

Forging the Future

As we enter 2008, what will the future hold for Thoroughbred racing in 2008 and beyond? Our board of directors understands that forging the future means creating change. Whether that change is in medication, drug testing, track security, sales integrity, owners' rights or just taking care of our horses once their racing careers have ended, TOC's mission is to keep moving forward.

One important area we are currently focused on is working with Barretts Equine Ltd. to make our sales auctions in California a model of success and integrity, and to educate owners on their rights when they go to buy a horse at auction. Recently Barretts announced that anabolic steroids would be banned at all sales except for two year olds in training. The board of directors of TOC wants to see anabolic steroids banned for every sale, including two year olds. We also want to see full disclosure of ownership and the complete availability of medical records as well as surgeries performed on all horses sold in California. We also feel that licensing consignors as well as agents in California would be useful. Last fall, the Sales Integrity Task Force came out with their recommendations for the industry. While we applaud their efforts, we feel the Task Force fell short of the mark by making recommendations that were not requirements.

While I understand the task force was set up in response to changes in Kentucky, clearly the scope of the task force was meant to have national impact, yet Western racing states were much underrepresented. TOC hopes that by the end of 2008 we can see full transparency and disclosure at all auctions and in all sales of Thoroughbred racehorses across the country. California owners buy horses not only here in California, but spend a considerable amount of money in Kentucky and other states.

One of the most successful programs that TOC has continued over the years has been our seminars for current and future owners. We want to expand those programs in 2008 by working with Barretts to educate owners on how to buy a horse at auction and to develop a "Buyer's Rights" handbook for people who buy horses in California. Along with expanded conformation clinics at the actual sales, we hope to continue educating existing owners as well as being able to bring new owners to racing.

All of these changes, as well as many other important issues the TOC is working on, would not be possible without a strong board of directors. As most of you know, every year we hold elections for open board seats. We have a 15 member board; 12 of the seats go to owners and three of the seats go to trainers. Each member is elected to a three year term; thus every year, five seats are up to be filled. Many board members choose to run for re-election when their term is up, but some want to move on to other endeavors. Regardless, TOC is always looking for new board members who want to be part of the future for California racing. Now is the time to step forward and get involved. These are exciting times; TOC is working on a lot of good issues like the ones mentioned above. We are also continuing our work on finding ways to raise purse money and improve racing conditions. We've got a great board, but there are still some board seats we need to fill. March 1 is the deadline to get on the ballot for this year's election, which will be mailed out on May 15 (see article on page 11). Just call Mary at our TOC office in Santa Anita, and she will tell you what you need to do to get on the ballot.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the TOC, I want to wish all California owners a happy and successful year in 2008. And thank you for continuing to be a part of Thoroughbred racing in California. Here's to the future...



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