



From the Executive Corner

A Lifetime Legacy

He was my hero. He was so special. He was “Freebie.” I am Trudy McCaffery. I love the Thoroughbred. I feel like I have lost a son and California a great stallion in Free House.

A few weeks ago, Managing Editor Rudi Groothedde and Editor Doug Burge asked me if I would like to provide the opening editorial for this August issue of *California Thoroughbred*. As chair of the Magazine Committee for over five years, we thought that it would be appropriate for me to address the CTBA membership about their official publication, as well as discuss other important areas in which I was involved in the industry. Little did I know then, how bittersweet this article would turn out to be.

So, it is with mixed emotions that I welcome you to my world, which was literally turned upside down with the unexpected and tragic loss of my beloved Freebie on July 19. Twice voted the California-bred Horse of the Year—probably by most of you who are actually reading these words now—he embodied all that is great about a horse.

My experience with his career is something I will never forget. The fact that he raced from ages two to five and won graded stakes each year is a tribute to his trainer Paco Gonzalez. He retired sound to Vessels Stallion Farm just over four years ago, and he has already produced a daughter of whom I am very proud, the multiple graded stakes winner House of Fortune. As a result of her being voted the Golden State’s Champion Two-Year-Old Female of 2003, Free House was our leading freshman sire of last year.

Another favorite of mine is his own sire Smokester, who is fast approaching \$12 million in progeny earnings as he continues to sire talented horses, confirmed by the fact that he was the recipient of two state awards last year—leading sire by both number of wins and number of races won.

What comforts me at this time of sadness is the knowledge that, with bloodlines like this, Freebie’s wonderful legacy is secure. So, make sure you read Debra Ginsburg’s lovely, emotional tribute to him on page 14.

But now is the time to talk of other good deeds, like this very publication. I am very gratified with what we have accomplished in recent years. With Rudi, Doug and their dedicated and loyal staff, I believe we have improved the content, presentation, timeliness and overall quality of the magazine. However, we are always on the lookout for improvement, so our goal for the future is to provide our readers with monthly issues containing the kind of subject matter that will be beneficial to the continued success of our local breeding industry.

On July 10, I was honored to have a group of 42 members of Kids To The Cup (KTTC) in attendance at the Hollywood Gold Cup. This was our first trip to Hollywood and it was a huge success. This day will become a part of our annu-

al schedule of trips to the Santa Anita Derby, the Triple Crown and Breeders’ Cup. Our organization is now five years old and is the fastest growing kids group in the country.

I also strive to give back to an industry that has given me so much joy and excitement over the years. I am proud to serve as a director of the CTBA, Oak Tree Racing Association, Breeders’ Cup and NTRA (National Thoroughbred Racing Association) Charities, as well as a Trustee of the Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders Association (TOBA).

At this point, I would like to refer to the current issue of the magazine and offer my congratulations to the 2003/2004 Broodmare of the Year and Valkyr Trophy award winners, Rio Tejo and Moscow Burning, respectively. It is this caliber of excellence that will ensure the future success of our all-important aim of breeding quality horses.

I also hope that many of you decide to attend our 8th Annual Harris Ranch Seminar, being held in Coalinga on Friday, Sept. 24 and Saturday, Sept. 25. Our guest speaker is Dogwood Stable’s Cot Campbell. I know Cot personally and have heard him speak. Believe me you are in for a treat. He is truly entertaining, and one of the most delightful people I have met in horse racing.

In closing, I remind you all of this year’s CTBA Sales’ Del Mar Yearling Sale, which returns to the Del Mar Thoroughbred Club’s saddling paddock—after that track’s day of racing—on Monday, August 16. As part of the Sales Committee, we are very excited about both the venue and the quality of the 122 youngsters catalogued.

We look forward to seeing all of you at Del Mar.

—Trudy McCaffery



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