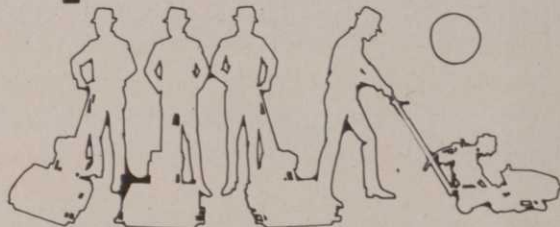


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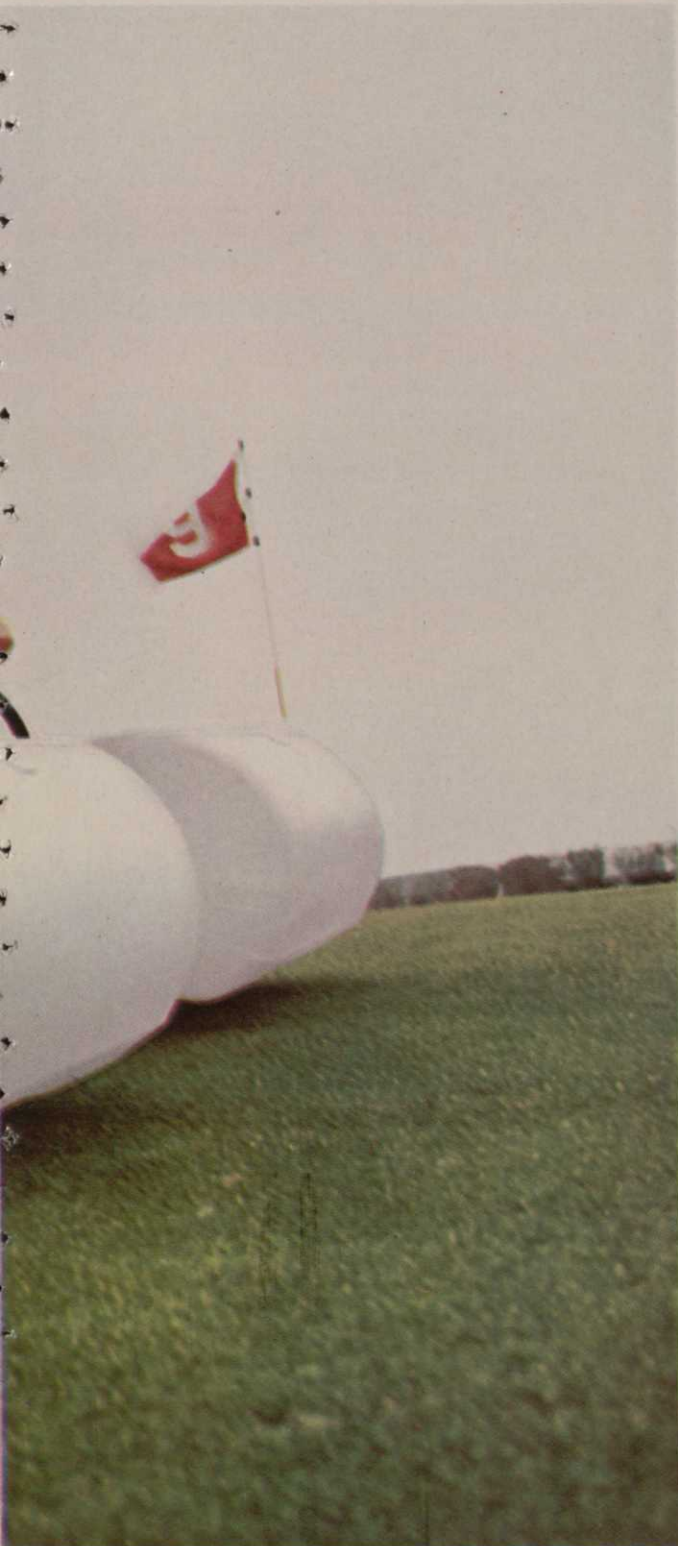
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by Ken Emerson

ACCENT ON MANAGEMENT

Nader criticizes tax advantages of Maryland country clubs; NCA answers

Over the holidays Ralph Nader presented the golf clubs and the golfers of the United States with an unusual Christmas present. In a critical report leveled at the golf clubs in a Maryland county, Mr. Nader's staff made several statements which are in contradiction to the thinking of this writer and the National Club Assn.

These statements are of sufficient importance so that NCA's president, Edward J. Drew, has authorized publication of the following statement in rebuttal.

Ralph Nader has released a report on property tax assessments in Montgomery County, Md., particularly as they apply to golf clubs. In doing so, he has attempted to publicize the study by bringing up a civil rights issue, implying that the county is losing money and that the clubs are being subsidized by minority groups who cannot participate in the club's

activities. In fact, the issues are unrelated.

The tax benefit to which he refers results from the county assessing recreational land on the basis of its actual use rather than the highest and best use to which it might be put.

The theory of taxation at "highest and best use" promotes intense development of property. The legislature of the State of Maryland has decided that, in the case of golf clubs, this intensive development is not in the best interest of their communities. Clubs are granted assessments as recreational land to preserve their existence as open, green space in an increasingly urban and industrial area. The benefits of this aid to the ecological balance are well known to Nader, although they may have been momentarily forgotten. What Nader refers to as a tax benefit is really a method of maintaining a community benefit.

Several non-biased and serious studies by Housing on Urban Development (HUD), the Urban Land Institute and GOLF Magazine have shown, not only the ecological need for these green spaces, but that adjacent land values are enhanced by the presence of golf clubs. Should golf clubs be sold to a developer, adjacent land values would, in fact, decrease and a decrease in the tax base could result.

