



Local Fight Coverage with Briggs Seekins

21st Century Bare Knuckle

In the late 19th century when the *National Police Gazette* was the most important sporting publication in America, the sport of boxing was transitioning from bare-knuckle scrapping to the gloved spectacle we recognize today. Now, in 2013, bare-knuckle fighting is reemerging, and the *Gazette* is once more on the cutting edge of writing about it.

Earlier this week I spoke with Randy "the Wolf" Smith, a Southern Tier professional mixed martial arts fighter and the proprietor of the Power of One MMA affiliate school located in Cortland. The Wolf has just returned to town after fighting in New Hampshire on the inaugural BKB Championship Boxing event at the Hampton Beach Casino Ballroom.

On a personal level, Randy is one of my favorite stories in fighting. I've known him since probably the first week he started training, and was around him a lot at the gym during the first summer he was transforming himself from a 300 pound-plus, regular Joe with aspirations into a rock-solid, 240 pound professional MMA heavyweight.

In the past six years, he has forged a career as one of the most entertaining and action-oriented big men in the northeast. He's fought dozens of fights and battled former UFC champion Tim Sylvia.

The Wolf is known as a fighter who always brings it, so he was a natural for the BKB Championship Boxing event. The fights take place in an innovative new environment known as "the Pit." Smith described it as "like a shallow cereal bowl, with a flat surface on the bottom where the fight takes place." Fighters wore specially designed gloves, that support the wrists and the smaller bones in the hand, but leave the knuckles exposed.

Just as in the old bare-knuckle days, fighters must start by "toeing the line," face to face. According to Smith, this guarantees all-action fights. "You're starting out right in punching range, so somebody has got to start punching. And the pit doesn't let you run away."

"I don't think there was a dull fight on the card," he added.

While the event sounds like the kind of thing that would take place in a smoke-filled backroom, Smith describes a promotion with a lot of money behind it. The Hampton Beach Casino Ballroom is a major venue in the northern New England area, and it was sold-out for the fight.

"It's the biggest event I've ever fought on," Smith added. "Kenny Albert did the play-by-play and Michael Buffer was the ring announcer."

The pre-filmed card will be broadcast over Direct TV later in July. Smith plans to fight for the promotion again in November.

Local Politician Barbara Lifton Reveals Bigoted Attitude Towards the Fighting Arts

Meanwhile, New York remains the only state or province in North America with a discriminatory prohibition on professional mixed mar-

tial arts fighting. Despite having massive popular support, the bill that would authorize it remains dead in assembly, thanks to political shenanigans behind the scenes.

Earlier this month, Ithaca-area assemblywoman Barbara Lifton took it upon herself to send a letter to Speaker Sheldon Silver, urging him to continue to use backroom, scumbag tactics to prevent the citizens of New York from being able to enjoy the same rights as members of the rest of the United States.

Lifton noted that she was sending the letter "on her own, with no influence," but to anybody who has been following the MMA saga, it is clear that Lifton is acting as part of a misguided power block in the state. Lifton has cited "homophobic and sexist statements" by professional MMA fighters as a justification for the continued ban.

No decent person condones sexism and homophobia in today's modern world, but to start banning activities based on the ignorant statements by a few participants is idiotic. Are we going to ban all sports now? Because you could find sexist and homophobic statements by athletes in any sport. Let's ban cops, firemen, school teachers and preachers, while we are at it, because members of all those professions have no doubt made statements that would be deeply offensive to Barbara Lifton and her crew.

The fact is that MMA as a sport is practiced and enjoyed by people from every facet of our contemporary society: men, women, gay, straight, conservative, liberal and progressive. As far as the sport being "sexist," in no other professional sport are female competitors taken as seriously by fans and media as they are in MMA.

I've voted for Lifton in the past, but will never do so again. Her desire to march in lock-step with a bigoted and uninformed opinion reveals her as nothing more than a typical career politician. This is the elected representative for UFC superstar Jon Jones and for many of the top MMA prospects in the northeastern United States. It would be well within her ability to actually educate herself on this issue.

But she ultimately has decided that it's more politically expedient to remain intellectually dishonest.

Police Gazette Thoroughbred Now Running in Australia IN THE MONEY IN EVERY RACE!

In this year's April issue we reported on the progress of "Police Gazette," the American thoroughbred racehorse that had been running at French racetracks (see picture on page 4). Well, the four-year-old is now in Australia and he's been tearing up the turf.

Police Gazette has been in five races at various Australian tracks through May and June, finishing first once, second twice, and third twice. And these are not scrawny fields. Each race has had between 11 and 14 horses participating.

After his win, jockey Brad Rawiller said of Police Gazette, "Through the run he gives you a really strong feel. He's got class about him." New owner OTI Racing gushes over horse, "Now a winner in both hemispheres, Police Gazette appears set for a spring campaign that could include Country Cups and perhaps a race

like the Sandown Classic. Will be targeted towards the Melbourne Cup in 2014."

Here, of course, saying Police Gazette has class is preaching to the choir!

Binghamton Tiger Cats in Championship

The Women's Spring Football League concluded its season June 29th with championship games played at Memphis, TN. The difference this year is that our very own Binghamton Tiger Cats made it to the championship game and traveled to Memphis to fight the West Virginia Wildfire for the "8's" title.

The WSFL is a league for full-tackle, all-female football teams from all over the eastern half of the United States. They play in divisions for "11-man" teams and "8-man" teams. The Tiger Cats finished second in their 8's division, entitling them to a shot at the championship against the first place Wildfire.

All had hoped for the upset victory, but it was not to be. The Wildfire survived the Tiger Cat onslaught by a score of 44-8. But for the Binghamton Tiger Cats, this is one more step on the road to greatness. And it's "Wait till next year!"

Limerick of the Month

There was a young dentist Malone,
Who had a charming girl patient alone.

But in his depravity,
He filled the wrong cavity.
God, how his practice has grown!
Like to submit a limerick? Write letters@policegazette.us. Maybe we'll use it!

HOTCHKISS

(continued from page 6)

So what does any of this have to do with a radio show that promotes local music? There are two points I'd like to make. First, it's easy to predict I'm going to say that live music is a great prescription for an aching soul. The other day we were recording a show with a large group of musicians that regularly play the open-mic night at Red's Kettle Inn. I had had a rough day; I was tired, dirty, sweaty, and pretty much in a foul mood. But the show must go on. And during the warm up, as I witnessed these people literally communing over their music, I was raised up. It was so spiritual in fact, that I got a minor inspiration to open the show like we were convening a church service. When I left that night, I realized how trivial my problems are in the grand scheme of things.

The other point is closely related. I'm not much of a musician—though I'm pretty sure I'd get some good back up on this from serious musicians—but actually creating the music is "mind altering." It takes the person beyond synchronizing with a vibration to actually sending out a vibration that puts the person's brain into a higher state, similar to meditation. I can even go out on a limb and say that making music is a form of meditation. That makes it a very healthy practice, which can even become healthier if we can remove our egos. Stop judging what's "good" versus what isn't, and just enjoy the sound. That's why I am often heard to close episodes of *That Sunday Show* on Magic 101.7 by saying "We're over our time limit again; we're probably fired, but please get out there, enjoy some music, make some music, celebrate the abundance of music that surrounds us. Have a great week everybody, stay positive and be kind."