

Issue 14 | Spring 2013

BY DESIGN



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The news that 2012 was the best year in almost a decade, as far as the number of rounds played by US golfers was concerned, is great for the golf industry. True, the statistic is buoyed by excellent weather in the early part of the year, leading to the golf season starting some weeks ahead of usual in many parts of the country, but to highlight this is to miss the point: the numbers prove that the demand for golf is there.

Knowing this, those of us in the golf business need to redouble our efforts to grow the game. But growth, as the NGF's Golf 20/20 research shows, doesn't only have to come from new golfers. There are millions out there, in the US and for that matter in many other parts of the world, who no longer play golf, or play less golf than they used to. Any marketing professor will instantly confirm that it is far easier to reinvigorate a former customer than it is to create a new one.

So our efforts to grow the game must have a twin focus. We need to inspire a new generation of golfers and make it simple for them to learn the skills of our great game, but we also need to bring back the flocks of golfers who have either been lost to the game or who simply play less often than before. To do that, we need our facilities to be welcoming, to be efficiently run (so they can offer good deals, but remain economically viable) and we need to show those lost golfers that what they loved about the game is still there, only with less of what they didn't like.



Yours sincerely,

Bob Cupp
President
American Society of Golf Course Architects

BY DESIGN

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Golf business

NGF reports strong 2012 for US golf

Figures from the National Golf Foundation show that 2012 was among the US golf industry's strongest years in the last decade.

Total rounds played in 2012 were up by 5.7 percent on the previous year, or more than 26 million extra rounds of golf. Rounds played figures have declined for much of the past ten years, by a total of 11 percent—the 2012 growth alone recovers more than half of that drop.

Almost every state saw an improvement over 2011, but the engine for growth was the northern half of the country, where average year-on-year growth was 9.5 percent. Improved weather was the biggest influence on rounds played: PGA PerformanceTrak reports a 6.5 percent increase in playable days nationwide in 2012.



US rounds were up nearly six percent

But NGF notes that weather isn't the only driver, with national measures of consumer confidence and spending showing consistent moves upward from the numbers seen at the depths of the recession. PerformanceTrak also reported that median golf fee revenues were up 6.6 percent at member facilities.

But competition remains fierce: the national average for rounds-per-18 holes—approximately 32,000—is more than 20 per cent lower than it was prior to the start of the building boom in the late 1980s. Course closures also dramatically outweighed openings for another year.

Success for Let's Play 9

Tee-time provider GolfNow.com has revealed strong 2012 results for its Let's Play 9 initiative, with over 225,000 nine-hole rounds played, generating US\$3.6 million in revenues, an increase of approximately 60 per cent on the previous year.

English golf accessible

Golf clubs in England are more accessible and inclusive than ever before, according to new research. Feedback from England Golf's 2012 Golf Club Membership Questionnaire shows clubs becoming increasingly flexible and customer-focused as they strive to attract new golfers and to recruit and retain members.

Dye honored

The renowned Casa de Campo resort in the Dominican Republic has renamed its main lodge after ASGCA Past President Pete Dye, the creator of 63 holes of golf at the resort, including the Teeth of the Dog course, generally ranked the Caribbean's best.

Golf's economic strength in Europe

The golf business contributes more than €15 billion to the European economy, according to a new survey commissioned by the Professional Golfers' Association. Across the 27 nations of the European Union, plus Norway and Switzerland—a total population of 510 million people—golf is responsible for at least 180,000 full time jobs, and total employee wages of €4.4 billion.

US Open

Sixth US Open for Winged Foot

The 2020 US Open will be played at the Winged Foot club near New York City, the first time the championship has returned to the club's West course since Geoff Ogilvy's victory there in 2006.

This will be Winged Foot's sixth US Open. Bobby Jones, Billy Casper, Hale Irwin and Fuzzy Zoeller also won the event at the Mamaroneck course, which was designed by architect AW Tillinghast.

"Winged Foot is a quintessential US Open course," said USGA executive director Mike Davis. "With its wonderfully challenging greens complexes and dogleg

holes that emphasize proper placement off the tee, Winged Foot offers the best players in the world a spectacular test of golf."

The return has not been without controversy, though. Located in suburban Westchester County, the Winged Foot club is widely believed to have been unhappy with some issues after the 2006 Open, notably the impact on its East course, which is used to locate service areas for the tournament. Some commentators have also expressed concern that the course's famously sloping greens may be altered in the runup to a future event.

