



# Fall 2017 Newsletter

## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As summer fades into fall, racing remains in high gear as we begin the countdown to the highlight of the “second half” of the racing year – the Breeders’ Cup World Championships. For the TPA, the fall also ushers in a busy time for some of our most important activities of the year. Be on the lookout for balloting for the Big Sport of Turfdom award, which the TPA awards to a person or group of people who have enhanced coverage of Thoroughbred racing through cooperation with media and racing publicists. This award will be presented in early December at the Symposium of Racing and Gaming, where we will also host our annual Mark Kaufman workshop and award a scholarship to a college student pursuing a career in horse racing.

For the second consecutive year, the TPA also plans to send a member on an expense paid trip to the symposium (see details in this newsletter). Many of our members not only wear multiple hats as part of their job, but juggle a heavy workload within budgets

that sometimes shrink each year. We are honored to present an opportunity for one member to not only get to network with peers but get a small break from their daily routine!

This issue is dedicated to highlighting some of the hard working members of the TPA. We hope you enjoy reading each story.

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## UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA SYMPOSIUM ON RACING & GAMING

The TPA has announced that the organization will sponsor attendance for one of its members at this year’s University of Arizona Symposium on Racing & Gaming, Dec. 4-6, at the Loews Ventana Canyon Resort in Tucson, Ariz. The trip – which includes Symposium registration, roundtrip airfare and resort accommodations – will provide career development opportunities for a publicist or marketer who might not otherwise experience the industry’s biggest annual conference.

“One of our goals at the TPA is to provide our membership who work at smaller racetracks and/or organizations an opportunity to engage in professional growth and networking,” said TPA President Rhonda Norby.

The Symposium trip is underwritten by the TPA with in-kind support from the Race Track Industry Program.

Only current TPA members that have paid their 2017 dues in full will be considered. To apply, members are asked to submit an essay of more than 300 words describing their job duties, typical annual business travel, and what they hope to get out of Symposium attendance. Submissions are due by Oct. 29 at 5 p.m. ET and should

be directed to  
TPA Secretary/  
Treasurer Dave  
Zenner at  
davezenner@  
gmail.com.

The TPA, founded in 1951, is comprised of approximately 130 Thoroughbred racing publicists and marketing executives at racetracks throughout North America with the shared goal of promoting the sport of Thoroughbred racing. Each year at the Symposium, the TPA organizes the Mark Kaufman Workshop on a topic relevant to publicists and marketers, awards the Big Sport of Turfdom to recognize an individual or individuals who enhanced the sport of thoroughbred racing through their cooperation with the media and racetrack personnel, and sponsors an annual scholarship for a RTIP student with a strong record of academic achievement and an interest in journalism or publicity.



# PENELOPE MILLER

by Joe Bacigalupo

Ocala, Florida, has a long history of producing top Thoroughbreds at some of horse racing's most historic farms and also serves as the center for young racehorse preparation and sales. Without a doubt, Ocala and surrounding Marion County, play a vital role in providing many of the magnificent horses we see day in and day out at racetracks in the U.S. and throughout the world.

It should come as no surprise, then, that Ocala also produces its fair share of two-legged talent for the industry. Many horsemen, riders and veterinarians, for example, hail from or have lived in the central Florida city. Add Penelope Miller, America's Best Racing (ABR) senior manager of digital media, to the list of industry types who have called Ocala home.

Miller grew up on her family's small Ocala breeding farm, where she was exposed to foaling, layups, breaking/training and even standing stallions. "My interest started in utero," joked Miller about her horse racing background. "I was incredibly lucky to grow up surrounded by Thoroughbreds."

A single moment in her youth at south Florida's Hialeah Park on Flamingo Stakes Day, however, stands out to Miller as when she knew for certain that horse racing was where she needed to be. The racetrack's iconic Flamingos, who called the infield lake home, had been persuaded into flight by an employee in a canoe prior to the running of the feature race.

"I remember the horses parading and these pink, beautiful birds circling above," recalled Miller. "And I thought, 'Oh, yeah. I have to do this.'"

The daughter of Leverett and Linda Miller never felt forced to pursue a career in the industry but the draw was strong. In fact, Miller's father firmly suggested that his daughter work outside of horse racing for 10 years after she graduated from Georgetown University before making a career decision. The trial was short-lived as Miller lasted all of six months.

"I broke like a dropped dish," admitted Miller, who was then assigned night watch duties in the foaling barn at the family farm after she persuaded her father to let her return.

