

One more look back at 1993, the year in golf...

The only thing more irksome than a New Year's Day hangover is the glut of year-end retrospectives that clutter newspapers and magazines from December of the closing year straight through to June of the new one. But they're hard to avoid — just like the hangover.

I read these years in review. In fact, I read them all with relish. Polls, surveys, Top Ten lists, best of this, worst of that. I love 'em.

You may have noticed this from the contents of our past two editions. January was filled with our annual "Best of the Best" awards, and this issue names the Best Mountain Course to open since 1988 — Robert Trent Jones Jr.'s Squaw Creek (see pages 1 and 35).

I've included in this column the final, complete results of our Best Maintained Course on the LPGA Tour survey, as voted by LPGA touring professionals. Further, in honor of *Golf Course News*' fifth anniversary, Publisher Charles von Brecht (see below) has weighed in with his assessment of our first five years — complete with his Top Ten news stories of 1988-93.

Had enough? Well, slap me silly with a bag o' mulch, we're not done yet! Not without handing out my personal Golf Industry Awards for the calendar year, 1993.

Raquel, the envelopes please:

The John Bobbit Ridiculous New Product Award goes to... the golf club and urine receptacle in one. I've avoided using the brand name and manufacturer to keep a straight face and stay out of court. But somebody out there is actually trying to sell a hollow golf club (with screw-off top) into which one can relieve him (or her?) self to avoid "embarrassing" situations.



Hal Phillips,
editor

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BEST MAINTAINED COURSE ON THE LPGA TOUR 1993

As voted by the players/Conducted by *Golf Course News*

Mission Hills (Old Course) CC, Rancho Mirage, Calif.	22
Columbia-Edgewater Golf Club, Portland, Ore.	10
Dupont Country Country Club, Wilmington, Del.	4
Moon Valley, Phoenix, Ariz.	3
Highland Meadows Golf Club, Sylvania, Ohio	2
Walnut Hills Country Club, E. Lansing, Mich.	2
London Hunt & Country Club, London, Ontario, Canada	1
Hermitage Golf Course, Old Hickory, Tenn.	1
Wykagyl Golf Club, New Rochelle, N.Y.	1
Killearn Country Club, Tallahassee, Fla.	1

Innovations in service and management at Public Golf

Just as greens fees drive profits at a golf course, so does innovative management and marketing steer the vehicle. Ideas that fit this scenario overflowed at *Golf Course News*' recent Public Golf '93 conference in Charleston, S.C.

From American Golf Co. Vice President Kenneth James' wisdom in filling tee times to National Golf Course Owners Association President Vince Alfonso Jr.'s admonitions to give to the community, attendees from Florida to Hawaii learned a spate of money-making ideas.

We share a fraction of them here, suggesting, as Lansbrook Golf Club General Manager Gregg Gagliardi did: "Every area has ideas that work. You have to find your own promotional opportunities within your market. If you're going to make money, you've got to push and drive business. Flexibility in your operations is a must. Service is number one."

To better serve the golf course industry, *Golf Course News* has expanded the annual Public Golf conference into a trade show and three-tracked educational symposium for superintendents, owners, managers and developers. It's called Golf Course Expo, and it's scheduled for Nov. 10-11, 1994, in Orlando, Fla. In addition to a management program, Golf Course Expo will offer educational programs in agronomy and development.



Mark Leslie,
managing editor

HAVES, HAVE NOTS

One theme that rang out at Public Golf '93 was that golf course operators *have* not because they *ask* not.

"People wonder how we got all this help. It's because we asked," said Elaine Fitzgerald of Fitzgerald Promotions, Inc. near Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. Not only has Fitzgerald obtained hundreds of thousands of dollars in free advertising for two golf courses by tying them into promotions of area hotels, she has gotten major mileage by placing brochures in visitors bureaus and chambers of commerce — at little or no cost.

Bobby Vaughn, president of Sunbelt Corp., which has opened the 18-course Jones Trail in Alabama, supported Fitzgerald's stance.

"We've spent less than \$150 per hole per year for the last three years promoting and marketing this concept," he said. "Much of our publicity was done for free because we asked. And now we have finally given people a reason to come to Alabama."

Among the Jones Trail's successes:

- As a major tourist attraction, it had the highway department put up 84 Interstate signs all over Alabama.
- It worked a deal with AAA in which it is featured on the cover

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FROM THE PUBLISHER

Thanks for five years of news, views, people and places

Don't be alarmed! I'm not resuming my monthly column, which we "axed" a couple of year's ago when Editor Hal Phillips came on board. I am taking space this month to thank our loyal readers and advertising clients for supporting *Golf Course News* on what could be considered a minor milestone in publishing.

