



Ty Green

CTBA BOARD MEMBER

GRASSROOTS OWNERS

A question that we all ask ourselves is, “How do we get new owners into Thoroughbred racing?” It’s a topic that has been at the forefront during my decade in the business, and it’s a question for which there has not, to my mind, been a satisfactory answer. Like many of you, I was introduced to racing at a young age, 10 years old, when my dad had an extra ticket to the Big Fresno Fair (which wasn’t so big then). I fell in love immediately and can’t comprehend why everyone doesn’t love it. We can’t all be so lucky.

I recently got an inkling that the ownership problem is different than I had realized. An acquaintance called and wanted to take his family to Del Mar. He is a successful, intelligent, and sophisticated businessman, but, as he had never been to the races, he found the whole idea of taking his family too daunting on his own. I helped them get a shaded table at Del Mar and gave them detailed instruction on what to

do—down to the last Delmargarita. I handicapped the card and emailed my picks, which included six winners. (That never happens when I’m betting my own money.)

Monday morning my phone rang with my excited acquaintance now referring to himself as “friend.” (Funny what a few winners will do.) He told me that even before they started winning, they were having a great time and couldn’t wait to go back. More on point, he started asking me about our stable, how I got started, what are the costs, and ended by saying, “My wife and I really want to buy a horse to race.”

So in a week or two we will be visiting Tom Clark at Rancho San Miguel to look over our horses. Knowing Tom, we’ll also look over some stallions and may “accidentally” see a yearling or two. Then we will lunch while I help them create a plan to get started. I am strongly suggesting they start by claiming. Who knows where they will go from there?

There is an obvious point, but I

suspect most members encourage their non-racing friends and acquaintances to try a day at the track. What I hadn’t grasped is how overwhelming it might be for someone who watches the Kentucky Derby once a year to make the jump to attending races.

If I hadn’t walked this family through every step of the process, they would have gone to the beach. Instead, they did not feel they were walking into a completely unknown world, and as a result we have new fans and might have future CTBA members.

Our racing facilities do a good job of shepherding the potential converts once they get in the gate. The question is, how to get them in the gate? How do we remove the “daunt” for the maiden racing fan? I suppose the grassroots campaign I inadvertently waged might be a good start because today I received a call from a mutual acquaintance asking for the same treatment: Six winners and all. **CTB**