

THRU THE GREEN

[December]

November, 1997

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of Northern California

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Poppy's Sousa Meets The Challenge

One would think that an advantage of being at a relatively new course would mean the majority of your attention would be directed towards maintenance as opposed to construction. Not so for Manny Sousa, course superintendent at Monterey's distinguished Poppy Hills Golf Course, site of this year's Larry Lloyd Memorial Golf Tournament.

Sousa, now entering his ninth year as the superintendent, says there hasn't been much time in the last eight years when he hasn't been involved in some form of construction project, the most recent of which was a new teaching complex. A brief project summary includes: green re-contouring, bunker replacement and renovation, concrete cart paths, and drainage. All this plus annually preparing for a PGA tour event in the dead middle of winter.

For those of you who have never had the experience of playing Poppy Hills, you are in for a treat. Sousa describes the Robert Trent Jones layout as a shot makers course, where hitting landing areas are critical. Bunkers are abundant around the greens and when you get there, expect plenty of undula-

tions on greens that range in size from 6,500 to 8,500 square feet (you'll need your long putting game).

A fifteen year NorCal member, Sousa just completed his 23rd year in the business. He previously served as the superintendent at Lake Wildwood for eight years and was the Assistant at neighboring MPCC for seven years. Sousa credits MPCC superintendent, Bob Zoller and his father John as playing instrumental roles in his career.

Hosting a tournament among your peers, can be an unnerving experience, particularly in early December. For Sousa and his Poppy Hills staff, challenges such as this have become a way of life. Sousa, in fact, finds the challenge exciting. Tournament chairman, Forrest Arthur is excited too. "We really made an effort this year to provide the members with an outstanding event. Poppy's reputation as a golf facility speaks for itself. This year we've included a pre-golf breakfast as an extra touch. Our Party site is one of the best on the peninsula, and offers the convenience of lodging on site. "In many respects this year's event will determine the future direction of the Holiday event," Arthur said. We will let the membership decide through their support which way we will go.

Institute Lives Up To Billing

The 1997 Golf Course Superintendents Institute lived up to its advanced billing as the premier educational event of the year. The over 115 members in attendance, particularly those who hung on until the end, were treated to one of the most informative Institute programs on record.

Program Cochairman, Bob Costa, CGCS, heaped praise on fellow committee members while discussing the success of the event. "This was the 7th Institute I have been associated with as a committee member," Costa said. "I think we all knew that we had something special as the topic outline began to unfold." Costa credits long time committee member Brian Bagley with developing the theme for this year's program. "Brian always finds a way to make a contribution, he's been a valuable resource and we look forward to his input next year." Committee newcomers, Dave Davies, CGCS, and Gary Carls, CGCS, also played instrumental roles. "Gary's help with the tournament and registration were invaluable down the stretch," said Costa and Davies, the self proclaimed man with no opinion, contributed greatly with speaker recommendations.

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Institute (Cont'd)

No Institute would be complete without the sage advice and presence of Dr. Ali Harivandi, moderator extraordinare. "Ali is such a great resource and sounding block for ideas. You have to respect his opinion and ideas, after all, he has been a part of hundreds of educational programs and seminars."

Costa was particularly pleased with the speakers contributions. "This is one of the few seminars I have attended where I felt each speaker was outstanding. I would be hard pressed to pick a favorite," Costa lamented. "Each speaker was so well prepared they seemed to build on each others presentation. I was particularly impressed with the presentation by Ray Festa," said Costa. "Ray had the difficult task of closing the program, which is always a challenge. Not only was his presentation informative, it was also presented in an interesting fashion. I jokingly told Ray after the program that he should consider taking his talk on the road, I was so impressed," Costa Said.

"Our goal as a committee is to provide quality education, presented in a practical, hands on format. That's what you hope for but until the presentations are made you never really know," said Costa. "I thought each speaker presented their information in a real comprehensible and usable fashion."

The morning program, which focused on the master plan process, benefitted from two outstanding presentations from Damian Pascuzzo and John Harbottle. Harbottle spoke on the master plan process while Pascuzzo offered his insight on avoiding the pitfalls of course renovation. Lake Merced Country Club member, Bo Links, offered a spirited talk on selling the membership, complimented by a hole by hole photo summary. Links credited course superintendent, Lou Tonelli and his staff not only for contributing to the project, but also for satisfying the members with outstanding temporary greens.

The talented Mike Oliphant discussed a key component of the renovation process when he spoke on the superintendent and

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contractor relationship. Many agreed that Mike hit home when he emphasized the importance of open and regular communication, and mutual respect between the contractor and superintendent. Not to be denied, Jim Janosik, of the Alisal Guest Ranch shared his experiences from a superintendent's perspective, summarizing the entire renovation process. When asked his thoughts on Janosik's presentation, Costa had this to say. "I thought what made Jim's presentation so effective was that he was so candid and honest in his remarks. He made no bones about discussing areas where the project failed. Not many people would be willing to make those statements. With an objective to provide useful, hands on information, I'd say he deserves an A."

