



With Gratitude: A Toast to Joe Bartko

By Kent M. Nicholas, President

Mesa Country Club celebrated Joe Bartko's 30th anniversary recently, and the turnout was beyond our expectations.

Joe is a gentleman who dedicated his career to Mesa Country Club, and our membership has been grateful ever since he sent out his first foursome. I've had the pleasure of knowing Joe ever since the junior golf program in the early 70's and it's obvious that he played a much larger role in the lives of members than tee times and tournaments.

Joe takes pride in teaching the juniors at Mesa Country Club the fundamentals of golf and golf etiquette. For those who listened, he even shared some of life's lessons, such as the benefit of a firm handshake and looking a person in the eye when speaking. He instilled a sense of sportsmanship, along with the necessity of replacing fairway divots, raking sand traps and fixing ball marks on the greens. He covered the juniors in dust an inch deep as we rode in the back of his pickup truck across the Salt River Indian Reservation to junior tournaments. I and the other club rats who are still hanging around have fond memories of learning a game that will last us a lifetime from a true professional.

Joe is close with the senior members and does not hesitate to send a get-well card or drop by for a hospital visit. It is not unusual to see him paying his

respects at a member's funeral one minute and complimenting the parents of a newborn the next. He counsels every new board member that if they want to keep their nose clean and do the right thing, they better keep the women in mind. "Make it easy on yourself, pardner, keep the women happy," he'll advise while kicking the toe of his cowboy boot into the turf.

Joe's staff is appreciative of his leadership and generosity. He teaches by example and is far more practical than the trendy tips listed in golf business books: "Know their name, make them laugh and get them on the course." He knows how to whittle down a long-winded rendition about a round of golf to a brief summary by asking how they did on his favorite hole, number 17. His jokes are innumerable and the smiles and laughter he brings to the membership are priceless. If it's been a tough day or week, walking up the short ramp to visit Joe in the pro shop can put the world in perspective: "Pardner, everything is going to be fine. Why don't you go off #16." From Joe's Annual Christmas Party to Joe's Fishing Derby, he has gone the extra mile for the Club.

I'm sure all clubs have a pro they enjoy, but at Mesa Country Club, we've been blessed for the past thirty years. Thank you, Joe.

Staff Promotions and Additions

Tui Selvaratnam – With the departure of James Waitt, Tui Selvaratnam became AGA Tournament Manager. Her new duties will include golf course preparation, on-site management of the annual 50-plus AGA event schedule and overseeing the more than 75 active volunteer corps. A valuable member of the AGA team, Tui will provide a smooth transition in this new position and ensure that the high standards that have been set will continue.

Rick Owens – Joining Tui will be Rick Owens, who will be the Tournament Administrator and will be responsible for

coordinating entries, database management of players and computer management of events. Rick was previously a successful entrepreneur as the owner of Scottsdale Scuba prior to taking the plunge into this land-based sport.

Doug Hosey – The AGA is very fortunate to have Doug Hosey join the staff in the dual role of Sales Manager for the AGA along with TPG Sports, who produces *Arizona*, *The State of Golf* for the Association. He will be responsible for advertising and promotions, representing the Association's magazine, website, sponsorships and member-benefit promotions. The former publisher of *Golfer's Guide*, Doug is well-respected within the golf industry and a welcome addition to the staff.

Sean O'Malley – Sean O'Malley, the Director of Course Ratings, and his wife Cheryl, were greeted by their first child, Maura Clare, on October 26. Sean is already teaching his daughter that sand is really a bunker and not a trap.

AGA Merchandise Now Available–

Members and visitors to the AGA website now have the ability to purchase apparel and merchandise with the AGA logo. This new service offers a wide array of selections from Antiqua and other fine vendors. To see the available merchandise, visit the AGA website, click on Partner Specials and find the AGA Logo Store under the Retail Section.

TOURNAMENT RECAP

Southwest Team Matches – The Colorado Golf Association won the inaugural Southwest Team Matches hosted by the Arizona Golf Association Nov. 13-14 at the Legacy Golf Resort. The event pitted eight top amateurs (four open division and four seniors) from Colorado, Arizona, Public Links of Southern California and the Utah Golf Association in a match play competition.

In the hotly-contested matches, Col-



Arizona Team in the inaugural southwest team matches. Back row (left to right): John Ferenchak, Bill Swed, Ray Siegal, Tom Walinski, Jeff Peterson. Front row: Kevin Trent, Tom Beach.

orado claimed the championship title with 20 points, while Arizona and Public Links of Southern California tied for second with 18 points each and Utah notched 16 points to finish fourth.

The event was created when representatives of these four associations wanted to provide a stage for their accomplished tournament players to compete against each other in a team format, following the recent decision by the Pacific Coast Amateur Association to change the focus of their annual championship from a team

format to an individual competition.

Club Team Championship - The 7th Annual Club Team Championship was a rousing success and FireRock Country Club was the perfect setting. Despite the inclement weather, all 52 qualifying teams representing 37 AGA clubs competed in the two-person scramble championship.

Troon Country Club (represented by Bill Entringer and Jerry Bevers) was the overall champions shooting a 10-under-

par 62. In the Championship flight, Desert Mountain Golf Club team (represented by Jay Anderson and Jeff Zieky) shot 7-under 65 and won in a score card playoff against Tatum Ranch Golf Club's Keith Hietpas and Jim Russo, the 2003 defending champions. Information for the 2005 event will be available in May.

