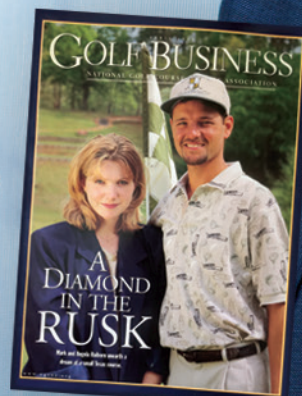


GB

GOLF BUSINESS

The **Pillsbury** Effect

ClubCorp's
expanding,
but still true
to its roots



20 years later,
there's more to the story

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The Pillsbury Effect

David Pillsbury took the CEO's reins at ClubCorp nearly a year ago, and has taken the company in some interesting directions. But at the core, ClubCorp is still remaining true to its roots.



Still Shining

Featured 20 years ago on the cover of Golf Business magazine, a return visit to this family business shows it still has staying power.

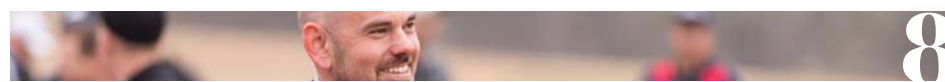


Bucking the Trend

Desert Mountain is defying the private club decline, adding a new course — the Seven — and seeing significant growth in its surrounding housing development plan.

EDITOR'S NOTE:
In the January
2019 issue Bud
Beucher and
the Beucher
family's name
was misspelled in
the story "Know
Who You Are."

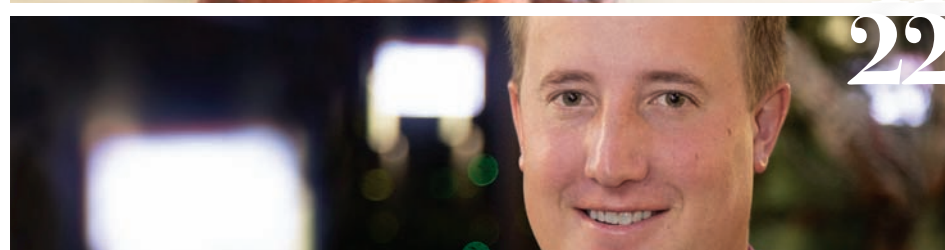
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8 Vantage Point

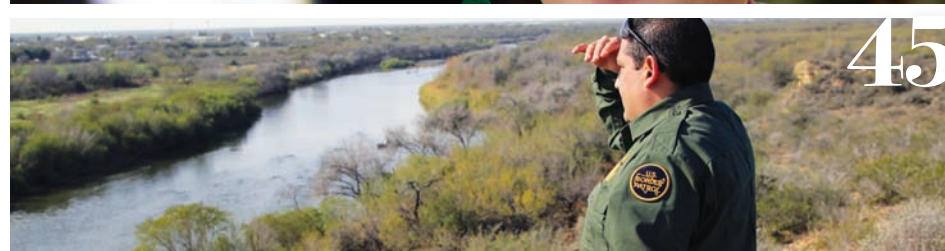


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A high-end operator has developed an exclusive network of private clubs that spans the country.



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Randy Solis shares his thoughts about challenges facing the golfing industry.



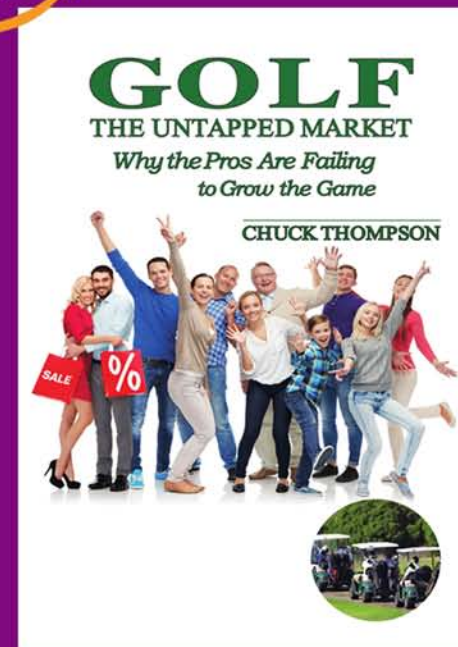
51 NCGOA In Action

GB MARKET 50 | GB CLASSIFIEDS 50 | AD INDEX 49

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Chuck-

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I commend Chuck Thompson on his insight to the Golf industry. As a former PGA President, I learned more from Golf: The Untapped Market than I have in 43 years of operating and owning golf courses.