In addition, when recreational open space is developed to its highest and best use, the cost to the community of rendering essential public services is increased. A golf club does not impose as increased a burden on a local school system as a high-rise apartment, for example.

The special assessment rate was clearly granted in order to preserve green spaces and to keep golf clubs in an area from which they would otherwise move with the resulting damage to the underlying ecological need of the community.

The question of club membership policy has no bearing on the tax rate of the club. Should a club open its doors to all, the club would still have a "recreational land" assessment. □



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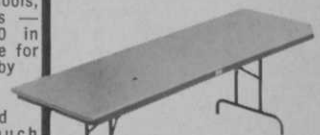
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by Herb Graffis

SWINGING AROUND GOLF

Success marks 50th birthdays

Several of our foremost clubs have completed their first 50 years. **Longue Vue Club**, Verona, Pa., in suburban Pittsburgh, recorded its half century in an exceptionally attractive book presenting a history of the club written by Alice V. Furlong. Long Vue's clubhouse is built of stone quarried nearby the building site on a steep bluff that provides a magnificent view of the Allegheny River. It has received numerous architectural awards.

The clubhouse and coordinated facilities occupy about 7 1/2 acres, which today would mean a building cost of about \$5 million. Despite immense changes in quality and quantity of available labor since the 1920s, the Longue Vue clubhouse can still be operated with top-grade service without murderous costs. Significant changes in the course, mainly reducing differences in elevation, are mentioned in the history. The first pro was Dale Zimmerman, followed by Willie McKay for 32 years until he died in 1959, then Willie Beljan and now Roland Stafford. The superintendents, William Key, Essler Walker, Robert Buehner and others did very well establishing good golf turf on that rocky rolling ground. Longue Vue's membership from the start included members of Pittsburgh's wealthiest families. Ralph Sykora, manager of Longue Vue during the Club Managers Assn. 1931 convention, and his officers were hosts at a dinner that veteran American- and continentally-trained managers de-

clared was the classic of all epicurean affairs.

Another top-ranking club now entering its 51st year is **Fresh Meadow CC**, Great Neck, N.Y. Fresh Meadow was the scene of the 1930 PGA, which Tommy Armour won, and of the 1932 National Open, won by Gene Sarazen, who with 100 strokes for the last 28 strokes finished three strokes ahead of Bobby Cruickshank and Phil Perkins.

Fresh Meadow's management of those two championships was possibly the best combination of business operation of a tournament and hospitality toward big tournament visitors in the memory of players and golf reporters. Conditions now wouldn't permit much expression of geniality on the part of a membership hosting a major tournament for which it is paying a high purse, other huge expenses and expecting to make money commensurate with the work, the responsibility, the risk, the nuisance and the ingratitude.

Some complain that the **Masters**, by a long way the best business-like operation in golf, is just as cordial to its patrons as Kennedy International Airport. Others, citing incidents of exploitation of visitors during Masters week, believe that late and lamented residents of Augusta were more pleasant to Sherman and his army than they are to Masters customers who, the complainants maintain, are treated as though they were bringing to the town not only cash but leprosy.

Having been at many championships in 50 years, including the Masters since the start, one reporter although agreeing that the big tournaments aren't the friendly, welcoming shows they used to be, has to admit he can't think of what can be done differently to keep the productions friendly, yet under control. Without the limitations **Cliff Roberts**, Masters Tournament Committee chairman, has to exercise in staging that show, it would be a shambles. Without the United States Golf Assn., the Professional Golfers' Assn., the players' committee and club members muscling program ads and ticket sales or involved in a mess of committee jobs, without a tournament director taking a fat cut off the top and without having club members' wives and daughters acting as cab drivers and performing other chores, Roberts gets a few of his fellow members, invites a few competent specialists to supervise proceedings and hires the

(Continued on page 17)

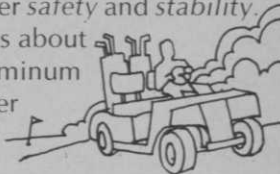
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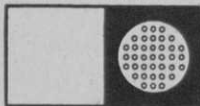
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Back when Fresh Meadow was a trail-blazing tournament operation, it was doing great for its times, but since then times have changed. Fresh Meadow looked ahead in one way that affected golf commercially more than tournament promotion ever did.

Gene Sarazen was Fresh Meadow's pro from 1925 to 1930 and had as his assistant **Al Ciuci**, a playmate in Gene's Westchester caddie days. Gene always was a playing pro, teaching when necessary but not interested in running the pro shop. Al Ciuci was a promising player, but there was room for only one Sarazen, so amicably Al minded the shop.

Kindly members, including several of the nation's top merchandising minds, took an interest in Al and his shop and made it an exhibit of what they would do if they were pros.

It wasn't long before there was talk nationwide about the Fresh Meadow shop and how it was first with the finest and latest for the members. The Fresh Meadow shop was probably the first really fine pro shop in the United States. Another one has been built near the first tee and will be in operation this year.

Al Ciuci has been at Fresh Meadow 45 years and was Long Island PGA president for 19 years.

Formation of a **pro golf league** patterned after the Florida winter pro league, but with the players guaranteed salaries, may mean again that lawyers will be the big purse winners of the year, just as they were during the PGA family brawl. Promoters of the proposed league, talking of the possibility of the Tournament Players' Division bumping into anti-trust laws, is funny when you consider that the contemplated new golf league may be one of those numerous things in

(Continued on page 21)

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