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September 22, 2009

Good afternoon fellow NTWA members!

Summer racing is complete and the Breeders' Cup is coming fast, along with our annual awards dinner.

Just like the organization, the NTWA Awards Dinner celebrates its 50th anniversary for the 2009 edition and we're hopefully assembling a great event for our members and guests.

Invitations will be in your mailboxes very soon and the event will continue to be on its normal Wednesday prior to the Breeders' Cup, this year on November 4, at the Altadena Town and Country Club in Altadena, California. The dinner site is located very close to the Breeders' Cup media hotel and just minutes from Santa Anita Park as well, so everyone can make it after their work for the day is done.

Cocktails and silent auction begin at 5:30 p.m. PDT and dinner follows at 7 p.m.

In addition to our three main award winners—Dr. Jack Robbins, Larry Jones, and Dan Farley—who were announced last week, we annually recognize the winners of the Red Smith Kentucky Derby Writing Awards at our event and are glad to welcome back the return of the Breeders' Cup Media Awards for 2009.

Breeders' Cup Awards

Please remember to get your submissions in for this year's Breeders' Cup Media Awards, which return after a two-year hiatus. The deadline for the submission is Wednesday, September 30.

The National Turf Writers Association worked with and urged Breeders' Cup Ltd. to bring back the awards, which were scrapped in 2007 and 2008 due to a shortage of entries.

The winners of the four awards—the Joe Hirsch Award for outstanding newspaper writing, Bill Leggett Award for outstanding magazine writing, and the new Online Writing Award and new Social Media Award—will be presented during the 50th annual NTWA Awards Dinner on Wednesday, November 4 at the Altadena Town and Country Club in Altadena, California.

Handicapping book

Longtime NTWA member Steve Davidowitz also wanted to send along a note to the membership on a new book he worked on and that is below.

Semi-annual meeting

The NTWA will conduct its semi-annual meeting on the morning of Thursday, November 7 at Santa Anita Park at a specific time and place to be announced in a few weeks. Topics of discussion will include the awards dinner, any access concerns or issues at the Breeders' Cup, new members, and many others.

As always, please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions, concerns, problems, etc.

Take care and enjoy the rest of September and October!

Tom Law
NTWA President
September 17, 2009

BREEDERS' CUP MEDIA AWARDS

The Breeders' Cup Media Awards honor excellence in coverage of the Breeders' Cup World Championships. There are four awards that will celebrate outstanding writing and communication of the Championships in 2008: The Joe Hirsch Award for Outstanding Newspaper writing, Bill Leggett Award for Outstanding Magazine writing, the Online Writing Award and the Social Media Award.

To enter the competition for these awards, contestants may enter one submission per category with the exception of the Social Media award. However, contestants may not enter the same submission into one of the other categories.

The submissions for the Newspaper, Magazine and Online writing awards must be focused on covering some aspect of the 2008 Breeders' Cup: an advance story on a race, an individual profile, column, business article on the organization and structure of the event, or actual race story. No question and answer interviews will be accepted.

Social Media Award

The social media award is being introduced this year to recognize new forms of media communication. Due to the recent emergence of certain forms of Social Media, the time frame for submissions has been expanded to Sept. 30, 2009.

The criteria for this award is as follows:

Twitter

Must have over 200 followers

Must have over 30 Breeders' Cup related Tweets (between Oct. 1, 2008 – Sept. 30, 2009)

Must be Re-Tweeted over 20 times (Can be non-Breeders' Cup related)

Must have Re-Tweeted a Breeders' Cup Tweet at some point

When tweeting Breeders' Cup related material use hashtag #BC09 when possible

Blog

Must have over 10 posts about horseracing

Average number of comments per post must be over 10

Mailing Instructions

For the Newspaper, Magazine and Online writing awards, please send by postal service, air mail or overnight courier service, one original of the article and two plain copies of the article in word documents without the author's name or publication. You may also submit a copy of the original article from the publication, but you must cover completely your name and publication in all places. For the Social Media award, please mail two sets of copies of the 30 "Breeders' Cup Tweets," or for Bloggers, two sets of copies of your 10 posts.