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Women's golf

'Female-friendly' course certification launched

The PGA of America is supporting a program that evaluates golf courses to ensure they cater adequately for female players.

The new PGA-published *Golf 2.0 Connecting With Her* playbook encourages facilities to become certified by the National Women's Golf Alliance. Launched in 2012, NWGA offers course evaluations, consultation and its Rolling Out the Green Carpet certification program to assess golf facilities on standards and best practices that make the facility more welcoming and attractive to women.

Golf architect Jan Bel Jan, ASGCA, is among the founders of the NWGA. Along with the other partner organizations, she is using her years of expertise, data and observation on what keeps women excited about and

engaged in golf. Using this information, NWGA has developed a base of standards and best practices to help make golf facilities more welcoming and attractive to women.

"The *Connecting With Her* playbook gives courses excellent guidelines to better target women golfers," said Lynn Stellman, president of Ladies Links For Golf, and another of the NWGA partners. "The NWGA evaluation and certification program offers independent validation."

The process involves a trained NWGA evaluator and three female guests playing an eighteen hole round to evaluate the facility on five key areas of focus: playability, service, course amenities, facility amenities and golf programs. The facility receives a comprehensive written report highlighting areas



Jan Bel Jan, ASGCA

of excellence and offering recommendations. A second evaluation conducted two to six months later assesses consistency and improvements.

Facilities that achieve a score of 80 per cent or higher in at least three areas of focus earn the Rolling Out the Green Carpet certification. Lasting three years, this designation comes with extensive publicity and marketing, including an insignia to use on promotional materials and in advertising. The annual evaluation fee is US\$500 per course, with a three year commitment.

New practice format

Leeds Golf Centre in England has become the latest UK driving range to adopt the 60 60 Golf practice format. 60 60 Golf was launched in 2012 as an alternative to traditional rounds of golf. Players are challenged to hit balls to driving range targets and score their game on the free-to-download smartphone app.

Snag equipment launch

Player development program Snag Golf has launched a new range of equipment designed to allow learners to acquire golf skills even at night time. Snag's new After Dark product line includes targets, tees, balls, clubs and launch pads, all of which glow in the dark.

Indian golf league

A new professional golf format has debuted in India. The Pearls Golf Premier League sees teams of four players competing over three 14-hole rounds at Aamby Valley in Pune, India. Darren Clarke and Angel Cabrera feature in this new format event, which seeks to emulate the success of Twenty20, the shortened form of cricket.

Thailand tops

Tour operator Golfasian says it expects Thailand to be the world's leading golf destination within three years, if current trends continue. More than 750,000 golfers came to Thailand in 2012, up by 50 percent in three years. At this pace of growth, Thailand will pass Spain in 2015 or 2016.

Golf Industry Show

ASGCA members lead at GIS

A number of ASGCA members took center stage at the recent Golf Industry Show in San Diego, California explaining to an international audience the role of golf course architects and the skills of ASGCA members.

- ASGCA President Bob Cupp was joined by fellow author Ron Whitten for a discussion of their recent book *Golf's Grand Design*. The pair shared stories of courses and the architects who have made them famous.
- ASGCA Vice President Rick Robbins served as a guest presenter reviewing one of his construction layouts and providing feedback to attendees, who shared their own routing ideas.
- Kyle Phillips, ASGCA, Andy Staples, ASGCA Associate and Jeff Blume, ASGCA conducted a session of Remodeling University.
- Brit Stenson, ASGCA and Jeff Brauer, ASGCA presented on the show floor's 'Design & Construction' center.

The One percent club

First Links

Coaches understand the philosophy of aiming for repeated small gains that together make for a major leap forward. Can the same apply to golf courses, asks Adam Lawrence?

Sir David Brailsford, the boss of British cycling, and the man behind an unprecedented flood of Summer Olympic gold medals in both the Beijing and London velodromes, not to mention Bradley Wiggins' Tour de France victory, has a simple philosophy. "If you take everything you do, and improve it by one percent, that adds up to a big improvement in performance," he says.

It's a mindset that managers in many businesses could do with adopting, golf included. It isn't hard for bright, engaged people to work out small improvements in tasks they handle day in and day out. If minor changes can reduce maintenance budgets (or improve the standard of course presentation for the same money), or produce a small increase in the average spend of each golfer in the pro shop or clubhouse, or whatever, the result will be a more efficient operation. Perhaps equally importantly, a staff

that understands just how closely their efforts correlate to the overall performance of the golf course.

