

News

MUNI GOLF

San Francisco gives it back to citizens

NEWS, 9

PEOPLE, 48

COMING EVENTS, 50

Ever wonder how you could lose more than \$300,000 in the golf business in a year? You might want to take a lesson from the city of San Francisco, which after eight declining years of play on its municipal system is turning the direction of course management back to the populace.

It reads like a horror story. The fate of muni golf in the city by the bay has been poorly handled by the local administration and the Recreation and Parks Commission. Recently, the San Francisco board of supervisors relented under pressure to the formation of a citizen's golf advisory committee, to focus in on the problems of the 81-hole system that contains six different facilities.

Critics of the golf program in San Francisco point to the continuing deterioration of all courses in the system over the last decade. Diversion of allocated funds for golf course improvement by the present administration of Mayor George Moscone or his predecessors has been charged by a citizens group vitally interested in the city's recreational projects.

Frank Proctor, a 67-year-old semi-retired management consultant, drew the nod for the citizens' committee head post and he says the municipal system can be on the right track by this summer.

"We have established a finance committee, a grounds committee, a materials and equipment committee, and a personnel committee. These committees will take a look at just what is existing with the city courses. Simultaneously, we are setting up standards for each golf course. At the same time, we will be looking for outside funds — state and federal," Proctor told GOLF BUSINESS.

Proctor made it clear this was not the first time that such commit-

tees have been formed in San Francisco. Similar groups have been put together to focus on the problems of muni golf and failed. Proctor adds, though, that the whole-hearted support of the board of supervisors has not been with such committees in the past.

Cash losses over and above expenses for 1975 were considerably higher than last year. Figures for that year showed the city lost \$532,000. Biggest headache for the committee, the mayor, and the City Supervisor of Golf John Grant is getting the courses back in shape, so play will increase. "The courses have to be in the worst shape I've ever seen them," said John Fry, head professional at Harding Park Golf Course.

More than 1,600 acres make up

the system, greatly enhancing the quality of life in the San Francisco area, but care of that acreage over the years has been questionable. Civil service dictates who will eventually maintain the facilities, and most of the workmen from the Recreation and Parks Commission have little formal training in course maintenance.

When the renovation project is completed, set now for sometime in 1978. Proctor advocates a 50 cent increase in green fees. "Such an increase would add another \$450,000 to system income," Proctor noted. Fees at the San Francisco courses are now the lowest in the state, at 50 cents a round. Indications are that fees for nonresidents of San Francisco will be instituted, costing somewhat more than local taxpayers that play.

"The courses have to be in the worst shape I've ever seen them," says Harding Park golf professional John Fry on the San Francisco municipal system. Fry and others working in the bay area may finally be in luck, as city government has relented under citizen pressure and is letting the golfers back into the picture.



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San Francisco's system is flooded with seniors, people who by and large do not spend much money in the system's pro shops or concession stands. Concessions are offered to private concerns who contract for the service, but with decreasing play over the years, this additional amenity for the San Francisco muni golfer has fallen on hard times. Concessionaires are not bidding for facilities like they once did. Some concessionaires who have been involved with the system have not offered much in the way of consistent service either.

Civil service played havoc with the system last year, when a city employee strike idled maintenance workers for 51 days last spring. Work on the six courses ground to a halt with no preventive care of the turf at all. This episode had to have been the worst in the system's history.

With increased pressure from the citizens groups, suddenly money has been found to get the courses back into shape. Last year, Grant requested \$54,000 for materials and supplies for the six courses, which in itself was way underbudgeted. Proctor told how Mayor Moscone had recently pledged full support of the committee's efforts and more than \$280,000 would be allocated for the overall improvement of the system. Proctor insists the money was always there. That should greatly improve the trend in lost rounds: 180,000 fewer over the last eight years.

Biggest roadblock to Proctor's efforts in the past has been Lou Sabella, a recreation and parks commissioner appointed by previous mayor Alioto. Proctor charges Sabella and others in the department were indifferent to the needs of the municipal golfers in the city.

The city had even thought of raising the fees before the renovation was begun, but the 1,200-member Citizens Golf Association balked at such a move, threatening that they would picket the facilities if rates were raised without adequate improvement of the conditions.

