



From the *EXECUTIVE CORNER*



**DOUG BURGE**

CTBA PRESIDENT

# SANTA ANITA SPOTLIGHTS CALIFORNIA-BREDS MAY 25

Competitive rivals back in the day, Santa Anita Park management honored the late, great Hollywood Park by naming its April 19-June 16 dates the spring “Hollywood Meet.” California-breds will be in the spotlight on Saturday, May 25, when the card features five stakes, three of which were originally run across town and now are Santa Anita staples.

Originally created in the early 2000s as California Gold Rush Day, the state-bred spring showcase offers a total of \$550,000 in purses for the quintet of Golden State Series-eligible stakes.

Here’s the lineup:

**ADDED VALUE, STAKES**

**CONDITIONS, DISTANCE**

<b>\$125,000 Snow Chief Stakes Presented by City National Bank</b> .....	3 YO, 9 F (T)
<b>\$125,000 Melair Stakes</b> .....	F, 3 YO, 8½ F
<b>\$100,000 Thor’s Echo Stakes</b> .....	3 & UP, 6 F
<b>\$100,000 Crystal Water Stakes</b> .....	3 & UP, 8 F (T)
<b>\$100,000 Fran’s Valentine Stakes</b> .....	F/M, 3 & UP, 8 F (T)

Fittingly, each race is named after a champion Cal-bred from the past.

Preakness winner Snow Chief, bred by Carl Grinstead, owned in partnership with Ben Rochelle, and trained by Mel Stute, was the champion 3-year-old in the country in 1986. He was a three-time Cal-bred Horse of the Year, from 1985-87.

Melair, bred and owned by Marianne Millard and Bea Rous and trained by John Sadler, raced only five times, all wins, capped by a defeat of Snow Chief when she ran the fastest mile for a female while beating the boys in the 1986 Silver Screen Handicap. She was named that season’s champion Cal-bred 3-year-old female and sprinter.

Thor’s Echo, bred by Fast Lane Farms, Carleton Block, and Harry Forman and trained by Doug O’Neill, was the second Cal-bred to win a Breeders’ Cup race as the upset winner of the 2006 TVG Breeders’ Cup Sprint. He was voted an Eclipse Award as the nation’s champion sprinter of that season.

Crystal Water, wearing the silks of breeder/owner Connie Ring and trained by Roger Clapp, in 1977 reeled off consecutive wins in the Santa Anita Handicap, Californian, and Hollywood Gold Cup. That fall he added the Oak Tree Invitational. Crystal Water had been named Cal-bred Horse of the Year in 1976, when his wins included the Hollywood Derby, and he repeated with another Horse of the Year title in 1977.

Fran’s Valentine was bred by owner and auto paint entrepreneur Earl Scheib (“I’ll paint any car, any color for \$29.95—no ups, no extras”) and trained by Joe Manzi. Named for Scheib’s wife, Fran’s Valentine won seven stakes, including the 1985 Kentucky Oaks. But she is equally remembered for the win taken from her, the controversial inaugural Breeders’ Cup Juvenile Fillies in 1984, when she finished first but was disqualified and placed 10th for interference in the stretch. Fran’s Valentine was named a Cal-bred champion for four consecutive years. **CTB**