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Off Beat

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A Good Bet

ABOUT A YEAR ago, on the advice of a fellow habitué of the betting windows, Off Beat checked out the little corner of the Internet known as **The McChump Racing Tour**. We've been going back ever since. Lovingly assembled by Chicagoan Terry Bjork (a.k.a. McChump), the site comprises an ongoing journal (five years and counting) of its creator's excursions to thoroughbred racing venues around the world, with special attention--and affection--reserved for **low-rent tracks** across North America. The cumulative result is a combination **quirky guide** to small-time horseplayerdom/ode to same. Bjork recently came up with a new wrinkle that caught Off Beat's eye: McChumpalooza, a **whirlwind tour** of several dozen racetracks that aims to augment the usual McChump agenda (i.e., betting on the horses while assessing **the environs, the food, and the beer prices**) with a good cause--raising money for the **Pegasus Foundation**, a California-based nonprofit that finds homes, and often new careers, for **abused and neglected thoroughbreds**. The plan is to select one race per day on which to place a bet whose payoff would benefit the charity, and also to **comp any McChump fan who drops by** a five-dollar bet that would do the same. We were slightly crestfallen to see Canterbury Park listed as a "**maybe**" on the McChumpalooza itinerary, but we put in an optimistic call to Bjork, who tells Off Beat that all that stands between him and a visit to our fair Cities this Sunday to partake of the Canterbury Claiming Crown (for more about the event, see the A List, p. 48) is a last-minute bargain cyberfare. "**Canterbury is one of my favorite tracks**," says Bjork. "It's real friendly. It's well-laid-out, it's pretty much got everything for everybody, so I enjoy it. I like **the little Leinenkugel's tent**. And they do have a **good beer selection**. I find that to be important--I hate those tracks you go to and all they have is Budweiser. They also have a real good food selection. Plus, every time I come there **I win a lot of money**." If you want to hook up with McChump at the track and help out the Pegasus Foundation, direct your browser to the McChumpalooza Web site (<https://mcmj.dreamhosters.com/the-stories/2000-mcchump-racing-tour/mcchumpalooza-2000>)