Other winners included:

Jones Flight:

Intel GA: Scott Ferguson/Shannon Taylor (Gross Winners in Playoff)
Apache Creek GC: Chindo Arciniega/Jeff Roy (Net Winners)

Hogan Flight:

Painted Mountain GC: Mike Kernagis/Chris Wilson (Gross Winners)
Spruce Goose GC: Robert Haek/Dave Markason (Net Winners)

Nelson Flight:

Pueblo Del Sol GC: Ed Lucas/Dave Parsons (Gross Winners)
Tatum Ranch GC: Bob Lofaro/Jeff Seabaugh (Net Winners)

Sarazen Flight:

Starr Pass GC: Emil Bair/Arlie Winn (Gross Winners)
Tucson Insurancemen's GA: Ed Hubert/Jim Weir (Net Winners)

2004 Stroke Play Champion, Ken Kellaney.



31st Arizona Stroke Play Championship

Presented by Drivetime

The rain and cold clearly did not dampen the excitement surrounding the 31st Arizona Stroke Play Championship, which was presented by DriveTime and played at The Raven Golf Club's Verrado and South Mountain courses.

In a very tight race, Ken Kellaney once again proved why he is one of the best-ever amateur players in state history, posting a one-shot victory over Chris Kessler and Casey Strunk.

Kellaney's birdie on the 588-yard par 5, 15th hole at Verrado cinched the deal for the 48-year-old banker, who was 1-

over for the day and finished the four-day tournament 1-over par at 289.

“On the 15th, when I made birdie and Chris made bogey, I thought we were tied,” Kellaney said. “I struck the ball pretty well from there on in.”

Kessler, a former PGA professional at Desert Mountain Golf Club, who recently regained his amateur status, started the day atop the leader board with Kellaney, but had difficulty after an errant drive on the 15th hole found the bunker. Unable to advance the ball more than 100 yards and then missing the green on his approach shot, he found

himself unable to save par, while Kellaney rolled in a 25-footer for birdie that proved to be the difference.

Strunk, a recent graduate from Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill, was pleased with his performance and credits the harsh weather in that state for his ability to do well, “It’s always a grind and a test of patience in this type of weather. It’s just fun for me to be competitive and play golf,” the 22-year-old said. “When I was in college, it would be forty degrees and as long as there was no snow, we would play. So I’m used to this.”

ASU junior Lenny Park, who was 1-over for the day, finished alone in third place with a four-day total of 291, while Robin McCool, 2004 Arizona Public Links Champion, was three-over for the day and held on to sole position of fifth place with a score of 292.

Defending champion Jesse Mueller was 7-over for the day and finished in a tie for 13th at 301, a full 12-strokes behind the leaders.

The top 30 finishers (including ties) earned an exemption into the 2005 Stroke Play Championship.

ARIZONA STROKE PLAY TOP 30

1 Kenneth Kellaney 68 75 73 73 289	7 Morgan Brown 73 76 74 73 296	13 Jesse Mueller 72 73 77 79 301	15 Russell Hatfield 72 75 79 76 302	22 Andrew McLaren 78 73 77 76 304	29 Jerry Huff 79 74 76 77 306
2 Chris Kessler 75 66 75 74 290	7 Matt Rosen 70 73 83 70 296	13 Tim Beth 74 71 77 79 301	20 Rich Morrison 72 77 79 75 303	22 Paige Peterson 72 76 76 80 304	29 Chris Celio-Elia 74 73 85 74 306
2 Casey Strunk 70 72 76 72 290	9 Kevin Tilbury 75 75 72 75 297	15 Josh Gold 73 68 80 81 302	20 Michael Loustalot 72 76 79 76 303	22 Trenton Brown 70 73 81 80 304	29 John Schaller 80 71 74 81 306
4 Lenny Park 68 73 77 73 291	10 Jeff Nichols 73 76 72 77 298	15 Brian Swenson 72 71 78 81 302	22 Guy Gedeon 72 74 81 77 304	28 Craig Bailey 71 76 79 79 305	
5 Robin McCool 72 72 73 75 292	11 Armen Dirtadian 70 72 82 75 299	15 Shreve Tso 75 77 70 80 302	22 Larry Brasch 76 74 79 75 304	29 Matt Rutledge 77 71 78 80 306	
6 Tommy Medina 74 74 72 75 295	12 Steve Dallas 71 73 79 77 300	15 Daniel Fitas 79 73 72 78 302	22 Curt Lewis 71 75 83 75 304	29 Dustin Hall 74 73 79 80 306	

Goldwater Cup

The Goldwater Cup is an annual team event that pits Arizona amateurs against the professionals in a Ryder-Cup format. Twelve pros compete against twelve amateurs in both open and senior divisions. The 2004 matches were played at Desert Forest Golf Club, Nov. 29-30. In the open division, they played two rounds on the first day; foursome matches in the morning and four-ball matches in the afternoon. Seniors played one round of four-ball matches. The second days consists of twelve singles matches in each division.

Although the weather was less than desirable and play was delayed due to frost, the open division amateurs kept the competition close during the morning foursome matches. With one point at stake in each of the six matches, the professionals were leading 4-2. The afternoon, however, was not so kind. By the end of the day, the amateurs were down by five points.

The second day of competition, once



AGA's Senior Goldwater Cup Team, led by Captain Armen Dirtadian, second from left.

again, began with a frost delay. The cold weather and breezy conditions made the already lightning fast and difficult greens even more deadly. By the end of the day, the Arizona professionals had clinched the Goldwater Cup win in both the open and senior divisions.

Final results:

Open Division: Professionals - 16
Amateurs - 8

Senior Division: Professionals - 14 1/2
Amateurs - 3 1/2

One of the honored traditions of the Goldwater Cup matches is having Bob Goldwater (who will be 95 on July 4, 2005) regale the group with his now famous rendition of The Preacher and the Bear. This year, he surprised everyone with two new songs instead.