This initial role led to other hands-on duties at the farm and eventually to positions with Ashford Stud in Kentucky and Australia. Hard work for sure, but work that Miller thoroughly enjoyed. "It's an inspiration to know that there are people who do that kind of work year in and year out all for the love of the horse," reflected Miller. "I do understand it. I got into this sport because I love horses."

Upon returning to the U.S., Miller landed a horsemen's liaison position at Tampa Bay Downs but she wore many hats, including work in the publicity office, as a tour guide and in social and digital media. Miller took from this experience a

much appreciated education of the day to day operations of a racetrack.

"It gave me a profound respect for people who work at racetracks everywhere," Miller said about her time at Tampa Bay Downs.

Next up for Miller was her current role at America's Best Racing in New York City. Miller is charged with overseeing all of ABR's digital media assets, such as the website, social media and the ABR app. She also assists with marketing and ad sales.

Formed in 2012, America's Best Racing consists of a core team of 10 individuals who bring the sport of horse racing to new fans by "meeting them in their backyard," according to Miller. This translates to using digital channels, specifically social media, to reach a new and growing fan base to make horse racing a part of their lives and one of their entertainment options. "We have an outstanding team," Miller shared when discussing her ABR colleagues. She singled out Greg Charkoudian, who leads the video team and whom Miller called a "magician."

Miller's childhood in Ocala and prior work experiences have led to a role that perfectly suits her. "I feel so lucky to work in the industry itself," Miller said. "But also in this capacity to bring the sport to new fans because, to me, there is nothing better than a day at the track. And to be able to introduce people to that experience is a real privilege."

Miller's responsibilities with America's Best Racing give her plenty of days at the track. She estimates that she travels to a racetrack 20+ weeks out of the year, plus local trips to nearby Belmont Park and Aqueduct. She does not spend her summer weekends on Long Island beaches as many New Yorkers do but rather at racetracks across the country to cover major races with Breeders' Cup World Championships implications. Three tracks that she had not previously visited prior to her ABR role stand out to Miller as new favorites: Oaklawn Park, Woodbine and Del Mar.

Miller still pinches herself during the many moments of good fortune she witnesses while at America's Best Racing. Topping that list is what happened the morning after American Pharoah captured the Triple Crown, when Bob Baffert invited media members that had gathered at the



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barn to pet America's 12th Triple Crown winner. "I remember putting my hand on his withers and thinking, 'I'm touching the first Triple Crown winner in 37 years. I'm touching him.' It was such a generous moment," Miller reflected. And one that this Ocala native will forever cherish.

Quick hits from Penelope Miller:

Favorite racehorse: Wise Dan – "Embodied everything a

Thoroughbred could and should be."

Mentors: Leverett & Linda Miller; Stella Thayer (Tampa Bay Downs); Margo Flynn (Tampa Bay Downs); Dell Hancock (Claiborne Farm); Adam Parker (T Square Stud) and Prof. Olga Meerson (Georgetown University)

Words of advice for aspiring publicists: "Be proactive, persistent and positive."

## TAMMY KNOX

by Jennie Rees

In her role as race marketing manager at Indiana Grand Racing and Casino, Tammy Knox follows the mantra of a former editor: Get all the important information in the first paragraph when writing a press release because of the likelihood that it will be cut.

So let's start over.

As a racetrack publicist, Tammy Knox's mantra is "seek unique." She no longer does daily press notes (simply no time) except for leading up to the showcase Indiana Derby program, instead emphasizing stakes coverage and human-interest stories. She grew up in a harness-racing family in Carmi, Ill., near Evansville, Ind., and still owns a standardbred racehorse with her 79-year-old father. Her foray into working in the industry started with an internship at the U.S. Trotting Association, where she got a job upon graduating from Murray State University. She came up through racing-office channels while working at tracks throughout the East and Midwest while writing publicity stories on the side. Knox became a full-time publicist at Hoosier Park, leaving in 2012 when the night racing became too tough for a single mom with a young daughter. Knox went back home to edit the small newspaper in her hometown, jumping back into racetrack publicity and marketing at Hoosier's sister thoroughbred track, Indiana Grand, two years later.

Now to put meat on the bones.

Knox is in a tricky market in Shelbyville, Ind. Even though it's only 30 minutes from the heart of Indianapolis and an easy drive on Interstate 74, media can view Shelbyville as being outside the market. And even so, it's a tough fight for attention from a city with pro football and basketball and without the racing tradition of Louisville, Lexington and Chicago — which themselves face considerable challenges in getting racing coverage from the local media.

