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CHRB NEWS RELEASE

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JOHN HARRIS ELECTED CHRB CHAIRMAN FOR 2004**COMMITTEE TO LOOK AT SECURITY MEASURES**

LOS ALAMITOS, CA – The California Horse Racing Board is creating an ad hoc committee of industry representatives to consider possible new security measures to enhance the integrity of horse racing, including a proposal voiced Thursday by trainers attending the CHRB monthly meeting. The trainers advocated the creation of detention stalls and the installation of camera surveillance systems in stable areas that would record the movements of all horses entered to race on any given day.

In other major business Thursday, the Board elected new officers for the coming year. Commissioner John Harris, who currently serves as CHRB vice chairman, will become CHRB chairman on January 1, and Commissioner Sheryl Granzella will become vice chairman. Their fellow commissioners elected them to those posts unanimously.

Current CHRB Chairman Roger Licht, in what could be the final major action of his one-year term as chairman, will formally announce the members of the ad hoc committee next week. He mentioned Don Barney, director of security and operations at Hollywood Park, and Tim Read, director of operations at Del Mar, as two people he would like to see serve on the committee. He also indicated he wants representation by the Thoroughbred Owners of California, the California Thoroughbred Trainers, and others who have expressed sincere interest in these matters.

Licht said he placed the security matter on the Board agenda for discussion because he has received communications from people within the horse-racing industry voicing suspicions that others are violating CHRB rules prohibiting the administration of unauthorized substances to horses entered in races. He said the allegations have been speculative and that no one has provided the Board with any details of wrongdoing.

“I want to begin by saying that our investigative staff is doing a tremendous job with limited resources, and our drug-testing laboratories are doing outstanding work,” said Licht. “We all agree there is a perception problem. Whether there is in fact a problem in reality, we must each determine for ourselves. But we should do all that we can to improve the perception that horse racing is a fair game.”

Licht asked one of the trainers who spoke, CTT Executive Director Ed Halpern, if he believes the problem is one of reality or just perception.

“I have no evidence that any illegal activity is taking place,” responded Halpern. “But it is not beyond the realm of possibility that it is taking place. The issue is to show that we are doing everything reasonably possible that (illegal drugs) are not being used.”

Halpern suggested various ways to accomplish this. He said the CTT endorses increased surveillance of the stable area, including more unannounced visits during the hours immediately preceding races. The CTT also recommends more complete testing, more extensive use of cameras in the stable area, the designation of security stalls in each barn for horses entered to run, with the stalls monitored by cameras, and the freezing of blood samples for future testing when new tests come along for currently undetectable drugs.

Licht responded, “I agree there is a major perception problem and I’m glad the CTT is not saying there is a rampant drug problem on the backside.”

Harris said, “I really question whether there really is very much going on at all, but there certainly is a perception that it is.”

Trainer Vladimir Cerin said, “I agree that the testing is good and the surveillance is good, given the limitations, but we need you to help us convince the fans that the game is on the level.”

Cerin suggested the need for increased surveillance by investigators and/or cameras, or as a last resort the creation of a detention barn or centralized security area for horses entered to run. He said most trainers agree with him on these points.

“If you can set up cameras in barns, try it on a few horses, try it on one race per day, and see how it goes,” said Cerin. “I don’t know what the answers are, but working together I’m sure that we can find some answers.”

Drew Couto, representing the TOC, said any recommendations for new security measures would need to address the costs involved, then he added optimistically, “We’ll find the money.”

Sherwood Chillingworth, executive vice president of the Oak Tree Racing Association, said Oak Tree would provide financial help.

Commissioner Alan Landsburg said that to date no one has provided the Board with any evidence of rule violations, “no facts, no details.”

Dr. Ron Jensen, the CHRB equine medical director, said the two laboratories that perform drug testing for the CHRB – Truesdail Laboratories in Tustin and the Ken Maddy Laboratory at UC Davis – both are highly respected. He noted that when the National Thoroughbred Racing Associations launched its “super testing” program two years ago to assess the efficacy of drug-testing laboratories around the country, the Maddy laboratory was one of the two selected by the NTRA to do the review. He said 98.7% of the samples tested were negative, and of the 1.3% that tested positive, 41% of those were positive for excessive authorized medication.

In other business, the Board approved a one-year license renewal for XpressBet to conduct Advance Deposit Wagering (ADW). XpressBet is a subsidiary of Magna Entertainment Corporation and it offers account wagering on races at the three MEC tracks in California – Santa Anita Park, Bay Meadows, and Golden Gate Fields – as well as harness races at Cal Expo and the fair meets.

The Board approved the distribution of \$235,000 by Hollywood Park Racing Charities, Inc. to 33 beneficiaries, more than 67% of which will go to industry-related organizations. The Board also approved the distribution of \$70,000 by the Bay Meadows Foundation to 28 beneficiaries, including \$14,000 to the disabled riders endowment.

Commissioner Harris, the incoming chairman, was appointed to the CHRB by former Governor Gray Davis on November 9, 2000, to a term that expired last July. He was reappointed by Governor Davis to a second term that expires July 26, 2007.

Harris owns and operates Harris Farms in Coalinga. He has owned thoroughbreds since 1958 and is a prominent breeder of racehorses. He was elected a director of the California Thoroughbred Breeders Association in 1974, served as the organization's legislative chairman for 20 years, and was twice elected CTBA president.

Harris also has served on the boards of the Breeders' Cup, Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders Association, Grayson-Jockey Club Research Board, and Center for Equine Health/UC Davis Advisory Board. He is a member of the Jockey Club.

Commissioner Granzella was appointed to the CHRB by Governor Davis on October 22, 1999, then reappointed in 2002 to a term that expires January 1, 2006.

Granzella graduated from St. Mary's college in 1989 with a bachelor's degree in economics and business administration, then she joined Richmond Sanitary Service as special projects manager, serving as liaison between the company and local businesses and elected officials.

A lifelong resident and native of Contra Costa County, Granzella is director of the Contra Costa College Foundation, Salesian Boys and Girls Club, San Pablo Chamber of Commerce, and San Pablo Community Foundation.

She currently serves on the CHRB Race Dates Committee, Stewards Committee, and Benevolent Programs Committee.

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