



ISSUE 62 // SUMMER 2023

BY DESIGN

Excellence in Golf Design from the American Society of Golf Course Architects



OUT OF THE ORDINARY

ASGCA members share the stories of their most unusual discoveries on golf course sites

FORGING A CAREER

The ASGCA Foundation's Wadsworth Scholar Program has prepared eight young people to join the golf industry

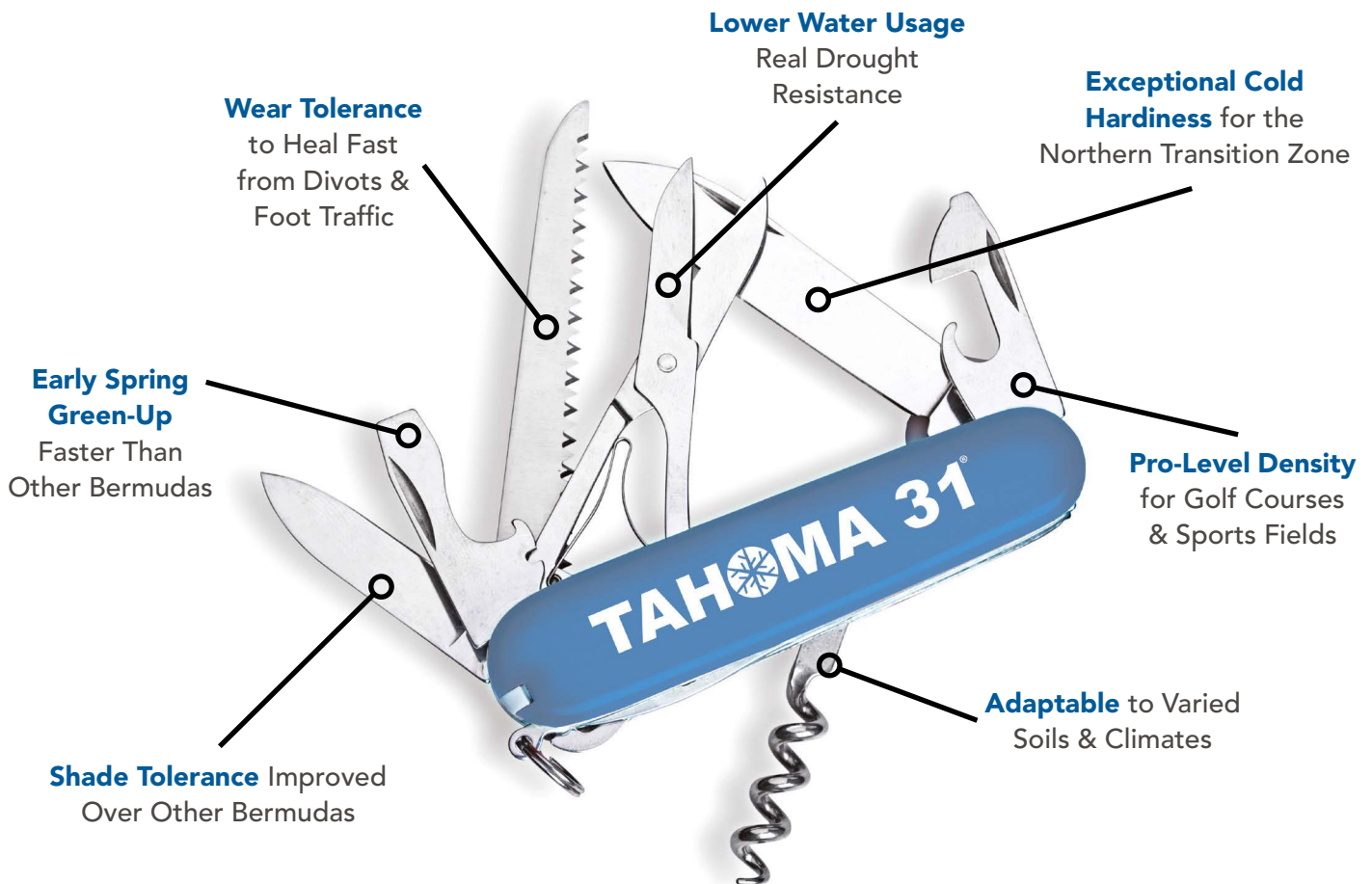
ALSO:

- // Thoughts on distance
- // Fields Ranch East
- // Sustainability

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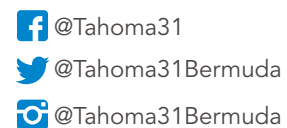
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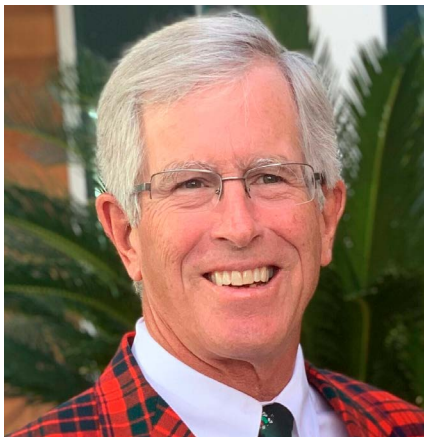
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Brit Stenson
President, ASGCA

Better place

The latest National Golf Foundation analysis of current trends for golf is encouraging for the industry; surmising that we are at the end of golf's second major sustained contraction.

NGF makes the case that, taking the long view, "golf is in a better place today than it was when the current supply correction began". And I think that is right. Courses are being remodeled, renovated and restored at record levels. Some courses that were abandoned are being completely 'resurrected'.

There are also more new courses being built than we have become accustomed to in recent years, and this issue of *By Design* opens with news of one of those: Fields Ranch East, by Gil Hanse, ASGCA. It was a joy to watch this course demanding thoughtfulness and creativity from the competitors in the recent Senior PGA Championship.

Many of our members report being busier than ever. And as they visit more sites, they may be increasingly likely to stumble across a design challenge that is completely new to them. Our cover story for this issue reflects on some of the more unusual encounters that ASGCA members have had. As I read it, I found myself smiling as I recalled some of the stranger things I have experienced on my travels to golf course sites around the world. These discoveries also demand thoughtfulness and creativity, to create courses that will provide lasting memories.

There's plenty more in this issue, too. I hope you enjoy the read.

Brit Stenson

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CONTENTS

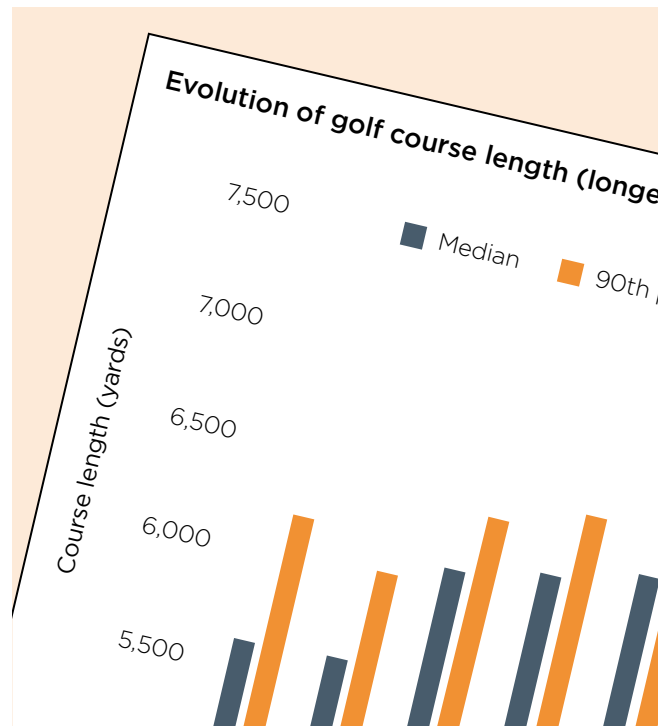
6 Digest

The issue begins with news of Fields Ranch East, the new course by Gil Hanse, ASGCA, that has opened at PGA Frisco in Texas. We also report on projects in Arizona, California and Florida.



14 Out of the ordinary

Every now and again a golf course architect is presented with a site unlike any they have encountered before. Richard Humphreys explores how designers deal with the exceptional.