Please send your submissions for arrival no later than September 30, 2009 to Jim Gluckson at the address below. A panel of experts will determine the winners in each category. The award winners will be announced at the National Turf Writers Association annual dinner on Wednesday, November 4 in California. Please mail submissions to:

Jim Gluckson
Breeders' Cup Ltd.
One Dag Hammarskjold Plaza
15th Floor
New York, NY 10017
212-230-9512

DAVIDOWITZ LETTER

Fellow racing writers, I am not sure you know that I have revised and greatly expanded *Betting Thoroughbreds* into a new edition, just released by DRF Press. It is I think, appropriately called, *Betting Thoroughbreds for the 21st Century* and includes a foreword by Steven Crist.

If you have been sent a copy by DRF Press, please let me know. If you have not been sent a copy and wish one for review purposes, please also let me know and provide a good mailing address other than your office, (books disappear that way). I will see to it that a copy will be sent to you as soon as possible.

One of the reasons I am writing this note has to do with a story behind the story of the original *Betting Thoroughbreds*, which I wrote in 1978. It shows you how important reviews from peers and related media can be for any book, especially for a book in which horse racing is involved.

When I first wrote *Betting Thoroughbreds*, the publisher E.P. Dutton was given a list of almost 300 media contacts for complementary copies ostensibly for review purposes. Three months after publication there were no reviews at all (this in an era when there were dozens of fully employed racing writers and racing columnists). So I went in to see the President of Dutton, Jack McRae who had assigned himself and his secretary as the 'Editor' of record, because the original Editor, Dan Farley had left for greater opportunities (Farley now is president of MacMillan Publishing, after having served as head of Harcourt Brace in San Diego. He also got involved in horse ownership after working with me on my book and David Litfin on an early book of his.)

That aside, I was an unemployed, single parent at the time, going through a divorce and I traveled from New Hope Pa., to McRae's office in New York with my six-year-old son Brad with me. McRae's secretary, Jane came out and told me with my son at my side the following: "Steve, I hate to tell you this, but this sometimes happens with a book that does not get any reviews. It's probably because your friends in the media didn't really like it and don't want to embarrass you with a negative review."

Needless to say, I left with slumped shoulders, realizing that my son heard every word as we held each other's hand heading to the elevator. It was to put it simply, one of the worst moments of my professional and private life.

Leaving Dutton on my way back to New Hope I decided to leave Brad at my sister's in the Bronx and go out to Aqueduct to see a few friends in the press box. As fortune would have it, I met Ray Kerrison, racing columnist for the NY Post and gave him the one copy of my book that I had with me, when he said he had not seen it.

About a month later, Ray wrote a glowing insightful column about my new handicapping ideas in the book, *TRACK BIAS, TRAINER PATTERNS and KEY RACES* and as coincidence would have it, I got a phone call from Jack McRae a week after Ray's great review.

Word for word, 30 years later I remember exactly what Jack said: "*Steve, we just found about 300 copies in the warehouse, the review copies never went out!!!*"

Great reviews and terrific sales ensued and 12 print runs and a revised expanded 1995, "second revised edition" was added with total gross sales in excess of 150,000 copies worldwide. This, without a single dime being spent by Dutton and its subsidiary to promote the book. Not a single dime!

So in February 2007, I bought the rights to *Betting Thoroughbreds* back from Dutton and in 10 minutes sold it to DRF Press at Handicapping Expo when Steven Crist said he would gladly publish a revised, updated edition for the new game we are playing.

"Betting Thoroughbreds for the 21st Century took me nearly two years to complete and includes about 50% of the original and second revised material blended together.

It has chapters on the new synthetic tracks and how to deal with them; it has chapters on the so called Super Trainers who have been winning races at phenomenal, sometimes suspicious rates. It has new 'off track', 'turf' and 'synthetic sire' lists, plus a wide range of exotic wagering designs for players of any budget. And it has more than 100 new examples of my handicapping ideas blended in with the original material. It also has many new ideas I've learned from professional players across the country in my travels and media assignments.

Without being egotistical, and I mean that sincerely, I believe *"Betting Thoroughbreds"* was an important book, in the same vein that Andy Beyer's *"Picking Winners"* and Tom Ainslie's *"Complete Guide to Thoroughbred Racing"* were.

I believe *Betting Thoroughbreds for the 21st Century* deserves honest reviews by professional turf writers—my peers—especially in this age when there are fewer newspapers and far fewer full time racing writers.

I look forward to reading what you think about it. Regards and all the best,
Steve Davidowitz, NTWA member since 1972.

Please Note: To get a review copy of 'Betting Thoroughbreds' please E-mail me at davidwtz@aol.com.