



# COUNTRY LIFE PRESS MERRYLAND MAGAZINE

From Beginning To Winning



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## MARY JO PONS PASSES AT AGE 87

Mary Jo Pons, matriarch of Country Life Farm, died of natural causes on Monday evening, Jan. 1. She was 87.

At her home on the farm, Mary Jo Pons raised five children and became famous for her gracious Preakness Stakes (G1) parties, held on the Thursday before the classic each year.

Mary Jo's Preakness Party tradition began in 1961, when Carry Back, sired by Country Life stallion Saggy, won the Kentucky Derby (G1) and arrived in Baltimore to prepare for the Preakness. Sportswriters flocked to Pimlico, and Mary Jo invited them to Country Life.

Among them were Pulitzer Prize-winning writer Red Smith, New York Times racing columnist Joe Nichols, CBS radio announcers Win Elliot and Jack Whitaker, as well as prominent Baltimore racing writers Joe Kelly, Dale Austin, and Bill Boniface. She dubbed it "The Press Party." Carry Back won the Preakness two days later. The party proved to be a good-luck omen to the light-heartedly superstitious Mary Jo.

With a touch of irony that often attends the sport of racing, her Preakness Party was suspended in 2013, when she suffered a stroke the day after [Orb](#) won the Kentucky Derby. As was the case for Carry



Back, Orb's sire was a Country Life stallion: [Malibu Moon](#).

A memorial celebration in Mary Jo's honor will be held at Country Life Farm at noon on Sunday, April 9, the day before her 88th birthday.

## COMING SOON—RAISE YOU 2017!

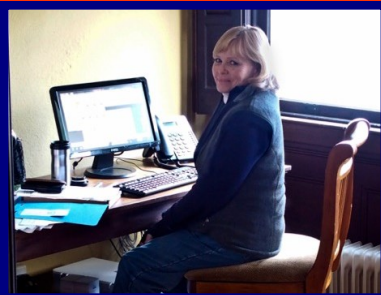
Country Life Farm has a rich history of breeding good horses. In 1946 Country Life bred Raise You, dam of champion Raise a Native (sire of Mr. Prospector). Last year we introduced the popular "Raise You" Breeding Partnerships that feature in-foal mares purchased at Keeneland. The concept is to buy mares in foal to hot Kentucky stallions, foal them at Country Life to have Maryland-breds, breed the mares back in Kentucky, and sell the foals as weanlings. After two foaling seasons, the mares will also be sold and the LLC dissolved. The LLC is the breeder of the foals and thus eligible for Maryland-bred breeders awards for as long as those foals race.

With the Keeneland January sale coming up next week, we intend to purchase another mare for the 2017 edition of the Raise You LLC's. Shares are being offered at \$5,000 each, with Country Life retaining one of the ten shares. The monthly expenses are estimated to be around \$225/month. The three mares below sold out in days. Please call or e-mail us if you want to be included in the upcoming Raise You LLC!



Country Life purchased these three mares in November at the Keeneland Sale, and their LLC's sold out within days. Miss Pauline (in foal to Tonalist), Union Waters (in foal to Twirling Candy), and Simmadownnow (in foal to Tapizar) will deliver their foals at Country Life this spring.

## NEW FACES FOR 2017!



**Sallyellen Hurst, our Pedigree Research Analyst, nicks client mares and prepares stallion breeding contracts.**

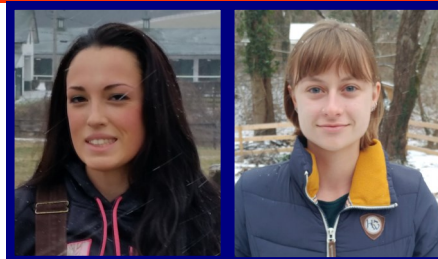
The staff at Country Life and Merryland has recently expanded.

Knowledgeable Maryland horsewoman Sallyellen Hurst now works in the farm office nicking mares to our stallions for clients and preparing the stallion breeding contracts. She and her husband Hugh are breeders themselves and have a small farm in

Glen Arm, Maryland.

Cheyenne Piccolo and Jen Malinoff have joined us to help care for the mares and foals at both farms.

They are enthusiastic, hard-working young women whose horsemanship skills meet the high standards of the team that makes Country Life/Merryland the best-staffed operation in the Mid-Atlantic!



**Cheyenne Piccolo and Jen Malinoff joined the team as Assistant Broodmare Managers at Country Life and Merryland.**

## RAISE YOU YEARLING AT KEENELAND



**Orb-Serena's Joy colt**

In November we sold the first weanlings from the initial Raise You LLC's, and next week the last of those first-season foals sells at Keeneland. The Orb colt out of Serena's Joy will go through the ring on Tuesday, Jan. 10th. His sire, Kentucky Derby winner Orb (by Malibu Moon), was the leading 1st crop weanling and yearling sales sire. His first foals are 2-year-olds of 2017 and are highly touted.

