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# New steeplechase course opening at Buckland

By TERRY KARNES  
Observer staff

Horse racing is coming to Buckland this month with the 46th running of the Casanova Hunt Point to Point Races.

Casanova Hunt Point to Point, named a top 20 event in the southeast by the Southeast Tourism Society, is the kick-off race of the Virginia steeplechase racing season. Feb. 22 will be the inaugural race for the new track at historic Buckland Farm. Post time is noon. Steeplechase racing, where

horses race over fences at break-neck speed, is the fastest-growing spectator sport in the mid-Atlantic region. The events take place every weekend until mid-May. The final meet, sponsored by the National Steeplechase Association, is the \$50,000 Gold Cup at Great Meadow in Fauquier County. There are more than a dozen point to point races on the Virginia circuit.

The first location for the Casanova Point to Point in 1958 was Spring Hill Farm in Casanova, along VA 28. In the late 1980s the event was moved to Mt.

Sterling Farm, near Warrenton.

David Blake, owner of Buckland Farm, offered some of his land for the Casanova Hunt to build a new race course.

"It is through the generosity of the Blake Family ... and that of the surrounding community that it has been made possible for the Hunt to construct this wonderful new race course," said Joyce Fendley, one of the masters of foxhounds.

"The sweeping fields and panorama provide an elegant back-

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## New steeplechase course at Buckland Farm

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drop. The races at Buckland promise to afford race goers excellent viewing for an exciting day of racing."

One of Virginia's greatest award-winning horses, Pleasant Colony, was born at Buckland Farm. The horse died at 24 this year and is buried in the center of the new race course.

Blake said horses have a history in Prince William County, and Buckland in particular, that goes back to the late 1700s.

Blake, who has owned the farm for nearly four years, said Buckland Farm was a horse breeding farm as far back as 1780s, and is what it still is today.

The farm, located off

### Homebuyers seminar set for Feb. 8

A Haymarket Realtor will host a free Homebuyer's Seminar on Feb. 8. The event will be presented by Vernon Miles, realtor/attorney/engineer, Sal Rotante, CPA/loan officer, and Art Grace, a settlement attorney, also of Haymarket.

Topics will include home buyer's process; what you need to know about buying new homes; real estate as an investment; qualifying for a loan; home inspections and

Vint Hill Road, has connections to some of the most famous leaders in Virginia's history, as well as the United States. George Washington asked Buckland Farm owner, the Loves, for a horse, Blake said.

Buckland Farm was the site of Gen. George Custer's "First Stand" in a battle fought in 1863 and was coined "The Buckland Races" by Gen. J.E.B. Stuart.

"The battle at Buckland boosted the sagging moral of the Confederacy but was J.E.B. Stuart's last southern cavalry victory of the war and Custer's most serious defeat until his final battle at Little Big Horn," Fendley said.

Buckland, which was chartered as a town in 1798,

has its own deep history with many of the original structures still standing along Broad Run.

Other Casanova Hunt fundraisers include Casanova Hunt Ball and Silent Auction in March and Working Terrier Trials in June and October.

"The Casanova Hunt is proud to have been part of Virginia's sporting tradition, a source of pleasure for friends, members and landowners, and a good neighbor for over these last 89 years," Fendley said. "We now look forward to the next 89 and beyond."

The Casanova Hunt was organized in 1909 by a group of foxhunting farmers, according to Fendley.

At the Casanova Hunt Point to Point there will also be the annual Tailgate Party Competition where spectators enter their picnics in a fun-for-all competition. Proceeds from the Tailgate Party entry fees are donated to community projects.

General admission for the race is \$20 per car at the gate. Advance tickets can be sought by calling 540-347-2612 (day) and 540-788-4806 (eves.)

warranties; and settlement procedures.

The seminar will be held from 10 a.m. to noon at the Hampton Inn at the corner of VA 234 and Williamson Boulevard and will include a continental breakfast. Opportunities to win two free gift certificates to Carmello's Ristornate in Manassas will take place, as well.

For reservations, call 703-753-2274 or 888-753-9292 or email [vernonmiles@erols.com](mailto:vernonmiles@erols.com).