



# Winter Newsletter

January 2026

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY BILL NADER

Dear Members,

We are now one month into the new year, a perfect time to reflect on the accomplishments of the prior year, the hope for continued momentum, and the little things that we should

never take for granted.

One of the great attributes of horse racing is its sense of community. We are an extended family of horse owners, breeders, trainers, jockeys, backstretch workers, frontside workers and a legion of racing fans who love our sport. It is not always perfect as all families will disagree from time to time, but this does not change our common denominator. We are connected by the same passion that gives us purpose and hope. Personally, I remind myself of this whenever the going gets tough. A short walk from the TOC office to the paddock is all the medicine I need.

As we make the transition to 2026, let's review some of the key outcomes to help tell our story.

On the minds of many is, of course, the brief introduction of a limited number of Racing On Demand terminals at Santa Anita. Intended to help the California horse racing address a competitive disadvantage that has persisted for more than last two decades, the terminals were removed just two days later by law enforcement officials from the Department of Justice. Shortly thereafter, Santa Anita filed a 52-page complaint in Los Angeles Superior Court.

Racing on Demand mirrors existing pari-mutuel policy with payouts that reward both partial and perfect selections over

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## TOC Board Election

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## 2026 TOC BOARD ELECTION March 1 Deadline

Owners may qualify by obtaining 50 signatures from current TOC members supporting their candidacy on a petition issued by the TOC.

[LEARN MORE](#)

# President's Message, Cont.

a three-race sequence. In discussions with stakeholders both inside and outside California, the industry is unified in its support of Racing on Demand to preserve and protect the history and tradition of our sport, the tens of thousands of jobs, the state's tourism economy, and sustainable agriculture.

This support includes the TOC, CTBA, CTT, racetracks, backstretch workers and all who contribute to California's vibrant equestrian culture, as well as industry partners from across the nation. We will keep you updated.

Looking back to the achievements from 2025, purse overpayments at Del Mar and Los Alamitos were completely erased, and we enter 2026 on solid fiscal footing. The purse overpayment at Santa Anita was substantially reduced to a manageable amount and is on pace for a balanced budget at the end of this year. The days of increasing deficits are behind us, and we are now well positioned to build on our recent success.

The purse of a maiden special weight race at Santa Anita was \$60,000 on January 1, 2025; this year it was increased to \$70,000. The increase in that same race category was over 15 percent at Los Alamitos when comparing December 2025 to the prior year. Overnight purses were up; purse overpayments were down. That's a win, win for both today and tomorrow. While it may be too early for some to forecast what purses will be at Del Mar this summer, you can take comfort in knowing that "where the turf meets the surf" is riding the right wave.

Field size in 2025 was over 7.8 per race, another big step in the right direction and a remarkable increase over the prior year. For the first time in decades, California outperformed New York in this key performance indicator. The average in California was higher than Aqueduct, Belmont at Aqueduct, and Saratoga with the latter coming in at 7.7.

The newly installed Tapeta training track at Santa Anita was the unsung hero it was meant to be when heavy rain arrived at Christmas and continued into New Year. It provided a fallback option to keep horses in training and provided much-needed stability at the start of the new season.

With great assistance from the TOC Board of Directors, we continue to work on your behalf to protect your interests, bolster purses and field size, and create a better experience for owners, stakeholders, and fans. Momentum matters, and together we are finally moving in the right direction.

U.S Thoroughbred Racing Economic Indicators			
Indicator (Jan ~ Dec)	2025	2024	% Change
Wagering on U.S. Races*	\$11,028,652,933	\$11,265,666,064	-2.10%
U.S. Purses	\$1,280,653,612	\$1,312,188,358	-2.40%
U.S. Race Days	3,590	3,787	-5.20%
*Includes worldwide commingled wagering on U.S. races. Data from Equibase.			
Southern California Thoroughbred Racing Economic Indicators			
Indicator (Jan ~ Dec)	2025	2024	% Change
Wagering on CA Races*	\$1,239,038,803	\$1,237,263,660	0.14%
CA Purses*	\$84,106,500	\$86,144,500	-2.37%
CA Race Days	157	156	0.64%
*Figures for wagering on CA races are from all locations - ADW and Brick and Mortar - on CA live Thoroughbred races (excluding Breeder's Cup races)			



# California Stakes Schedule

A listing of Stakes Races held at California Tracks

[VIEW 2026 SCHEDULE](#)