Greatest advocate of the movement inside city government is Supervisor Quentin Kopp, who many in the community look at as a politician with a future outside the sphere of the San Francisco area.

There are indications that San Francisco may go after some solid advice on their system from a city in southern California which has shown that its courses can pay their way well. Anaheim several years ago experienced the same headaches.

Tom Liegler, director of the Anaheim entertainment department, recently reported to GOLF BUSINESS the new net profit figures for the city's courses. The H. G. "Dad" Miller Golf Course netted more than \$152,000 in 1976, a 9 percent jump over the previous season. Anaheim Hills Public Country Club, on the other hand, is undergoing a major renovation project that increased operating expenses an additional \$59,000 plus, so that facility is operating at a deficit for the time being.

What will occur in the San Francisco case is anybody's guess. Proctor and his committee might prove, though, that the power should belong to the people.

CONFERENCES

Superintendents back to class at Purdue

Always searching for education, superintendents attending the 41st Midwest Regional Turfgrass Conference at Purdue University got enough new knowledge to send them into their spring seasons with renewed vigor.

More than 600 turfgrass managers were on hand in West Lafayette, Ind., for the 3-day run last month. Seminars were offered for superintendents on both sides of the business, sessions scheduled discussed the turfgrass market in regards to both private country club and daily fee operations. Owner/operators were also involved in the daily fee forums.

Top speakers filled the program coordinated by Purdue turfgrass specialist Dr. William H. Daniel and the Midwest Regional Turfgrass Foundation. Most notable of the first-day sessions was the presentation handled by superintendent Dave Harmon, Golden Horseshoe, Williamsburg, Va.

Harman, who also serves on

the GOLF BUSINESS editorial advisory board, took on the headaches challenging superintendents in their maintenance areas. He pointed to direct examples at his facility of proper procedures in upkeep of maintenance buildings through a slide presentation. Constant communication is kept between the superintendent's office and each member of the course crew through the use of citizens band radio. Safety was also emphasized with proper guards around danger areas such as gasoline pumps.

With OSHA becoming more of an everyday reality for the superintendent, Harmon emphasized the necessity for each crew member to continually wear hard hats and to use goggles when handling or spraying toxic chemicals. "As always, ignorance of the law is no excuse," Harmon added, when dealing with OSHA.

Stan Fredericksen, a retired industry executive, focused on the positive mental attitude a superintendent has to maintain to accomplish anything in the business. "This PMA can be conceived, and it can be achieved," Fredericksen told the turf managers. Fred Ledebauer, from Loft-Kellogg Seed Co., spoke on the impact the grass seed industry has around the world.

Somewhat more technical in nature, the second day's programs were turned over to the agronomists. Don Holt, from Purdue's department, focused on water that can be found in the plant, while water in the soil was covered by another Purdue agronomist, Bill McFee. McFee pointed out the fact that water will have an unsaturated flow in regular soils, but will flow

slowly and not too well through fine silts and clays.

Purdue's Daniel handled the tough topic of sensing and controlling moisture, while meteorologist W. L. Stirm gave an overview of weather and water in the air. Stirm emphasized the advances made in use of tensiometers in measuring turf moistures.

Two of the most interesting presentations were made by James Latham, Milwaukee Sewerage Commission, and John Morris, superintendent at Highland Golf & Country Club, Indianapolis. Latham stressed the tough problem superintendents will have in the future with water and irrigation. Extreme water conservation activity is already prevalent in many parts of the country, according to Latham.

"Irrigation design is poor today, in many cases," said Latham. He showed, in a slide presentation, how poor drainage techniques were at many courses. In one case, the superintendent had used an aquatic weed control product in his pond, which also served as a water source for the course. The superintendent, forgetting about the adverse effect the chemical could have on his course, used the treated water on the course. The reaction killed some turf.

Morris showed how infrared photography could assist the superintendent in seeking out problems on the course. Different types of grasses could be photographed and the variances in the finished photograph could help the superintendent better identify these areas for possible replanting. Morris emphasized such photography was no more expensive than regular shooting and was within costs for most superinten-

dents.