A similar mindset can be applied to course development. In the 1930s, legendary architect AW Tillinghast was hired by the PGA of America to tour the country, visiting courses and providing them with free advice on how to keep their operations running during the worst of the Great Depression. There are many courses still around today that owe their survival through the Thirties to this work.

Now, in conjunction with ASGCA, the PGA is funding a similar program for courses in today's golf market that feel the need to improve, but don't necessarily have a lot of cash. The First Links program provides funding for ASGCA member architects to visit clubs and produce reports highlighting ways in which the course could be improved through changes in course design. And clubs are starting





Battenkill CC has a successful junior development program

to see the benefits of what is, to them, free consultancy.

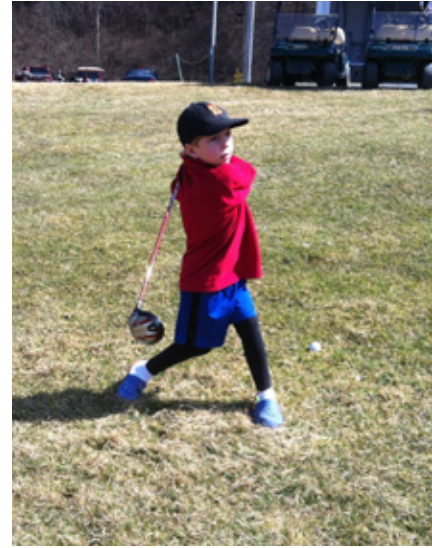
Battenkill CC, in Greenwich, NY, is one of the first clubs to engage with the First Links program. Architect Lester George, ASGCA, who visited Battenkill, and produced a report highlighting ways in which the historic nine hole course could create practice and short game facilities that would help attract new players, says: "It's one of the most charming golf courses I have ever visited. They have a long history of being a small town club, and they should embrace that image. They are the epitome of what more clubs need to strive to be: uncomplicated, dedicated to member enjoyment, simple necessities, community friends and remarkably sustainable."

Battenkill professional Bill Wigand has a children's program with around 20 youngsters regularly participating. The tight nature of the property means his classes have little space to practice.

During his clinics, Wigand uses the putting green and the fairway and green of the opening hole for chipping and putting practice. When members want to play the hole, Wigand moves the kids aside.

George's report identifies a way around this problem. By shortening the opening hole, using a defunct chipping green and an unused plot of land near the ninth tee, a short game area of around 30,000 sq ft could be created. "Our course sits in a bowl surrounded by hills, a train track, and the Battenkill river. Most of this flood plain is occupied by the course, but there are pockets of land that are not in play we thought could be developed for practice and teaching facilities, but that were not so clearly suited to the task that it was obvious how to do so," says David Harshbarger, a member of Battenkill's green committee, and one of the key movers behind the project.

"Lester recommended against using a section of the property we thought could have been repurposed as a driving range or short game facility. He reasoned that the area was too far from the clubhouse to expect that it would get meaningful use, even if the space would accommodate the needs. More generally, he was very attuned to the role our facility plays in our community. We are not a championship course. We attract higher handicap and less experienced players, both as members and guests. Lester pointed out numerous areas where we could make improvements to the course, such as piping streams underground, adding tees, or avoiding native areas or additional water features, that would continue to make the course attractive to our demographic. Finally, Battenkill is a Golden Age course, originally laid out in 1925, and has relatively well-preserved features consistent with



Battenkill CC looks to welcome more beginners with the help of Lester George, ASGCA

courses of that era. Lester encouraged us to consider highlighting those features, for example by recapturing geometric greens by extending our oval greens out to the edges of their rectangular pushed-up green pads. He suggested that by doing so, we could better define our course in our market, and give it character and additional interest.”