Five years ago this month, I showed up in Anaheim at the GCSAA Show with a couple thousand copies of *Golf Course News* filled with *free* advertising. Joining me were our chairman, Ted Gordon, and managing editor Mark Leslie. Also with us was an idea that this booming industry needed a news source that could offer wide-ranging information focusing on maintenance, development, management, design and supplier business.

I am pleased to say that, in

this short five-year period, this idea has become a full-blown, successful reality.

Shortly after the '89 show, Peter Blais came on board as associate editor and, of course, Vern Putney was hammering out stories until some health problems sidelined him (he's back, in fine "fettle," as contributing editor). Our editorial staff found a leader in Hal Phillips, who joined us at the New Orleans show in '92. All of the original staff is still with us and continuing to provide you news for the industry.

During these five years, there have been many interesting happenings in the industry. I'll never compete with Letterman, but with an assist from our editors, I've come up with a few "Top Ten" or "Best of" lists. I'm sure we've missed a few of your



Charles von Brecht,
publisher

favorite items or names in the *News*, so please send along any additions. Here we go:

Top Ten News Stories

- 10) Weather-related disasters affecting golf facilities: Hugo, Andrew, Iniki, quakes, floods, drought — and the incredible resilience of the nation's superintendents
- 9) Real attention paid to the speed-of-play issue
- 8) Emergence of golf course management companies
- 7) Rapid rise of the Asia-Pacific market
- 6) Major reorganization at top of GCSAA (for the better!)
- 5) Boom in daily-fee/public-access facilities
- 4) RTC liquidation of properties, Landmark foremost among them
- 3) Mergers and acquisitions on the supplier side, as the

industry continues to mature

2) EPA and state regulation, along with chemical reregistration under FIFRA

... And the number-one news story from the year 1988 to 1993...

1) More than 1,700 new golf courses open for play. The NGF was right: That's nearly one per day!

One of my lasting impressions from that first show in Anaheim was how personable people are in this industry. Along with the new leaders at GCSAA, a slew of personalities has emerged in the golf world over the past five years. Here's my list, in no particular order:

• Mike Hughes, executive director, National Golf Course Owners Association — the growth of the NCGOA speaks volumes

• Perry Dye, Dye Designs — single-handedly kept the

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Phillips commentary

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situations. Now, correct me if I'm wrong, but if someone is too embarrassed to go in the bushes, might they also be too shy to use this so-called wiz stick?

The Arab-Israeli Better Late Than Never Municipal Development Award goes to?... The town of Sherburne, Vt., which is on the verge of building the state's first municipal golf course (see page 3) — no small feat in a state where it's easier to elect a socialist congressman than receive permitting for a new golf facility.

The Tonya Harding/Lady Byng Trophy for Sportsmanship goes to?... Members of the British Ryder Cup contingent, for bowing out of the brouhaha at the Belfry without clubbing anybody on the kneecap with a 9-iron. The English have such good breeding.

The Desmond Muirhead/Put the Artistry Back in Architecture Award goes to?... Bob Cupp, whose geometric exploits have been the subject of more bad metaphors than Pythagoras ever thought possible. What critics have overlooked, however, is Cupp's acclaimed, Pumpkin Ridge outside of Portland, Ore. When viewed from a passing plane, Cupp's 36-hole routing plan actually resembles the inner ear of an ordinary house cat.

But seriously folks... I played some wonderfully designed, beautifully maintained golf courses during 1993. Here is but the creme:

Best New Course You've Heard Of: The Four Seasons Resort at Aviara. This Palmer/Seay design in Carlsbad, Calif. was drop-dead gorgeous, interesting and fair. Here's the ultimate test: I played horribly and still enjoyed it immensely.

Best New Course You've Never Heard Of: Cattail Creek in Edgewood, Md. A Willard Byrd course that featured about 14 spectacular holes, complemented by four solid ones.

Best Established Course You've Heard Of: Finally played Pebble Beach... But Spanish Bay was better. Honestly.

Best Established Course You've Never Heard Of: Oswego Lakes CC, Lake Oswego, Ore. This is a fantastic H. Chandler Egan design (1926) carved into a small mountain outside Portland. Exhilarating old world golf with views of Mt. Hood.

Best Maintained Course: Interlachen in Edina, Minn. Had the pleasure of playing just before the Walker Cup and the conditions were as you might expect: pristine. Incidentally, I played Royal Porthcawl — site of the next Walker Cup — over the summer. The Welsh wind was blowing about 40 mph off the Bristol Channel — nothing special, according to the club secretary.

Looks as if Jay Sigel turned pro at the right time.

Environmental Summit

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and a couple of things have jumped out at me," Patterson explained. "First, 95 percent have expressed a keen interest. And second, nobody has been to a conference like this before.

"We'd like to break a little ground and maybe make a regular thing of it because these issues must be addressed over time. Solutions will evolve, but only with better communication."

Minger concurred: "We won't muffle anybody. We'll try to balance things so learning can take place."