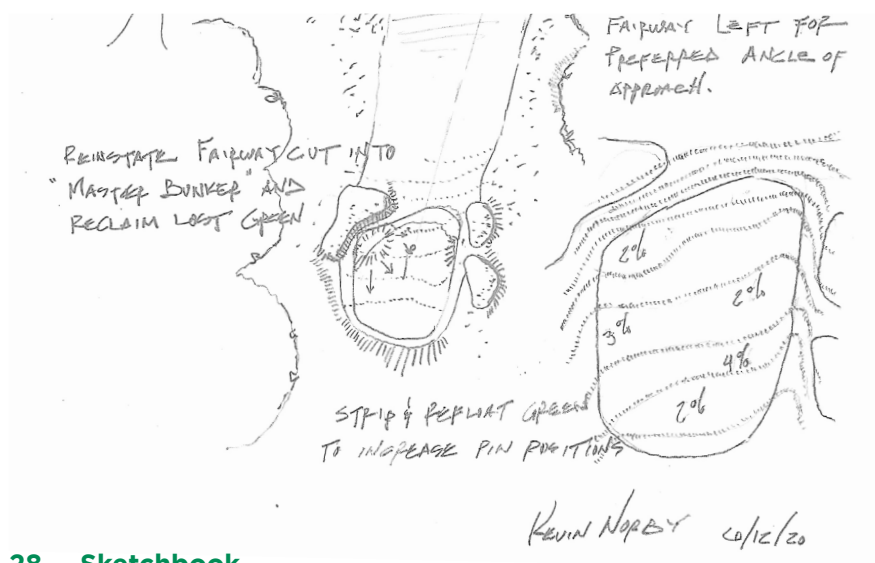


20 Thoughts on distance

With the USGA and R&A proposing a new local rule that could rein in driving distance in the elite game, *By Design* asked five ASGCA members for their thoughts.

24 Carving out a career

The Wadsworth Scholar Program provides students interested in golf course development with a chance to kickstart their career. *By Design* spoke with previous recipients about the program's impact.



28 Sketchbook

Kevin Norby, ASGCA, shares a sketch of the ninth hole at Golden Valley CC in Minnesota, which he is currently renovating.

On the cover



The eleventh hole on the Leader's Peak course, designed by Brian Curley, ASGCA, at the Stone Forest golf complex in southwest China. Photography by Ryan Farrow.

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Fields Ranch East debuts at Senior PGA

The new Fields Ranch East course at the PGA Frisco development in Texas has opened for public play after marking its debut by hosting the 2023 KitchenAid Senior PGA Championship.

The layout was designed by Gil Hanse, ASGCA, and his associate Jim Wagner, and has already been named as host for 26 tournaments, including PGA Championships

in 2027 and 2034 and Women’s PGA Championships in 2025 and 2031. “Everything that Gil created on the East course was championship driven,” said Jon O’Donnell, president of Heritage Links, the construction firm that built the course.

Hanse said: “The property here reminded me a bit of Southern Hills – the topography, along with

the creek so prominently featured. Of course, Southern Hills is now surrounded by Tulsa. But when Perry Maxwell built it, Southern Hills probably looked a lot like our site in Frisco does today.

“This used to be a ranch, so we focused on that, along with what is some really interesting topography, good rolling ground. But everything has been done in

The opening hole on Gil Hanse's Fields Ranch East course at PGA Frisco

Photo: Evan Schiller



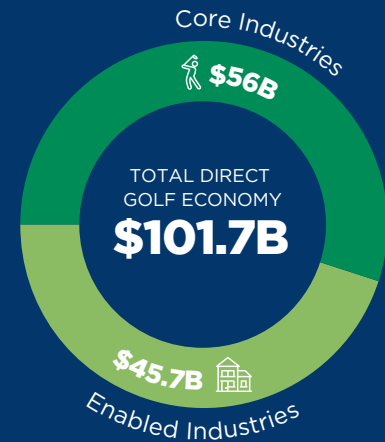
proportion to the broad expanses we're dealing with here. In that context the bunkers are the calling card, the most visible feature out there – and they are dramatic.”

O'Donnell said: “Gil wanted a theme where the course features look as if they had been there for 60 years, whether it be a refined bunker or a natural bunker. The same themes apply to the wetlands,

native grasslands and oxbows you'll see out there.”

Hanse's layout is accompanied by the Beau Welling-designed West course, and the two architects collaborated for The Swing, a 10 hole par-three course, and The Dance Floor, a two-acre putting course. The PGA of America moved to its new headquarters at the Frisco development in spring 2022.

Golf invests in courses as business surges



Source: AGIC Economic Impact Report 2023

Four-of-every-five golf clubs in the US have undertaken course investments in the last five years, according to new data from the National Golf Foundation (NGF). It also says that golf is now a \$102 billion business in the US, representing 20 percent growth since 2016.

Of an estimated \$4.3 billion spent on golf courses since 2018, \$1.13 billion went on renovating and improving greens, \$1.2 billion on irrigation systems, and \$1.92 billion on other renovations, including tees, fairways, bunkers, cart paths and general landscaping.

NGF has also reported that new golf course construction in the US is on the rise for the first time in almost 20 years. It said that 54 courses are under construction and at least 38 others are currently in the planning stages.

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Rees Jones redesigns the Old Course at Broken Sound

ASGCA Past President Rees Jones and his design associate Bryce Swanson, ASGCA, have completed a renovation of the Old Course at Broken Sound Club in Boca Raton, Florida.

The updated course will host a PGA Tour Champions event in November 2023. “We had to design it for the senior players as well as the members, so it had to have really good greens, but they also needed to be accessible,” said Jones. “If we can do courses with more options, we’ll have a healthy game.”

“In the future we’ll be getting a lot of less proficient golfers coming into the sport. So, we’ll be doing more things around the greens, rather than surrounding them with sand. Chipping areas, grass bunkers and grass pockets. And even if you have a slightly elevated green, we’ll design a ramp.”



Photo: Evan Schiller



“Mother nature is wonderful”

Gary Browning, ASGCA

In the latest podcast from *Golf Course Industry’s* “Tartan Talks” series, Gary Browning, ASGCA, talks about designing courses in the mountains of Canada and life as a golf architect.

“Mother nature is wonderful,” says Browning, who has worked on courses such as Blue Devil, Crowsnest Pass and Kananaskis, all in Alberta. “She creates fantastic views and vistas, and all us golf architects have to do

is find holes that show them off. “Sometimes I pinch myself and wonder how blessed I am to be in the golf course design business and working in mountains. What better views can you imagine for a golf hole than the Rockies. I often played when I was building courses in the mountains... it is quite an experience!”

Browning has over 40 years’ experience as a golf and landscape architect, and joined

the ASGCA in 2021. “I have loved working as a golf architect every single day, I’m obsessed with it!” he says. “I could not have picked a better profession. My early experiences with the ASGCA have been great. I am amazed at the camaraderie and the wonderful human beings that are in this profession.”

Listen to the full “Tartan Talk” at golfcourseindustry.com.

Here are links to other recent “Tartan Talks,” now featuring over 50 episodes:

- [Rick Phelps, ASGCA, had a terrific seat to witness and help guide golf development in his native Colorado.](#)
- [Kevin Norby, ASGCA, discusses a busy five years which has seen him work all over the country.](#)

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RTJ II focuses on environment at Bay Area municipal

Robert Trent Jones II Golf Course Architects has been appointed for design work on the North course at the municipal Corica Park facility in Alameda, California.

Greenway Golf, which operates the two courses at Corica Park on a lease from the City of Alameda, has a mission to “harmonize exceptional golf experiences with environmental and social sustainability.”

“What Greenway is doing at Corica Park is impressive and truly different,” said Robert Trent Jones, Jr., ASGCA Fellow. “Their efforts to transform the site into a vital ecological habitat and socially inclusive resource are a model for the golf course industry and represent a shared values system and inspiration for our team. We’re



Greenway Golf owners and the RTJ II design team on site ahead of the renovation

looking forward to enhancing the golf experience at Corica Park with purposeful design and thoughtful challenges for golfers of all levels.”