"Because we are in Shelbyville, a lot of times we're not considered Indianapolis area. Especially when we were in Anderson, we have a hard time getting Indianapolis media

to cover us," Knox said. "They say, 'That's way up in Anderson.' Or 'way down in Shelbyville.' It's not that far. So we have some challenges with that.

"I've learned over the years to go more on the human-interest side than the racing side. I still do the nightly releases for the stakes races or what not. I try to 'seek unique.' That's what a boss told me one time. I always tell our interns that your story isn't complete unless you go back and ask all the questions, 'who, what, when, where, why.' And I always throw in 'how.'"

The Indianapolis Star does run some racing stories, and The Shelbyville News provides coverage. But Knox emphasizes the track being its own news outlet.

"I know newspapers are down to skeleton staff," she said. "When I first started, we'd write stories and fax them out. And I know half of them ended up in the trash can — or 75 percent. Then we moved over to email. Tom Bannon (at Hoosier Park) always said that our website became our daily newspaper. He said we should always update it every day with something, so people get used to coming there every day to look for the updated news. That's something I've always tried to do. Now social media has become so huge. I put everything on social media — that is my newspaper now."

Knox has two seasonal interns and brings in assistance for Indiana Derby Week. On-air personality Rachel McLaughlin is the racing production manager handling television, and paddock analyst Nancy Holthus writes occasional news features.



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## [Tammy Knox Continued]

A full-time entertainment manager took off some of Knox's workload, though it picked up in other ways, including doing all the paper work for the new Grand Gesture fractional ownership syndicate.

Saturday is the only night that Indiana Grand races. A company laptop allows Knox to work at home other evenings, allowing her to have dinner with daughter Gabrielle or attend the 14-year-old's swim meets and other events.

"We're very fortunate that we work for a company that gives us support," she said.

Through it all, Knox seeks unique. For instance, the track received great exposure on a release detailing how the Indiana Grand jockeys donated 365 pounds of peanut butter to veterans and Holthus' feature on apprentice jockey Katie Clawson eating a pint of Graeter's Chocolate Chocolate Chip ice cream as the reward for winning her 40th race.

"I think you just have to keep yourself relevant," Knox said. "Because I'm an older mother, I work really hard to stay relevant and up on the trends. It helps to have a 14-year-old daughter. I'm forced to listen to her music and TV shows, but it's a good thing in a way."

## CARRIE EVERLY

by Lynne Snierston

She's been a fixture at the Maryland Jockey Club and its two tracks- Pimlico Race Course and Laurel Park- for three decades but the second jewel in the Triple Crown never gets tarnished for Carrie Everly.

"The Preakness is when everybody comes back and you're with the people you've been working with for 27 years, and you get to see all of the great horses. Everybody comes together to make it happen. That's the best of it," said Everly, who has been the MJC's vice-president of marketing since 2001 after moving up from marketing director (1994-2001) and promotions manager (1990-1994).

Marketing an event with the magnitude of the Preakness is an enormous responsibility and Everly has only a graphic designer, a promotions director and a marketing coordinator as year-round departmental employees.

"Everybody wears a lot of hats, that's for sure," she said. "There is a big team of people brought in to help and just in the last year or two, many people come in from The Stronach Group (the owners of the MJC tracks) and we all are heavily involved with the Preakness."

Since TSG took over and implemented changes, the Maryland Thoroughbred industry has been revitalized. There is year-round racing now that Virginia's Colonial Downs, which raced summers, has gone under, and other than a 12-day meet centered on the Preakness at Pimlico, the action has shifted to a still under renovation and modernized Laurel Park.

Even though Laurel races three days per week, Everly still needs to market 12 months per year.

"Our handle has gone up dramatically since Tim Ritvo (TSG's COO) took over. I'd like to say it's some of the industry advertising we're doing. I utilize the Daily Racing Form, The Paulick Report, and all the rest to get the message out on everything

from carryover banners when we have them to the rest of our story. It's a whole realm of advertising that we never did much of before. We try to put ourselves out there so that the national player knows that we're here. We're not only marketing to our local fan base, but to players around the country so we're at the top of their mind awareness when they figure out what signals they want to wager on. That must be working because with a combination of other factors, like the field size increasing, the handle has been going through the roof," she said.

The message that Maryland racing is on an upward trajectory must stay evergreen and that isn't easy when the winter blahs set in. How does she grab the attention of her audience in the cold and dreary months and entice them to come out to the track when they would rather hunker down at home?

