



**ALBERTA STANDARD BRED
HORSE ASSOCIATION**

The Fun For Fans Stable was started in 2017 by Alberta Standardbred Horse Association executive director, Fred Gillis, as a kind of outreach program to organizations in communities where harness racing was taking place. The idea was to turn over 75 per cent of whatever the horse(s) earned after commissions and fees to organizations that might be challenged to fund raise for things they wanted to do. All that the organizations had to do was show up on race day and cheer on the pacer. The 2016 season was an example of the best and worst of horse ownership, as Gillis explains.

“We had Sotally Tober all set to race for the stable,” said Gillis. “Then a week before the first race for the club, the horse got hurt. He never raced the rest of the season. Well, I was stuck, so I phoned (breeders committee chair) Connie Kolthammer, who runs Outlaw Stables. She and Dave Farrell shared ownership in a filly named Outlawburntpopcorn. Connie let me have it for less than market price. Norm Kennedy (former ASHA President) and I put up the \$6,300 and we had a horse to start the program last May.”

Little did anyone know what Outlawburntpopcorn would do at the races. She started off slowly but kept earning modest paycheques and kept generating revenues for several area charities. Then in October she scored a \$28,000 upset win in the final of the Alberta Marquis for three-year-old fillies and followed that up two weeks later with a fourth-place finish in the Super Finals, earning \$6,400 in the process. The final tally was just short of \$58,000 from a 5-5-5 log in 29 starts.

“We paid off all the stable’s bills, turned over a bunch of money to the charities and gave Connie and Dave some extra money for supporting the stable,” said Gillis. “Norm and I got our money back. And we had a bit of a base to start off this year. We’ve leased ‘Popcorn’ to trainer Devann Crick, and we’ll get 25 per cent of whatever she makes. And we’ve bought another filly from Connie named Outlaw Intriguedbyu. She’s paid up for all of the stakes races this year too. So maybe, we can have some fun.”

That fun hopefully will extend to several charities. The stable will compete for Rockyview Volunteer Fire Department in April, Airdrie Boys & Girls Club in May, Breast Cancer in June, the Airdrie Over 50 Club in July, and Ronald McDonald House in August. September is up in the air as the racing circuit finishes at Century Downs and spends a weekend at Enoch before settling in for the fall meet at Northlands Park. “For sure, though, we’ll be supporting the Stollery Children’s Hospital again,” said Gillis. “Popcorn was a big hit with a lot of the patients last fall, and we were able to make a few dollars for the hospital even though it was the end of the season.”