Jones and his team will renovate

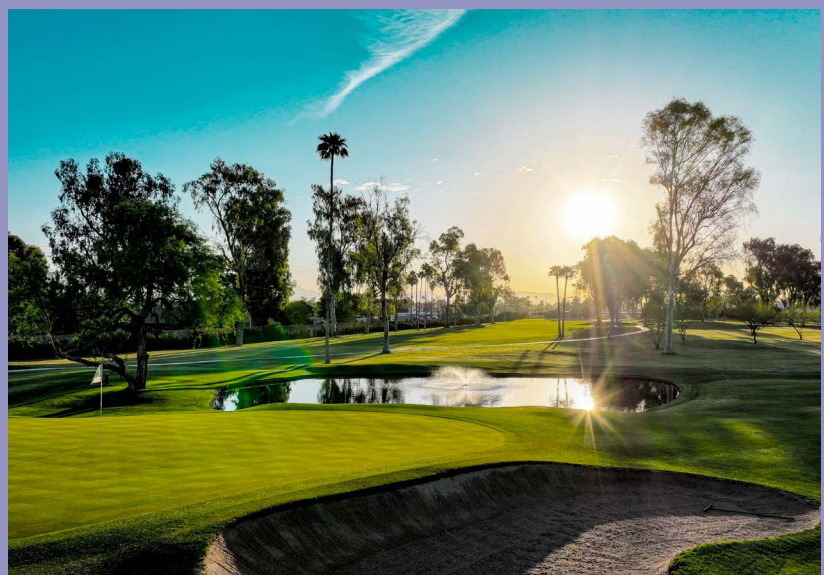
the back nine of the North course, and make tweaks to the front nine, which was completed by former Greenway Golf stakeholder Marc Logan in 2021.

Andy Staples to lead water conservation work at Mesa

Mesa Country Club in Arizona has appointed Andy Staples, ASGCA, to renovate its William F. Bell course.

“All the greens will be rebuilt to USGA standards, greenside bunkers will be renovated to improve playability and, importantly, a new irrigation system will ensure significant water reduction usage,” said Neil Baier, president of the board at the club, which celebrates its 75th anniversary in 2023.

Staples said: “The big news item here is the water conservation work in relation to the irrigation system upgrade, the lake reduction plan, and the low water use areas in out-of-play areas. This will address the water issues and the upcoming state mandates.”

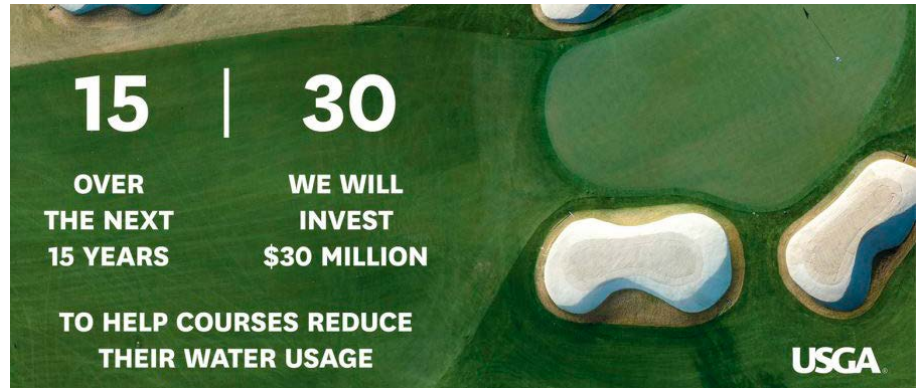


USGA unveils sustainability initiatives

The United States Golf Association (USGA) has unveiled new initiatives to accelerate its sustainability work.

It has pledged \$30 million over the next 15 years to help golf courses reduce their water use.

“The long-term economic and environmental sustainability of green-grass golf courses – where more than 25 million people enjoy the game and millions more are employed – will be challenged in certain regions if the game doesn’t advance this critical work now,” said Mike Whan, CEO of the USGA. “The USGA is ready to not only contribute our voice, but also our resources and expertise, to



help our golf course partners and ensure golf’s future.”

The governing body has also announced 17 new sustainability projects for 2023 as part of the Mike Davis Program for Advancing Golf Course Management, a

program that invests approximately \$2 million in grants annually. With more than 70 new and ongoing research projects in 2023, the initiative continues to be the largest private turfgrass and environmental research effort in golf.

Richardson and Danner develop GolfBase

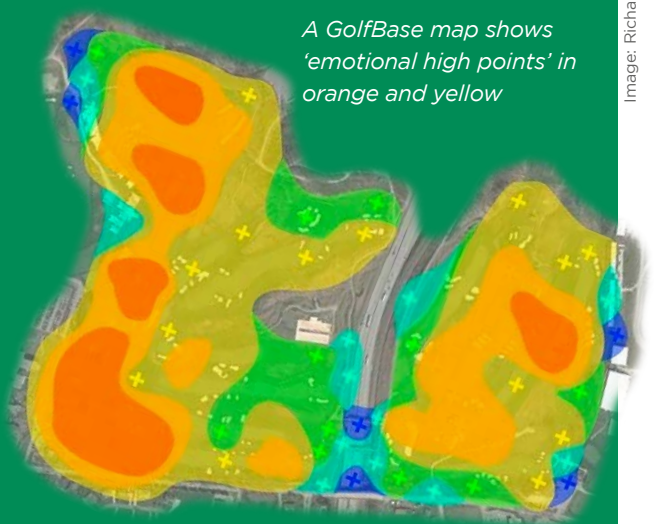
ASGCA Past President Forrest Richardson and Jeff Danner, ASGCA, have developed GolfBase, a proprietary assessment system that measures the overall player experience of golf courses.

By using GolfBase, course owners can visualize where “the psychological highs and lows” occur across a golf course.

“What we’ve created is a measurement system that translates into a highly specialized map of the golf course,” said Danner. “Through a process that quantifies such factors as aesthetics, excitement, fun, challenge, distractions and conditioning, we are able to develop a ‘contour map’ that depicts the emotional aspects across an entire golf course.”

Richardson said: “It looks much like your typical topographical map. But here the ‘high points’ are not physically elevated – instead, these points represent the places during the routing of the courses where the golfer is getting the most experiential benefit of the course and the game.

“It may be a particular tee, an area of a fairway, or a green site. When we identify the ‘high spots’ we can understand where the greatest thrill, entertainment and aesthetic qualities are being delivered



A GolfBase map shows ‘emotional high points’ in orange and yellow

during the round. Of course, with this mapping we’re also able to identify the low points – where the course fails to deliver excitement and positive memories.”

Image: Richardson, Danner

Toro extends commitment to First Tee



The Toro Company has extended its long-time commitment to First Tee, a non-profit that helps young people develop skills through golf, until at least 2025.

The company has donated more than \$1 million to First Tee since 1998 and the extension will include grants and equipment donations to support chapter initiatives and diversity efforts across the First Tee network.

“Being part of the ongoing growth of First Tee aligns with

our values as we have seen thousands of young people empowered through the game of golf,” said Edric Funk, group vice president of golf, grounds and irrigation businesses at Toro. “Golf provides the framework through which First Tee teaches life skills like self-confidence, honesty and resilience, qualities we know will continue to serve First Tee participants throughout their lives on and off the golf course.”

Two new members join ASGCA

Golf course architects Joel Hornickel and Garrett Wasson have become ASGCA members.



Hornickel began his career in 2004 with ASGCA Past Presidents Arthur Hills and Steve Forrest, where he was part of the design team for the Westhaven newbuild in Tennessee, and renovations of Glacier Club in Minnesota and Naperville CC in Florida. In 2021, he became a design associate for Drew Rogers, ASGCA.



Wasson has a Landscape Architecture degree from Cornell and has a master’s degree in Golf Course Architecture from Edinburgh College of Art. He is currently a senior designer for Chris Lutzke, ASGCA. His list of projects includes the new Hillside course at Amber Hills in Vietnam and a renovation of the Francis Byrne course in New Jersey.

