

1010 Hurley Way, Suite 300
Sacramento, CA 95825
(916) 263-6000
Fax (916) 263-6042

CALIFORNIA HORSE RACING BOARD

12235 Beach Blvd., Suite 7
Stanton, CA 90680
(714) 890-7001
Fax (714) 890-7006
Contact:
Mike Marten
(714) 890-7004
Cell: (714) 240-1870

CHRB NEWS RELEASE

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JOHN ANDREINI INTENDS TO STRENGTHEN HORSE RACING

SACRAMENTO, CA – John Andreini does not take half steps. In 1951 he started his own insurance business. He built his company into what is now one of the largest privately held brokerage firms in the United States.

He also decided to get into the vineyard business. Now his four vineyards produce in excess of 30,000 tons of grapes each year.

He bought his first racehorse in 1968. Today he owns 35 broodmares and has a ranch where he boards 80 of his own horses in various stages of development.

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger appointed Andreini to the California Horse Racing Board on October 14. Andreini didn't speak much during his first CHRB meeting three weeks later, but if his past record is any indication, it is only a matter of time before Andreini throws all of his energy into the challenge of regulating California's massive horse-racing industry.

"I only know how to do things one way," said Andreini. "There's a mantle – a responsibility – you have when you take a position like this. I'm not going to let down the people who helped me get this position."

Andreini never thought much about horses before 1963 when a client friend asked him to participate in the Rancheros Vistadores. Andreini became a member of the famed riding group and wound up serving six years on its Board and Membership Committee.

"Before I went on that first ride, I never realized how much I loved horses," said Andreini. "My interest evolved from horseback riding to owning and breeding racehorses. I've had dozens and dozens of racehorses but I'm really a breeder. I breed for the market.

"In 1968, I bought a ranch in partnership with my trainer at the time, Judd Morris. We broke and trained and bred horses there. Some were fair; some were better than fair. But I didn't enjoy true success until Blane Schvaneveldt became my trainer in 1980, and we went into partnership. We've been rockin' and rollin' ever since.

"I firmly believe that the need great broodmares to have great babies, so I went about acquiring great broodmares, including Ah Sigh, a world champion filly in 1993 and 1994. And Deeachick was broodmare of the year in 2003. I have Jumping Tac Flash, who was champion 2-year-old filly. And Militia is another great one.

“In 1988, I purchased a ranch in Paicines, which is 38 miles south of Hollister. My farm manager is Danny Cordoza. We don’t stand any studs there, though I do own shares in several stallions and major interests in two others.”

Asked about his new role as a racing commissioner and his primary concerns, Andreini said California racing needs to boost its revenue base in order to compete with other jurisdictions.

“My hopes are that sometime in the not-to-distant future we are going to get gaming at racetracks,” he said. “If you look at how racing is prospering in New Mexico, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and everywhere else where they have slots, you can see why our efforts have been stymied. Horses tend to go where the big purses are.

“If we could get help in the form of slot machines at racetracks, a lot of good would come from it. That’s my main concern at the moment. As a racing commissioner, my focus will be on the biggest issue by far – the survival of horse racing. If we can’t solve that problem, we might as well pack up and go home. I’m not ready to do that.

“There are other issues, of course. As a racing commission, we must uphold the laws and the regulations of horse racing. Everyone has to play by the same rules, otherwise there would be havoc. But gaming is far and away the biggest issue.

“I sat silent at my first Board meeting, and I will probably remain silent at the next meeting or two. I don’t know where all of the bodies are buried yet. But as soon as I know where they are, we’ll kick up some dust.”

Andreini was born in Los Angeles in 1927 but he has resided most of his life on the San Mateo Peninsula. He served in the Merchant Marine from 1944 to 1946 and spent most of that time in the South Pacific.

After leaving the service, Andreini worked for Bank of America until 1951, when he started his own insurance business. His company has nine offices in California and one in Nevada, and employs more than 200 people. Three of his six children work for Andreini & Company.

Andreini is a Board member of the Pacific Coast Quarter Horse Racing Association. He is also a director of the American Quarter Horse Association and a member of the AQHA Foundation Committee/Council and AQHA Racing Committee. He is a member of the Equine Orthopedic Research Advisory Board of Colorado State University.

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