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From the CEO Vantage Point

By Jay Karen
CEO
NGCOA

Why Bother with Barter?

While there are promising indicators and progressive things happening in golf that cause me to be quite bullish about its long term prospects, the business of running golf courses in America – by and large – has been a slog for the past 15 years. The supply and demand curve has been moving in the wrong direction since before the Great Recession. Most experts agree the number of course closures will continue to far outpace course openings for the next decade.

If you compare the average price of a round of golf (\$38 according to We Are Golf) to the change in Consumer Price Index, golf is arguably cheaper than it's ever been. Pellucid Corp reports 39 percent of courses in the U.S. operate in the red. Despite the challenges, I do not believe there is a macro, existential crisis (there are over 14,000 golf courses generating an \$84B impact on the U.S. economy). It's still a great business, but it is hard to succeed.

While the economic pie of rounds and revenue seems to shrink, one can't help but notice the prosperous rise of Online Tee Time Agencies (OTTAs). Golfers can find affordable golf in every market in the U.S. It's a buyer's market, plain and simple.

The OTTAs claim to serve both the supply side (primarily through technology and marketing services to golf courses) and the demand side (primarily through easy booking for golfers). However, from my observation, their value is heavily weighted towards the needs and desires of the golfers – the aggregation of tee time options at multiple golf courses, all on one screen. I don't believe most golf courses need the OTTAs marketing ser-

vices to meet the natural demand for golf in our marketplace, nor do I think they stimulate incremental demand for golf.

If you are among the audience or followers of NBC, NBC Sports or the Golf Channel, you've likely seen the new GOLFPASS program. GOLFPASS is Golf Channel's subscription model of services. It offers golfers one free round of golf every month, access to subscriber-only content, 400+ hours of instruction, travel credit at golf resorts, and more – all for as little as \$99 a year or \$9.99 per month.

It reminds me of Amazon Prime. For the low fee of \$12.99 per month, subscribers get free, two-day shipping on over 100 million items, exclusive access to favorite movies and shows, unlimited access to millions of songs, unlimited photo storage, free online gaming and more. Looking at GOLFPASS, there's a lot of value packed into the offer. It will no doubt increase engagement in golf, and that is a good thing for all of us concerned about the golf economy. Although GOLFPASS marketing doesn't appear to single out the free round as the primary feature (as free shipping has been the primary feature of Amazon Prime since the beginning), I cannot help but be fixated on the free golf. But I am biased, because I represent the supply side of the industry – the golf courses around the U.S. Free golf is the fatal flaw for all the golf courses now inextricably and unwittingly involved in the program.

Let's follow the dollars. Joe Mulligan gives his credit card number to the Golf Channel as a new GOLFPASS subscriber, and the Golf Channel bank account increases by \$10 per month – automatically (and exponentially, of course) – while Joe likely forgets over the next four years his card is even being charged. Isn't that the little secret of the subscription model – that the seller benefits from the "breakage?" Meaning, if Joe doesn't

actually – or frequently – use the benefits being offered, the Golf Channel still gets Joe's regular monthly payment.

Joe gets his first monthly promo code from GolfNow and books his free round of golf, and claims his "Hot Deal." If the Golf Channel is lucky enough, Joe got his buddies to join GOLFPASS, and they all sign up for the 12:08 p.m. tee time on Monday. Joe and his buddies enjoy their round of "free" golf, go home, and hope to do it again.

While incurring the costs associated with Joe's round of golf, the golf course received no income and attracted customers whose primary motivation was to pay as little as possible.

One can make an argument that the golf course scored by receiving some marketing and technology benefits from GolfNow in exchange for no-revenue, bartered tee times. And some might argue that Joe and his buddies are going to buy some hot dogs and beer while on property. But I think that is a dubious position. So for argument's sake, I say the golf course scored zero.

If GOLFPASS is wildly successful, it could very well mean millions of rounds of free golf being played all across the land, while golf courses continue to bear the burden of the significant costs needed to keep the golf courses running. The shrinking effect on the bottom line will be harmful at best and devastating at worst, leading to greater struggles and possibly more course closures.