SOCIAL UPDATE



Golf Course Architecture @gcamagazine

“The transformation of Belleair’s West course is nothing short of stunning. ASGCA Past President Jason Straka, Dana Fry, ASGCA, and Patrick Burton, ASGCA, can hardly have done much better than this in their whole careers,” says GCA editor Adam Lawrence on the restoration of the Donald Ross design at Belleair



ASGCA Home Offices @ASGCA

“ASGCA Insights” podcast – How did a banjo-playing land planner from the University of Virginia come to spend 30+ years with the @PGATour and @IMG? <https://tinyurl.com/285n3ayp>



Kevin Norby, ASGCA @golfnorby

Countdown to renovation at @GoldenValleyCC, which includes green reconstruction, fairway regrassing, a larger pond on the seventeenth and the return of bunkers lost during The Depression

Search ASGCA on the below channels for more posts:



UNUSUAL ENCOUNTERS

Out of the ordinary

Every now and again a golf course architect is presented with a site unlike any they have encountered before. Richard Humphreys explores how designers deal with the exceptional.



In 2006, before Brian Curley, ASGCA, had even set foot on land near the city of Kunming in south China where he had been asked to design three new golf courses, he sensed it was going to be a little different. The site, he was told, was on the edge of an area known as ‘Stone Forest’.

Nevertheless, when he got there, he still couldn’t quite believe his eyes. Thousands of huge pillars of rock protruded, as if growing out of the landscape. “They were everywhere!” says Curley. “Many were hidden with dense vegetation and even the taller vertical faces were obscured by thickets of trees.”

It was like nothing he had seen before, or since. And he knew the site would present a challenge quite different to anything he had previously encountered. “The ‘discovery’ period was easily the most time-consuming I have ever had,” says Curley. “I spent many days crawling through bushes and over rocks, many so sharp that you could cut a steak on the edge!”

Curley describes the site as “the most wild, rugged and jaw-dropping” he has encountered, noting that he still bears scars from some close shaves from falling rock debris in a particularly challenging construction phase. One thing

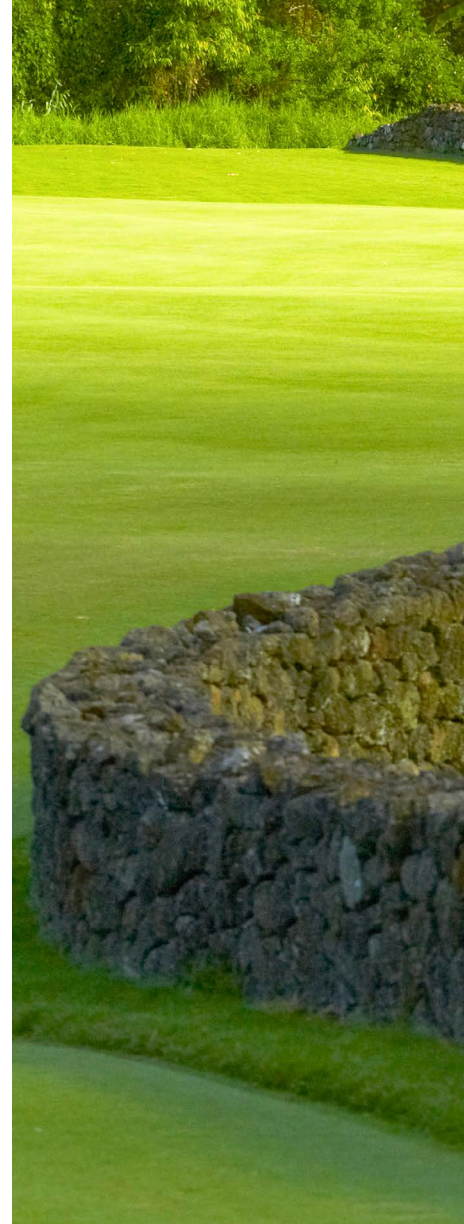
was certain, he would make the 270-million-year-old Karst rock pillars the star of the show.

“The massive stone formations made for obvious green locations and backdrops,” says Curley. “Then, I had to somehow find landing areas that avoided as much rock as possible. When we had rock in a playable area, we would try to create strong grades that would alter the roll of the ball away from the rocks. I decided early on that I would shoot for good green-to-tee connections but that, ultimately, we would want to find holes rather than create them, even if it meant a long ride to the next tee.”

The fifteenth on the Leader’s Peak course at Stone Forest, where rock pinnacles protrude from the landscape



UNUSUAL ENCOUNTERS



The dramatic par-three twelfth at Stone Forest

The 196-yard par-three twelfth hole on the Leader's Peak course is a prime example of the enthralling end result of Curley's design work. "From the tee, the green looks small, as the rocks stick up and obscure the putting surface, but it is a lot larger – about four times the size of the seventeenth green at TPC Sawgrass – than it appears," says Curley. "Golfers expect their ball to be lost but find it's on land... and there is a super cool walk to the green through stone pinnacles."

Another hole, the fifteenth (pictured on the previous pages), was designed so that one cluster

of massive rock pinnacles splits the fairway, giving distinct options. "The rock formation straight over the bunkers in the wide fairway is about 280 yards," says Curley.

A site this unique called for a special local rule. "Any ball in a fairway cut could be dropped along the same line to the pin and as far back as the player felt comfortable to clear the rock formations."

Stone Forest – sadly seen by relatively few golfers, as the club succumbed to the Chinese government's crackdown on golf in the 2010s – was a particularly extreme site. But golf course architects often take delight at

encounters with the unusual, as it gives them the opportunity to create something particularly unique.

For Greg Letsche, ASGCA, one of his most memorable discoveries was a network of 17th-century stone walls on the island of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean.

The walls were built by Dutch settlers who settled there until 1710 when, struggling to overcome the hardships of colonization on the remote island, they abandoned Mauritius.

By the time of Letsche's visit, almost 300 years later, Mauritius was home to over a million people and had become a major



Photo: Anahita Golf Club

Seventeenth-century stone walls dictate strategy on the par-four fourteenth at Anahita in Mauritius

tourist destination. Working for Ernie Els Design, he had been asked to design a golf course for the Anahita resort on the island's east coast.

Relics of Dutch settlement can be found throughout the southeast of Mauritius, where they first landed. Between 1999 and 2005, archaeological studies uncovered a variety of structures from the period, including a stone lodge built in 1698, around 20 kilometers south of Anahita.

For their course design, Letsche and Els took inspiration from one of golf's most famous walled layouts: North Berwick in Scotland.

"Our idea of how to use the walls on the fourteenth came from North Berwick's thirteenth, the Pit hole," says Letsche. "It has a similar style and strategy; the closer you hit it to the walls, the better the angle to the green you have."

Letsche and Els laid out the par-four hole to take full advantage of three segments of wall. The first bisects the fairway, giving golfers a choice between wider left or narrower right sections. A successful drive to the right side leaves an open route to the green, whereas those taking the easier left option will have to navigate further sections of wall to reach the

putting surface.

It's not just the fourteenth that features remnants of Dutch colonization. "The second plays a lot like the third hole at North Berwick," says Letsche. "A wall goes directly across the fairway. Some of it has broken apart, meaning the best strategy is to hit it as straight as possible at the gap."

For Letsche, the walls were an opportunity to create a really special design. "You're always looking for something that people will remember. At Anahita, we had that with old walls. Anyone that has played the course has enjoyed them, even those playing



An 18th-century stone house ruin defines the strategy of the closing hole at Whiskey Creek in Maryland

in tournaments; it is just a different experience for them.”

Maybe Ernie Els is drawn to old stone, because it was on another of his projects that Brian Costello, ASGCA, encountered one of his most memorable design features.

At Whiskey Creek in Ijamsville, Maryland, Costello worked with Michael J. Poellot, ASGCA Fellow, in collaboration with Els as design consultant.

The team had designed the closing hole around an old barn stone wall foundation that would frame the right of the hole and provide a backdrop to the first green, but it was another building that became the primary feature. “On our second site visit reviewing the proposed centerlines, we wanted to check out what appeared to be a small outbuilding on the map,” says Costello. “What we actually

discovered was a partially collapsed, two-story stone house ruin that had been enveloped by the forest right in the middle of the proposed first landing area. It was a surprising find, to say the least, and one that we wanted to try to incorporate into the strategy of the golf hole.”

setback restrictions,” he says.

“After trekking back and forth, and careful measurements in the field, we determined that the ruin could bisect the landing area, and dramatically accentuate the underlying risk-reward strategy.

