

All Mobbed Up

Penn State grads will tell you the Mafia doesn't exist. They deny blood rituals, secret handshakes and whispers about "made" superintendents that have circulated about their school for years.

But if there's no Penn State Mafia, how do you explain that all but one of this year's U.S. Majors are being hosted by clubs that employ Penn State graduates? Coincidence? We don't think so.



Oscar Miles (standing, right) enlists a pack of Nittany Lions for help at the Merit Club, including second assistant Chris Blake (standing, left), and interns Brian Steelwagen (kneeling, left) and Steven Craig.

Here's a list of the important tournaments Penn State influenced this year: the Masters, Augusta National (William Bradford Owen III., '87); the U.S. Women's Open, The Merit Club (Oscar Miles, '61); the U.S. Open, Pebble Beach Golf Links (Eric Greytok, '96); the U.S. Senior Open, Saucon Valley CC, (Old Course) Old Bethlehem, Pa. (Terry Laurent, '86); and the 100th U.S. Amateur, Baltusrol GC (Upper Course) in Springfield, N.J. (Mark Kuhns, '77).

The Penn State brotherhood denies the rumors that Godfathers Joe Duich and Tom Watschke will soon make an offer to the staff of the PGA Championship, which will be held at Valhalla GC in Louisville, Ky., that they can't refuse. The Championship is the only U.S. Major this year not to bear the stamp of that school in State College.

Scanning the Web

Frank Andorka reviews state association sites

I don't belong to a superintendent association, so I have to live vicariously through the sites that you work so hard to post on the Web. If you're looking to start your own chapter Web site, here are a few to check out to see what others are doing (all sites start with <http://> unless otherwise noted):

(**** - Bookmark it and return frequently; * - Look at only if absolutely necessary)

****www.igcsa.com - The site was created and formerly maintained by Rob Buckner, superintendent of Blue River CC in Shelbyville, Ind. With user-friendly menus, discussion forums and a links page that provides extra benefits to members, Indiana GCSA has a lot to be proud of. The site was recently updated and improved, according to Chris Piske, president of the association, who says the "new" site is "20 times better" than the original.

****www.ogcsa.org - The Oregon Golf Course Superintendents Association site, though pleasant looking, has a disconcerting opening page. In the middle of the page is a line of text that seems stuck in perpetual hyperdrive. After 10 minutes of staring at



it, I still couldn't read it (let's hope it wasn't a subversive subliminal message of some sort). The page's hotlinks with industry vendors are easily accessible, and its interface leads users easily through the site. Oregon's superintendents can obtain copious information to help them do their jobs better with the help of this site.

****www.mgcsa.com - Maine's Golf Course Superintendents Association provides a no-frills site packed tightly with information. It provides a meeting schedule, president's address and extensive job postings for anyone looking for a job in The Pine Tree State. It's a solid site that serves its members well.

Scanning the Web is compiled by Frank H. Andorka Jr., Golfdom's associate editor, whose friends and family don't want to associate with him. You can reach him at fandorka@advanstar.com with column suggestions or sites you think he should visit.



Heads Up!

More beginner golfers means more "fores!" on the golf course. So watch out for errant balls.

	1995	1996	1997	1998
Beginner golfers (thousands)	1,831	1,959	2,962	2,859
Participation rate*	0.9%	0.9%	1.3%	1.2%

*Percentage of total U.S. population that played golf for the first time in the specified year.

SOURCE: NATIONAL GOLF FOUNDATION; ILLUSTRATION: DAN BEEDY