

Saratoga Ahead Looks

by Sandra Cohen

I have a friend I've never met. He's a fellow writer, and we have corresponded over the Internet for the better part of a decade. Once in a blue moon, he will send something via snail mail – something that he finds important enough that I need to hold it in my hand. It's always made of paper. At any give time, he has no idea what I'm working on, but I always know what he's working on . . . handicapping the races. He's a horse-racing aficionado, and Saratoga is his Holy Grail. The day I sat down for an interview with Mayor Scott Johnson, I received from my friend a small yellow envelope. In it was one-third of a piece of paper on which there was a handwritten note: "This is almost exactly how I felt on that first day when I drove into Saratoga in 1972." The following quote was what was on that piece of paper . . .

"Sometimes a man hits upon a place to which he mysteriously feels that he belongs. Here is the home he sought, and he will settle amid scenes that he has never seen before, among men he has never known, as though they were familiar to him from his birth. Here at last he finds rest."

W. Somerset Maugham, *The Moon and Sixpence*, 1919