SA

CA-Breds

TRACK	2026	STAKE	AGE	SEX	FURLONGS	SURFACE	GRADE	PURSE
Santa Anita	31-Jan	San Pasqual	4+		9	D	2	200,000
Santa Anita	31-Jan	Megahertz	4+	F	8	T	3	100,000
Santa Anita	1-Feb	Las Virgenes	3	F	8	D	L	100,000
Santa Anita	7-Feb	D. Wayne Lukas	4+	F	7	D	2	200,000
Santa Anita	7-Feb	Robert B. Lewis	3		8	D	3	100,000
Santa Anita	7-Feb	Thunder Road	4+		8	T	3	100,000
Santa Anita	7-Feb	Sweet Life	3	F	*6.5	T (H)	L	100,000
Santa Anita	8-Feb	Clocker's Corner	4+		6	T	R	100,000
Santa Anita	14-Feb	San Marcos	4+		10	T	3	100,000
Santa Anita	15-Feb	Palos Verdes	4+		6	D	L	100,000
Santa Anita	21-Feb	Wishing Well	4+	F	6	T	R	100,000
Santa Anita	22-Feb	Pasadena	3		8	T		100,000
Santa Anita	28-Feb	Buena Vista	4+	F	8	T	2	200,000
Santa Anita	1-Mar	Santa Ysabel	3	F	8.5	D	3	100,000
Santa Anita	7-Mar	Santa Anita Handicap	4+		10	D	1	300,000
Santa Anita	7-Mar	Frank E. Kilroe Mile	4+		8	T	2	200,000
Santa Anita	7-Mar	B. Wayne Hughes Beholder Mile	4+	F	8	D	1	300,000
Santa Anita	7-Mar	DK Horse San Felipe	3		8.5	D	2	200,000
Santa Anita	8-Mar	China Doll	3	F	8	T	L	100,000
Santa Anita	14-Mar	San Simeon	4+		*6.5	T	3	100,000
Santa Anita	15-Mar	Santa Ana	4+	F	10	T	3	100,000
Santa Anita	21-Mar	San Luis Rey	4+		12	T	3	100,000
Santa Anita	21-Mar	Irish O'Brien	4+	F	*6.5	T (H)	CA	100,000
Santa Anita	22-Mar	Sensational Star	4+		*6.5	T (H)	CA	100,000
Santa Anita	28-Mar	Wilshire	4+	F	8	T	3	100,000
Santa Anita	29-Mar	San Carlos	4+		7	D	3	100,000
Santa Anita	4-Apr	Santa Anita Derby	3		9	D	1	500,000
Santa Anita	4-Apr	Santa Anita Oaks	3	F	8.5	D	2	200,000
Santa Anita	4-Apr	Monrovia	4+	F	*6.5	T (H)	3	100,000
Santa Anita	4-Apr	Echo Eddie	3		6.5	D	CA	125,000
Santa Anita	4-Apr	Evening Jewel	3	F	6.5	D	CA	125,000
Santa Anita	5-Apr	Providencia	3	F	9	T	L	100,000
Santa Anita	5-Apr	John Shear	3		*6.5	T (H)	L	100,000
Santa Anita	18-Apr	American	4+		8	T	3	100,000
Santa Anita	19-Apr	Santa Maria	4+	F	8.5	D	3	100,000
Santa Anita	25-Apr	Royal Heroine	4+	F	8	T	3	100,000

# John Sikura Appointed to TOC Board



The board of directors of the Thoroughbred Owners of California (TOC) unanimously voted to appoint owner John G. Sikura to fill the vacant seat of Nick Alexander, subject to full board ratification at the upcoming January 30 meeting. Sikura is president of Hill 'n' Dale Farms in Kentucky and is one of the leading horsemen in the Thoroughbred breeding and racing industry in America.

His late father, John Sikura Jr., inducted into the Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame in 2013, founded Hill 'n' Dale Farms north of Toronto in the late 1960s. He later bought a farm in central Kentucky, and young Sikura took over those operations. Hill n' Dale relocated to the historic 1500-acre Xalapa farm in 2022. There they stand stallions such as Curlin and are both commercial breeders and major consignors at public auction. In addition, John is also an accomplished Thoroughbred owner. He has campaigned many graded stakes winners, including Richi (IRE), who recently captured the Grade 2 Santa Maria Stakes and Grade 3 Las Flores Stakes at Santa Anita Park.

