GCSAA faces opposition on proposed bylaw changes

By PETER BLAIS

This year’s GCSAA annual meeting promises to be anything but a ho-hum affair. The proposed bylaw changes will see to that.

Recommendations to give the board of directors authority to set dues, get rid of delegate voting, change from a two-thirds to simple majority rule, and restructure membership classes have drawn fire and support from around the country. The Organizational Study Committee recommended and the board of directors unanimously endorsed the changes, according to GCSAA President Bill Roberts.

Still, some board candidates, former association officials and members have expressed reservations about the changes. “Many people feel like these are being rammed down their throats,” said board of director candidate George Renault of Burning Tree Club in Bethesda, Md. “They could all be voted down. It just stresses the need for better communication with the membership.”

Board candidate Dave Fears of Blue Hills Country Club in Kansas City, Mo., explained that the board has simply endorsed bringing the proposed changes before the membership for a vote rather than endorsing the actual changes themselves. “Whether they pass or fail, they have the members interested and ac-

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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, which will be available in a rough version in January and in a booklet come late winter or early spring.

Central to the changes is the intermediate pea-gravel layer, known as the choker layer, which Snow termed “controversial, not in terms of agronomics, but in terms of money.” “I believe most of the time the choker layer is left out of the construction,” Snow said. “We have found good specs for determining when you need it or not” based on particle size distribution of the root-zone mix.

The recommendations place more stress on laboratory tests, especially in

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Low Country courses take proactive environmental tack

By HALL 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 and here’s what we’re doing’” Tinkey said. “It was embraced.”

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.