Supers descend on Anaheim

By PETER BLAIS

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Guess what, folks. This year's winner of the GCSAA's highest honor, the Old Tom Morris Award, will be there to receive his plaque.

Business kept last year's recipient, golfer Tom Watson, away from the New Orleans ceremony. Knowing he would not be able to personally receive the award, Watson requested the association give it to someone else.

But the group decided Watson was their man and honored him anyway. Although he taped an acceptance speech shown during the annual banquet, the five-time British Open champ's absence was definitely noticeable.

Revised green construction specs forthcoming

By MARK LESLIE

Major changes in the U.S. Golf Association greens construction specifications, to be unveiled this month, will save developers money and time, according to USGA Green Section National Director Jim Snow.

New guidelines will be released in January following a "thorough, scientific" 18-month review of the USGA's controversial construction recommendations by agronomists, scientists, architects, industry personnel and soil laboratory personnel. Snow believes golf course builders, architects and developers will be happy with the results.

"Whether they pass or fail, they have the members interested and ac-

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Low Country courses take proactive environmental tack

By HAL PHILLIPS

HILTON HEAD, S.C. — The words "coastal council" are enough to scare some golf course owners and developers half to death. However, a proactive approach taken in the Low Country of South Carolina has shown that regulators and course owners can work together, to the benefit of all concerned.

Mike Tinkey is chief operating officer of Royal Golf & Tennis, Ltd., which manages 81 holes in and around Hilton Head. Since 1989, Tinkey has overseen a slew of environmental improvements: lagoon naturalization, bird sanctuaries, above-ground fuel storage, wildflower plantings, and conversion to irrigation using 100 percent effluent. All this was done with the active blessing of regulatory agencies.

"We went to the agencies and said, 'This is what we're doing,'" Tinkey said. "And they've been very cooperative. We've worked with them, and they've worked with us."

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Wildflower beds on the 4th hole at the Barony Course are among 4.5 acres planted on the Port Royal/Shipyard courses on Hilton Head.
The bylaws: Time for a few changes?

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In response to superintendent requests for more information on golf course design, several well-known architects are leading a handful of the 60-plus seminars. American Society of Golf Course Architect members Brian Silva and Jan Beljan discuss Golf Course Restoration, Renovation and Construction Projects the first Saturday and Sunday. Geoffrey Cornish and Robert Muir Graves give their critically acclaimed Golf Course Design Principles seminar Monday and Tuesday. Pete and Alice Dye on Golf Course Design will be on Tuesday's one-day session by two of the industry's top names.

Other topics during the first four days of seminars range from water quality and wildlife habitat conservation to employee safety training and managerial productivity.

Hall of Fame catcher Johnny Bench will be the keynote speaker at Tuesday night's Opening Session. Organizers are excited about some of the speakers, especially on the environment, on tap for the six concurrent education sessions scheduled for Wednesday.

Sessions by allied associations round out the conference. Among them are the Golf Course Builders Association of America on Thursday, American Society of Golf Course Architects on Friday, and United States Golf Association Green Section on Saturday.

Wednesday is Distributor Preview Day for the trade show, providing an opportunity for exhibitors to meet with current and potential distributors and major dealers. The trade show officially opens Thursday, Jan. 28, running from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday and Friday, and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday. The 175,000-square-foot show floor will house a record 600-plus exhibitors.

The annual meeting on the closing Saturday morning should be one of the most spirited affairs in recent memory, with heated debate expected on the proposed bylaw changes. The election of Randy Nichols of Cherokee Town & Country Club in Dunwoody, Ga., as the new GCSAA president will highlight the election of officers. The conference and show should draw 16,000 to 17,000 domestic and foreign visitors, which could surpass the record attendance set three years ago in Orlando. The recession held down last year's numbers in New Orleans, organizers said. Desert Storm and a souring economy did the same two years ago in Las Vegas, they added.

But with an improving economy, no military engagement to threaten foreign travel, and the proximity of this year's event to a major metropolitan area like Los Angeles, attendance is likely to improve.

Bylaw changes?

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With mail-in ballots, many people would vote for directors on the basis of name recognition alone, giving candidates from larger chapters with more financial resources an advantage over candidates from smaller ones, Bavier said. It would also eliminate any realistic chance for a person nominated from the floor, he added.

The "if-it-ain't-broke-don't-fix-it" attitude extends to those opposing the proposed change from a two-thirds rule to a simple majority vote to amend bylaws. Intense lobbying by a vocal minority could sway half the eligible voters, putting too much power in the hands of a few, they say.

Current two-thirds rule forces an amendment to stand on its own merits, Bavier said. Directors must vigorously sell any changes to members to gain approval, he added.

Amendment supporters contend current bylaws mean a one-third minority can override the desires of two-thirds of the members.

"A two-thirds requirement is overkill," Roberts wrote.

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The annual banquet, which features a performance by the legendary Beach Boys, wraps up the eight-day event. The 64th annual conference and show kicks off the previous year, the GCSAA decided to move the event to Anaheim, Calif., a regrettable though unavoidable scheduling problem, according to show organizers. A one-day computer and turf management seminar Sunday, Jan. 24 is followed by more one- and two-day sessions on Monday and Tuesday.

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