

## APA LAS VEGAS' BOB GRAESER PASSES THE TORCH

by Marvin Rethman, November 3, 2009



I am originally from Mid-Michigan, a Midwesterner with Midwest values. I was raised about 90 miles North of Detroit and it was there that I grew up playing sports and becoming competitive in everything I did. I still call Michigan "home" and I travel back about 3-4 times a year to visit my youngest daughter, her husband and my 2 beautiful granddaughters. I miss the season changes. The Fall leaves changing color, a white Christmas and the smell of a real tree, and seeing the robins in Spring. I started coming out here when we had only 48 states, just kidding! Its been a

long, long time. I got hooked after coming out of Caesars Palace one early morning and I saw the beautiful, red Sun coming up over the purple mountains. What a sight. I promised myself that someday I would live out here and that happened 11 years ago.

Playing pool has been a part of my life since I was a young kid going to the barber with my dad. The barber had a bar size pool table that cost 10 cents to play and my dad would promise to let me play if I was "good" while he had his hair cut. But being a kid, and having no patience to be "good", I would reach my small hand down the pocket and pull out the balls! I was in hog heaven, until I got my hand stuck! I didn't have the nerve to yell out to my dad or the barber on what had happened so I stood there, with my hand swelling up in the pocket, my legs getting tired and tears streaming down my face. When they realized I was too quite they knew what had happened. They lubed my hand and pulled it out. I still had the ball in my hand!

I never lost interest in the game and my uncle taught me my first trick shot. A 3-railer that I still use today. I was 15.

I have played league for the past 10 years. My first experience was at Pink E's on Flamingo. Pink felt, doormen and mud wrestling. Those were the days! It was an APA league and the club had 30 teams throughout the week. Most of the players I met back then are still around but I'm the only one who hasn't gotten any older??!! I have, and still do, play in most of the Las Vegas area leagues including Southern Nevada 9-Ball, TAP, BCA and in-house leagues. I've enjoyed them all and I consider those that I beat (met) to be friends. I believe all the leagues have a niche and I know, and respect, the operators including Rhonda-Southern Nevada, Jeff and Cindy-TAP, Greg/Henry-Cue Club in-house, Shawn -Mickey's in-house, Mark/Randy CSI and USAPL and Jim Thompson.

On a personal level my biggest challenge will be trying to understand why I have to click on START to turn my computer OFF! With that said, you can understand the computer will take some time to master. The APA has been a part of the Las Vegas landscape for 13 years. It will be here for many more. The

availability of Host locations will continue to grow and new players will join us. They will, as we have, enjoy the APA formats and the socialization that comes out of playing league on Monday, Tuesday, etc. But with any new adventure, with any transition, there is going to be growing pains. Some good, others possibly bad. But in any form, change is good and we will grow from the experience.

How many of us have said, "If I ran this league...", I know I have, and guess what, I do! The torch has been passed. But it wasn't given to one person. This league isn't " Marv's" league. Its a group of players, young and old, experienced and unskilled, who come together each week and shoot pool, meet friends and have fun. We can only do the things we wanted to, "If I ran this league.." if we communicate, if we exchange ideas and if we share the growth and success of "Our" league.

You asked, "What are my initial priorities"? Over the past few months I've written down a lot of ideas and I 've had a lot of thoughts, but as I talk to others this list changes. As of today, I can tell you #1 would be to create Goodwill, and dispel the ill will that may exist among the players, teams and host locations. I want to see more players having more fun. I want to see Host locations fighting over getting more teams in their locations and players fighting to get in Host locations! I don't want to rely on posters to sell the league, I want word-of-mouth to grow the league! Lets have FUN! My goal, in addition to starting a Ladies Division and Masters Division this next session, is to grow from approximately 600 members to 1,000 players and friends at the end of 2010! This isn't just a possibility, its a reality.

Now if I can only turn this computer off!!??

Sincerely,

Marv Rethman