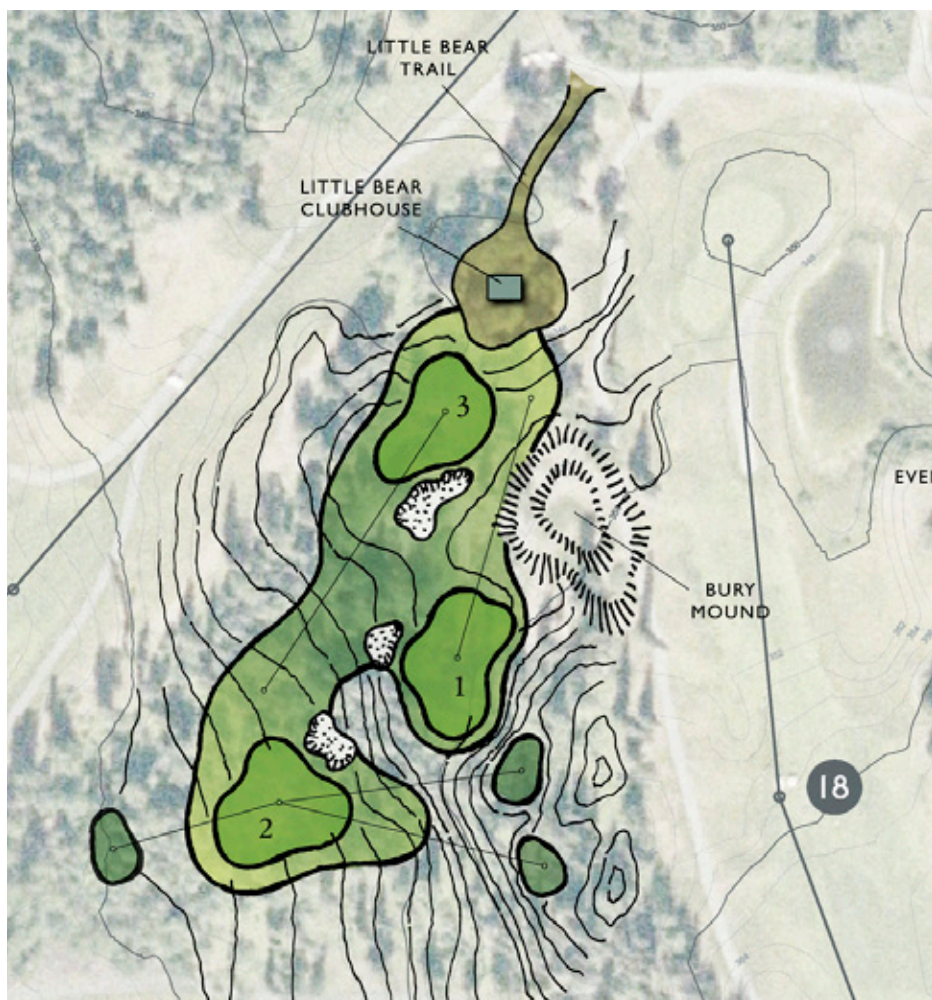
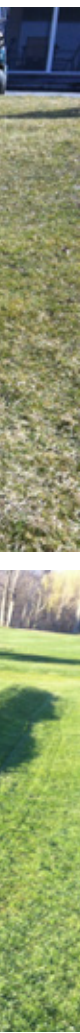
Harshbarger says the club is now figuring out how to put George’s recommendations into place. “In the vein of small improvements over time adding up to big improvements, we are first looking at things we can do

in-house, such as expanding teeing grounds or expanding greens out to the edges of the green pads,” he says. “We have considered moving forward with a capital improvement fund, and if we can bite that off in addition to addressing a number of pressing operations needs, we will. We feel through First Links we were able to see new opportunities to extend access to golf for our members and beginners within our community. As long as we can continue to attract and encourage golfers to enjoy and improve at the game, regardless of current skill level,

we will remain viable and relevant in our community.”

In Jacksonville, Fla., is another example of the First Links program helping golf operators find new solutions for their operational issues. A large, national developer bought the Desmond Muirhead-designed Baymeadows Golf Club in 2005, with the intention of closing it and redeveloping the land for housing. This plan fell through, partly because of the economic situation, and partly because of the objections of existing homeowners on the property.

“Lester George pointed out numerous areas where we could make improvements to the course



At Anchorage GC, a new junior facility could be made possible by First Links and Forrest Richardson, ASGCA

Now, partly thanks to First Links, there may be another solution. Tom Burnett, who owns a nearby golf academy, is in negotiations with the developer about taking over 25 acres of the former course and relocating his academy there, with the possibility of reopening nine holes at a later date.