"We created a Winter Festival on President's Day weekend and it's something to look forward to. We bring in an ice sculpture group. They do horse ice sculptures and we do a prize wall where people chisel numbered horseshoes out and they can win anything from Preakness tickets to a voucher," she said.

But Mother Nature doesn't always cooperate. Everly said that one year it was so warm the sculptures were melting and at the last minute she had to move the event to the next day



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## [Carrie Everly Continued]

and hire refrigerated trucks to store the sculptures overnight. The next year, winter's worst necessitated the cancellation of racing.

"You have to make the best of it," said Everly, who added that in 2017 they moved the G2 Barbara Fritchie and the G3 General George from Monday to the Saturday of President's Day weekend and shifted a couple of other stakes to the beefed-up card.

"That certainly gained some attention for us from both the racing and wagering standpoint. You have to stay creative and roll with the punches," she said.

Tapping into a younger, hipper and new market is part of the strategy. To that end, Everly has partnered the track with promotional companies to bring Beer & Bourbon, Wine Tastings, and other fun happenings on track. The companies bring their locally-based fan base, about 90 percent of whom have never been to the track before.

"We found that partnering with other companies is a good and cheaper way to get our target audience out to the racetrack. As we all know, just buying advertising can get

really expensive," she said. "You take a fun event and then add live Thoroughbred racing, which none of the crowd knows much about. So we always have Racing 101 booths and hosts to teach people how to wager and take them down to the paddock if they show an interest. It gives them a good glimpse into racing, and hopefully, they'll come back on their own another day."

The treasured days that belong to Everly are spent with her three adopted and much beloved animals.

"I have a 19-year-old OTTB named Tale. He never made a start but at age 5 was back into training for the second time in Maryland and pulled a suspensory. I was ready and he became mine. He's been a trail horse ever since. Lieutenant is my 30-year-old quarter horse and I still ride him. I got him in 1993 when he was six. I have put a lot of miles on that lovely boy," she said. "Stella is my rescued cattle dog. She is everybody's best friend, canine and human. I adopted her from an agency that gets dogs out of high kill shelters on December 20, 2014 and ever since she's been a superstar."

Since she joined the MJC those many years ago, the same can be said for Everly.

## BRIAN W. SPENCER

by David Zenner

Horse racing has long been a sport nomadic in nature. As soon as roots are laid down in one location it is time to move on to the next. Horsemen and jockeys are not the only ones who find themselves having to piece together a year-round plan that often isn't the most logical as even front-side workers move from place to place often hindered by overlapping meet-dates or other barriers.

Fortunately for Brian W. Spencer, the paddock host for Arlington International Racecourse and Fair Grounds, not only do the track's dates fit together nicely but they both are owned by Churchill Downs Incorporated creating a year-round position shared between the two tracks. Still, moving twice a year and living out of boxes much of the time has its drawbacks but they are more than made up for by a love and appreciation for all aspects of the sport.

Spencer, 34, was born in Georgia but moved to the Chicago area when he was four. "I don't come from a line of horsemen but my grandfather had some small stakes in ownership of horses that ran in Chicago and he would bring my mother out to the track and she enjoyed it so she brought me out to the track when I was younger.

"I wasn't initially drawn to the majesty of the horse but as a sixth grader I was struck by the statistics and past

performance aspect of it. I wasn't old enough to gamble but I was drawn to how the numbers worked together. I would watch the replay show (on TV) whenever I could.

I didn't necessarily put two and two together when I was 12 or 13-years-old because I wasn't in a position to get paid when I had a right opinion, but I was intrigued that in some sense there was a way to figure this out – a logical, analytical way and that's something that's always made sense in my brain."

After going to school – starting as a math major at Marquette University but graduating an English major at Portland State University – Spencer began to incrementally work his way into the role he has now.

"Even before I finished school I was e-mailing guys like Joe Kristufek, Jeremy Plonk and Jay Cromley and building relationships with them," Spencer recalled. "I'd go over to Portland Meadows in the afternoon and schmooze with the jockeys there. I did my best to try to insert myself in the game as much as I could."

Back in Chicago after graduation and working a full-time job

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## [Brian Spencer Continued]

as an analyst for a cable company, Spencer began to pick up freelance work for Joe Kristufek, who was doing a myriad of jobs including handicapping for the Daily Herald newspaper, writing comments for the track program and doing the morning-line odds for Arlington as well as hosting occasional 'Learn to Win' seminars at Arlington and its network of OTB facilities.

