

## 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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