Public golf people were well instructed on what is new for their particular operations under the guidance of Bill Lyons, owner/operator at Lyons Den Golf Course, Canal Fulton, Ohio.

National Golf Foundation Regional Director Fred Stewart spoke on developments in the industry, such as how slow play was causing young people to stay away from the game. "Slow play is stifling growth," said Stewart, with his own office based right in the Lafayette area.

Stewart pointed to the fact construction starts had slowed significantly over the past 5 years, due to increased costs. NGF figures showed that of the 95 projects last year, 30 of the 60 public fee operations were tied into land developments. Fee schedules were also an acute problem for the public golf business, said Stewart. Many operations do not even offer separate fee schedules for people that just want to play nine holes on an 18-hole layout. "Some people can only plan nine at a time," Stewart noted.

Another area that brought alarm from the NGF staffer was the growing amount of golf courses that had changed hands over the last year. Stewart indicated more courses were up for sale than ever before.

Education and golf promotion were the two subjects handled by PGA club professional and course owner Don Essig, Hoosier Links, New Palestine, Ind. Essig stressed several ways owner/operators can make their facilities more available for teaching golf to all.

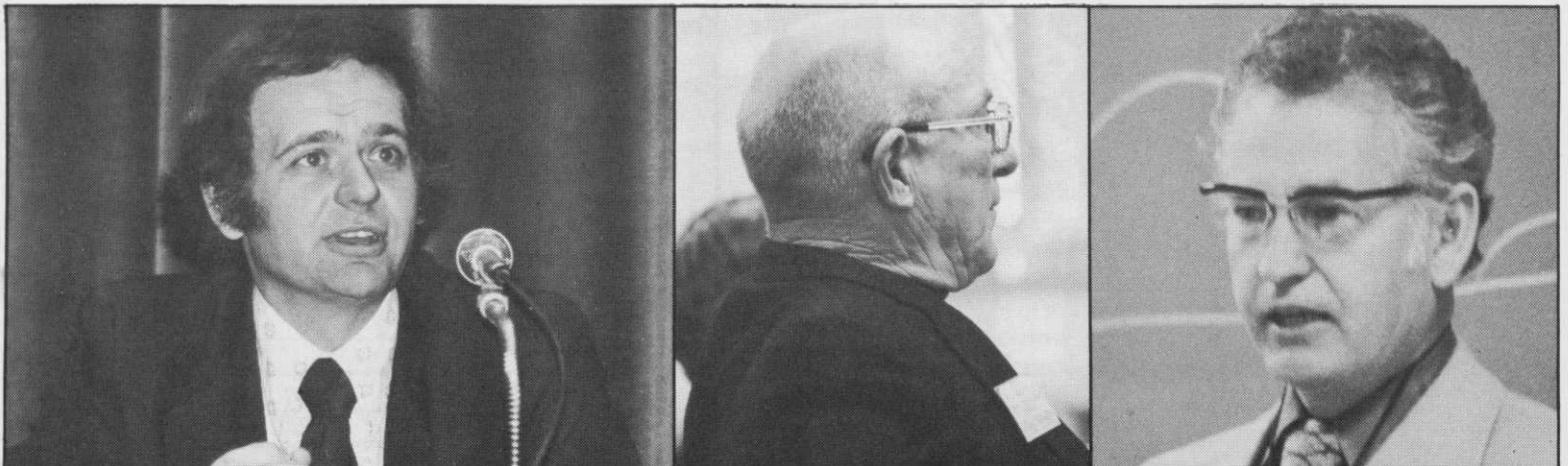
Others on the daily fee program included Jim Rees, owner-operator of the Friendswood Golf Course,

Camby, Ind.; Palmer Maples, education director for the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America and GOLF BUSINESS Managing Editor Nick Romano. Rees discussed some of the more humorous experiences he had had running a daily fee operation, while Maples stressed the importance for continuing education for all in the business.

Romano covered the latest battles the industry has been involved with in real estate taxes and other government regulation, such as OSHA, EPA, and the Consumer Product Safety Commission. Lyons handed out several tips on making more money at daily fee operations, including setting up stroke limits on holes for beginning golfers. "This way, you can keep play moving and also establish an incentive for them to become better golfers," Lyons pointed out.

