

# Architects and Certified Builders: You Just Can't "Grow in" Without Them

*As I described in Part 1 of my article (On Course, Jan 2007), The GCBAA held its annual summer meeting in Chicago and I was fortunate enough to attend this information packed event. The GCBAA prides itself on being involved with 13 Allied Associations of Golf. Here are some of the various Associations' perspectives given at the meeting:*

## ASGCA

Mr. Chad Ritterhouse, the Executive Secretary, reported:

- The ASBCA offers the following publications to assist you in your next project:
- Golf Course Development Planning Guide (Free)
- Printed Membership List (Free)
- The Golf Course Remodeling Process: Questions & Answers (Free)
- Request For Proposal (Free)
- Selecting Your Golf Course Architect (Free)
- Career in Golf Course Architecture (Free)

Please go to [www.asgca.org](http://www.asgca.org) for more information.

## NGCOA

Henry Delozier, President, and Mike Tinkey, Deputy CEO of the National Golf Course Owners Association, described their organization. They suggested that NAHB's (National Association of Home Builders) website is a great place to find out what is coming down the pipeline. They also work closely with NGF and were a founding partner of Golf 20/20. These organizations report that it is the 40 plus to 60-year-old market that should be targeted. Quite simply: **The Boomers are coming and they're coming to play golf!**

If you want more information, please go to [www.golf2020.com](http://www.golf2020.com).

## GSCAA

Steve Mona reported that the GCSAA and GCBAA would continue their collaborative efforts with a "Building of a Bunker Solution Center" at the 2007 GIS. These live demonstrations encourage a better understanding for both parties. I am sure you will agree, bunkers are filled with some pretty incredible stuff!

Mona credited Bill Kubly, CEO of Landscapes Unlimited, for spearheading the efforts of the Environmental Institute for Golf (EIFG). The EIFG is the philanthropic arm of the GCSAA combining efforts of the environmental and golf communities. Mona said the No. 1 issue facing the GCSAA is the environment. We need to show the government how golf courses are good for the environment by collecting with factual data. This data collection process is now formalized and will focus on five areas:

- Water Management
- Integrated Plant Management
- Wildlife and Habitat Management
- Golf Course Site, Design and Construction
- Energy and Waste Management

For more on The Institute, visit [www.eifg.org](http://www.eifg.org).

As a sidebar, the surveys from the GCSAA on environmental issues are extremely important for capturing the needed baseline data. Please participate in these surveys.

## LPGA

Ms. Kelly Hyne, Director of Tournament Business Affairs, showed a great film on the LPGA, a 54-year-old organization. The LPGA was founded by a group of 13 women, including **Babe Didrikson Zaharias**. The association held 33 events in 2006. Unfortunately, the Americans won only seven of them. Not only has it grown nationally, but the LPGA is now international in scope. Did you know that the average drive is 275 yards for the LPGA player? (I'm pretty sure I can drive the cart that far, what is the big deal?)

The LPGA is becoming increasingly visible. Next year they will be playing at St. Andrews for the first time ever. They will play Pebble Beach in 2010. The Solheim cup will play at Rich Harvest Farms in 2009. The LPGA prides itself on working closely with the Superintendents to set up the course. Jeff and Jason let us know if this is true!

To learn more about women golfers go to [www.lpga.com](http://www.lpga.com).

## USGA

Our own Paul Vermeulen, of the USGA, stated the obvious: expectations have never been higher. Paul said his experience with over 50 clubs is solid proof that the USGA guidelines work for constructing greens. He stressed that all of us should enthusiastically promote the project. We spend too much time and effort trying to save money up front, rather than building it the right the first time. If it's too costly to build a green correctly, it will be far more costly to build it incorrectly.

Paul said that focus is needed on bunkers now. Superintendents are reporting that bunkers have surpassed greens as the largest component of the maintenance budget. He stated that there need to be better evaluation

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techniques to qualify sand. I really don't see a need for this. Just ask me where you should get your bunker sand! To learn more about Paul...just watch him as the new Director of Agronomy for the PGA Tour.

The seminar also featured an Architects Panel Discussion with our own MAGCS members: Bob Lohmann, Rick Jacobsen, and Greg Martin. Greg Muirhead, ASGCA President and an architect with Rees Jones, also presided. All four of these men are ASGCA members. To become a member, you must meet very stringent guidelines in a several year process. **Average age of this year's applicant: 46. Average years of experience: 25. Average expectation: Priceless.**

Greg Martin said he knows an architect strives for three components in any given project:

- For it to be done on time.
- For the project to be done exquisitely.
- For it to be done within budget.

However, if you want to be realistic pick any two!

Bob Lohmann asks builders how long it will take for the construction so that he can relay that information back to the owner. He also appreciates a new breed of expert: the "Grow In" Superintendent. "Been there done that" expertise is priceless.

Rick Jacobsen stressed that the architect and builder have a long-term relationship that needs to be maintained. It's tricky, and yeah, it takes a lot of patience and work, but it is far more rewarding than the "one

time" shot with an owner. (O.K, maybe those weren't his exact words, but that is how I remember it!)

All agreed it is difficult to get the owner to "let go" after the project is complete. With a punch list in hand, the final walk through should involve the Certified Builder, Architect, and Owner. When is the project officially completed for the architect? Rick Jacobsen said when the architect says, "grass it."

So, with all this talk about Certified Builders, what exactly constitutes a Certified Builder?

In 1992, the GCBA Board established and implemented the Professional Certification Program for Builder Members. To be eligible for certification, a company must meet the following requirements:

- Have been in the golf course construction business for at least five years (under the current company name).
- Have completed construction of the equivalent of 18 holes of golf per year for each of the past five years under the direction of a golf course architect.
- Provide references from individuals in five of the following seven categories:
  - a) Owner/developer
  - b) Golf course architect
  - c) Engineer
  - d) Irrigation designer
  - e) Golf course superintendent
  - f) Municipality
  - g) GCBA Certified Golf Course Builder.

- Provide references from a financial institution, credit agency, insurance company, and bonding company.
- Pass the written Certification Exam, which is offered annually at the Golf Industry Show.
- Attend at least one GCBA educational session per year.
- Consistently engage in ethical business practices.

At the conference, there was some dialogue about starting a new class of membership: a renovation specialist. I am sure you will all agree that new courses in the Chicagoland area will be few and far between. Renovations are on the rise as each course competes for survival and profitability. As discussed in part one of this article, there is a certain level of experience and expertise that is required during a renovation, especially if the decision is made to keep the course partially open. This renovation specialist should be subject to the same degree of scrutiny, just not the volume of business, that is required to become a Certified Builder.

As we all know, the Golf Course Superintendent is continually faced with the pressures of providing a "perfect golf environment." Why not stretch your odds and pick an ASGCA Certified Architect and GCBA Certified Builder to better your odds?



Invited MAGCS members (L-R): Tim Anderson of Naperville CC, Tom Prichard of Ivanhoe CC, Dave Ward of Coyote Run and Dan Dinelli of North Shore CC.