"I have a great love for California racing dating to my youth attending Santa Anita with my father when Charlie Whittingham was our trainer," said Sikura. "I currently have horses with Bob Baffert, and I can think of no more important issue than the sustenance of California breeding and racing. We must face the challenges with courage and in collaboration with industry and political agencies that can help our quest. California is of historic importance to our industry and we must prevail."

TOC Chairman Gary Fenton said "The TOC Board already reflects the full spectrum of California ownership... small owners, large owners, and California owner-breeders. By welcoming John, we add something new and critically important: a nationally respected owner-breeder with a broad, long-term perspective on the sport. John understands how California fits within the broader ecosystem of American racing, and his voice will help connect regions, align interests, and strengthen California's role in the sport's future."

To fulfill a TOC Bylaws requirement, Sikura will be required to run in the next election.

Alexander had served on the board since 2013, as chairman from 2016-2021. He founded Nick Alexander Imports in Los Angeles and operates a horse ranch in Santa Ynez. He has raced Thoroughbreds in California for more than 40 years and led all owners in wins in 2025. He bred and owns Grazen, leading California-based stakes sire of 2023, 2024, and 2025 standing at Eclipse Thoroughbred Training and Sports Therapy.

## To Qualify for the Ballot:

Owners may qualify by obtaining 50 signatures from current TOC members supporting their candidacy on a petition issued by the TOC.

Please keep your mailing address updated with the CHRB to ensure you receive election notices from TOC.



## TOC Board Election

PROCESS  
BEGINS

[LEARN MORE](#)



# Owner Spotlight



## Kevin Bogart

From a young fan visiting Del Mar with his parents to becoming a successful owner at the highest level in California, Kevin, discusses the moments that sparked his lifelong passion for the sport, the lessons learned along the way, and what it truly takes to build a rewarding ownership experience.

[WATCH NOW](#)

## Top Performers - Fall 2025

### DEL MAR MEET

OCT 30TH - NOV 30TH

#### Ranked by Wins

Juddmonte .....	4
Spendthrift Farm LLC .....	3
Reddam Racing LLC .....	3
J K Racing LLC .....	3

#### Ranked by Earnings

Susumu Fujita .....	\$3,640,000
HOS Syndicate .....	\$2,600,000
Godolphin, LLC .....	\$2,560,000

### LOS ALAMITOS RACE COURSE

DEC 5TH - DEC 14TH

#### Ranked by Wins

SF Racing, Starlight Racing, etc .....	2
Reddam Racing LLC .....	2
Harris Farms, Inc .....	2

#### Ranked by Earnings

SF Racing, Starlight Racing, etc .....	\$152,400
Reddam Racing LLC .....	\$146,980
Juddmonte .....	\$120,000

## TOC Spring Event

### OWNER EDUCATION SEMINAR

Saturday, March 21 - 9:00 AM

Santa Anita Park

All owners are invited to TOC's FREE seminar! Join us for an informative Horse Conformation class at Santa Anita Park.

Licensed owners are welcome to bring one guest.  
Additional guests will result in a fee.

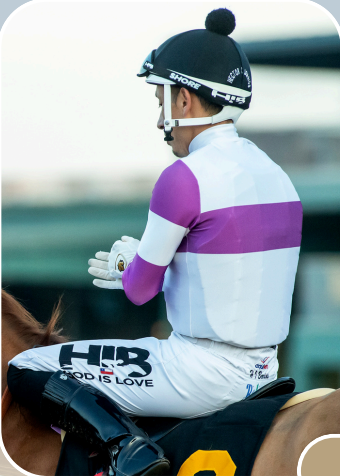
Registration Opens February 21

More details coming soon.





# 2025 Leading Owners



[VIEW DETAILS HERE](#)

## TOC OWNER AWARDS: NOMINATE NOW

Do you know someone who became a new owner in 2025? It's time to recognize their hard work and accomplishments! Whether you're nominating yourself or someone else, this is your chance to shine a light on a deserving rookie.

Nominees will be evaluated based on their achievements and the impact they've made throughout the year. We'll be tracking progress, but we need YOUR input! Share the story of their journey, the milestones they've reached, and the difference they've made.

Let's celebrate those who have truly gone above and beyond. This is your chance to recognize the rookies who are making waves and leaving a mark!



[NOMINATE NOW](#)



[NOMINATE NOW](#)

TOC would like to recognize and celebrate the growing population of co-ownerships and partnership entities within the horse racing community. We are looking for nominations that provide a compelling story that simply, but significantly, reflect the joy of the sport.

This award is not based on statistics and is open to co-ownerships and partnerships of all sizes from two and beyond. Partnerships of any size can be nominated through self-nomination or by another TOC owner.