Greens were an area focused on during the conference's last day. Bob Boltz, superintendent at Brynwood Country Club, Milwaukee, and Jack Keidel, Country Club of Terre Haute (Ind.), both surveyed the ways they construc-

There were seminars reaching into just about every area of the turfgrass industry at the Midwest Regional Turfgrass Conference last month at Purdue. Below, from left, USGA Green Section staff agronomist Carl Schwartzkopf participates on a panel dealing with the problems of thatch. In a daily fee operator seminar Ted Cox, from a course in Chillicothe, Ohio, listens in, while Purdue's Dr. William Daniel takes on the topic of controlling moisture.



ted greens in separate slide presentations. William Woodruff, LaPorte County Landscaping Service, Michigan City, Ind., documented Purr-Wick green construction his firm completed at a new municipal facility in that northern Hoosier city.

University of Illinois professor John Street covered the latest efforts in weed control, while Monsanto's Ed Jordan discussed the pertinent properties of his firm's popular herbicide, Roundup, in the seminar's most commercial minutes.

MILESTONES

Pro LoPresti marks 50 years in business

Tommy LoPresti did not hide his feelings. "The business has been good to me," said the 68-year-old club professional at Sacramento's Haggin Oaks Golf Course, who celebrated 50 years in the business in February.

At Haggin Oaks for 45 of those years, LoPresti has been a living legend in the northern California PGA section for more seasons than he cares to remember. He has trained many assistants that have gone on to head pro jobs — more than 25 in all. LoPresti has made playing golf more enjoyable for hundreds of golfers who frequent the Sacramento municipal system.

Besides overseeing the 36-hole Haggin Oaks layout, LoPresti and his associate pro Ken Morton keep tabs on the other two Sacramento facilities, Bing Maloney Golf Course, an 18-hole layout, and William Land Park, a nine-hole facility. As if that was not enough, he is co-owner of two daily fee operations in the area with business partner Frank Dolle, who once was a LoPresti assistant. These two nine-hole public courses are Lindale Golf Center and Perkins Golf Center.

An expert merchandiser in his 4,500-square-foot pro shop, LoPresti also buys for the nearby private Del Paso Country Club and 30 other pro shop accounts in the Sacramento area on a wholesale basis. Admittedly, in his Haggin Oaks operation, LoPresti sells hun-

dreds of thousands of dollars of merchandise annually.

Success for LoPresti is directly related to his attitude on teaching and gaining the loyalty of his customers. As he says, "There is an important relationship between the way you teach the game and the sales you make."

That philosophy, coupled with the continuing attitude that the customer's game is more important than the professional's, helped launch many of today's most successful club professionals on their careers. These former assistants include: Bill Ogden, North Shore Country Club, Chicago, and Bermuda Dunes Country Club, Palm Springs, Calif.; Buddy Porter, Westchester Golf Club, Los Angeles; Joe Torneo, Ruby View Golf Course, Elko, Nev.; Harold Crockett, River Bend Country Club, Sacramento; Dave Mead, Del Rio Golf & Country Club, Modesto, Calif.; Bob Cox, Green Tree Country Club, Fairfield, Calif.; Bob Ledoux, Rolling Hills Golf Course, in Sacramento area; Bill Brooks, Sierra View Country Club, Roseville, Calif.; Ed Lewis, Peach Tree Country Club, Marysville, Calif.; and Frank Ottaviano, Foothill Golf Course, Sacramento.

Many men have opinions on what it is like to train under LoPresti,

Fifty years in the trade have passed since Tommy LoPresti dedicated his life to the profession. Below, LoPresti talks over his bag inventory with assistant Laura Lepape in the Haggin Oaks pro shop in Sacramento, Calif. At bottom, LoPresti confers with his associate pro Ken Morton. Morton is one of more than 25 professionals who have worked with LoPresti at Haggin Oaks. LoPresti also oversees two other Sacramento municipal courses.



but Brooks and Lewis can speak for the consensus on the San Francisco native.

