Golf Writers Encourage Communication

By Bob Costa

A panel discussion among three local golf writers and a golf course superintendent triggered a lively debate at the June meeting held at Adobe Creek. Ralph Chatoian - Marin Independent Journal, Bruce Meadows - Santa Rosa Press Democrat, Doug Saunders - Independent and Rick Hansen - Windsor Golf Club maintained a captive audience during the hour long discussion. The group of writers encouraged golf course superintendents to get to know their local writers. Developing a relationship with local writers and other members of the media, they felt, provides a conduit for communicating with golf course staff. As a result, future stories involving the golf course are likely to appear more accurate and technically correct.

Hansen, who’s course plays host to a Nike event spoke first hand about how his relationship with a local writer resulted in a fair and accurate story regarding course conditions. He felt because of the relationship he had established, every effort was made to obtain the facts before the article went to press. And when it did, the story was more forgiving than he expected.

Doug Saunders, who has written several articles for Golf Course Management Magazine, emphasized how golfers awareness and curiosity about course conditions has grown, increasing the exposure of the superintendent. As a result, he believes there is a need to educate golfers about the nuances of course maintenance. Saunders went on to say that superintendents need to be recognized by members of the media as the spokesperson for course conditions. “All too often,” he said, “the General Manager, and Head Professional are quick to accept this role.” Meadows, brought laughter to the group when he likened the superintendent to the crazed uncle who lives out back. “It’s time for superintendents to step forward and be recognized,” he said.