We cannot separate the danger of free golf from the fact that over 6,000 golf courses willingly allow this to happen. Barter itself is not an evil concept, if bartering involves the fair trading of goods or services between two willing parties receiving comparable value in the exchange. However, a "haze of ambiguous value" clouds the entire barter economy in golf, preventing course operators from truly understanding what they are giving up.

Research from the Golf USA Tee Time

Coalition reveals, while more than half of golf courses do not agree barter should be a payment option in our industry, 86 percent of those who barter would prefer it to continue. These relationships are complicated, to say the least, (half of golf courses believe they compete with their own OT-TAs) and wrangling back control of pricing and inventory is going to be its own slog.

The ORCA Report, which has approximately 700 public golf courses sharing performance data every month, yields one of the most important data points in our industry and helps to remove the haze: Barter Opportunity Cost. BOC indicates what income a golf course might expect

to earn had they sold those bartered rounds on their own. Early insight into ORCA data coming from nearly 400 golf courses engaging in barter reveals an average of \$37,000 in BOC for 2018.

What the golf industry desperately needs are these OTTAs to emulate the restaurant industry's OpenTable, which simply connects diners with

restaurants. The OTTAs should have no influence on price. Let the courses compete on their own merits and just give the world frictionless, beautiful aggregation and ease of booking – and get out of the way.

Later this season, NGCOA will publish a guide, taking a comprehensive look at the economics of barter in our industry, services offered in exchange for barter, prices that can be paid for such services, tips for negotiating healthy contracts, and more tools and knowledge to help course operators calculate the cost-benefit equation.

Course owners and operators: We have to stop whistling past the graveyard and end this race to the bottom.

Jay Karen's column is a condensed version of a longer blogpost on this topic. Read the entire article and share your thoughts at [linkedin.com/in/jaykaren/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/jaykaren/)



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Barbara Searle
Associate
Director of
Membership



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It doesn't matter what kind of golf course you run, NGCOA is for you.



Addressing The Issues

By Ronnie Miles
Director of Advocacy
NGCOA

A Time for Reflection

With the many changes taking place in Washington, D.C., it seems there is a "quiet before the storm." This period has provided me an opportunity to reflect on my three years with NGCOA. Having spent over 30 years managing multiple business and community operations, including golf, for the U.S. Navy, I understand how state and federal regulations can impede the economic balance between service and profits. While there exists some unique differences between public and private enterprises, and taxing issues are unique to the private business sector, the majority of labor and environmental regulations can create equal challenges.

The commitment made three years ago by the NGCOA Board of Directors to invest in a full-time staff member to support the advocacy efforts of the organization reflected their understanding of the need to ensure golf course owners and operators voices are heard and their commitment to ensuring that ongoing engagement is part of the services to our members.

What I realized fairly early as director of this new initiative was that advocating for our members is not limited to Washington, D.C. The majority of public policy issues are focused more at the state and local level. Working with our members on these issues has allowed us to become more of a clearing house of best practices, and connecting members with solutions to their day to day challenges.

While some of our members are fortunate enough to have the time and staff neces-

sary to stay on top of the issues facing the industry, the majority have little resources to dedicate to this time-consuming task. We recognize that many of the issues we report on may not impact all members today, but one thing we have learned in the world of politics, if one community or state has found a new way to create more tax income, others will soon follow. Owners and operators must engage early and educate their leaders on the impact a measure will have on their business and subsequently their community.

Currently we have a couple of important federal rules that will greatly impact our members. One is the proposed overtime rule being issued by the Department of Labor. We are hopeful the final rule will set minimum pay levels for exempt employees in the mid-\$30,000 range. Some states have already taken steps and created their own pay levels for exempt employees.

Another federal policy that is out for comments is the new Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) Rule. As you know, the golf industry has been a leader in protecting our waterways by greatly reducing the harmful chemicals released into local streams and waterways. Unfortunately the battle of convincing Congress and the media of this fact is an ongoing effort.

This is one of the major messages the We Are Golf Coalition delivers to our leaders in Washington every year as part of our National Golf Day event. As a golf course owner we need your voice with us in Washington. If you have not been a part of this event in the past, I would encourage you to consider making this investment in your business.

Should you need NGCOA assistance with any advocacy issues, contact Ronnie Miles, rmiles@ngcoa.org.