Architect Scot Sherman, ASGCA, visited the facility to advise Burnett on the options. "Because of its size and existing lighting, I recommended that the main tee near the clubhouse site should be open to the public as a day and night range for ongoing revenue," says Sherman. "In addition to long game practice, there is ample space to construct multiple short game areas for both academy students and the general public. The area of the abandoned eighteenth green could become the 'Village Green' in the spirit of the

Himalayas in St Andrews or the new Thistle Dhu putting course in Pinehurst. This area would be open to all residents. Finally, to take full advantage of the site, there is space to also use the constructed practice features as a nine hole par three course. Given its proximity to many households, major transportation routes, and warm weather climate, I expect this facility will enjoy a sustainable future in every sense. Our business needs a comeback story and I look forward to the opportunity to assist."

At the other end of the US, in Anchorage, Alaska, player development is at the heart of another First Links project. In 2011, the Anchorage Golf Club completed a masterplan that included several areas for practice, player development and bringing youth into golf. Among the areas was the Little Bear facility, a two acre site

planned as a designated youth area to introduce young players to the game.

Anchorage has a successful chapter of the nationwide First Tee organization, but one of its key facilities, a nine hole course known as Russian Jack, is the subject of potential redevelopment plans. The chapter, therefore, is interested in moving its operations to Anchorage GC, if a suitable facility can be provided.

Architect Forrest Richardson, ASGCA, visited Anchorage under the First Links program to investigate the club's options. His report suggests a plan for the Little Bear space incorporating three greens, with fairway, rough and surrounds connecting the area. The plan calls for the area to be cleared from dense forest with stands of trees left in place to form buffers between the greens. These stands will define fairways and holes that will be flexible in terms of set-up and configuration.

The challenge for the club is to finance the construction. The First Tee of Alaska is investigating the option of having much of the rough construction work carried out by local contractors as a donation to the organization, with the fine work then being carried out under Richardson's supervision, provided pro bono. ●

FIRST LINKS

Funding for First Links comes from the PGA of America, and the program is administered by the ASGCA Foundation. Grants are available to golf course owners or operators interested in reconfiguring their layouts, or devoting open land to smaller-scale facilities, helping new players to ease into the game. First Links grants enable applicants to pay for visits by ASGCA members to evaluate potential short courses, practice facilities or other modifications making the course more appealing to new players. ASGCA member consultants will follow up their visits with a site evaluation report describing their ideas.

Apply for a grant by visiting <http://asgca.org/first-links>, or email aileen@asgca.org.

The way forward?

The R&A's new free CourseTracker service could play a major role in helping clubs improve the efficiency and sustainability of their maintenance operations

The Royal and Ancient has launched a new online service that promises to help golf courses all over the world manage themselves more sustainably and effectively.

Because sustainability is more than just an environmental agenda, the new CourseTracker application aims to give managers a clear view of what is being spent on the course, where and when. A business-focused tool, users of the system record high level management information at the CourseTracker website, which can then generate instantaneous management reports to assist with the decision making process: What are we earning? What are we spending? Why? Where?

The system allows golf clubs to monitor their performance over time and identify strengths, weaknesses and areas where savings could be made in terms of energy and water, for example. The reports that come from CourseTracker work on two levels: firstly, they give course and club managers a clear view of their operations, for example, the amount of time spent maintaining particular parts of the course by greens staff, but they also provide benchmarking information against other, comparable courses.

CourseTracker also enables golf clubs to anonymously benchmark their performance against that of other clubs of a similar size in their country. It produces accurate performance reports for the use of course managers and can be used to

keep committees informed and to aid decision making.

The system has been extensively tested with course managers, club secretaries and industry bodies and their feedback has been used to develop and refine its range of functions. It has been endorsed by England Golf, the Golfing Union of Ireland, the Scottish Golf Union and the Golfing Union of Wales.

The R&A says that participating in the CourseTracker process should be easy and take as little as an hour a year to enter the required data, most of which will be found

on the club's balance sheet. As an aid to communication with committees, members or owners, CourseTracker will help provide clear information on what has been done on the course, why, what the results have been and what else needs to be done in order to continue successfully moving the course forward. If clubs are seeking environmental certification, the data provided by CourseTracker should make the process easier. And the R&A says it can also help determine the amount of time and money spent or saved by gaining the

Images courtesy of The R&A



The R&A's Steve Isaac (left) and guests launch CourseTracker

“There is more pressure than ever on golf clubs to make the right decisions to manage golf courses sustainably, efficiently and cost effectively

eco-label. If consultants such as an external agronomist have been hired to help the club, CourseTracker will demonstrate where savings have been made as a result of following their advice.

