

Vision and Verse...

The new TOC Board took their seats at July's board meeting (the start of our fiscal year), and in August that board elected its officers for the coming year. With those elections, your horsemen's organization has set itself up to become one of the best boards TOC has ever seen. An organization is only as good as its people, and I am here to tell you today that your current board is composed of the best and brightest of our owners in California. We are a solid team that has been in development over the last two years with new people and fresh ideas. Officers for the current year include Madeline Auerbach, in her new role as Vice Chair of Southern California, and Billy Koch, serving his first time on the Executive Committee as Secretary. This is probably one of the youngest boards that TOC has had, but we still have a solid mix of veterans among us, like Mace Siegel, who brings tremendous knowledge and history to the board. We have three trainers on the board, one veterinarian, and several breeders, all who own and race thoroughbreds in California. While TOC still needs to improve on the percentage of women and minorities represented on the board, as the saying goes, we've come a long way baby. Only four of the current board members have been on the board over two and a half years, and that's the way it should be: change is good. While we still need our veterans on the board, the future of the TOC lies in getting new people involved who are enthusiastic and committed to the future of racing.



Marsha Naify

As the Chairwoman, it is my job to set the agenda and to work with the President, Executive Director and other staff to make sure TOC remains a strong and effective organization. It is also my goal, working with the entire board, to make sure that TOC has a clear vision for California racing. As owners, we are California racing, and it is up to us to make sure that thoroughbred racing in this state remains a viable and stable industry, and that it becomes as profitable as possible not only for horse owners but for everyone involved. The future of racing depends on every owner being able to stay in business, whether that owner owns two horses or 20 horses. How we accomplish that goal is critical. As an organization, we must be a leader in this industry on a local, as well as a national level, but we must lead by example. Integrity in all our business affairs is crucial. Only by partnering with other industry stakeholders can we achieve anything, but our partners must recognize that the owners are the most critical component of the equation in California racing.

As we look towards the coming year, we have some big issues to tackle and some long range goals that need to come to fruition sooner, rather than later:

1. Increasing purses
2. Creating and passing legislation that will provide financial relief and long overdue reform
3. Renegotiation of ADW contracts
4. Medication issues, drug testing and penalties and track security
5. Safety for jockeys and horses
6. Wagering
7. Capital improvements for racing venues
8. Partnering with California Tribes
9. Marketing and public relations: recruitment and retention of racing fans
10. National issues including the NTRA
11. Equine rehabilitation and retirement programs
12. Partnerships with the CTBA and CTT; working with the CHRB
13. Recruitment and retention of owners
14. Racing calendars, types of races run
15. Owner education
16. Board recruitment
17. Keeping TOC strong, effective and responsive

These are not easy issues, but I believe we are up to the task at hand. We have to be if we want this sport to survive and thrive during the next century. It will take dedication and hard work by all of us to reinvent thoroughbred horse racing in California. Our future depends on everyone in the racing industry coming together for the greater good. Having a vision is one thing; achieving it is something entirely different.

Marsha Naify