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CHRB NEWS RELEASE

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**FILMMAKERS SHOOTING DOCUMENTARY ON HORSE RACING**

ARCADIA, CA – Filmmakers Robin Rosenthal and Bill Yahraus will spend a year shooting a documentary on horse racing in California beginning December 26 with the opening of the Santa Anita winter meet.

“We are developing a documentary on one of our passions, horse racing,” said Rosenthal. “Hall of Fame trainer Richard Mandella has opened his barns to us as the nucleus for a year-long, fly-on-the-wall look at a racing season on the world-class Southern California circuit.

“In our conversations with Mr. Mandella, he explained that the racing community is like a family, and the horses are the children. We intend to turn our cameras on this extraordinary family.”

Rosenthal and Yahraus, who are husband and wife, are taking steps to acquire the necessary approvals from the CHRB and racetracks for this project. They met with the stewards, CHRB Chairman Alan Landsburg, and CHRB personnel, including Dr. William Bell, the official veterinarian at Santa Anita, to arrange for access to secure areas, such as the saddling paddock, receiving barn, and stable area.

“They are very professional and knowledgeable about horse racing,” said Landsburg, himself an award-winning film producer, director, and writer who has developed documentaries on horse racing for the CHRB and the Thoroughbred Owners of California.

“We were very impressed with their attitudes,” said steward Tom Ward. “They understand that the safety of horses and their handlers is our principal concern. If other trainers and owners feel that the presence of a camera is unsettling to their horses, the crew will politely leave that area. Everyone is aware of the sensitivity of some matters.”

The filmmakers already have obtained approval from management at Santa Anita and Hollywood Park for access to seating sections and other public areas, and assuming they obtain similar approvals from other racetracks, shooting will continue throughout the year. They also are planning trips to horse sales, breeding farms, research facilities, and various nationally and internationally significant races.

“This is an ambitious project,” explained Rosenthal. “We will open a window onto a rich and colorful world of people and horses doing something extraordinary together – from the intricacies of breeding to starting the yearlings, from planning the morning workouts to assessing the results, from instructing the jockeys in the walking ring to the intensity of the race itself. It will be as if the viewer himself were privileged to spend a year training and racing high-performance equine athletes.”

In addition to a close-up look at one of the most successful and highly respected trainers in the country, a very important component of the documentary will be the assistant trainers, veterinarians, exercise riders, grooms, hotwalkers, and others who contribute to the success of the barn. Mandella’s two main jockeys, Alex Solis and Mike Smith, also will feature prominently in the documentary.

The filmmakers intend to widen their focus to include other trainers besides Mandella. They understand that some racing participants may not wish to be included in the documentary. They have agreed to comply with the wishes of anyone who objects to being filmed.

The husband-and-wife team’s last project was the feature-length “Travels With Tarzan,” for which they spent a season on the road with a family-owned tent circus. PBS broadcast the film nationally.

Rosenthal has been an educator and a film editor as well as a filmmaker. She edited the documentary “Chamoru Dreams” and the award-winning “Mary Jane Colter: House Made of Dawn.”

Yahraus started out in the late 1960s with the documentary unit at KQED, the San Francisco public television station, then continued to make independent documentaries, including the award-winning “Homeboys.” He has edited many feature films, including “Heartland,” “Country,” “The Long Walk Home,” and “Silent Tongue.” He has been teaching film production at the University of Southern California since 1999.

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