“We shifted the hole back so that,

“The ruin stands at roughly 280 yards and clearly presents two strategic options”

After determining that it could be made structurally sound with some reinforcements, Costello began work on how to integrate the ruin into the closing hole.

“We couldn’t shift the fairway to the right because of the barn walls and couldn’t shift to the left because of a creek and regulatory

from the championship tee, the ruin stands at roughly 280 yards and clearly presents two strategic options. The narrower and riskier line of play is to the left of the ruin. But the reward is a shorter distance and better angle to the green, providing temptation to go for it in two. Playing to the right side of the

fairway is the safer and wider route, however, it leaves players with a less desirable and shallower angle into the green over the pond.”

The stone ruins also emphasize the property’s heritage. “We knew Civil War events had occurred in the vicinity, but in this case, the barn and farmhouse ruins were from a German immigrant family that had settled on the property in the 1800s,” says Costello. “It was a really poignant reminder of the farming history of the early settlers and now provides iconic imagery and instant recognition of Whiskey Creek.

“Anytime you can save an existing feature that provides some geographical and historical context – a sense of place – you weave that into the golf experience,” says Costello.

However, it’s not always possible to incorporate unusual finds into a golf course design, as Lester George, ASGCA, found when he visited the Eaglewood Golf Course at Langley Air Force Base after 2003’s Hurricane Isabel had inflicted substantial damage on both the Eagle and Raptor courses.

George developed a repair and renovation plan, but when grading began, the project team unearthed a nasty surprise: unexploded bombs. “We used a Doppler radar and once we discovered the first few, we had to call an explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) team to assess whether there were bombs anywhere else on the property,” says George. “The EOD team went

down to 36 inches, because that was going to be the depth of our new irrigation, and found 17,400 anomalies!”

It turns out that the site had been used by the US Army Air Corps for bomb practice during both World War II and the Vietnam War. And the presence of bombs would shut down George’s project for two years.

When it resumed, it’s an understatement to say that the project proceeded with extreme care. “The EOD team would go out and extract and dispose of the bombs, and we would plow the irrigation line behind them,” says George.

Their caution was well justified, given some of the construction team’s experiences. George shares a story about work on the sixth hole: “We had shaped the green and bunker and were getting ready to leave for the weekend,” he says. “An outlet from the front of the green was carved so it would drain

properly and as soon as that was done, we ran into two 500-pound bombs! It took two weeks for those to be hauled out.”

In this instance, the unusual encounter took its toll on the project, with the presence of bombs adding about \$2 million to the total cost of the Raptor course. “We were also going to rebuild nine holes of the Eagle course,” adds George, “but that course ended up closing due to a lack of budget from the Air Force.”

There were additional inevitable constraints on George’s design work. He had originally wanted to modify some of the lakes, but with no more excavation work permitted, changes were required to the intended strategy of the renovation.

“They didn’t want to go below 36 inches anywhere on the property because they weren’t sure what would be down there,” says George. “That remains a bit of a mystery!” ●



Photo: Courtesy of George Golf Design

Lester George, ASGCA, rebuilt the Raptor course at Langley Air Force Base, but was held up by the discovery and subsequent removal and disposal of unexploded bombs

Thoughts on distance

With the USGA and R&A proposing a new local rule that could rein in driving distance in the elite game, Richard Humphreys asked five ASGCA members for their thoughts.

The debate about distance can sometimes feel as old as the game itself. “We have already got to the stage where there is too much walking and too little golf,” said Dr Alister MacKenzie, almost 100 years ago.

More than half of PGA Tour players now drive the ball, on average, further than 300 yards. But golf’s governing bodies are hoping to rein that in, with a proposed model local rule (MLR). This would give tournament organizers the ability to use a modified ball, which it is thought will travel about 15-20 yards less than the current ball, when hit with a driver.

One of the primary conclusions from the Distance Insights Report that was prepared by the USGA and R&A following years of research, relates to golf courses. It reads: “Overall, the trend towards longer courses puts golf at odds with the growing societal concerns about the use of water, chemicals

and other resources, the pressures for development restrictions and alternative land use, and the need to mitigate the long-term effects of a changing climate and natural environment.”

So, what do those who design golf courses think? We spoke to five ASGCA members to find out more.



“Golfers have an internal yearning to hit the ball as far as possible”

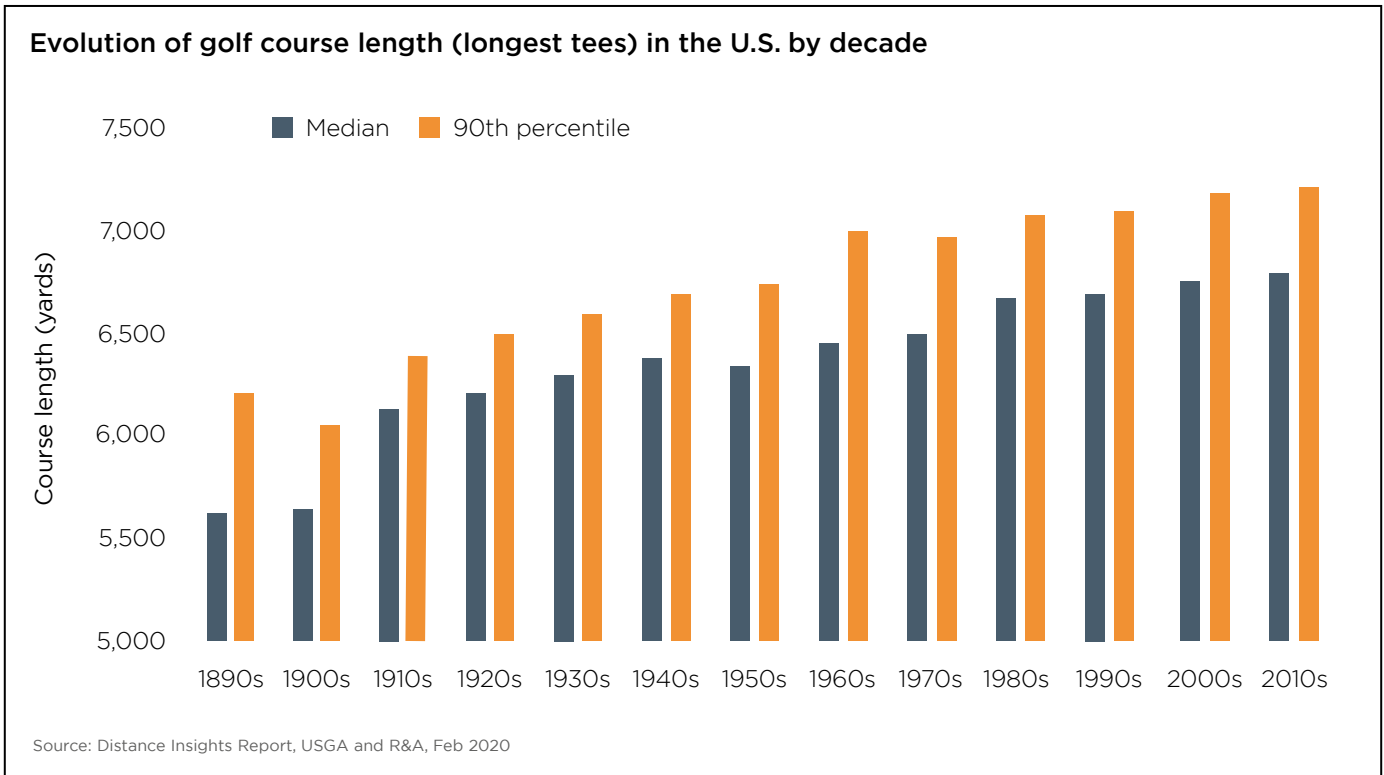
// **Brandon Johnson, ASGCA, says:** “I do question what it is all for. Just elite tournament play? Scoring? Trying to retain the championship merits of historic clubs? The ball is only one of many

factors in the distance equation. The fitness of elite players has also had a huge impact.

“Professional and elite players will still smash the ball incredible distances with a slight change, but I don’t see the MLR causing huge ripple effects through the game. It is not as if the rule targeted distance benchmarks back to a specific era like the 1940s, 60s or 80s. Primarily, courses that are considered short or even obsolete to elite golf due to distance will remain so as the overall footprint for professional golf will remain the same as well.

