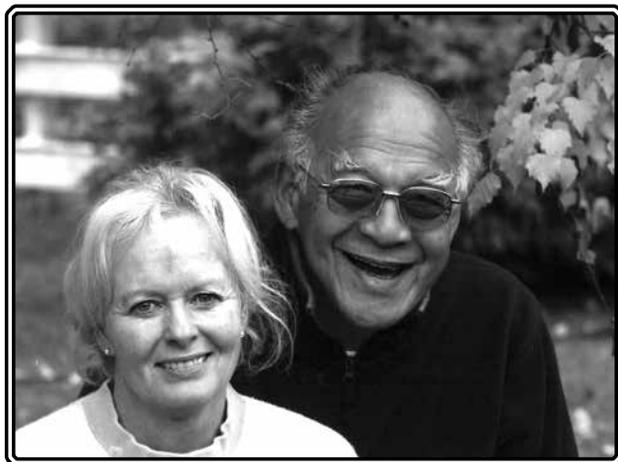# Hall of Fame Inductees

Canyon Farms

by .... Randy Goulding

When Canyon Farm's Strait of Dover won the 2012 Queen's Plate he became the first British Columbia-bred to win Canada's most famous race. For Wally and Terry Leong, who bred the son of English Channel at their farm in Kelowna, it was the thrill of a lifetime.

"We've been breeding horses for over 30 years and winning the Queen's Plate was a dream come true." said Wally.

Wally Leong has been involved in horse racing since the mid 1960's. He had graduated from the University of British Columbia with a degree in mechanical engineering when along with a couple of friends he bought his first horse, Arctic Blizzard.

"I really didn't know anything about horses but I had enjoyed going to the races with my uncle and thought it would be fun," said Wally. "Bud MacDonald was our trainer and he also trained my first stakes winner, Ground Flight."

His first involvement with breeding came when he got involved with Mission Creek Farm, a group that started out by importing four stallions to British Columbia. The most notable was Golden Reserve who was inducted into the B.C. Horse Racing Hall of Fame in 1996.

"Golden Reserve was the first and only horse to sire four different Horses of the Year," said Wally.

For the record those horses were: Rumpole, Delta Colleen, Fleet Reserve, and Avant's Gold. When the recession hit in the early 1980's Mission Creek wasn't immune to the hard economic times and went bankrupt.

Wally was hooked on breeding horses and wanted to continue in the business. Luckily for him he had met and married Terry.

"Because I was the guarantor of the loans for the companies I owned I couldn't get a loan for the farm," said Wally. "Terry could, though. We started off small with just a couple of horses and it grew from there."

Terry didn't know what she was getting into and she had no idea what breeding horses entailed. According to Wally, she now runs the farm.

"I'm a city slicker and when I met Wally he told me he owned a few horses," said Terry. "I didn't realize he meant a farm-full of horses. My first job at the farm was chopping ice."

She said winning the Queen's Plate with Strait of Dover was "surreal."

"Because we are so far away we weren't part of the hype leading up to the race," she said. "It really was a thrill when he won."

Being the only people to have bred a Queen's Plate winner is reason enough to warrant being inducted into the British Columbia Horse Racing Hall of Fame. Canyon Farms isn't a one-trick pony, though.

Stakes winners they have bred and raced include Illusive Force and Lord Samarai who won back-to-back Jack Diamond Futurities in 2002 and 2003.

Trained by Rob VanOverschot, Illusive Force was the first horse Canyon Farms ran in the Queen's Plate.

"We learned a lot from that," said Terry. "You really need to have the horse based there."
Illusive Force went unplaced in the Queen's Plate but he went on to win the 2004 B.C. Cup Classic.

They won their first Jack Diamond Futurity with the Sid Martin-trained Midnight Courier in 1993. Lord Shogun was a top 3-year-old in 2002, winning five races in a row including the Alberta Derby and the Grade 3 Manitoba Derby.

Starlite Strike lost by a nose in the Sadie Diamond Futurity but went on to win the $103,000 Northland Oaks and the B. C. Cup Distaff. She retired with $231,894 in earnings.

Other stakes winners of note bred by Canyon Farms were Stratoplan, Aero Duchess and Legal Courier.

Many of the mares bred by Canyon Farms, including Bahrain Star, the dam of Strait of Dover, are by Danzig.

"I've been a big fan of mares by Danzig for a long time," said Wally. "It really paid off with Strait of Dover."

The highest of highs of winning the Queen's Plate was followed by lowest of lows when Strait of Dover died this year. Trainer Daniel Vella was pointing Strait of Dover to major races for older horses at Woodbine when he came down with colic.

