

O W N E R P R O F I L E

Smart, young, and enthusiastic, Greg Vela and Greg Long represent the type of owners who can lead racing into the 21st Century. Excellent spokesmen for the sport, they illustrate how owners' talents can be utilized to promote racing. We are fortunate indeed to have them among our ranks.

## "You Don't Need to Be Royalty to Participate"

by Lynn Dordahl

As many owners have, Greg Vela fell in love with racing through childhood trips to the track with his father and grandfather. A "boys day out" at the racetracks of Chicago began his bond with racing. Kentucky Derby parties, celebrated

across from the Del Mar Racetrack from 1988-1990, and armed with season tickets, Greg began to seek out winning owners and trainers in the winner's circle. He found these individuals to be more than willing to share their knowledge of the industry. More importantly, they shared their mistakes and pitfalls to avoid. An eager student, Greg listened, studied pedigrees, and became familiar with how the industry was run.

After marrying one of his biggest racing supporters, his wife Donna, Greg began to seek out potential partners. He attended owners' seminars to increase his knowledge of and contacts in the business. Partners were found and friendships were formed. Greg and his compadres formulated a business plan and developed criteria for selecting both horses and a trainer. Peter Eurton was selected to train. A filly was spotted to claim. The plan was a go.

The excited group, operating under the name Life Long Dream, claimed Shiny Slew in 1994. The filly introduced them to the winner's circle soon after. Life Long Dream's first venture was a success! The new owners were on their way.

Greg has since moved on to form other non-claiming partnerships. He

is a big believer in the partnership form of ownership. "It spreads the risk and resources over many different horses. I also believe it benefits the horses, as there is less pressure to get them to the races in order to get a return. Furthermore, it is more rewarding to share all aspects of the racing game with your friends. Everyone gets into the fun."

Greg is also a big believer in sharing his success stories with others. He has participated in many seminars put on by both the TOC and TOBA and serves on advisory committees for SCOR and the TOC Marketing/Public Relations committee. "I've had such a wonderful experience - I want to share it. Even though this is the Sport of Kings, you don't necessarily need to be royalty to participate."

Greg urges owners to get others involved in partnerships. "It's the way to get people into the business and give them a better chance of success." He also firmly believes that people need to support the NTA and other efforts to gain a stronger market base for the industry. "This industry needs a single platform to stand on. It just makes good business sense." 🐾



Owner Greg Vela and his "Wall of Fame"

with fraternity brothers while at Purdue University, further cemented his love for the sport.

Greg moved to California in 1985 to work in the electronics field, and started to seriously explore the possibility of racehorse ownership. Living