

From the Executive Office



Winners All the Way

The California breeding industry lost one of its true champions with the recent passing of John Mabee. He and wife Betty have carried the banner for the industry over the past two decades. They have topped the breeder award standings for the last 15 years straight, sometimes even doubling the amounts earned by the closest recipients.

The Mabees set the standard for all to achieve. Through their support and dedication, the breeding program in the state has continued to stride forward. This is evident in not only the quality of horses they annually produce, but also through encouraging others to strive to upgrade and breed better horses. That is, if you wanted to compete with the Mabee-breds.

Their endorsement of the California program over the years has assisted many other breeders. By routinely turning down offers to ship their top stallions elsewhere and by supporting their stallions with an outstanding band of broodmares, they have helped increase the value of stock owned by many Californians.

John was a big proponent of the state incentive awards program. In fact, in a 2000 survey asking the significance of the Cal-bred incentives on their breeding operation Mr. Mabee stated, "with no incentives, I would sell the horses and the farm." These are some strong words coming from a three-time Eclipse Award recipient as the nation's leading breeder.

As a token of our gratitude, we have devoted a significant portion of this publication to a tribute to John and the great work he and Betty have done. We have included quotes from some of the industry leaders, which really summarize the importance of John and Betty Mabee.

As stated earlier, John Mabee set the standard for the industry in California. He was a leading supporter and defender of the breeding

program in the state. I personally, always felt fortunate to have John on our side. He will definitely be missed.

The month of May also brought the passing of Mrs. Natalie Friendly, a passionate Thoroughbred owner and breeder along with her husband, Ed. The Friendlys have been involved in racing well over thirty years and have campaigned many top Cal-breds including graded stakes winner Goldiggers Dream, as well as other quality runners, a lot of whom were named after Natalie. We have documented the life of Mrs. Friendly on page 22 of this issue. Certainly a class figure in racing.

The third annual California Gold Rush at Hollywood Park, featuring ten races for Cal-breds with total purses over \$1.3 million, was held in late April. The day was once again a huge success, with an increase in on-track attendance and nationwide handle on par with previous years.

With an abundance of horses entered and the races proving extremely competitive, the event was very popular to owners, breeders and fans. Also, much to the delight of Hollywood Park, the competitive fields stumped the wagering public, yielding a carryover in the guaranteed \$1 million Pick Six. Factoring Gold Rush Day, and the following race day together, we were all very pleased with the results. As handle fuels purses and incentive awards, such competitive, full-racing fields are extremely vital to us all. I would therefore like to thank Hollywood Park, and their new sponsor California Federal Bank, for offering such tremendous opportunities for California-breds

— Doug Burge