"LoPresti was tough to work for, but fair," said Brooks, a 24-year veteran of the pro shop at Sierra View. "Tommy always was a strong proponent of the junior golf programs. He realized these people were the future of our business. It was always easy for Tommy to pick out the good players. Brooks served as LoPresti's head assistant at Haggin Oaks from 1949-53.

Lewis, who is a Sacramento native, heard about LoPresti as a youngster from the first day he held an iron in his hand. Now 49, Lewis served in the Haggin Oaks shop on two separate occasions. He made his first appearance in 1943 and worked through 1948, then returned in 1950 and left again 6 years later.

After Haggin Oaks, Lewis went on to jobs at Table Mountain municipal course in Orrville, Calif.; North Shore Country Club, Chicago; and Moon Valley Country Club, Phoenix; before being hired at Peach Tree 17 years ago.

"Working for LoPresti was one of the greatest experiences of my life," said Lewis. "He taught it all. I never met a man more dedicated to the game of golf than Tom. The man has given himself to the business."

Although he says he does not have the time to spend training assistants, as he once did, LoPresti has 12 full-time assistants at work just at Haggin Oaks, plus four at Bing Maloney and one at William Land. The assistants at Haggin Oaks also serve as starters. The Sacramento municipal course enjoyed more than 90,000 rounds in 1976, an increase over 1975, which LoPresti attributes to the good weather Sacramento had last year.

Northern California PGA Section Executive Director Lyle Wehrman has watched LoPresti's assistants go out and get some of the best head pro jobs in the area. "The best way to describe LoPresti is that he is the most energetic person I know in the business," Wehrman said of the man who took the honor of the national PGA pro of the year in 1962.

"LoPresti was always one of the hardest workers I knew in the business," said the National Golf Foundation's Bob Rickey from his Cincinnati office.

When you ask LoPresti the best way private club professionals can start a good rapport with their golfers, regardless of the size of facility, he says play a round with that golfer on a complimentary basis right off the top. "It helps you get acquainted with the person and the person with you. Each season I'd put out a chart and, two days a week, I'd play with the members. At the start of the season, everybody in the club could play with me at least once, free of charge. After I'd gone through the membership, I might pick out my own games and play with different groups. I would never get locked in with the same five or six low-handicap players. That makes those five or six players happy with you, but it makes the other couple of hundred not too grateful."

His philosophy does not differ much for the professionals at public courses. "At the daily fee operation, greet everyone, even if you do not know their name. You should try to be around the front of the shop to ask the golfers how they are doing today. Regardless, of race, color, or creed, treat them all alike and make them feel like that is their 'country club,' even though they can not afford to belong to one."

Showing interest in your golfers is LoPresti's golden rule. "Even if the man has bought a set of clubs somewhere else, indicate to him that he made a good deal, if he did. Tell him you are sorry that he did not buy them from you, but tell him the next time he is ready to buy, he might keep you in mind. Or, if he is not in a position to buy, he might have a friend he can send to you."

Even though he sees the changes that 50 years have made in the business, the California Golf Hall of Famer is quick to point out that there are still many club professionals that have jobs now that are better than the ones in years past. It all goes back to how valuable the professional is to his facility, according to LoPresti. "The pro who wants to play all the time and moan and groan about his members not supporting him, well, those days are gone."

Teaching is an important part of being a professional — it always has been for anyone who has worked the shop for LoPresti. Many junior golfers today, according to the Haggin Oaks pro, are being

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overtaught. "The first thing you find is that many junior golfers cannot use their natural talent, because they are stifled by the old saying 'analysis brings on paralysis.' If you get the youngsters analyzing too much, they don't free up their swing. Just keep it basic. The older they get, then you can get more sophisticated with teaching methods."

With 50 years already invested in the game, LoPresti gives no indication of slowing down, although his doctor has asked him to from time to time. "As long as the good Lord lets me walk around, I love golf and love to be around it," he said. "It's the people I've encountered on the golf course that have made me a success." Who could argue with that?

COMPANIES

Free tee towels: an offer not refused

More than a quarter of a million tee towels are literally up for grabs in a new offer from Chicopee Manufacturing, a Johnson & Johnson Co.

Samples of the Chicopee Tee and Sports towel are being mailed to virtually every course in America, as the Milltown, N.J., firm attempts to lure management away from the linen golf towel which has been on courses for decades.

