

## The California Horse Racing Alliance

When I became Chair of the Thoroughbred Owners of California two years ago, I pledged to keep working on issues that were of the utmost important to owners. These issues were the reasons I ran for election to the board of directors of the TOC in the first place, and for the past four years I and my fellow directors have worked to see those goals accomplished. Those objectives included tougher medication testing and penalty guidelines, increasing purses overall and increasing revenue from ADW handle, as well as making sure the TOC was always a totally transparent organization that communicated well with its membership and handled itself with integrity in all matters. It's been a long four years in an industry often divided, with an all volunteer board, with many complex issues to tackle. We have worked hard to accomplish those goals, and while our work is not completed yet, we have accomplished a lot in the last four years.

After the nationwide economic meltdown back in September, the racing industry, along with other businesses, has had to overcome new challenges. Over a year ago, some of us started meeting to plan for the demise of Hollywood Park. Now we are faced not only with that scenario, but the bankruptcy of MEC, which puts both Golden Gate Fields and Santa Anita at risk. On many an occasion our board has discussed the need for the industry, especially horsemen and women, to own their facilities, whether it is tracks, training sites or even our ADW companies. Along with that, clearly the economic model for racing needs to be overhauled. The cost of offsite training facilities (discussed later in this issue), vanning and just owning and training a horse have become almost cost prohibitive. Lowering costs has become a key issue; the flip side of that is how we increase revenue. Our satellite facilities are out of step with the times and in need of overhaul. Why can't a racing fan walk into a sports bar and place a bet? These are just a few of the items that need to be vigorously tackled in the coming year.

First off, the TOC is committed to lowering costs and increasing revenue. Secondly, we are going to look at how horsemen and women can own and operate facilities for racing and training so the thoroughbred industry stays alive and strong. Third, we are joining with our industry partners as members of the California Horse Racing Alliance to better manage and run our industry in California. While the board had some reservations about joining this new Alliance, we felt it was better to be a part of it and participate actively in making the Alliance successful, rather than be a bystander to it; so in February the TOC officially joined the CHRA. The CHRA, or California Horse Racing Alliance, which was formed officially in January, hired Richard Shapiro to be its Senior Advisor. The main goal of the CHRA is to unify the horse racing industry in California and tackle the problem of fund deficits while exploring revenue opportunities like instant racing. By speaking with one voice in Sacramento, we feel the time is right to get some of the industry's major asks in front of lawmakers and get needed legislation passed to improve the industry.

For the first time breeders, trainers, owners and tracks are meeting together to hash out an agenda for California racing and to effect positive change in an industry that desperately needs it. Meanwhile, your board of directors continues to remain hard at work doing the job they were elected to do: representing California horse owners and their interests.



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