

# GOLF COURSE NEWS

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## Golf Course News will arrive quicker

Happy New Year. Our first-ever January issue begins the year with a very healthy list of readers and advertising clientele. A recent direct mail campaign has increased our direct-request circulation to over 10,000 of our 20,000 total distribution.

As you will see, this issue includes a list of prestigious products and services from a wide spectrum of the

industry. Sixty-five advertising clients contracted for over 40 advertising pages in this issue. What does this mean to you?

It means we will continue to build on our success and improve our publication with every issue with our added resources. We have laid plans for furthering the development of our editorial features. The circula-

tion increase will allow us to mail via 2nd class rather than 3rd, which will speed the delivery time of Golf Course News to you, offering news of the industry even quicker.

You'll see evidence of our increased editorial focus in this issue with the GCSAA show information provided in an easy-reading format. The February issue plan is to offer a "pull-out"

insert which will guide you through the Orlando Convention Center with ease.

All in all, I think you are in for an interesting and information-filled period with Golf Course News, and I wish you the best year ever.

Sincerely  
Charles E. von Brecht  
Publisher

## Stronger families, stronger industry

BY MARK LESLIE

A number of Americans in the golf industry have been traveling to Europe, exporting their knowledge and cashing in on their talent.

Meanwhile, we in the United States can learn one major lesson from the Europeans: Keep the family strong.

Speakers at Golf Course Europe in West Germany last fall spoke about the importance of the family unit in their countries. Families there actually spend leisure time together. Sound like America 30 or 40 years ago?

That family bond not only translates into a better society but — if golf course builders and golf community developers plan correctly — it can mean higher revenues at their facilities.

If a golfing facility can draw an entire family to a course instead of just Dad, or Mom and Dad for that matter, the profits can soar: both for the family and the facility.

Over the years in the United States, all too often golf has pulled families apart.

The term "golf widow" is not an unfounded term.

"Golf orphans" was never coined but could be in many families. It's Saturday and Dad's off to the golf course. Eighteen holes equals four to five hours away from wife and

kids. Lunch and drinks — count off another hour or two.

When day dawns on Sunday: ditto.

Some simple yet innovative projects around the country will help the situation. Others by their very nature will surely bring many families together.

**Example 1:** Golf Unlimited's Lake Under Hill Golf Center (see page 1 story) in Orlando, Fla., was formulated on the idea of drawing on the entire family. Owner Jack Irwin said, "Dad can bring the kids out and teach them or let them play miniature golf while he and his wife are playing."

The center will include a fully lighted par 3 course, complete heated or cooled driving range with landing greens, miniature golf course and a huge green that will serve as an 18-hole putting "course."

The par 3 layout is short enough so that the whole family can play it together yet challenge the adults. And Irwin plans to offer beginners' instruction.

Golf Unlimited hopes to build similar facilities elsewhere.

**Example 2:** In Panama City, Fla., Bay Point Yacht and Country Club expects this year to complete a similar "family golf center," featuring a 58-tee lighted driving, all-weather tees, a large putting area, two 18-hole

miniature golf courses, teaching facilities, golf arcade and snack bar.

**Example 3:** Jim McLoughlin of The McLoughlin Group in Pleasantville, N.Y., a consultant to golf course developers, is reporting success with this idea: Next the clubhouse set aside 20 acres for a double-ended driving range surrounded by three holes — a par 3, par 4 and par 5 — that are not part of the 18. Make those holes the best in the facility, McLoughlin suggests, adding that while some members of the family practice off the tees, the others are nearby playing those three extra holes.

**Example 4:** Modified distance or Cayman ball courses, the brainchild of Jack Nicklaus, equalize good and average golfers and could mean more families playing together. Architect Bill Amick of Daytona Beach, Fla., is a major proponent of the Cayman courses.

**Example 5:** Pitch and put courses offer wonderful opportunities for parents to take their children out to a learning — and family — environment.

Meanwhile, the burgeoning number of "golf course communities" should strengthen families by the very nature of the communities — residents live where they golf. No more travel time away from family. A better chance to take along the chil-

dren who, in turn, can play just nine if 18 is too much.

Managers of these communities can organize family events, creating healthy family as well as community ties. Marketing can be a major force for change, treating golf as a social happening for the entire family and tournaments as family outings: father-son, mother-daughter, husband-wife, father-daughter, brother-sister; the possibilities are lengthy.

Shifts in societal makeup, such as the aging of the population, make golf a game that can evenly place grandfather and grandson together in a twosome.

Sir Henry Cotton wanted a string of nine-holes, economically built and maintained, so that young golfers could learn the rudiments of play and the etiquette of the game. All hail that idea!

The National Golf Foundation for four years has declared a Family Golf Week in the summer to encourage golfers to share the experience with family members. Good going.

I'll never forget the "sign-off" of a sports show I watched while growing up.

Maine outdoorsman Bud Leavitt would end each show with this refrain: "The family that plays together and prays together, stays together."

Truer words were never spoken.

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