"It was devastating," said Wally. "But you just keep going on and hope you can breed another one like him. I know it's unlikely but you never quit trying."

Wally, 79, was a very successful engineer and if he hadn't sunk most of the money he earned into horses he could have retired long ago into a life of luxury.

"I keep asking myself why Terry and I keep doing this," he said.

They found out why when Strait of Dover went to the front with Justin Stein aboard and never looked back in the Queen's Plate.

Peter Redekop

by .... Randy Goulding

Peter Redekop was born in 1935 in the former USSR in a Mennonite colony in what is now part of the independent country Ukraine. His family was very religious and due to being oppressed by the Communists, they were forced to roam Germany as refugees from 1943 until the war ended in 1945. After spending a couple of years in the Netherlands they immigrated to Canada and eventually settled on a farm in Abbotsford in 1948. He got hit with the horse racing bug when he went to the Pacific National Exhibition and saw his first horse race as a young adult.

"Growing up in Europe during tumultuous times I had never seen a horse race before," says Redekop. "I thought it was one of the most exciting things I had ever seen and I still think it is."

Redekop had experience working with horses on his family's farm and when he and his cousin Peter Wall were starting to become successful in the real estate development business they decided to buy a couple of yearlings in the British Columbia Breeder's Sale in the mid 1960's. It didn't take Redekop long to realize there was a lot more to owning race horses than he thought.

"I just thought a horse was a horse," says Redekop. "We bought the first two yearlings at the sale and thought we would just race them. I had no idea what it took to get them to the races. Neither horse won so then it became a challenge."

He learned quickly, though, and along with Wall became major owners in British Columbia and California while racing under the stable name Cossack Farms and Tara Stables.

A horse Wall and Redekop brought from California was Great Descretion who set a track record for six furlongs in the 1969 Inaugural Handicap.

One disappointment for Wall and Redekop was

not being able to win the B C Derby, a race Redekop has now won three times.

"It seemed like we brought a horse up from California every year and they were usually the favorite but they would finish last," says Redekop. "It was very disappointing. One year we decided to try and change our luck by celebrating the night before the Derby. We still lost. We were having a lot of fun, though. Our trainer in California, Farrell Jones, was a real character. Sonny O'Connell, our trainer here, was also fun to be around. "

Redekop and Wall are still business partners but they went in different directions as horse owners. Redekop's first quality horse was Astro Beauty who won 10 stakes races including the British Columbia Oaks. Redekop bought her as a yearling in 1991 for $15,000 and she went on to win a total of 14 races for earnings of $364,078.

"She was by Bold Laddie, who I liked as a sire," says Redekop.

Squire Jones, trained by Lance Giesbrecht, gave Redekop his first B C Derby win in 1994. He bought Squire Jones privately in Aug. and he used the same formula in winning the 2012-13 Derbys, buying Second City and Title Contender late in their 3-year-old campaigns. Redekop says winning the 2012 Derby with Second City, trained by Craig MaxPherson, was the most memorable of all of his wins as an owner. Title Contender is trained by Anita Bolton.

"He was undefeated and in all of his races he was on the lead," says Redekop. "When he was last after getting wiped out at the start I thought he was dead. It couldn't have been more exciting when he rallied to win."

The best horse Redekop owned is Hollywood Hit who was the champion sprinter in Canada in 2010. Comedero is another top sprinter Rede-

kop raced in the United States.

"Actually, the biggest purse I ever won was with Comadero at Charles Town," says Redekop.

The race he was referring to was the $400,000 Red Legend in 2010.

Both horses are retired and living a life of leisure at Bryan and Carol Anderson's Wild Rose Farm in Princeton, B.C.

Redekop won his second Jack Diamond Futurity with Andallthatitmeans in 2013. His first came with Astro Force in 1995.

One of his great thrills in racing was having a horse, Cause to Believe, run in the 2006 Kentucky Derby.

"I thought he might have a chance when he won the California Derby but after he finished third in the Illinois Derby I was pretty sure he wasn't going to win the Kentucky Derby," says Redekop. "I took the whole family, though, and we all had a wonderful time."

Cause to Believe has become a great addition to the sire ranks in British Columbia with four stakes winners in his second crop of 2-year-olds.

As well as his outstanding record as an owner Redekop has enhanced B.C. Cup Day by donating $25,000 to the Redekop Classic.

"B C Day is a good thing for horse racing in the province," says Redekop. "I just think the biggest race of the day should have the highest purse."

There is a real twinkle in his eye when Redekop talks about his experience as a horse owner. There is little doubt his journey from refugee to successful North American businessman has been well worth the hardships he encountered along the way.