GOLF INDUSTRY Calendar

2019

May 1

National Golf Day
Washington D.C.
wearegolf.org

June 23-26

**IAGTO's North America
Golf Tourism Convention**
Horseshoe Bay Resort
Horseshoe Bay, Texas
iagto.com/nac

July 23-24

NGCOA MCOR19
Monterey Plaza Hotel
Monterey, California
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August 12-14

**PGA 2019 Fashion
& Demo Experience**
The Venetian Hotel/TopGolf
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October 8-9

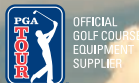
**NGCOA North Carolina
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2020

January 20-22

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Coalition Concerns

By Jared Williams
Managing Director
GOLF USA TEE TIME COALITION

Reaching the Tipping point

We’ve all been there before. You make a purchase, receive goods or services and days later you login to check your bank account. Sometimes the charges are still pending, sometimes the card has been authorized. Most times, those goods and services are paid for and your card has been charged.

But what if it hasn’t been charged? We live in a digital age. And as with most technology, errors can and often do happen.

Some advice: Be very careful when declining training or any portion of the setup and installation of your software. It may be tied to a much more important function of your point-of-sale system or merchant processing provider.

An Arizona-based golf course owner and member of both the PGA of America and the NGCOA boards of directors recently fell victim to a bad batch of credit card transactions. Batch credit card processing is the practice of a merchant (golf course) processing all of its authorized credit card transactions for the day after the close of business or at a time determined by the credit card processor. Credit card batching can be done more often than once a day, but there is a fee for each request, so merchants tend to process batches once a day to minimize costs.

Augusta Ranch Golf Club in Mesa, Arizona, uses ETS as its merchant processor and EZLinks as its golf management system. Somehow, the golf course’s batch report revealed that a large number of credit card transactions either did not charge the

cardholder for the actual amount of the purchase and/or failed to charge the card for any authorized gratuities that were added to the transaction after swiping the card. The transactions in question took place from Oct. 20 to Nov. 30 at the Scratch Pub & Grill, the course food and beverage component.

When the system was installed, EZLinks did not test whether or not the ETS credit card processing system was working properly, nor did EZLinks perform the standard implementation steps during the setup. The software didn’t indicate to the golf course that any errors had occurred when tips were not added to the authorized charges. Originally, neither EZLinks nor ETS took responsibility for the error. When Augusta Ranch became aware of the issue, EZLinks said the golf course owner’s decision to forego training also meant that EZLinks would not proceed with the standard implementation process which includes running tests.

All in all, the blunder has cost Augusta Ranch about \$10,000. Nevertheless, the course owner paid his employees the tips cardholders had authorized. The owner would now like for either EZLinks or ETS to take ownership of the issue and re-run the credit cards or make things right financially.

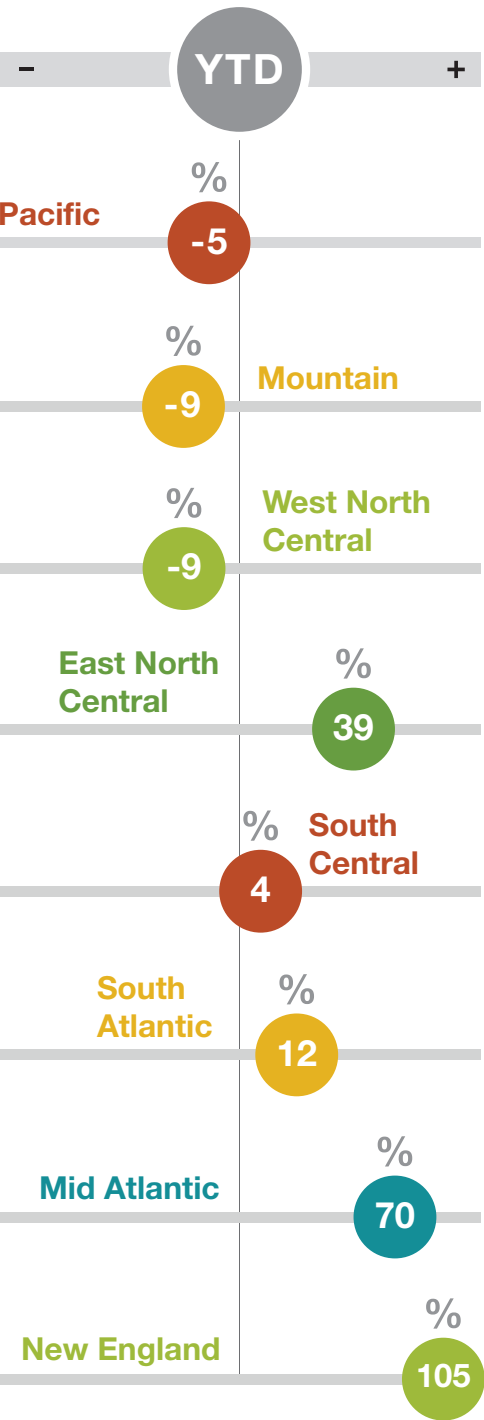
I am optimistic that EZLinks and/or ETS will find a way to make things right with this golf course owner. This is a small sum for the vendors, but this type of loss in revenue has real implications to golf courses.