“Perhaps there is an impact on how the governing bodies can set the courses up for tournament play? I’m hopeful the new rule allows for the true three-shot par five, with that critical second ‘go for it’ shot or delicate lay-up making a comeback into the elite game.

“As it stands, the recreational game, which is 99.5 percent of



golf, remains unchanged. Golfers have an internal yearning to hit the ball as far as possible. Luckily for amateurs we can still pursue that quest with the hottest golf balls on the market.

“It’s a myth that recreational players play with the same equipment as the pros. While amateurs and professionals may play the same brands and get ‘fitted’, the lengths that manufacturers go to tailor and customize clubs and balls to their professional staff far exceeds anything recreational players have access to. Adding another ball into the equation only formalizes current practices with the added stipulation of ball specifications for the entire field of play. I just don’t see an issue here.”



“Standardizing the golf ball will not solve the root issue of the problem”

// **ASGCA Past President Mike Hurdzan says:** “The words ‘far and sure’ have been associated with golf from the earliest records, with ‘far’ evolving and ‘sure’ devolving over time, mostly through equipment technology. Today, by using computer technology to blend in individual kinesiology and bodybuilding, each player can find the optimum combination of factors to achieve their personal ‘far’.

“Acceleration and force are directly proportional; so, swing the golf club head faster and the standard golf ball will go further. Standardizing the golf ball will not solve the root issue of the problem, which is that someone will always find a better way to hit the ball to maximize the ‘far’.

“Although designers, along with USGA and R&A officials, like to pay lip service to reining in the ball, check out what technological advances they have in their own golf bag, and you will see that they, too, want to hit it far. I don’t know anyone who is playing with old technology equipment just to demonstrate their displeasure with how far some skilled professional hits the ball. No one cares, except journalists! I would also add that those of us who always, or

BALL ROLLBACK

occasionally, play golf with century-old, wood-shafted clubs find the game just as fulfilling and enjoyable as with modern equipment.”



“It is do or die for the game as we know it”

// Kevin Ramsey, ASGCA, says:

“The governing bodies that test equipment clearly missed earlier opportunities. In the end, it will be great for golf. No other sport allows a player to hit, throw or kick a ball as far as golf does, so long hitters will still be big bombers at the local course or on tour. The difference here is that the pros get paid a lot of money and their big sponsors, usually ball manufacturers, have a vested interest in this.

“This is definitely a charged issue based upon tour reactions. However, as an architect and not a professional golfer, my interest is in the game itself and how it is played. Bomb and gouge, or grip it and rip it, are not great strategic design principles. Requiring golfers to think and strategize how they play a golf course in a risk-reward setting is a much more enjoyable experience for golfers of all levels.

“I feel it is do or die for the game as we know it. More land equals more

grass, more water, more chemicals, more fertilizer and more labor. This all leads to higher priced golf and a waste of valuable natural resources. If people truly want to ‘grow the game’, you do so by accessibility.

“In a world where water is becoming a scarce resource, and clean drinking water even scarcer, it would be irresponsible to continue on the path we are currently on with regards to the distance the ball travels.”



“The average amateur players need all the help they can get”

// Sean Quinn, ASGCA, says:

“I would only bring the ball back for professional events and to protect golf course design integrity. The average amateur players need all the help they can get. If the ball is to be reined back, the game would be more exciting to watch as players would need to hit longer approach shots and much of the intended course strategy should be more in play. It will also protect course design to a degree, and hopefully make strategy more relevant to pros, especially on older courses.

“Even though the technology in cycling is highly regulated, the average speed of the pro peloton gets

faster each year because the bikes are still getting better. It is a tough one for golf... on one hand it’s quite ridiculous how far some pros hit the ball, but this is also testament to how much better the average pro is versus the average amateur.



“I will adjust my design approach as I have in the past”

// ASGCA Past President Steve

Smyers says: “Though golf has been played for centuries, major advances that altered how the game is played began in 1902 with Spalding placing dimples on the golf ball and thereby introducing more spin. Since then, there has been a major introduction to the game and how it is played every 10 years or so. Some of these include the introduction of steel shafts, improved mowers allowing for lower height of cut for both fairways and putting surfaces, and the introduction of automatic irrigation.

“Golf course architects have adapted to these changes and have designed accordingly. If the MLR proposal comes in, I will gain a full understanding of how the changes affect the game, and then I will adjust my design approach as I have in the past.” ●

“Traditions are
just as important
as innovation.
I’m a voice of
the ASGCA.”

— BILL COORE



asgca.org



Carving out a career

The ASGCA Foundation's Wadsworth Scholar Program provides students interested in golf course development with a chance to kickstart their career.

By Design spoke with previous recipients about the program's impact

Since its introduction in 2018, the ASGCA Foundation's Wadsworth Scholar Program – which is funded by the Wadsworth Golf Charities Foundation – has provided students with an interest in golf course development with the opportunity to learn from those in the industry, as well as giving them a kickstart into a career in golf.

The ASGCAF spotlights candidates, with Joey Graziani

advantage of the opportunity in front of you. I also learned that it is important to be thorough in every detail of a project, from conceptual sketches through to implementation. The Wadsworth Scholar Program has opened the lens of opportunity to what existed in the golf course design industry, leading me to a mentorship by Bobby Weed, ASGCA.”

Following the scholarship and his graduation from Louisiana

includes managing all aspects of design, construction, shaping and finishing. From the first day that I met Bobby, he taught me the value of operating equipment and being on site... among many other things! I have fully embraced this philosophy, living on every job site at some point and personally assisting with the layout, shaping and finish.”

Graziani has recently applied for the ASGCA Tartan Program, the route to membership of the ASGCA, with Greg Muirhead, ASGCA, and ASGCA Past President John Sanford as his sponsors.

Eric Pfeifer was also selected as a Wadsworth Scholar at that 2018 meeting in Houston, which he credits to the support from his early mentor, ASGCA Past President Forrest Richardson. “The opportunity to join the 2018 ASGCA Annual Meeting as an inaugural Wadsworth



“The scholarship and ASGCA Annual Meeting gave me hope that there’s a future for us young architects”

Jacob Felkins

selected for the first ever Wadsworth Scholar Program, at the 2018 ASGCA Annual Meeting in Houston.

“The scholarship had a great impact on me,” says Graziani. “It taught me to avoid complacency, continue learning and take

State University, where he spent a semester as an intern for Weed working on the Grove XXIII project, Graziani now works as a design associate with Bobby Weed Golf Design.

“I administer projects in an office and field-based role,” he says. “This



Following his Wadsworth scholarship, Joey Graziani now works as a design associate for Bobby Weed, ASGCA

Scholar was an unforgettable experience,” says Pfeifer. “The three days I spent networking, learning, and golfing alongside passionate and professional architects affirmed my dedication to pursue a career in this industry. The key advice I took away from the program and my ASGCA mentors was to keep an open mind, go wherever the opportunity is, and take calculated risks.”

It was this attitude that would take Pfeifer to Vietnam and see him become the Asia-Pacific director of design and operations for Greg Norman Golf Course Design. He is currently involved in several projects in various stages of planning, design and construction in Vietnam as well as the firm's first venture in Cambodia.

“I’ve had the privilege of being exposed to a full range of new construction, renovation and redevelopment projects in both domestic and international settings across a gamut of public, private and mixed development models,” says Pfeifer. “My design toolkit and philosophies are certainly a reflection of the sum of these experiences and particularly the mentorship I’ve received from fellow design professionals and allied industries including construction and maintenance.

“Above all I’ve learned that there’s no such thing as a one-size-fits-all approach to golf course design. The architect’s role is central to synthesizing and harmonizing interests among all project

stakeholders to develop and execute a holistic strategy for success.”

Jacob Felkins became a Wadsworth Scholar the following year, at the 2019 Annual Meeting in Phoenix. “I met a wonderful array of plaid-jacket bunker bandits,” he says. “They were all keen to chat with my young clueless self, and I always left a conversation less clueless than before. In fact, I still have 30 or so business cards in my wallet from that little fiesta.