"I'd work my day at the cable company and then I'd come home to sit down to work for him for an hour or two," he said. "I was also blogging and getting some good feedback on that but it was a very part-time kind of thing. There would be a 'Learn to Win' at Arlington that I could do because it was my day off from the cable company.

"After about five years of that, Joe and Jeremy were launching horseplayernow.com and they needed somebody full-time," Spencer said. "It was a bit scary. I had a good job with good benefits. It was a little risky to give it up but I was still young enough that had it turned out to be a mistake, it wasn't going to throw my life into turmoil. I think that mindset is what allowed me to take that chance."

While working in the press box one summer at Arlington, Spencer had the opportunity to some on-air work with Jessica Pacheco, then serving as the track's paddock handicapper. At about the same time it was announced that Katie Gensler would not be returning to Fair Grounds that winter and Spencer tossed his hat into the ring and ended

up getting the position.

"That was intuitively what I wanted to do," Spencer said. "I love the puzzle. I love explaining the puzzle. That was fun as was writing comments for the Arlington program – getting to craft an analysis that makes sense."

With consolidation of jobs happening in every industry, versatility is key.

"I got hired to be a racing analyst and just help out a little with the racing communications but coincidentally that was right when Jim Mulvihill (Fair Grounds communications manager) left to take a job with the NTRA and all of a sudden there was this opening that by virtue of having worked in the press box at Arlington, having an English degree and having the ability to write stakes advances and recaps more or less defaulted to me.

"There was a major learning curve for me as far as writing the marketing-focused press releases. It took a little time to feel confident doing that but I feel it's been beneficial to me because it has given me a much better idea how a racetrack is run.

"I've really come to enjoy the relationship with the media aspect of the job," he added. "As anyone in our position knows that is sometimes more fun than others. The relationships you make are interesting trying to help the people get the content they need while also getting them the content you'd like to see them have."

## JENNIFER HOYT

by Jeff Maday

Jennifer Hoyt, media relations manager at Oaklawn Park in Hot Springs, Arkansas, may have found her racetrack nirvana.

"I live in a town that really supports racing," she said. "I'm really blessed to be here."

Oaklawn Park runs a 57-day meet from January through April. Hot Springs is a racing town.

Purchasing a Daily Racing Form is not an anomaly at any local convenience store; it is an opportunity for the clerk selling the form to seek a hot tip from the customer. And if that customer is a horse trainer buying a form, "then they really want to know who they like today," Hoyt said.

Hoyt is well aware of the advantages of working in an environment where racing is king.

"We don't compete with professional football, baseball or basketball in Arkansas," Hoyt said. There is of course great passion for Arkansas Razorback football but the college

football season falls outside Oaklawn's racing season. When Oaklawn kicks off its meet the "statewide focus is on horseracing," she said. "This is one of very few states that supports racing."

Hoyt makes this statement with an appreciation for the situation in which she finds herself today but also with great respect for the position she holds and the responsibility it entails. She and the Oaklawn staff feel the obligation to keep racing at this historic track, with its large purses and premier racing, a primary focus not just locally, but nationally.

Hoyt also speaks from experience. She has made a career in



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the industry.

She graduated from the University of Kentucky with a degree in equine science and no certainty of what she wanted to do next. Hoyt took an internship at Turfway Park in the marketing and communications department working for track executive Damon Thayer.

"Every job I've had I can trace back to that internship," she said.

She has also worked at Arlington Park, Gulfstream Park, Lone Star Park, another stint at Turfway, Churchill Downs, Thoroughbred Times magazine, and Eclipse Press, the book division of Blood Horse Publications. She joined the Breeders' Cup notes team in 2000, and in 2007 took on the responsibility of editing all biographies of Breeders' Cup participants, a job she still holds.

Hoyt and her husband Rolly were hired as consultants at Oaklawn for the 2010 Racing Festival of the South. In 2011, she became the fulltime media relations manager. But her duties include much more than media relations. She fulfills requests for speaking engagements, promoting Oaklawn in the community. Hoyt provides facility tours to school groups and equine clubs. She also coordinates the Dawn At Oaklawn program with track analyst Nancy Holtus, providing racing

fans with a behind-the-scenes look at the sport. Outside the racing season she hosts handicapping contests and promotes concerts at the casino property and the popular July 3 Spa Blast.

Even though state and local media embrace racing, the stories do not create or tell themselves and Hoyt works tirelessly to pitch and place those stories. Little Rock, the largest city in Arkansas, is an hour from the track and in today's media environment a crew is not always available to make the trip to cover the events leading up to a major race or sometimes even the race day itself.

