

SAVAGE Pacer



Legend of Dan Patch lives on in book

By Nancy Huddleston, editor, *Savage Pacer* Friday, June 23, 2006

When Jens Bohn thinks about all the notoriety that Dan Patch is getting this year, he pictures the smiles on the faces of old timers who kept the famous pacers story alive all these years.

I think of Joe, Frank, Ben and Bob and how happy they'd be if they could see everything that's happening this year, he said of the 100-year anniversary of Dan Patch's world record of 1:55 at the Minnesota State Fair.

Joe is Joe Egan, Frank is Frank Egan, Ben is Ben Morlock and Bob is Bob Allen. They all had an interest in Dan Patch and his famous owner, Marion W. Savage, which they fostered by telling and re-telling tales of Dan Patch's prowess on the racetrack and buying collectable items with the horses image.

Bohn said he first got hooked on the story when Joe Egan offered to sell him a picture of Dan Patch to display in his Razors Edge Barber Shop. Once I bought that, I started buying more stuff and taking trips with Joe to find more items, he said.

Initially, Bohn's interest was a combination of the historical and collectable circles surrounding Dan Patch; but now his focus is on the historical. As president of the Dan Patch Historical Society, Bohn oversees activities that center on history.

And hes especially proud of a book that's coming out this weekend, *The Great Dan Patch and the Remarkable Mr. Savage* written by Tim Brady and published by Nodin Press. The historical society worked with the book publisher to make sure the book came out in 2006 to commemorate the 100-year mark.

The author will be at Dan Patch Days this weekend, from 3 to 6 p.m. on Saturday, June 24 autographing copies of his book and talking with people.

Bohn said Brady did a thorough job of writing the book, which is not just a horse story. It's the story of both Dan Patch and Mr. Savage and how the public became enthralled with the quest to set the world record.

Did Mr. Savage make the horse, or did the horse make the man, Bohn asks when talking about the book, If not for him, no one would have heard about Dan and, if M.W. had stayed in Indiana, we never would have heard about him.

The uniqueness of the story is proving to be popular as pre-orders have been coming in for the book. People from all over the U.S. have been ordering the book and, just this week, an order came in from South Africa.

People who live here should be thankful for the uniqueness of the story and should find out more, Bohn advised. I personally think it's a story that surpasses all others, including Seabiscuit. It's a story of an owner and a horse, not just a horse. People think that all this stuff never happened, but it did.

The Dan Patch story takes place in the early 1900s, when horseracing was very popular. At the time, Dan Patch was racing the clock to set the world record and Mr. Savage promoted the horse through his business, the International Stock Food Co.

Dan Patch was housed in a palatial barn on the banks of the Minnesota River, which was located about in the area where the three tall radio towers now sit along Highway 13 in the downtown area. During his racing days and into his retirement, folks would come from miles around to see the pacer, who was considered a sports celebrity.

One hundred years later, there's still mystery and intrigue surrounding the pacer, as his secret grave is said to be along the banks of the Credit River near the site of the International Stock Food Farm. Only a few people know of the exact location of the horse's remains, as that information has been passed down from one of Dan's groomers to a select group of residents over the years.

Brady's book isn't the only one coming out about Dan Patch. The pacers story also will be told from another perspective in a book being written by Sports Illustrated executive editor Charlie Leerhsen. That book is due out next year.

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