And much of the best entertainment in L.A. is not in your tour guide

By HAL PHILLIPS

ANAHEIM — There should be no shortage of things to do when the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America isn't conducting its trade show, banquets and education program. There's nearby Disneyland, of course. And Hollywood. And Knotts Berry Farm. Etc., etc., etc.

However, if you don't want to trod the beaten path, Southern California boasts a long, long list of fun spots your travel agent probably didn't mention. We at Golf Course News contacted numerous regional experts to compile the following rundown of restaurants, nightclubs and other exotic locales.

Disneyland, one of America's most popular theme parks, sits nearby the Anaheim Convention Center where the International Golf Course Conference and Show will be held, Jan. 23-30.

Don't count on public transportation in the Los Angeles area. Rent a car — you'll be glad you did.

Bennett looking to defend GCSAA title

By PETER BLAIS

Forget the oversized driver, long-shafted putter or sports psychologist. Defending GCSAA tournament champion Gary Bennett knows how to raise your game to the next level.

"I remarried a wonderful school teacher in August. I've only played three times since then. But I've shot par or better each time," said the head superintendent at Crickente Golf Club near Columbia, S.C.

Bennett has to be one of the favorites heading into this year's GCSAA tourney in San Diego. Despite his low number of rounds played, Bennett's confidence is high. That's as it should be considering the scratch golfer's five-stroke victory in last year's 36-hole tournament played over Sawgrass Country Club and TPC at Sawgrass in Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla. Bennett won his first crown even though he played with a broken finger.

"It just depends on who is playing well at the time. Confidence has a lot to do with it," said Bennett, 44, who finished second in 1987 and in the top 10 every year he's entered, except 1980.

This year's tournament will be Jan. 23-24. The courses include Carlton Oaks Country Club, Eastlake Country Club, Mt. Woodson Country Club and Steele Canyon Golf Club.
The Rhythm Cafe in Santa Ana is loaded with nightclubs, but while young maids keep the patrons happy from Knotts Berry Farm, this is the closest. The RC has it all: rock, R&B, jazz and country.

"We will be there and accept the award. But I feel I'm accepting it on behalf of all the people who have joined and are taking care of their courses with the environment in mind," said Dodson, the NYSAS president. "Our attitude is that we are trying to provide good credible information and support. The real heroes are the people actually managing the courses for the wildlife and environment."

Dodson feels the award will give the sanctuary program credibility among superintendents and encourage more to join.

The award will be given at the GCSAA banquet Jan. 30 to Ron Dodson, on behalf of the New York State Audubon Society. The society administers the program, working with superintendents to enhance the wildlife on their golf courses.

Dodson said that, as a long-time golfer, he was not surprised at superintendents' high rate of interest in the environment. He related one groundskeeper's comment that he had always felt he was in a car without a cockpit. The sanctuary program "gave me the steering wheel as to what wildlife needs," he told Dodson.

From its inception in the spring of 1990, the program grew to just over 100 members the first year, nearly 300 by the end of 1991, and eclipsed Dodson's goal of 500 for the end of 1992. The staff has grown from Dodson and one part-time assistant to Dodson, two full-time ecologists, a managerial person and secretarial support.

"Now we have more money to hire more people," Dodson said.

Nancy Sadlon, environmental specialist for the U.S. Golf Association, which sponsors and funds the program, said her organization is excited about it and hopes it continues to grow. Of the more than 570 golf courses which are members, Florida and California lead the states, and the Northeast leads the regions.

The Canadian Golf Superintendents Association has shown interest in adopting the program in its country, and courses in Guam and Spain have joined. Sadlon said the USGA funded the program with a $25,000 grant the first year and followed it the next two years with $100,000 grants.

She hopes the Environmental Research Committee will approve a three-year funding and that the program will be self-sustaining after that year.