Steve Isaac, the R&A's director of golf course management, says: “There is more pressure than ever on golf clubs to make the right decisions to manage golf courses sustainably, efficiently and cost effectively. CourseTracker can help them do that through recording, monitoring and reporting their activities and inputs. We know this is an area where many clubs struggle due

to lack of time and resources.

“CourseTracker is free, completely secure and can enable clubs to compare their performance on an anonymous basis with other clubs of a similar size and situation. The aim is to give clubs more information and understanding of their course maintenance activities to enable them to improve performance.”

Paul Keeling, club services manager at England Golf which has supported CourseTracker, says: “CourseTracker is an excellent new resource for golf clubs which can really help them get a grip on their

expenditure on course maintenance.

It is so important to manage golf courses sustainably both to protect the environment and reduce costs. This is a quick, easy to use system which can deliver accurate and useful management information for golf clubs. We will certainly be recommending CourseTracker to courses we work with in England.”

CourseTracker can be accessed online at www.coursetracker.org. Golf clubs need only spend a few minutes registering before using the system. It is simple to use and there are full online tutorials available for guidance. ●



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ENVIRONMENTAL RECORD

American Society of Golf Course Architects members have a long history of helping golf courses improve their environmental performance and increasing the efficiency of their operations. Past President Larry Packard (profiled on p. 16) helped create the ASGCA Environmental Committee in 1970, and ASGCA's record of leadership on environmental issues is well-known in the industry. ASGCA has published many guidance notes that golf course owners and operators can use to address environmental concerns. These include free flyers on turfgrass reduction, golf and water and reducing maintenance costs, as well as the book 'An Environmental Approach to Golf Course Development'.

For more, visit asgca.org/publications.

Private clubs

Serving multiple generations

Clubs need to plan for the future without alienating the generation that is their current bread and butter, according to one leading US club manager

Golf clubs, across the US and elsewhere, must become more flexible if they are to continue serving their existing members well, while becoming more attractive to a new generation of members, according to Congressional CC chief operating officer Michael Leemhuis.

A survey, conducted by Leemhuis, of general managers and CEOs of leading US clubs reveals that the majority are facing significant intergenerational issues with their memberships. “Longer life spans mean that clubs are being challenged to serve the needs of multiple generations, which may not be the same, in a way that has not been the case in the past,” he explains. Many commentators have remarked on the problem of the increasing average age of club members, but Leemhuis says this is not the whole story. Yes, average age is increasing, and yes, clubs need to focus on recruiting new members, but they can’t do that by changing their culture in a way that risks alienating the older members, who are likely to be active to a much greater age than has been the case in the past. The baby boomer generation,

whose intentions have fueled much of golf’s growth over the last two decades, is now, with an average age of 64, heading into retirement. While planning for life beyond the boomers is an important task for clubs, they are still the key customers of today, and are likely to be so for a good number of years to come.

This generational challenge reflects itself in a number of the issues that face clubs. Take dress codes. It’s clear that, to be more attractive to younger people, clubs need to consider changing, perhaps even relaxing, their dress codes. At the same time, they need to think carefully about the expectations of their existing members. “Businesses have changed their dress policies dramatically in the last couple of decades, and the rise of casual dining means that the restaurant business has been through a similar change,” says Leemhuis.

Or consider technology. Leemhuis says that the NCA survey shows 71 percent of clubs reporting that the impact of technology is an issue for them. The devotion shown by many members, especially but not exclusively, to their smartphones,

is forcing clubs to look again at their rules concerning the use of these devices on club property. Technology is not just a problem, but an opportunity too: Leemhuis says members are now far more comfortable with the use of electronic channels for communications, including paperless billing, which has obvious positive implications for efficiency and cost. 68 percent of clubs responding have a Facebook presence, and an identical proportion of core US golfers maintain a profile on one or more social networks, according to NGF studies.

What members want from their clubs is changing too, Leemhuis says. Almost four in five clubs say they are being affected by members’ increased interest in fitness and healthier lifestyles, both for themselves and their families. “Club members are looking at a wide range of fitness techniques: personal training, pilates, yoga, aerobic dancing, spinning and even the Wii,” he says. Given the importance of the country club, with its traditionally wide range of services, in North America especially, clubs must think





Intergenerational issues are challenging for clubs, says Mike Leemhuis

carefully about adding more fitness-related activities to their portfolio.

Mention of families brings up another key topic. Leemhuis notes, as do many other commentators, that a family-friendly approach is vital to attracting new members and getting more play out of existing ones. "We need to improve our service to all family types," he says. "That could, for many clubs, include the provision of child care, and it certainly includes special programs for children and for women, things like sports camps."