With that reality, Hoyt made an important decision. "I have a limited staff and a limited budget," Hoyt said, "but one thing I make room for is a videographer." That position creates b-roll video packages that are provided to television outlets. The content is often interviews of trainers who have horses in upcoming stakes races. Hoyt also oversees and edits the writing of daily barn notes for the local and national print media and constantly is on the lookout for unique sports stories and compelling human interest stories.

"I love being around the racing. I have been a fan since I was really little. I remember as a kid following the Triple Crown."

This successful turf publicist has truly found a sweet spot and uses her experience to benefit the industry.

## DAN SMITH

by Rhonda Norby

When you have worked publicity in the Thoroughbred racing industry for more than 50 years, it would be a safe bet to assume you've seen and done it all. And yet for Dan Smith, who has been associated with Del Mar Thoroughbred Club since 1964, he will experience a first in his long and distinguished career when the seaside track hosts the Breeders' Cup World Championships for the first time Nov. 3-4.

"I'm really looking forward to it," Smith said. "The location is tremendous. The weather is almost always perfect, and Del Mar will provide a wonderful experience. I think it will be great."

While hosting the two-day Championships will be a first, Smith has seen and been a part of some of Del Mar's biggest days over the track's storied history. There are many big days that stand out in Smith's memory, but one of the biggest was the 1996 Pacific Classic, when Cigar attempted to break Citation's modern day record of 16 straight victories.

"The whole racing world was tuned in to Del Mar," Smith said. "We had more than 44,000 people, and Del Mar put on a great show. We all wish Cigar could have won, but it was still a great day."

A native of Chicago, Smith's parents were musicians and his first love was music.

"I played trumpet and wanted to be a jazz musician," Smith said. Smith joined the army in 1955 and played in the army band. While he graded himself as a "pretty good" musician, Smith felt he didn't have what it took to play at the top level.

Growing up on the south side of Chicago, Smith also developed an interest in horse racing as a child when his family would attend the races from time to time.

"I was smitten at an early age," Smith recalled. "We'd go to the races at Washington Park and get \$2 to spend. I would bet with mine and my sister would put hers in her pocket! For me, it was exciting and colorful and a lot of us young guys



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### [Dan Smith Continued]

were in to racing.”

In 1948, Smith’s family moved to California near Santa Anita Park where he continued his track visits and continued to cultivate his love for the sport. Those visits included memorable summer trips to Del Mar and Smith grew to love the seaside track.

When Smith finished military duty in 1957, he got a job at the Los Angeles Times as a copy boy working the late afternoon to midnight shift. An opening in the sport department led to covering horse racing and getting to know people in the sport.

Photographer and friend Bob Benoit suggested he transition to horse racing, and he made the leap in 1963 doing the southern California circuit of Hollywood Park, Santa Anita and Del Mar doing seasonal work. Smith became publicity director at Santa Anita in the early ‘70’s but still went to Del Mar to help out. Del Mar’s publicity director, Eddie Read died in 1973 and was not replaced right away. Smith decided to leave Santa Anita in 1975, and he called then Del Mar president Don Smith (who was not related) and asked if he would consider him for Eddie’s replacement. Smith joined Del Mar full time and has been there ever since.

Along the way, Smith has offered his talent and knowledge beyond southern California. From the inception of the Breeders’

Cup until 2012 he was Dick Enberg’s and Tom Hammond’s go to person behind the scenes preparing them for hosting the championships and sitting just off camera throughout the broadcast with notes and research at the ready.

Smith also assisted Churchill Downs during the 1970’s during Kentucky Derby week, helping out on the notes team and whatever was needed to promote the sport’s most famous race.

“I joined the notes team for Churchill in 1971, and I was so lucky to come along in the 70’s and have the opportunity to get so close to all those great horses during that time....Riva Ridge, Secretariat, Seattle Slew, and Affirmed. It was an amazing time for racing.”

In addition to the Affirmed and Alydar rivalry, Smith noted that Sunday Silence was a favorite and his Preakness win after an exciting stretch battle with Easy Goer ranks really high on his list of top races.

“I love horses and love watching them run. I’ve been so blessed throughout my career,” Smith said. “It’s just been a lot of fun.”

Even though Smith retired from full time duties in 2001 at age 65, it was only a semi-retirement as he continues to work each Del Mar meet and has no plans to stop anytime soon.

“I’ll keep going as long as I feel good!”