

tion that architects are "in on" the loot in the Public designs. His phrases: "belongs to the people" and "a game of the masses" clearly identify his philosophy.

Congratulations for printing the "right" side in the two letters by Hall and Prozan. Prozan is right on the nail when he says "we pay taxes to support him".

Andrew J. Watson, President
EECO, Inc.

An open letter from Dr. Hurdzan

Thank you for your readership, your enthusiasm for golf, and your efforts to express your thoughts on the industry. This column was intended to be a written dialogue and the printing of your letters makes it so. However, rather than condemning Mr. Morris and GOLF BUSINESS, I should think that you would rather thank him for the opportunity to read and express a different point of view.

As to your personal disagreements with my perceptions of the golf business, I would like to address those by reiterating my main points again on government golf. First, golf course construction is stagnating because many private and corporate investors feel the return does not justify the investment. Proof of this is that according to National Golf Foundation

statistics only 62 golf courses had opened through the end of September for 1979 and their figures show only about 80 to open in 1980 (this is down considerably from the 350-400 golf courses per year of a few years ago). Of those 62, a high percentage were government golf courses. Consider also that we have no way of knowing how many golf courses may have closed last year. However, it should be clear that the net effect is that the hundreds of golf superintendents who graduate each year and the hundreds of apprentice golf pros will find it increasingly harder to find a position if golf continues to slow down, not to mention the impact on all golf suppliers.

Also remember that government intrusion into the golf market started back about 85 years ago when James Roosevelt, New York City Park Commissioner, built the **first** public golf course in America. Van Cortland Park was built in 1895 and every golf course built before that time was for the private wealthy interests.

As for the free enterprise system, I can only say that I have owned four businesses of my own. But it is not infallible. If greens fees were to be set at the discretion of the individual who was strongly profit motivated, then this price may deny many the opportunity to experience golf. My father grew up in a coal camp in West Virginia during the depression, and the municipal golf courses there were his only chance as a boy to caddy or work to earn money for his family. His exposure to golf gave him a chance to get out of a life in the mines,

and his golfing ability that he learned has benefited him for the past 50 years. Had those government supported golf courses not existed during that time and throughout the 40's, 50's, 60's and 70's, he and many other people would have been economically denied the benefits and pleasures of golf.

I assure you that I am of the same political persuasion as you except that I see problems with a strict free enterprise system. Witness the high profits of the oil companies while many Americans must decide to "eat or heat".

Lastly, I do not believe that every municipal golf course should make money nor should they be a tax drain. If a government golf course has such a deplorable income record, then an outside consultant should be retained to study and revise the management system. However, it is the purpose of government to provide for the health, safety and welfare of its constituents and this includes recreation. Whether it is ball fields and picnic areas, public hunting, fishing, boat ramps or camping sites, it is imperative that recreation be provided for all people regardless of their backgrounds or economic situation.

Thank you again for your interest on the subject for I believe we are both concerned about the game; we just have different perceptions.

Michael J. Hurdzan

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