The afternoon program, although still linked to renovation, took on an environmental twist. Golf course owner, George Kelley of Stevenson Ranch kicked off the second half with an informative presentation on the Audubon Program, highlighting his courses signature status. Mr. Kelley, openly campaigned for course conditions that were conducive to shot making and playability and unlike many in his position, encourages his superintendent to maintain certain portions of the course in a stressed condition.

NorCal affiliate member and local authority on native plants and grasses, Dave Kaplow, spoke expertly on the topic of native grass establishment, selection and care. Highlighted in Dave presentations were slides of the new golf course at Half Moon Bay. Golf Architect, Damian Pascuzzo, returned for the afternoon session and spoke on the subject of designing for the environment. "My hats off to Damian," said Costa. "He was so well prepared, made two great presentations and volunteered what amounted to be a day of his time. He was an asset to the program." With Festa's Audubon talk as the closer, the two day event was in the books.

Before long the education committee will reassemble and the process will start all over. "I don't know about the others," Costa said, "but I'm ready for the break. Our goal this year was to develop the best institute ever and I'm satisfied that we accomplished our goal."

Although the golf tournament was officially cancelled due to rain on day one, 40 of the 52 players still managed to tee it up. Forrest Arthur was one of those and he had high praise for the course. "I'm sure course superintendent, Rick Hansen, was disappointed," said Arthur, "but those of us who played thought the course was in great shape. We had a great time."

The rain, a welcomed sight in many respects didn't dampen

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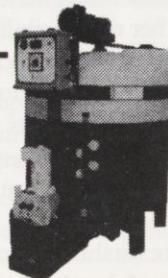
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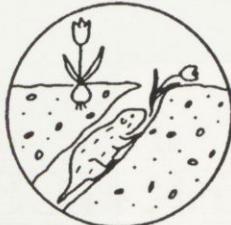
Boardroom Briefs

- ◆ Association Executive Secretary, Barbara Mikels reported that the 1997 salary survey will be included in the mailing with the membership renewal form. Barbara anticipates the mailing to occur in early November.
- ◆ The Proposed merchandise program with Southern Golf has been temporarily derailed. After a board vote, it was decided that the program would be placed on hold until issues involving the merchandise catalog could be resolved.
- ◆ A budget committee has been formed to develop the Association's budget for the upcoming year. Board members Bob Costa, CGCS, Gary Carls, CGCS, Dave Davies, CGCS and Mike Nunemacher were chosen to work in conjunction with Barbara Mikel. The committee plans to make a formal presentation to the membership at the January General Meeting.
- ◆ Forrest Arthur and Wayne Lindelof have volunteered to respond to the GCSAA chapter survey. The information will be used to provide information to interested parties on GCSAA's web site.
- ◆ Bob Costa, CGCS and John Holmquist presented a draft outline of a SOP for sponsorship at Association events and functions. The proposal will continue to be refined over the next several months. Hopes are the program can be launched in the spring of 1998.
- ◆ Bob Costa, CGCS, reported that two GCSAA so-sponsored educational seminars are lined up for January 1998. Marketing efforts for both seminars will begin soon.
- ◆ State Representative, Dave Davies, CGCS, solicited input from the Board regarding the purpose and role of the State Association. Dave will be representing the GCSANC at the upcoming State Meeting in Lake Tahoe.
- ◆ The notion of hiring a media relations person to assist in Public Relations matters was proposed by Bob Costa, CGCS. The Board endorsed the idea in concept, asking for more information and a formal presentation by Greg Crawford who currently serves as the media relations person for the Oregon Golf Association and the Western Washington Golf Association.

Naumann's Norcal News

John Jorgensen is the new Superintendent at Riverside Golf Course in Coyote. Presently Riverside GC is adding a new 18 hole course designed by Jack Nicklaus. Once that course is completed and opened, the existing 18 hole course will be rebuilt. John was the Superintendent at Ruby Hill CC in Pleasanton prior to his move . . . Larry Norman is the new Superintendent at the Institute GC in Morgan Hill. This is a new project being built on the side of an abandoned golf course. Larry was the director of golf maintenance at Sonoma Golf Club in Sonoma prior to his move. Juan de la Rosa remains as the Superintendent at Sonoma GC . . . Mike Nunnemacher is the Director of Grounds at Blackhawk Country Club. Mike was the Superintendent at Oakhurst CC in Clayton prior to his move. Mike Barber is remaining as the Superintendent at Blackhawk.

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Institute (Cont'd)

The rain, a welcomed sight in many respects didn't dampen anyone's spirits at the reception later that evening. A hosted bar, pasta, hors d'oeuvres and the 49er game in the background provided the backdrop for a relaxing evening. "The reception has really developed into a key element of the Institute," remarked Costa. "One of the things that makes the Institute so appealing is that, although it's grounded in education, it provides outlets too for relaxation and camaraderie. The two sites we have chosen are ideal for that purpose. The reception is just a comfortable way to segway into the seminar and it's good for the vendors as well."

With the 1997 Institute quickly becoming a memory, Costa had these final remarks. "Our success this year was really attributable to so many talented people, combined with a great facility. Certainly the committee members and speakers were instrumental and deserve a lot of credit. And then there's Barbara Mikel who is such a great resource. This year we even had an added bonus with the return of Cliff and Myrtle our good friends who faithfully volunteered their time."

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