The first five mares purchased for our Raise You LLC's in 2015 are all expecting their second foals this spring. Serena's Joy is in foal to Tapizar, Cavan Thunder to Verrazano, Captive Melody to Orb, Kanani to Take Charge Indy and Fleet and Fancy to Super Ninety Nine.

## NEW RACING PARTNERSHIP!

Our latest racing partnership features two outstanding yearlings from the first crop of Super Ninety Nine. Vee's Super Star is a colt out of Vee Vee Star, the dam of 2004 Eclipse Champion 2-year-old Declan's Moon. Lucky Ninety Nine is a filly out of Lucky Nita, dam of stakes-winner Where's Rosie B.

Both yearlings will be shown at the annual MD Horse Breeders Yearling Show in June at the Timonium Fairgrounds before being broken at Merryland in September. They will race at Laurel and are eligible for the Maryland Million.

There will be no expenses until September of 2017 for this partnership. Once we begin billing the monthly expenses are expected to be around \$350/month per share until race earnings have the potential to offset expenses. Shares are offered at \$5,000 each for a 6.6% ownership interest in the 15-share syndicate. Call us today to grab a share in this rare racing partnership!



**Vee's Super Star, a Maryland-bred colt by Super Ninety Nine out of Vee Vee Star.**

**Lucky Ninety Nine, a Maryland-bred filly by Super Ninety Nine out of Lucky Nita.**

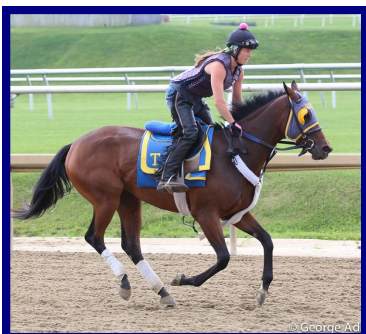




# RACING RECAP



Partnership horses Flash McCaul (above left), Friesan Flyer (center) and Midnight Ball (above right) all won races for us in 2016!



Other runners who made starts this year included **If Not For Her** (right, who was sold as a broodmare prospect for \$135,000 at the Keeneland November sale);

**Friesani** (second right, who made her racing debut in October for the Ma & Pa LLC);

**Brice's Fire** (third right, who made her racing debut in November for the Ma & Pa LLC);

**Axe Capital** (bottom right, who ran five times for the Carry Back 1 LLC before being claimed for \$40,000);

**Dominus Effect** (bottom left, who made her racing debut in October for the Dominus Effect LLC);

**Chanel Number One** (third left, who is being sold in the Fasig-Tipton January Mixed Sale in Timonium);

**Maryland Bird** (second left, who ran three times but retired with an injury and will be sold in the Fasig-Tipton January Mixed Sale);

And **First to Fire** (top left, who was sold and broke her maiden on the turf).



Jim McCue photo

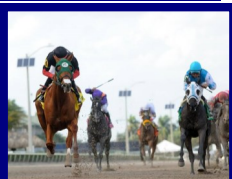




# LOOKING BACK AT 2016



**January** - the first foal of the year is born at CLF on the 29th, a bay filly by Into Mischief out of Cavan Thunder.



**March** - Friesan Fire's son Morning Fire wins his 2nd stakes, the Spectacular Bid Stakes at Gulfstream Park.



**May** - This Friesan Fire colt is the highest-priced colt in the Fasig-Tipton Midlantic 2 yr. olds in Training sale, selling for \$825,000.



**June** - CLF exhibits a record 16 yearlings at the annual MHBA Yearling Show!



**July** - We say goodbye to Ouita, the "head" dog at Country Life.



**September**—new stallion MOSLER wins the Laurel Dash Stakes in 1:08.26 and we announce that he will be standing at Country Life in 2017!



**October**—Freedom Child's first crop yearlings are popular at the Fasig-Tipton Midlantic Yearling Sale.



**November** - Country Life sells out three more Raise You LLC's, featuring three mares purchased at Keeneland, in foal to top KY stallions Tonalist, Twirling Candy and Tapizar.



**February** - Breeding season begins!



**April** - CLF/Fifteen Moons LLC-bred Mayla is voted Champion 3-year-old MD-bred filly!



**June** - The 64th and last foal of the year is born at CLF on the 20th, a colt by Super Ninety Nine out of Summer Vacation.



**August**—Country Life purchases the breeding rights in Mosler at Saratoga.



**October** - George Busche is the recipient of the 2016 Bill Quinn Award at our annual Autumn Day in the Country.



**November** - We welcome new Merryland Farm trainer Jackie Savoye, former assistant to Dale Capuano and Mary Eppler.



**December** - Friesan Fire finishes 2016 in the top 15 on the North American 2nd Crop Sire list!

**HAPPY NEW YEAR!**  
AND "HAPPY BIRTHDAY" TO ALL THE THOROUGHBREDS!