“The scholarship and meeting gave me hope that there’s a future for us young architects. I hope to contribute to the profession – after gaining knowledge and surpassing the rites of passage – and doing the job I know I can do: designing strategic golf courses with character,

plot and a bit of a twist.”

Felkins has worked as a construction laborer for two years, interned with Arnold Palmer Design Company, and rendered masterplans for APDC on a freelance basis.

He has also spent time with construction firm Green Tee Golf, where he staked baselines for Zac Blair’s Tree Farm project, learned

bevy of notes on his conceptual plans. Per his instructions, I would include these notes on the rendered masterplans and, while doing so, I would always take the time to read each one and pick up any pointers for my future design endeavors. I’m very grateful to both Thad and Brandon for helping me get a foot through the golf course architecture door.”

rest of our jobs we have going on across the country.”

2020 saw a pause in the program, before a return in 2021, when Justin Carver and Nate Moore were selected as Wadsworth Scholars. Carver’s first experience in the golf industry was an intern position with Richard Mandell, ASGCA, in 2021. “During my time, I expanded my knowledge of golf course design, landscape architecture and the principles of design,” says Carver. “I also gained insight into the architect-client relationship and running a small office as well as developing my presentation, AutoCAD and Photoshop skills.”

He reflects on his time at the 2021 ASGCA Annual Meeting in Cleveland. “The thing that stood out to me was how much respect each architect had for the other,” says Carver. “I had previously thought that all architects would have a heated competitive nature toward each other, but it was the opposite. All the architects seemed like old friends and, to me, that made the ASGCA unique.

“I talked to many golf architects about life and asked what they would do if they were in my position. Most said that I should have experience working at a golf course and understand what goes into maintaining it, others recommended that I should learn programs like AutoCAD to better my computer skills, and a few told me to take turf management classes.”



“The scholarship was a jetpack for my ambitions”

Blake Rawlings

how to shape a tee box with an excavator, and had the chance to observe a golf course renovation from start to finish.

“As a freelance renderer for APDC, I’ve seen the thought processes of Brandon Johnson, ASGCA, and Thad Layton, ASGCA, at play,” he says. “Of the 10 or so renders I’ve illustrated for them over the years, Brandon always had an insightful

Felkins has now returned to Mississippi State University to pursue a master’s in Landscape Architecture.

Blake Rawlings joined Felkins on the Wadsworth Scholar Program in 2019. “It was the perfect opportunity as I was able to meet ASGCA members and others throughout the golf course industry,” says Rawlings. “The scholarship was a jetpack for my ambitions, allowing me to jump right into the mix where I could continue to learn every day.”

Following his time as a Wadsworth Scholar, Rawlings was quickly snapped up by Wadsworth Golf Construction. “I learned from the trenches with Wadsworth, working with the crew and using equipment to build course features,” he says. “Currently I am working on a renovation at Winnetka GC in Illinois. I am also creating as-built plans and GPS-related files for the



Eric Pfeifer (right) landed a job with Greg Norman Golf Course Design following the Wadsworth Scholar Program in 2018



Class of 2021: Wadsworth Scholars Nate Moore and Justin Carver met ASGCA Donald Ross Award recipients Ben Crenshaw and Bill Coore in Cleveland

Following his scholarship and his graduation from Texas A&M University, Carver sought his first permanent position in the golf design business, and was notified of job opportunities by Aileen Smith, ASGCA's director of programming. He landed a role at Beau Welling Design. "My future aspirations are to progress within Beau Welling Design and become a licensed architect and a member of the ASGCA."

Moore went on to graduate from Penn State University with a degree in Turfgrass Science, completed while also undertaking internships at Saucon Valley CC and with Penn State's Beaver Stadium grounds crew.

"I was at Saucon Valley for two years," he says. "We were preparing for the 2022 US Senior

Open. It was so interesting to learn about how golf courses alter their appearance for a Major. We were able to alter some holes, and rerouting was done on the back nine. I found it interesting to learn about the differences in approach from the USGA and the original architect.

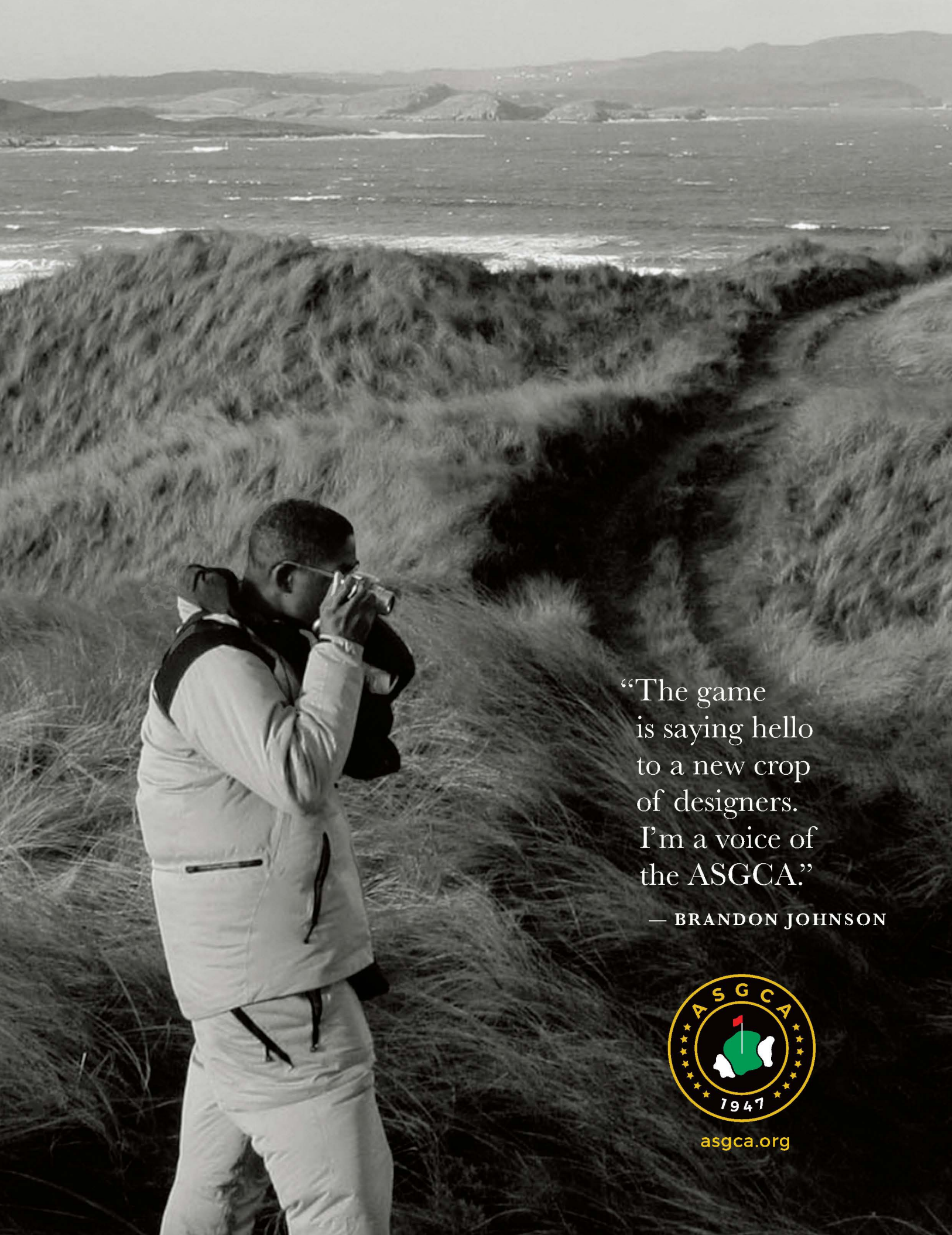
"The scholarship helped me to think about different ways to approach a single problem. Attending the ASGCA Annual Meeting and interacting with so many talented individuals really helped me learn about the past and future of golf. It all came full circle a few months ago when Nathan Crace, ASGCA, who I met and golfed with in Cleveland, came to speak to the Penn State Turf Club. I would not have been able to make that

connection had it not been for the Wadsworth scholarship."

The most recent Wadsworth Scholars, who joined the ASGCA annual meeting in Rhode Island, are Matt MacGillivray and Sydney Holt.

