

# News from the **North**

By Richard Scheidt

## Racing News

*2009 Race dates set, four-day winter and five-day summer race weeks among changes.*

It took numerous meetings and compromise on the part of all stakeholders, but the 2009 northern California races dates are set.

As expected, with Bay Meadows closed, Golden Gate Fields will run the majority of the year. 181 days of racing are scheduled at the bayside track including two weeks in August. Of the 181 days, 24 of them will be run with a percentage of revenues benefiting the racing fairs, and in particular capital improvements at the Alameda County Fair track in Pleasanton. The meet at Golden Gate officially started on December 26 and runs through June 14. Following the summer fairs, Golden Gate picks up again in early September, continuing until mid-December. Two weeks of un-overlapped racing at the Big Fresno Fair will give Golden Gate a break in early October.

The San Joaquin Fair in Stockton is back in its traditional spot on the calendar, and kicks off the fair season on June 18. With the exception of Golden Gate Fields running in August, the fairs' position in the calendar remains largely unchanged.

A major change from previous years is the adoption of four-day race weeks in the winter, and a shift from six- to five-day races weeks at summer fairs. Golden Gate fields will run a total of 12 four-day weeks in January, February, November, and December. The racing fairs will run five days a week the entire summer. The reduction in race days is primarily due to the shortage in number of horses on the northern circuit. Shorter race weeks will help increase field size on the remaining days, equating to increased handle on those races. Southern California will continue to race on days when the north is dark, further benefiting our northern horsemen, as the northern satellite wagering network, including Golden Gate Fields, will remain open for wagering on races in Southern California and out-of-state imports. Revenue generated on the dark days will help heal purse accounts that endured an unforeseen challenge with the cancellation of 11 days last winter at Santa Anita.

## Seminar Update

*TOC's Continuing Education Seminar focuses on Financial Planning.*

A group of more than 40 Thoroughbred owners attended TOC's seminar at Golden Gate Fields in November. The seminar covered the formation of business entities, importance of a proper business plan, and how estate planning and trust formation play a part in the way owners manage their stables.

Equine Attorney Polly Hey Panos delivered a detailed presentation on the differences between legal entities such as general partnerships, limited liability corporations (LLCs), and limited liability partnerships (LLPs). She cited real-life examples to examine the pros and cons of each, including potential tax implications and possible pitfalls depending of the goals of each owner.

Financial planners Derek McDougall and Tony Lopez stressed the importance of including one's stable, large or small, into one's overall financial portfolio. Together they covered topics such as how a stable fits into the formation of living trusts, tax implications, and ways to avoid probate problems.

Those interested in information from this seminar can stop by the TOC office at Golden Gate Fields. For the entire schedule of events including the 2009 Educational Seminar schedule visit [www.toconline.com](http://www.toconline.com).



## Golden Gate Fields' Owner Trainer Lounge Now Open!

Good things come to those who wait.

The long awaited Owner-Trainer Lounge is now open at Golden Gate Fields. Located on the apron level of the grandstand near the paddock, the lounge is open to licensed owners and trainers one hour prior to first post. The lounge features seating for more than 45 people, and ten large flat screen televisions to enjoy the races. Several tote machines are available, as well as complimentary soft drinks, coffee, and hot chocolate. Art Lobato, a friendly face and life-long race tracker, manages the lounge.

Stop in and check it out the next time you are on track. Thanks, Golden Gate Fields!