



by ANNE LANG
Texas Thoroughbred Editor

"Is anybody out there?"

In my two years of editing the *Texas Thoroughbred*, I've sometimes been tempted to climb up on the roof and shout that very question. We try our best here to bring you, the TTBA members and subscribers, a wealthy cross-section of information and articles pertinent to the Thoroughbred breeding and racing industry.

Most of the time we're pretty conservative. In fact, about 99 percent of the time. Goodness knows, when we're trying hard to maintain a strong, unified image for the voting public and the legislators, we certainly don't need to ruffle feathers within our own organization. And, of course, our purpose in publishing this magazine is to inform . . . to provide food for thought . . . and sometimes, to entertain. Never, intentionally, to insult or upset.

However — and a *big* however — we do welcome, in fact strongly encourage, opinions from our members and readers on subjects germane to the Thoroughbred industry. We want to hear from you people, and we have special sections reserved for printing your personal opinions — these are called commentaries and letters to the editor.

Sadly, we rarely receive unsolicited material for commentaries, or even letters to the editor, despite frequent encouragement on our part. We do publish a

commentary every month, from executive secretary Harry Montague, usually on the status of the association. We do publish opinions from TTBA Board members in our newly-created Director Forum. And occasionally I'll even get on my soapbox and pontificate here.

We feature Cecil Perkins' humorous *At The Wire* every month. But even ol' Cecil gets serious on occasion, and you can bet that when he's steamed about something, we print every word. That's because *At The Wire* is Cecil Perkins' allocated space in the magazine; it is his commentary.

Similarly, Allen Bogan's *Morning Line* is his allocated space. It is his commentary, his opinion. Whether or not the *Texas Thoroughbred* staff supports his opinion is not a factor. As it is stated on our masthead each month, "The opinions expressed in bylined articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect policies of the TTBA or the magazine." (Almost *all* magazines and newspapers assume the same neutral position.)

Some of you were upset by Bogan's *Morning Line* in the July 1984 issue, in which he comes to the defense of Louisiana Downs President and Chairman of the Board, Edward J. DeBartolo — a man who has been publically accused, certainly more than once, of being one of the biggest powers behind the forces intent on keeping racing out of Texas.

I'm not going to speak for the association, the magazine, or myself in taking sides on this touchy subject. I *am* going to defend Mr. Bogan's freedom of speech, for which we make generous allowances in the *Texas Thoroughbred*. He ruffled some feathers, indeed. But because so few people outside the regular columnists (such as Bogan and Perkins) ever share their opinions with us, we've had little occasion to throw similar controversial issues up for a good, healthy debate.

Life is full of surprises. When we recently published Ellen

Parker's two-part piece "The Choice Is Yours," in which the writer forced us to take a good, hard look at the not-so-pure trends in today's breeding industry, and frankly suggested that we are perhaps becoming commercially debased by breeding to sell rather than to run, I fully expected some righteous indignation from our readers. A least some argument. If feathers were to be ruffled, I predicted it would be as a result of the Parker piece.

Alas, we heard nothing but good things. No letters came pouring in, but the telephone and in-passing comments we received were numerous, and all complimentary: "It's about time someone wrote about that angle of the market," and that sort of thing.

Surprise, surprise. Ya just never know.

Anyway, a final word or two on the *Morning Line* controversy. As I stated earlier, we always have and always will support Allen Bogan's — and anyone else's — right to his opinion, within specified editorial space. To add a personal observation of my own here: for those of you who don't know him, Allen Bogan is one of the most ardent supporters of pari-mutuel for Texas — he's a founding TTBA member, former board member, former *Texas Thoroughbred* editor, newspaper sportswriter, and a lifelong, knowledgeable and extremely generous contributor to the magazine. He was also named the 1983 TTBA Man of the Year.

Despite a few bitter murmurs I've heard, he is not, I assure you, on any Cajun's payroll. He was simply stating his personal opinion; showing us the "other side," if you will.

And we've got our debate on the DeBartolo subject, in the form of an unsolicited but happily received letter from John Newkirk of Arlington. His response to the July issue *Morning Line* follows this editorial, completely "uncut."

We welcome Mr. Newkirk's opinion. We'll welcome yours, too. Is anybody else out there? Let me know.