

# Exciting Updates!

By Ryan Oakes



It has been a tumultuous few years for the pool industry. The onslaught of “COVID Pools” has brought the joy of swimming and being around water to thousands. Unfortunately, the lure of building pools in a time of high demand brought with it an ever-increasing need for better building standards in the pool industry.

In a time when demand exceeded supply, people with no construction experience sold pools and then found themselves responsible for managing pool construction where applicable design codes and construction standards weren’t widely adopted. Salespeople were taking up the trades, from excavation to shotcrete, to keep up with demand and with an eye on what seemed like an easy profit.

To that end, the higher failure rate of COVID Pools has brought more attention to the need for guidance in the design and construction of pools, whether from building codes or the industry trade groups and pool industry education platforms like Genesis/Pool & Hot Tub Alliance and Watershape University.

From its inception in 1998, the American Shotcrete Association (ASA) has actively participated in promoting standards in the shotcrete industry. Many of its members are actively involved with the American Concrete Institute (ACI) as well and have played a key role in the development of the ACI-Certified Shotcreter program, formerly known as the Certified Shotcrete Nozzleman program. Another key program from ACI that has been developed with the help of ASA is the ACI-Certified Shotcrete Inspector.

ASA has provided educational seminars for the ACI certification programs in a supporting role for the last 27 years, but our existence as an independent industry trade association has other purposes.

ASA provides a number of benefits to various industries, all of which can benefit from using shotcrete as a placement method for quality concrete for so many purposes. From new construction to repair and rehabilitation of existing concrete structures, swimming pools to bridges and tunnels and other major civil projects, and even to the most alluring projects like Olympic luge tracks, shotcrete placement has proven to be a cost effective, sustainable, highly functional and time-sensitive method of placing quality concrete.

The swimming pool industry is no exception and is one of the primary beneficiaries of the shotcrete process. In fact, it was the advent of the shotcrete process, many decades

ago, that brought swimming pools to the masses.

In recent years, the ASA Pool & Recreation Committee has offered community and guidance to its members in both the swimming pool and skate park industries. Through the publication of various position statements, the committee has helped shotcreters, engineers, architects, contractors and owners have a better understanding of the shotcrete process. Our position statements help to dispel myths and provide guidance. They are created and maintained by active members on our committees willing to share their extensive experience and supported by research from the most prestigious labs and researchers around the world.

Besides our position statements, our members contribute to our *Shotcrete* magazine with technical and project articles on topics ranging from multi-day projects creating monolithic shells to skin care in shotcrete.

Most recently, we are excited to announce our Position

## ASA POOL & RECREATION COMMITTEE

**Ryan Oakes, Chair** | Revolution Gunite

**Andy Duck, Secretary** | Artisan Skateparks

**Benjamin Lasseter** | Design Ecology

**Edgar Sanchez** | Modern Method Gunite Inc.

**Frank Townsend** | Patriot Shotcrete LLC

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**Marcus von der Hofen** | Coastal Gunite Construction Company

**Raymond Schallom** | RCS Consulting & Construction Co Inc.

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**William Drakeley** | Drakeley Pool Company LLC

Statement #8, *Steel Reinforcement for Shotcrete Pools*, published in this issue of Shotcrete magazine on page 38.

This long-awaited paper has taken a great deal of energy and thought to put together. We pooled resources from our members as well as a few engineers who donated their time to the benefit of our industry. This paper will be an invaluable resource for professional engineers, architects, contractors and owners of pool projects around the world.

This position statement is a guide for all parties involved in pool design and construction, to help create lasting pools that can be passed down to future generations to enjoy enhanced health and well-being. The paper also dispels many of the misconceptions that lead to sub-standard building practices just because that was all the designers and builders knew. Further, it sheds light on the existing knowledge base within our professional design institutions and expands that knowledge base to those who are interested in creating a better product — to those who want to create a legacy, who want their products to last for not just years, but many decades.

In other exciting news, the Pool & Recreation committee has, with the Contractor Qualification Committee (CQ), launched the ASA Qualified Shotcrete Contractor - Pool (QSC – Pool) program at the 2025 ASA Convention in

Savannah, Georgia this past March. Several pool shotcrete contractors showed up to attend the prerequisite education session and take the written exam.

The goal of the QSC - Pool program is to establish a peer reviewed qualification process that sets the stage for a shotcrete contractor who specializes in pools and other watershapes to prove that they have met the highest standards of our industry after being scrutinized by shotcrete experts to have met the required standards. This newly launched program stands to be regarded as highly as the ASA Qualified Shotcrete Contractor (Levels 1 and 2) for other structural concrete work and the ACI-Certified Shotcreter program.

As a final note, our Committee Secretary, Andy Duck, has spearheaded an effort to raise awareness and standards in the skate park industry. More news to come on that in coming issues of *Shotcrete* magazine!

To summarize, we in ASA and the Pool & Recreation Committee have been busy digging deep, working hard with our heads down to manage our businesses and contribute to our industry with every effort we can muster. We look forward to seeing the fruits of our labors in the years to come and hope to see new faces join our ranks in service of our industry.