

# News from the **North**

By Richard Scheidt

## Team TOC Update

Team TOC competed in the DRF/NTRA National Handicapping Championships January in Las Vegas, where 300 competitors from all over North America gathered at the Red Rock Resort to compete for \$1,000,000 in prize money. While none of the TOC participants finished in the money they all held their own with Andy Pham, the youngest player in the field, finishing 46th just a nose out of the money. Pham, along with Tom Ellis and Cresencio Dacayanan, will try to make it back to Vegas by participating in TOC's qualifiers in 2010.

TOC will conduct two Owners Challenge contests this year: August 21 at Del Mar and October 23 at Golden Gate Fields. Check [www.toconline.com](http://www.toconline.com) for details and registration information.

## Golden Gate Track Surface Receives Face Lift

Golden Gate Fields closed the main track for two days on March 15 in order to add wax and fibers to the synthetic surface, Tapeta Footings. Golden Gate officials had hoped to perform the maintenance earlier but needed Mother Nature to cooperate. The materials must be applied and groomed with no chance of rain and temperatures at least in the mid-60's. Golden Gate plans to have additional materials on hand and set a schedule for future renovations two or three times per year.

## Ownership 101 Held at Golden Gate

TOC's educational seminar went back to basics with Ownership 101 at Golden Gate Fields on Feb. 20. Participants, mostly prospective owners, were educated on various ways to acquire a Thoroughbred race horse and choose a trainer, as well as how much it costs. Ellen Jackson and Keith Pronske spoke on those topics and gave personal insight into the industry. Jackson, an owner, breeder and licensed trainer at Golden Gate, communicated her unique perspective on what it takes to get a horse to the track from the time its foaled. Pronske, an owner and breeder himself, emphasized the importance of having a business plan and sticking to it, adding that patience is a virtue when owning a race horse. Following a question and answer period, seminar attendees visited the barn of trainer Bill McLean.

Another Conformation Clinic has been scheduled for April 10 at Golden Gate Fields. Come out and see what a fast horse looks like! To RSVP and see a full schedule of events for 2010, visit our new and improved Web site at [toconline.com](http://toconline.com).



*"Team TOC" Cresencio Dacayanan, Andy Pham and Tom Ellis in Las Vegas.*

## Northern California Stakeholders Conference Set

What has quickly turned into an annual event has again been scheduled for the end of this month in Santa Rosa. Representatives from TOC, California Thoroughbred Trainers, California Thoroughbred Breeders, Golden Gate Fields and all of California's Racing Fairs have confirmed their participation. A variety of subjects over a two-day period will be discussed including the overall health of our industry, parimutuel distributions, purse levels, future race dates, racing venues, and horse population.