"Being awarded the Wadsworth Scholarship was a privilege that I won't soon forget," says MacGillivray. "It provided me with the chance to learn from experts in the industry and connect with like-minded individuals. It solidified my passion for golf course architecture and has given me a starting point to launch my career. Even months after the event, I am still in touch with some of the amazing people I met."

MacGillivray is graduating in June with a degree in Landscape



“The game
is saying hello
to a new crop
of designers.
I’m a voice of
the ASGCA.”

— BRANDON JOHNSON



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WADSWORTH SCHOLARS

Architecture from the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada. “During my university career, I focused on golf course architecture for my undergraduate thesis and my capstone project,” says MacGillivray. “Being a Wadsworth Scholar, I was able to attend the ASGCA Annual Meeting in Rhode Island, which allowed me to take my theoretical knowledge and ask a ton of questions. I met many people in the industry and was able to understand how and where they started their careers.

“After attending the meeting, I pursued an independent study with the head of the Landscape Architecture program. Together, we worked on a report to promote par-three short courses and make the sport accessible to all players.”

Tennessee native Holt attended Mississippi State University and graduated in December 2022 with a double major in Landscape Architecture plus Landscape Contracting and Management.

She has since started working for a civil and environmental consulting firm where she works on landscape and irrigation plans, as well as mass grading and hydrology. “One of the main reasons I took on this job was because I saw the opportunity to learn and grow in an area I knew little about but would give me a skillset that I will use in golf course design,” says Holt.

“Receiving the Wadsworth scholarship and being able to attend the ASGCA Annual Meeting was a huge inspiration,



Wadsworth Scholars Sydney Holt and Matt MacGillivray with Mike Hurdzan, ASGCA Fellow, at the 2022 ASGCA Annual Meeting in Rhode Island

giving me an even stronger drive to work hard and follow my dream to pursue golf course architecture,” she says. “The scholarship showed me what I am capable of, and, having met a variety of individuals who each inspired me, I am determined to continue working hard, ask questions and to challenge myself.

“I have had the great opportunity to speak to many people in the industry and I was able to gain a better understanding of what it means to be a golf course architect. Among the advice given, I’ve learned to sell and market myself well, continue to network, continue to learn, and to keep an open mind.” ●

Apply for a 2023 Wadsworth Scholarship

The ASGCA Foundation has been able to update the Wadsworth Scholar Program thanks to increased funds contributed by Wadsworth Golf Construction and the Wadsworth Golf Charities Foundation. Beginning this year, young people in the early stages of their careers – as well as current college students – are eligible for the \$2,500 scholarship, as well as the opportunity to spend time at the ASGCA Annual Meeting. [Applications to the 2023 program are now open.](#)

GOLDEN VALLEY CC.
HOLE #9

Golden Valley, Minnesota

Kevin Norby, ASGCA

The ninth hole at Golden Valley Country Club in Minnesota, where Kevin Norby, ASGCA, is conducting renovation work, is a par four with bunkers protecting the landing area and each side of green.

Golden Valley was originally designed by Tom Bendelow in 1915 and was later redesigned by A. W. Tillinghast in 1926. Norby's project in fall 2022 saw all bunkers renovated, with his work on the greenside bunkers designed to improve their relationship with the greens.

"On the ninth hole, Tilly's 'master bunker' at the front right of the green defines the strategy of the hole by dictating that the best angle to the green is from the left side of the fairway," said Norby. "There was one large cross-bunker up the left side of the fairway but, with today's driving distances, that bunker was somewhat less relevant than he intended.

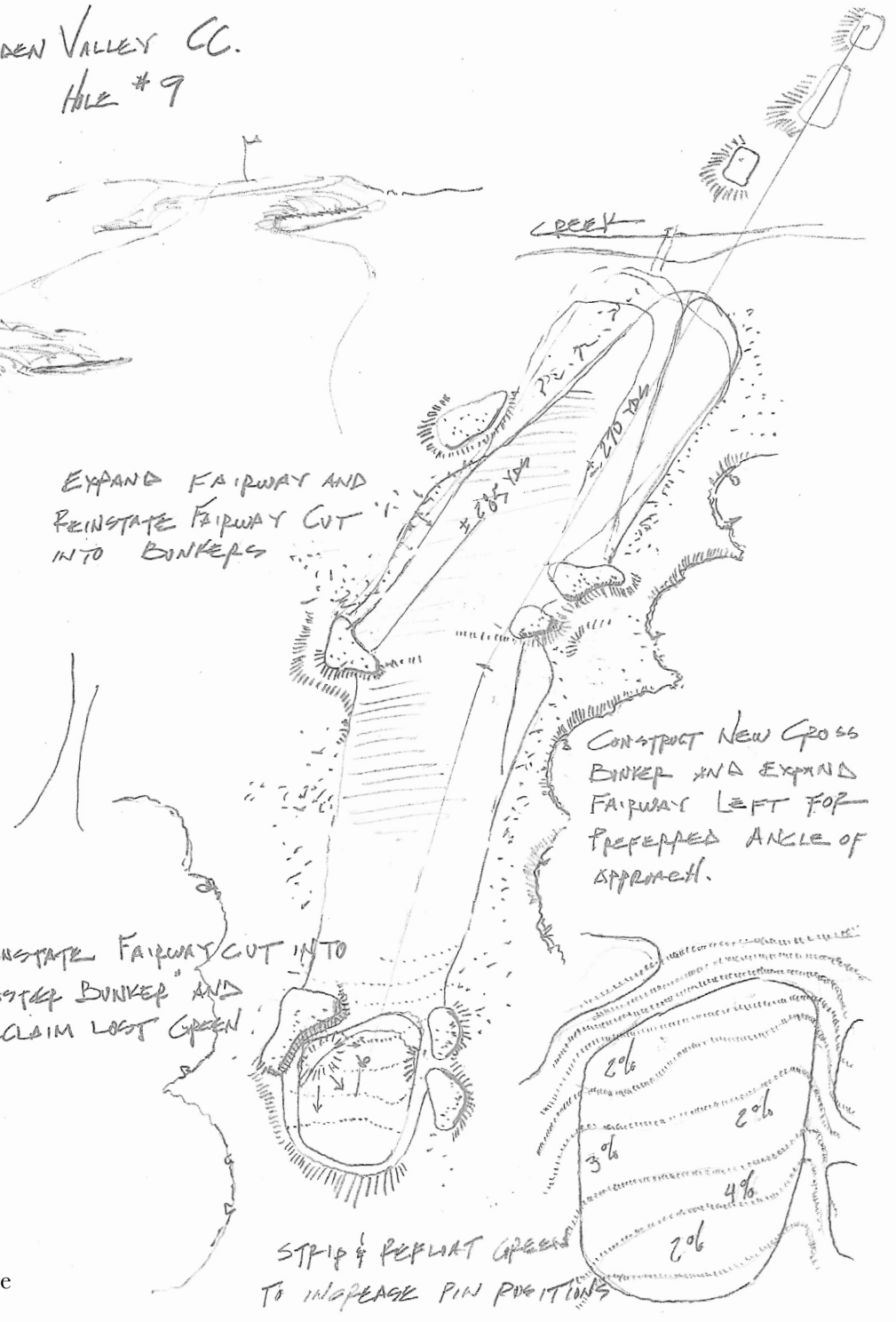
"We added a second cross-bunker and reconstructed the others with the fairway cut running into the bunkers as Tilly intended. We also

EXPAND FAIRWAY AND REINSTATE FAIRWAY CUT INTO BUNKERS

REINSTATE FAIRWAY CUT INTO "MASTER BUNKER" AND RECLAIM LOST GREEN

STRIP & REFLAT GREENS TO INCREASE PIN POSITIONS

CONSTRUCT NEW CROSS BUNKER AND EXPAND FAIRWAY LEFT FOR PREFERRED ANGLE OF APPROACH.



KEVIN NORBY 4/12/20

reinstated a 150-square-foot corner of the green that had been lost directly behind the bunker.

"I use these quick sketches to explore alternatives and to help my clients understand what the changes will look like. In this case, these

sketches helped solidify the location of the new fairway bunker."

Norby is returning to Golden Valley in June to continue renovation work, including the regrassing of fairways and rebuilding greens. ●



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