

The Nineteenth Hole

BY LEE HETRICK

It doesn't seem that long ago that I accepted the position of Executive Director for the GCBAA. I was excited to take on the challenges of this position and immediately set the goal to do whatever I could to help the Association grow and prosper. With my past work experiences and varied background in the golf industry, I felt I had much to offer the Association. I looked forward to talking with members and helping them solve whatever need they had.



In 2000, the golf course construction boom came to an abrupt halt and in 2001, our nation experienced war on its own shores. During these dire years, the GCBAA fought to stay stable and the time to "dig in" was upon us. In the years following, we all worked very hard to make sure the Association was financially solvent by growing the membership, implementing new Association Bylaws, and developing a certification process to promote greater professionalism for the Builders. To that end, awareness of the GCBAA has never been higher and the leadership of the Association should be applauded for shouldering the responsibility of making this happen.

In my departure, I would like to personally acknowledge and sincerely thank Jennifer Dwyer for her outstanding efforts as my assistant. Jennifer and I worked extremely well together to meet the challenges of managing the daily administrative duties of the Association, including hosting eleven successful membership meetings.

This position is one of the best in the Allied Associations of Golf, but with it comes a huge commitment to each of the members, the associate companies and to the Board of Directors. I've done my best and hope I have met your expectations. I feel my goal of growth and prosperity for the GCBAA was accomplished during my 5 1/2-year tenure.

It will come as no surprise to anyone that I will miss being involved with the GCBAA. Nonetheless, I feel it is time for me to move forward as there are other career opportunities to be experienced in my lifetime. I have learned a great deal since accepting the role of Executive Director, and I thank you for your patience, consideration and encouragement during my tenure. I hope and trust our paths will cross again — either on a personal level or a professional one in this great golf industry. Thank you for an unforgettable experience! ■

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Remembering Brandon J. Steele

BY DOUG LONG

SEMA Golf is deeply saddened by the passing of one of its rising stars. Brandon J. Steele, 32, of Scottsdale, Arizona, tragically lost his life on August 15, 2005. He is survived by his parents, Robert and Shari Steele of Scottsdale, Arizona and his two sons, Mason and McKane Steele of Austin, Texas.

Brandon attended Northeast Missouri State University on a football scholarship, graduating with a degree in criminal justice in 1996. He was then hired by SEMA Golf and worked his way up to the position of Project Manager. Brandon was involved with twelve projects during his tenure with SEMA Golf including: Comanche Trace in Kerrville, Texas, designed by Kite/Bechtol/Russell; Outlaw at Desert Mountain in Scottsdale, Arizona, designed by Jack Nicklaus (2005 Creative Excellence Award winner for best new construction presented by Golf Course News); and most recently Toscana Country Club in Indian Wells, California, designed by Jack Nicklaus. He was also an active member of the Golf Course Builders Association of America.

Brandon was an articulate, skilled professional who had a fun-filled life, full of enthusiasm to succeed in all that he did. He will be remembered for his vibrant smile and unique knack for making everyone feel comfortable around him. Brandon was admired by his family, friends, SEMA GOLF co-workers and golf industry colleagues, and will be greatly missed by all. ■