

# Harness the Stars!!

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## Gabe Wand

### “What’s Crack-a-lackin’”

If you have been following Wisconsin racing the past couple of seasons, you are undoubtedly familiar with the Wand green and white colors. For the past two years, he has been Wisconsin’s leading driver and is ready for another action packed season on the race track.

Gabe started driving horses right here on this very oval 18 years ago tomorrow. Wow, 18 years ago ... makes him seem like an old timer, but Gabe started at the tender age of 13, so you do the math! (If you’re stumped, no need to get out the calculator, just ask Gabe yourself – he will tell you he’s 29. Oh wait, he was 29 last year, and the year before – on second thought, scratch that idea.)

Silverthorn Road in rural Shullsburg is where you can see Gabe training daily with his dad Bob. This father-son duo began their racing journey some 20 years ago when Gabe first showed his competitive nature. When we asked Gabe how he got started, he laughed and started to tell how his childhood friend began helping his dad one day when they were playing at their training track. Not to be outdone, Gabe dived right in...and the rest is history.

Racing seasons have come and gone, and Gabe is now closing in on 100 wins. But a few are extra special to him. He started his driving career with one simple goal: to win one race “under the lights.” (Translation: A nighttime race at a pari-mutuel race track) Well, we recently found out that after winning an amateur race at Maywood Park in Chicago when he was 17, Gabe calmly got out of the sulky, handed his dad the lines and the whip, and proceeded to tell Bob that he was now retired. (Update: Retirement lasted 6 days when the then high school senior realized his scholarship money wasn’t much of a 401 (k).)

Trotters are Gabe’s true passion ... “I was always told a trotter will break my heart...but if I could, I’d still have nothing but them in the barn.” We are not sure where this developed as through the years, Wand Stables raced mostly pacers. Maybe it was the track record Gabe set here at Mineral Point in 2002 with Trottin’ UpA Dream. Or was it the Co-Trotter of the Year honors he scored with Good Ride Cowboy in 2009. Come to think about it, maybe it was one of his catch drives, (also his favorite horse to pilot) Starry Night Star (owned by Susan Schroeder & Vern Devine) that got him hooked?

It’s hard to believe Gabe has accomplished all of the above while working a full time job on the side. This spunky kid at heart sells cheese for a local dairy cooperative. (Ok, pause 20 seconds for laughter ... yes, he’s from Wisconsin and he sells cheese ... go figure). But don’t let his cheezy comments fool you...he’s got clients from coast to coast and even overseas!

When Gabe isn’t shipping cheese to South Korea or shipping horses across the Badger State, you may see him enjoying the arts at the Overture Center in

Madison or on Broadway in New York City. If you see him out and about, he will be the cliché patron requesting Billy Joel’s Piano Man while in a piano bar or attempting to bust a move to Love Shack, I Gotta Feeling or Lady Gaga.



We don’t know for sure if Gabe can 3-Peat as Driver of the Year this season as there are a lot of harness racing stars that all want the honor. We do know one thing however...he will have a heck of a lot of fun trying!