

# THOROFAN VOICE

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## Racehorse Owners are Fans First

By Marilyn Lane

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When I was in Kentucky last month Synergy Investments was putting a lot of energy into improving the entrance to the Fasig-Tipton sales facility on Newtown Pike in Lexington. I watched the daily progression during my ten-day stay since Fasig-Tipton was on the route between my host's house and Keeneland. There is nothing more pleasing to the eye than seeing exquisite taste and limit-less budget directed toward a project, and this was a prime example. The entrance is of native stone and fans off into a forest of newly planted evergreens with a backdrop of Kentucky bluegrass. It's beautiful and simply makes you itch to pull in and buy a million-dollar horse. But then, my taste has always exceeded my budget.

We are about to see Dubai-based Synergy Investments apply their golden touch to the Humphrey S. Finney Sales Pavilion at our own Fasig-Tipton facility. The total look has not been determined, but you can be certain that the facelift will be magnificent. This is a very exciting development for Saratoga and the horse industry, even for those outside the direct effect of racing's economic impact. It's a luxury to have this unique offering within our city limits. You can walk from the center of town and see the finest Thoroughbred bloodstock in the world enter into an elaborate facility to be bid upon by the biggest forces in a dynamic industry. The sky is the limit.

And guess what propels all of this exhilarating potential? It's racing fans, and do you know what it will take to keep this energy - more fans. I'm asking each of you, what do you do to perpetuate our golden goose? I walk downtown Saratoga and except for gift stores and a couple of eateries I see very little that embraces our racing history or advocates its future. We do not even show directions from Broadway to the track. This mystifies me. To me it seems a terrible mistake to leave all of the marketing of the sport to NYRA, the New York Breeders and entities within the business. Every person living, visiting, and investing in Saratoga is benefited in unlimited ways by racing and the sales. I see it widely used in real estate ads, our summer magazines showcase racing from nearly every angle, but for the most part Saratoga does not walk the walk.

I am not advocating that everything sold or decorated should bear the image of a horse. What I do support is for residents and particularly merchants to be able to intelligently satisfy basic inquires about the racing industry. Most people are naturally curious about racing and I feel disappointed when I see their questions shunned and unanswered. I find it off-putting when there are ads and flags for coming events, yet there is no street advertising for the National Museum of Racing.

This new exciting energy that Synergy brings will sustain only if we collectively help to grow the market for racehorses. Yes, those record-breaking prices will continue to primarily come from visiting powers that be, but like racing it's the average punter that sustains the market. There will be more Funny Cides, Icabad Cranes, and Incurable Optimists if we have people willing to jump in the pool and become horse owners. Remember, owners begin as fans, and this is the area where we are letting the industry down.

Earlier in the year when New York racing was at risk, this community concerned itself with the functions of racing. Now I find people returned to complacency. You may not be a horse-lover, a gambler, a breeder, an owner, or even a fan, but if you live in Saratoga and soak up the many benefits which racing provides to your lifestyle then I think it is only fair that you should do a little something to broaden its appeal. As Eleanor Roosevelt said, "*The most important thing in any relationship is not what you get but what you give.*"

I see in this morning's news where a non-profit Pocket Park Foundation has been formed and hopes to put horse sculptures on the site at Broadway and Route 50. I've immensely enjoyed Gwen Reardon's sculptures in Lexington's Thoroughbred Park and something similar here would be a wonderful addition to our racing heritage. Good luck to Dennis Brida and his group - this is a step in the right direction.

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**QUOTABLE**

*"The task of the writer is to seize the reader by the back of the neck and force him to love life" ~ Leo Tolstoy*

*This editor's task is to take fans by the forelock and lead them back to the traditions and joys of horseracing.*