## CARMA's 2025 Impact Report: Celebrating 17 Years of Second Careers

As we close out 2025, CARMA marks its 17th year of ensuring California's retiring racehorses transition with dignity and. To date, CARMA has successfully placed more than 500 horses through its Placement Program and awarded more than \$6.8 million in grants to aftercare partners dedicated to supporting Thoroughbreds beyond the track.

## CARMA 2025 Legacy Project: The Messineo Makeover Scholarship

This year brought meaningful growth and memorable milestones, including the launch of the Messineo Makeover Scholarship. The program supported six talented riders and their California Thoroughbreds from the CARMA Placement Program at the Retired Racehorse Project's Thoroughbred Makeover.

CARMA-sponsored riders delivered standout performances on a national stage, earning a Reserve Champion Freestyle title, the #1 Junior Rider award, and a \$5,000 Top California-Bred Horse Award. Additional highlights included top-six finishes in Competitive Trail, Ranch Work, and Jumpers, along with strong dressage and hunter performances in divisions with more than 100 competitors.

The scholarship honors the legacy of Nancy Messineo, whose generosity continues to open doors for both horses and riders.

## Other 2025 highlights for CARMA include:

- Awarding \$515,000 in grants to 22 aftercare charity partners, strengthening California's aftercare safety net.
- Successfully placing 30 retiring racehorses through the Placement Program into safe, fulfilling second careers.
- CARMathon: New Beginnings, which brought Thoroughbred aftercare to center stage with a Hollywood-inspired fundraiser and viral feature trailer spotlighting life after racing. The campaign raised more than \$200,000, surpassing its \$150,000 goal.
- Co-sponsoring the inaugural Thoroughbred High Point Award at the Santa Anita CSI3\* and CSI5\*-W Split Rock Jumping Tour in partnership with 1/ST and Thoroughbred Aftercare Alliance, recognizing top-performing Thoroughbreds in second careers with \$2,000, a Santa Anita race-day package, and a high point ribbon.
- Being named a semifinalist for the 19th Annual Dr. Tony Ryan Book Award for *What Horses Do After Racing: The Story of Good Carma*, a children's book by CARMA board member Jay Privman, with all proceeds supporting CARMA's mission.
- Launching an updated donor management platform to enable recurring donations and strengthen long-term donor relationships.
- Expanding Placement Program capacity to 25 horses, ensuring more retiring racehorses have a clear and supported pathway from the track to their next chapter.
- Continuing collaboration with the Michael Nyuis Foundation through the 2025 MNF Charity Show & Christmas Market, featuring the Thoroughbred Classic and supporting young equestrians while celebrating Thoroughbreds in second careers.

We are deeply grateful to everyone who contributed to CARMA's mission this year. Your support ensures that every retiring racehorse has the chance to thrive in a second career—because the finish line isn't the end of their story.

For more information about CARMA and its grant programs, visit [carma4horses.org](https://carma4horses.org).

*Thoroughbred Makeover 2025  
Credit: Erin Gilmore Photography*

# California Backstretch Services

*Learn about the services available and how you can help!*



## California Thoroughbred Horsemen's Foundation



*Provides comprehensive medical, dental, and optometry services.*  
Referrals to specialists, on-site lab work, prescription assistance  
Diabetes education classes and discounted gym memberships  
Partners with tracks on complimentary backstretch meals

[cthfcares.org](http://cthfcares.org)



## Edwin J. Gregson Foundation



*Supports programs that enhance the quality of life for members of the backstretch community and their families.*

On and off site recreational activities  
College scholarships and career guidance  
English Language Learner classes

[gregsonfoundation.com](http://gregsonfoundation.com)



## Race Track Chaplaincy of California



*Focused on the spiritual, emotional, physical, social, and educational needs of those persons involved in all aspects of the horse racing industry.*

Interdenominational church services and daily prayer  
Provides food, clothing, transportation, and support services  
Visits the sick and injured workers in hospitals

[rtccal.org](http://rtccal.org)



## Winners Foundation



*Helps front and backside employees who are troubled by alcohol, drugs, or gambling problems, as well as mental illnesses.*

Provides an array of services for transition back to gainful employment  
Crisis Intervention in the form of immediate and short-term psychological care  
Referrals to 12-step programs, detox centers, sober living environments, etc.

[winnersfoundation.org](http://winnersfoundation.org)



*Scan the QR code to watch a video about each organization's impact*