

Midwest Thoroughbred™

The New Voice of Horsemen in Racing's Heartland

Blinker's Off Special Edition

Illinois Horsemen.....Let's make it right!

By Mike Porcaro

May 31, 2011 is a day that will live in Illinois horse racing infamy. It's a day that those of us who have invested years of time and effort and money have finally lived to see.

May 31, 2011 is the day that the Illinois Senate voted in favor of the gaming bill.

For the moment, put aside the five new casinos, slots at Chicago's two major airports and, seemingly, machines on every street corner in every nook and cranny of the state.

What should be most important to us is that we will have slots at our three great Thoroughbred racetracks and at the harness tracks. That is what most of us have hoped for night and day for years.

It means that we will have more potential horse bettors at racetracks. We'll have more revenue, of which, portions will cascade into purses and breeders' programs. It means, perhaps, the relief we have wanted as badly as wanting our 4-year old maiden claimer to get his first win.

Fellow horsemen, it's a new day, so let's do all we can to put aside the infighting, the sniping, the lawsuits, the factions battling factions. Put aside horsemen versus horsemen; horsemen versus track management; everyone versus the politicians.

PLEASE!

Let's get the slots into the tracks. Let's get the money flowing. Let the process take its course, and in time, hope that it takes seed and blossoms into an industry as strong as it was in the years prior to 1989.

ALL horsemen would be remiss if we didn't give special thanks to those who worked so hard to get the bill passed. Mike Campbell, Glen Berman and Chris Block of ITHA; Lanny Brooks of ILHBPA; Dan Sullivan and the members of ITBOF; Bob Molaro; the management of Hawthorne Race Course, Tim Carey and Jim Miller; Arlington Park's

Richard L. Duchossois and Tony Petrillo; the folks at Fairmount, William Stiritz and Bobby Pace; Jackie and Joe King of Indian Hills Farm, and let's not forget our friends at IHHA, Tony Simone and Dave McCaffrey and all of the harness horsemen.

Please forgive me if I missed naming anyone else who deserves a "thank you," as I am past our print deadline for this issue and wish I had the time to do more.

Indeed, we still need to do all that is necessary to get Gov. Quinn to sign the bill. I am most confident that the Governor will do the right thing for all of the citizens of Illinois by signing it.

Someday we will look back at May 31, 2011, a day in which horsemen have been given new life, and say that this truly was "our finest hour." So I ask all horsemen to keep our renewed spirit in mind as we move forward....and let's make it right!