

News from the North

By Richard Scheidt

Racing News

Groundhog Day Comes to an End

When the dust finally settled at Golden Gate Fields, it was the conclusion of 181 straight days of racing. Everyone, including the horses, were looking forward to a change of venue.

To the credit of Golden Gate Fields, they continued to attract large, youthful crowds with a variety of promotions throughout the meet. Field size, although short from time to time, averaged 7 horses per race, well within the norm over the past nine years. The purse account got much healthier as well. Beginning with a \$300,000 overpayment, the meet ended close to flat, a far cry from a year ago when another large overpayment was being carried forward to the Fall. Kudos to Golden Gate, good luck to the Racing Fairs, and we'll see you again at the Gate this Fall.

Northern California Conference brings Stakeholders Together

Stakeholders in Northern California met for two days in April to discuss the current and future state of the industry. Organizations represented at the conference in Sonoma were TOC, Golden Gate Fields, California Authority of Racing Fairs (Stockton, Pleasanton, Vallejo, Santa Rosa, Humbolt, and Fresno), Cal Expo, California Thoroughbred Trainers, and California Thoroughbred Breeders Association. Among the topics discussed were the effect of the MEC bankruptcy, declining California foal crops, current racing inventory/horse population, legislation, and potential new satellite wagering locations.

The group also began discussion of race dates and venues for 2010 and beyond, with plans to meet again mid-summer. With so many complex issues facing the industry, it's not difficult to understand that the participants didn't agree on every topic. One that was unanimous is that we all need to continue working together to ensure the future of racing in California.



Tom Bachman illustrated conformation points and fielded questions from the focused group.

Seminar Update

TOC helped showcase the new Owner-Trainer Lounge at Golden Gate Fields with a seminar in April, when more than 50 current and prospective owners packed the lounge for a Conformation Clinic. Tom Bachman, TOC Vice Chair Northern California, with more than 30 years of experience as an owner and breeder, covered the basics of Thoroughbred conformation in a classroom style presentation.

After the presentation, the participants hit the backside, where they were given a first-hand look at the physical characteristics of successful racehorses by trainers Chuck Jenda, Michael Lenzini, and Val Rhoden.

The next TOC Conformation Clinic in Northern California is scheduled for October 17 at the Big Fresno Fair. For the entire schedule of events including the 2009 Educational Seminar Schedule visit toconline.com.



Linda Anderson with art work.

The Art of a Racing Official

If you've been around racing in Northern California long, then you know Linda Anderson. A racing official on the Northern circuit, she grew up learning the business by working many of the jobs on the backside. Her father, Rennie, is a former trainer; her mother, Carmela, and brother John currently train; and her grandparents were also involved in racing. Linda holds an undergraduate degree from U.C. Davis and a Masters in History from San Diego State University. While racing is her life, art is her escape. Like her father, Linda is accomplished in drawing and painting. Her picture of Laffit Pincay Jr. is on display in the TOC office at Golden Gate Fields. Stop by and take a look when racing returns to Golden Gate in August.