Caribbean countries to its former glory. His presentation was extremely relevant to the present state of the racing industry and it was received with a standing ovation.*

### ***Honouring Edmund De Freitas***

*In addition to paying tribute to the equine stars and stakeholders of the 2019 racing season, the ARC honoured a son of the soil, Edmund De Freitas, an outstanding Trinidad jockey, breeder, owner, trainer and tutor. He was one of the very few jockeys to make the successful transition to trainer. De Freitas' career in the saddle spanned the period 1956 to 1976, immediately after which he received his trainer's license.*

*His first win as a jockey was aboard Sea Fearer which dead heated with Sparkle at Shirvan Park, Tobago and his final win was on Corn On The Cob. He rode 516 winners in Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Guyana and Martinique. He rode for the top trainers and owners of the day. As a jockey he was associated with the likes of Volata, Delicia, True Gold, North Copse, No Dope, Twilight Zone, Aurelian, Water Lily, Ferry Boat, Pepper Pot, and Moon River.*

*He started his training career in 1976 and his first winner was Carlorama, ridden by his younger brother, Trevor. As a trainer he went on to win a total of 410 races including the Independence Cup (Miss Lover Lover), Easter Guineas*

*(Homey Gift), Derby Stakes (Page of Glory), President's Cup (Pease Yourself), Steward's Cup (Northern Treat) and St. Ann's Stakes (Silk Ruler).*

*Mr. De Freitas has continued to serve the industry from his base at Bonanza Farm.*

### ***ADJUSTMENTS AND CHANGES IN THE INDUSTRY***

*There continues to be a decline in the local racing industry, reflected in the reported decline in revenue to the Betting Levy Board which has advised that contribution to stakes will be further reduced in 2020 after being reduced in 2019. The ARC has intensified its efforts to meet with stakeholders to find ways of sustaining the industry. Discussions have centred on the present state of the industry and strategies that may be used to minimise the impact on stakeholders.*

*Some of the issues that need to be addressed are:*

- the declining horse population resulting in uncompetitive races*
- outstanding stakes*
- past due debts to creditors and the inability to access goods and services for the smooth operation of the ARC*
- efficiency in operations*
- need for improved competitiveness of the industry through legislative changes*

*The ARC has been relatively successful in stemming the decline in the level of revenue from betting and managing its expenditures. The Club is mindful that maintaining and/or increasing betting is not only critical for its operational survival but also ensures it can provide the BLB with a constant stream of tax revenue.*

*Two issues that require immediate attention and are the subject of ongoing discussions are the payment of outstanding stakes and, in light of the BLB's reduced contribution, adjusting the level of stakes to ensure more timely payment in the future.*

*These discussions are ongoing and the relevant decisions will be conveyed to everyone.*