But the increasing importance of family life in our hectic world is about more than just adding child care. If the golf club was, in the past, somewhere men would go to spend time with their friends in a family-free setting, that can't be the case in future. In the 'Private Club Trends' survey, dining and golf were noted as the top reasons members joined clubs, but the sexes differed on the relative importance of the two. For women, dining was number one, followed by golf; for men the reverse was true. And members, Leemhuis says, are demanding a different kind of catering from the burgers and beer

or traditional fine dining models that might have prevailed in the past. "There is increasing interest in healthier, more nutritional diets, and menus featuring heart-healthy, locally grown, low-fat, low-carb, gluten-free and other specialty foods," he says. If clubs can change their dining operations to focus on seasonal, sustainable, local ingredients and cater more for the wide range of diets seen today, it will improve the attractiveness of their offer, he says. But, of course, doing so requires more effort in sourcing and perhaps a different mindset in the kitchen.

Finally, Leemhuis says, clubs are realizing they need to tailor their membership and fee structures to reach a wider market and increase the usage of their facilities. This may involve the mix of equity in fees, the proportion of non-residential memberships and such like. But, bringing us back to where we started, changing the nature of membership deals runs the risk of antagonising those members who bought in the traditional way, who remain the core clientele. Club management in the 21st century is a balancing act! ●

ASGCA MEMBERS AT CONGRESSIONAL



Originally designed by Devereux Emmett, Congressional's Blue course has held five Major championships, going back to Ken Venturi's U.S. Open win in 1964. Several different ASGCA members have worked on the Blue course, including founders Donald Ross and Robert Trent Jones. Since 1989, the design firm run by ASGCA Past President Rees Jones has been advising the club on alterations to the Blue course. That year featured a complete renovation of all of the greens, fairways and other features. In 2006, Jones reversed the existing eighteenth hole to become the new tenth hole. In preparation for the 2011 U.S. Open all of the greens were rebuilt to USGA specifications in addition to a number of tee, bunker and fairway adjustments. As well as Jones himself, Steve Weisser, ASGCA, and ASGCA Past President Greg Muirhead have worked at Congressional.



Rees Jones, ASGCA (right) with Congressional superintendent Dave Hutchinson (centre) and construction project manager Joel Weiman of McDonald & Sons during 2006 work



A century of service

Marc Whitney
profiles ASGCA
Past President Larry
Packard, who recently
celebrated his
100th birthday

Anyone who reaches 100 years of age has certainly stood the test of time. For ASGCA Past President E. Lawrence (Larry) Packard, ASGCA Fellow, the same can be said for the more than 600 courses he has worked on over his distinguished career, including 350 new designs.

ASGCA leaders and members are paying tribute this year to Packard, who celebrated his 100th birthday in November 2012. They are taking note of both his design work across the globe and his legacy of service to ASGCA and the profession of golf course architecture.

Packard began his golf architecture career in Illinois in the 1940s with one of the founders of ASGCA, Robert Bruce Harris. Packard started his own firm in 1954 with Brent Wadsworth.

Packard's work has included the Innisbrook Golf and Country Club in Palm Harbor, Fla., where he designed three 18-hole courses in addition to a nine-hole layout. Innisbrook's Copperhead Course continues to host the PGA Tour's Tampa Bay Championship.

In a recent interview with *Sports Illustrated's* Golf.com, Packard discussed his extensive international experience. "I have designed courses in South Korea, Venezuela, Guatemala and Egypt," Packard said. "When you are standing in front of the pyramids in Egypt and you want to know where the water is going to come from, there is only one place: the Nile! I also learned that sand dunes don't always stay put."

ASGCA President Bob Cupp said of Packard: "Since the game of golf is so ancient, we don't look upon ourselves as 'pioneers,' but in Larry Packard's



Packard designed four courses at Innisbrook



“In Egypt, the water is only going to come from one place: the Nile!”

Larry Packard,
ASGCA Past President

case, it is appropriate. Larry was at the forefront of the post-World War II golf explosion, and his courses still stand. He should wear the ‘pioneer’ title proudly.”

When asked what he enjoys most about designing golf courses, Packard’s response likely resonates with his fellow ASGCA members.

“You have to be adaptive,” he said. “You have a brand new and very different project every time. It’s always a new challenge, and the fun is putting the whole project together.”

