



TY Green

CTBA BOARD MEMBER

SPANNING THE GENERATIONS

There is nothing like breeding a winning Thoroughbred. It's at least three years in the making. You spend hours agonizing over finding just the right mating, then sacrifice to the racing gods, hoping for a miraculous roll of the genetic dice.

If you are lucky enough not to come up snake eyes, you then spend months hoping they grow well and end up in the right hands. Finally, you spend less than two minutes holding your breath while simultaneously screaming for your boy to "get up" or "hold on." If you screamed loud enough that your horse crosses the wire first, you have 10 minutes of feeling the genius until worrying starts again over the current crop and next year's breeding. Despite or because of all that, I count those as some of my life's "best of" moments — and hope my wife isn't reading this.

Breeding, though, is an underrated aspect of the horse industry, especially outside of Kentucky. In California we rely more and more on California-breds to fill cards. Sunday, July 12, at Del Mar, approximately 65% of the horses entered were Cal-breds. Given the state of the world right now — in the short run at least — the reliance on Cal-breds is not likely to decrease. Without a robust state breeding in-

dustry, there simply wouldn't be racing in California, and the racing world would be the worse for it.

A lot is done to promote breeding and owning Cal-breds. The stallion, breeder, and owner incentive awards (including the maiden special weight bonus), Cal-bred stakes and restricted races, and the added money to open purses all provide solid economic incentive to increase the quality and quantity of breeding stock. There are many men and women who have devoted a lot of blood, sweat, and tears (and money) to the California breeding industry, and we all should be thankful to them for where we are today.

All that said, there is a bit of an ominous feeling on the California breeding scene. I felt it first when presenting an award at the CTBA dinner earlier this year. It was a well-attended event, but as I looked out over the audience, I noticed a sea of white hair—or, like me, no hair. It was a great evening, but youth was not served.

I think my fellow board members had a similar reaction, and it was agreed that one of us should write a column or two for this magazine, reaching out to younger generations (which, given the demographics of our group, means all generations other

than ours). My hope is to learn what the CTBA can do to help the next generations either develop or continue their interest in breeding.

I did pick up the phone and talk to one younger CTBA member. It was enlightening. I tend to feel inside like I'm still 30. Talking to the younger generation, I quickly learned that, while I might have been "groovy" 40 years ago, I really am not in touch with the motivations and interests of the younger generations. (I just mentally heard my three daughters go "Duh!")

So, I'm asking for help from all of you. Those of you who are younger CTBA members, I'd like your input on how we can further your needs and interests. If you're part of my generation, ask your younger friends and relatives what might get them interested in Thoroughbreds and breeding. Email me at tygreen1823@gmail.com and I'll try to explore some of those ideas in future columns.

To paraphrase the young man I spoke with, we have tons of young people at Del Mar who leave the track with no idea of how to get involved in racing or breeding. Let's find a way to tap their enthusiasm and energy and ensure a healthy breeding program for years to come. **CTB**