

ASSOCIATION NEWS

ASGCA honors John Zoller as 'Renaissance man of golf'

BY MARK LESLIE

Cited as a "Renaissance man of golf," John Zoller symbolized superintendents, club managers and golf association administrators when he accepted the Donald Ross Award from the American Society of Golf Course Architects on March 26.

While ASGCA Past President Rees Jones classified Zoller with Herb and Joe Graffis as "Renaissance men of golf," outgoing President Robert Trent Jones Jr. said the recently retired senior executive director of the Northern California Golf Association has "literally done it all" in golf and "ev-

ery golf course architect appreciates what John has done personally to enlarge and enhance our profession."

Pointing toward Zoller's supervision or advisory work on all seven golf courses within the Del Monte forest on California's Monterey Peninsula, Bobby Jones said development of Poppy Hills Golf Club marks the first time in North America that a golf association of volunteers, with its own finances, has bought the land, constructed a course and operated it for its own members and the general public.

"What better way to meet the ex-

ploding demand for our grand and glorious game?" he asked.

United States Golf Association President C. Grant Spaeth, of Palo Alto, Calif., told the ASGCA members gathered at the Inn at Spanish Bay: "Your selection of John Zoller is consistent with my theme," which is to provide "playable golf at reasonable prices" for all golfers.

"There are an awful lot of happy golfers in this part of the world because of John Zoller," Spaeth said.

Zoller, an Ohio State University graduate who worked first as a course superintendent, then as a club manager before taking over the NCGA, passed on his own kudos.

Citing baseball, football and basketball scandals involving drugs and gambling, he gave examples of golfers' actions that have carried on the sport's code of honor — a code similar to King Arthur and the Round Table while other sports' codes seem to derive from the James Gang.

During his 60 years in golf, Zoller said: "What is interesting to me is the growth of golf groups, such as this one (ASGCA), over the years. I've developed enormous respect for each of these groups, for what they've accomplished and contributed to the game. Surely, the one that must offer the most creativity, and therefore the most satisfaction, is that of a golf course architect."

Referring to "a pleasant and satisfying relationship with a number of golf architects" over the years, Zoller noted a successful course redesign with Bobby Jones's firm. "In a field where there are many pretenders, this forever cemented in my mind the need for always associating with real professionals," he said.

Zoller said he developed "a sensitivity of how important the superintendent is to the golf architect and the continuity of original design after the architect is gone.

"This must certainly be frustrating when, after a few short years, integrity of your designs is lost either because of a careless superintendent or a misinformed greens committee."

"I must recognize the NCGA and the opportunity they gave me to be involved in the development of Poppy Hills," he said. "For me, this was the thrill of a lifetime, and it was the result of being in the right place at the right time.

"To our knowledge, this is the first golf course fully owned by a regional golf association."

With 120,000 members in the NCGA, he said, the first goal was to build a course that would appeal to golfers of all skill levels. The second was to support a lot of play.

"I think the result has achieved both of these goals. And beyond that, it offers quality golf on the Monterey Peninsula to these 120,000 members at a very reasonable rate," he said. "And so the acceptance expressed during the four years of operation justifies the hopes of the NCGA founders who first dreamed of this project.

"It also answers the question of

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Fledgling TOCA plans conclave

The Turf and Ornamental Communicators Association's first annual meeting, May 20-22 in Atlanta, Ga., will feature professional improvement workshops and tours of area facilities.

TOCA, formed recently for "the advancement of the communications practices within the turf and ornamental industry," is accepting applications for board and officers positions.

Elections will be held at the

conference, which will take place at the Marriott Suites Midtown Atlanta.

Members will tour the Atlanta Athletic Club, conducted by golf superintendent Ken Mangum, and the Atlanta Braves' home, Fulton County Stadium.

People interested in more information may contact Den Gardner at 8500 Normandale Lake Blvd., Suite 1200, Bloomington, Minn. 55437.



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After a round at Spanish Bay's golf course, ASGCA honoree John Zoller, left, relaxes with, from left, new society member Jack Nicklaus, outgoing President Robert Trent Jones Jr. and past President Pete Dye.

Tingle named GCA president

Fred Tingle, owner of Springdale Country Club in Canton, N.C., was elected president of GCA for 1990-91, succeeding vice president Peter Trenchard.

Other officers elected at the annual conference were Vice President Jeff Hoag, owner of Scott Lake Country Club in Comstock, Mich.; and Secretary-Treasurer Gibson Lunt, owner of Lake Shore Golf Center in Rochester, N.Y.

Tingle's Springdale Country Club is one of GCA's founding members.

Tingle has served on the board of directors since 1986 and was co-chairman of GCA's Annual Conference in Naples, Fla. He has been a leading advocate of GCA's involvement with

other allied associations.

"The world of golf is changing so quickly that GCA can achieve many of its long-term goals by cooperating with certain initiatives of other associations," Tingle said. "In this way we can lend our insights and assistance to larger organizations that have the memberships to command attention while we represent our own members' interests."

The board of directors has directed GCA representation on task forces on tax equalization and environmental concerns, and attendance at the Allied Associations of Golf, PGA Annual Meeting, National Golf Foundation meetings, and major golf conferences.

Wilmot gives ASPA \$5,000

Frank Wilmot, owner/operator of Summit Hall Turf Farm in Poolesville, Md., won the door prize of \$5,000 in grass seed at the mid-winter conference of the American Sod Producers Association, then donated \$5,000 to the organization to fund research.

Earlier in the conference, ASPA's leadership had announced that the organization would become more involved in programs that demonstrate the environmental benefits of turfgrass.

Spaeth stresses affordability

United States Golf Association President C. Grant Spaeth called on golf course architects at their annual conference in March to help make golf available "across the board" to Americans.

Speaking at the annual Donald Ross Dinner of the American Society of Golf Course Architects, Spaeth, a Palo Alto, Calif., attorney elected in January, said: "It is my hope, and belief, and prayer that (at the USGA's 100th anniversary in 1995) we can all say that — between today and then — we will have made it possible for more Americans to join in the challenges of playing the game of golf..."

"I call it playable golf at reasonable prices. I happen to think that it matters in our country that this opportunity be made available across the board."

He said he wasn't sure exactly how the architects could help.

"I don't know whether it's a pro bono (for the public good) assignment. I don't know whether it's simply an adjunct to your normal work. I don't know whether it's being on the city council or the board of supervisors in your community. But there's no question about the importance of your participating, pushing, being creative in causing golf to be made available to more Americans," Spaeth said.

"Maybe this is something you could think about discussing at the next meeting of this wonderful society."

Zoller

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whether a regional golf association should be in the golf business... In my opinion we should not compete with private enterprise. But if a shortage of golf holes exists — as is the case in many areas in Northern California — then perhaps it has a place in golf."

Golf is 90 years old in this country, Zoller said, adding: "What about the next 90 years? There is no question in my mind that golf is the best-run, best-organized, best-administered of all sports activities. And professional groups like golf architects can only make it better."

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