The moniker ‘Father of the Modern ASGCA’ was given to Packard by former ASGCA Executive Director Paul Fullmer, due to Packard’s service to ASGCA and its members. Packard was ASGCA president in 1970-71, one of the first architects to vocally address environmental concerns, an early advocate for using effluent for course irrigation and sought to invite other

qualified golf course architects to ASGCA membership. He also encouraged regular meetings among leaders of other golf organizations, including the PGA, USGA, and the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America.

Packard was recognized by his fellow ASGCA members when he became the first of just four men to receive the ASGCA Distinguished Service Award in 2005. The award is given to an ASGCA member who has contributed exceptional time and effort to benefit both ASGCA members and the organization. In the fall of 2012, the ASGCA Board of Governors approved renaming the award to ‘The Larry Packard Distinguished Service Award.’

Today, Packard resides in Palm Harbor, Fla. ●

Marc Whitney is a member of the ASGCA staff.

PACKARD’S COURSES

Golf courses designed by Larry Packard, ASGCA Fellow, include:

- Bomun Lake Golf Course, Kyongju, Republic of Korea
- Cypress Run Golf Club, Tarpon Springs, Fla.
- Dreamland Pyramids Country Club, Cairo, Egypt
- Eagle Ridge Golf Resort (North, South Courses), Galena, Ill.
- Echo Valley Country Club (three courses), Norwalk, Iowa
- Hacienda Nueva Country Club, Guatemala City, C.A.
- Westin Innisbrook Resort (four courses), Tarpon Springs, Fla.

“ At the end of the season, schedule Superintendent’s Revenge Day

Growing the game

Increasing the fun factor

Golf is inherently fun for most of us, right? Golfers enjoy the game for different reasons: some because of its challenge, others for the camaraderie one can enjoy with friends. For some it might be the competitive encounters, or because it is an outdoor activity that provides exercise. Some enjoy the chance to get away and be on their own for a while.

But it is true that golf can require a good bit of time to play and demands a certain level of skills in order to succeed. The cost of playing can be a barrier, and lack of accessible facilities is another. And so the golf industry has been pushing to come up with ways to entice more people to play the game and have more fun on the course. Programs like ‘Tee it Forward’ provide some answers and considerations, but don’t concentrate much on the lighter side of things.

If golf isn’t enjoyable, why play? So I came up with a few ways to spark some interest at your club or facility. Hopefully we can create a little more excitement for the game and provide some unique experiences that most folks have never enjoyed before. So let your traditional guards down and consider, just for a moment, how these and other activities can be integrated.

1. On special days, junior outings or during certain events, set the course up in unusual ways and invent your own rules. Shorten holes awkwardly, create new tee locations, do the unexpected—but explain ahead of time it is just for fun!
2. Occasionally cut a few cups with an eight inch diameter—just for the fun of it! You might just see a few more chip-ins and certainly more putts holed.
3. Take your most difficult green and place two or three different pin locations. Give players choice!
4. Promote a Family Derby Night—pair up families as teams for a six hole alternate shot challenge. Grill out some hot dogs and award some fun prizes!
5. Hold an Annual Kids Day with a putting tournament, teaching clinic, short playing outing with parent caddies, and a family cookout to follow. This could be expanded into a weeklong Kids Camp, involving other activities such as tennis, swimming, fishing and other activities.
6. Hold a Couples—Only 70s Night twilight event with gaudy golf attire—maybe follow it up with a disco darty!
7. At the end of the season, feature ‘Superintendent’s Revenge Day’. The superintendent gets to set the course up in any way he pleases—a nice way to let your super take a few jabs at the players after a long season.
8. Schedule a special ‘Bring a Guest to the Course Week’, not to be confused with a member/guest tournament. Provide a special guest rate promotion with a shirt/logo balls/sandwich and round of golf to introduce them to the facility and maybe to the game for the first time.
9. Have a hickory golf outing! Hire a specialized outfitter to supply players with clubs/balls and play your (shortened) course like the old timers would. Encourage players to dress in period apparel and take a group black and white photo to commemorate the day.
10. Don’t keep score. Just play for fun. You’ll be surprised what you see, what you hear, how much more you laugh and smile and how much more relaxing golf can be. And if you’re going to play a competitive game, play matchplay—it’s faster and certainly less of a grind than having to play and count every single stroke. ●



Drew Rogers, ASGCA

Drew runs his golf design practice out of Toledo, Ohio.



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