If you are interested in getting in on the free offer, write: Chicopee Manufacturing, P.O. Box 68, Dept. T.S., Milltown, NJ 08850.

Grafalloy controlling interest to officers

Grafalloy Corp., which calls itself the nation's largest manufacturer of graphite golf shafts, has been acquired by the company's own officers in a move that transferred controlling interest to a group headed by President J. Pat Sterry and Vice President Richard Ten-

nant. The California firm's domestic customers include such golf equipment manufacturers as Stan

Thompson, Kenneth Smith, Dunlop, MacGregor, Karsten, and Pinseeker.

Grafalloy is represented exclusively to the Asian market by Santai American Corp., a Japanese trading company with offices in New York. A company spokesman states that according to the latest market surveys coming out of Japan, Grafalloy is now the largest-selling graphite golf shaft in that country. The Grafalloy market share is greater than all of the other Japanese graphite shaft manufacturers.

USDA certifies grasses for Lofts

Certification from the United States Department of Agriculture came recently for two ryegrasses developed by Lofts Pedigreed Seed. Yorktown and Diplomat were both accepted by the USDA in its plant protection program.

From 2 to 5 years is necessary to receive the certification, during which time the seed must be proven to be both new and superior. Yorktown develops best in cool, humid environments and is resistant to winter leaf blights. Diplomat is known for its superior summer performance.

Both seeds have shown good success in overseeding projects, primarily in southern climates.

Hahn out of danger on its Chapter XI

With a collective sigh of relief, Lloyd and Jack Hahn have finally worked out their past financial troubles with creditors and Chapter XI proceedings for the Evansville, Ind., turf products firm have been terminated.

Loyalty and cooperation from all Hahn dealers, distributors, and suppliers aided in the Chapter XI period that spanned over a year and a half for the family firm, founded in 1948. The Hahn family now has their eye on future growth, after weathering the financial storm of mid-1975.



CLUBS & TAXES

NCA, appraisers host research competition

In an effort to stimulate more research into the area of real estate tax appraisal and assessment, the National Club Association and the American Society of Appraisers have banded together to sponsor a nationwide project to get more information donated and collected on the subject.

The "contest," which offers three prizes totalling \$2,500 and three honorable mentions for submitted manuscripts, is open to anyone who wants to contribute to the better understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of existing appraisal systems.

A panel of appraisers and university faculty will judge the entries, which will be accepted until January 15, 1978. Program information is available through the ASA, Research Competition, Dulles International Airport, P.O. Box 17265, Washington, DC 20041 or through the NCA, 1129 20th St. N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

LEGAL ISSUES

Club law seminars planned by NCA

A trio of one-day seminars on club law will dot the nation this spring, as the National Club Association presents a "concentrated review" of club taxes, policy questions, wage-hour regulations, board powers, restrictive admissions, and director

liabilities. A check for \$2500, which the NCA will present to winners in a research competition on "The Valuation of Privately-Owned Recreational Land" jointly sponsored with the American Society of Appraisers, is the center of interest for (left to right) E. Guenter Skole, CCM, NCA Treasurer; Dexter D. MacBride, Executive Director of the Reston, Virginia-based ASA; NCA Executive Director Jerry Hurley; and Robert Leenhouts, General Manager of the Reston Country Club.

liabilities.

First in the series is set for the City Club in Dallas April 25, then on to the Union League of Philadelphia on May 9. The Lauderdale Yacht Club, Fort Lauderdale, Fla., serves as the sight for the seminar on May 16.

Correction

In the News section of the November-December GOLF BUSINESS ("Pro-only win stalls golf retailers"), the editors utilized information supplied by the plaintiff's attorneys in listing the defendants which had either settled out of court, paid damages, or agreed to sell to Chicago's Morrie Mages Sports, Inc.

Karsten Manufacturing Corp. was one of those firms mentioned that, contrary to the plaintiff's contention, were dismissed from the case before it went before a jury in the federal district court. This was similar to the case Karsten was involved in in New Orleans.

Officials at Karsten wanted to make clear their past experience, according to corporation president Karsten Solheim.