The Coalition wants to shine the light on things that happen in the online tee time distribution space and is most effective when it can regularly name vendors using customer feedback, whether positive or negative. Visit teetimecoalition.org/concerns to let us know about your experiences.

Rounds Played

January 2019

Data percentage compared to same period last year.



A STROKE OF GENIUS.

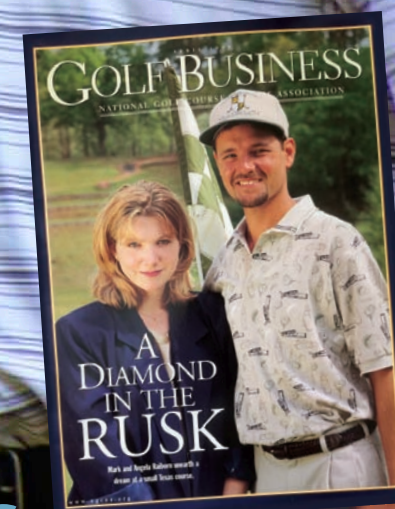
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THE START

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Angela and Mark Raiborn of Birmingham Golf Club in the small town of Rusk, Texas, were featured on the cover of Golf Business in 1999 (inset).



By Sally J. Sportsman

This Diamond in the Rusk still shines

20 Years Later, this Family Business Still has Staying Power

A slice of Americana often thought of with respect and even nostalgia is the family business, an increasingly rare yet ever-robust reflection of the American spirit.

The joys and challenges of building and maintaining a family enterprise successfully are evident in any field of commerce, but perhaps most especially in golf.

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© 2019 Photo by Connie Parrish

The importance that family-owned golf courses hold in their communities has only increased with time.

Golf Business introduced its readers to just such a family 20 years ago in the April 1999 cover story, *A Diamond in the Rusk*. Today, the Raiborn family still owns and operates their public, nine-hole golf course in the rolling hills of East Texas.

"All our members and daily golfers are like a whole extended family to us," says Angela Raiborn, 46, co-owner with her husband, Mark, of Birmingham Golf Club in the small town of Rusk, population 5,500. "Our kids are grown now, but we never had to put them in daycare; I could just be there with them."

"It's been good to build a business with my husband."

The course was built in 1967, the identity of its designer unknown. Mark, whose father taught him to play golf at age 10, knew that his dad had tried unsuccessfully to purchase the golf course, known until last year as Birmingham Forest Golf Club. Mark worked at the course throughout high school, learning every aspect. He and Angela, who met in high school, married in 1991, had the first of their three children in 1993 and purchased the golf course in October 1994.

"Working there as a kid, it was learn as you go," says Mark, 50. "I'm still learning."

For years the clubhouse was a small portable building, a former school house that the Raiborns bid on and moved to the site. The family lived nearby but spent all their waking hours at the golf course. Mark convinced Angela that they should move on site. So they added 1,000 square feet to the clubhouse as their living quarters, where they've been ever since.

"She loves it now," Mark says.

A neighbor owns the 15-acre lake visible from the clubhouse.

"We traded him a golf membership

"I dropped my gun, a 22, accidentally and it discharged."

for irrigation privileges and the gorgeous view."

Angela runs the pro shop, while Mark offers instruction and maintains the grounds and equipment. Their children, now all in their 20s, help out when they can. No tee times are required; members and local golfers know they can just show up and play any time. There are several tees to choose from, accommodating players of every skill level. To play 18 holes, golfers play the nine twice, usually approaching the second nine from a different tee.

The demands of administering every aspect of Birmingham Golf Club are many, but the Raiborn family puts them in perspective, considering the major challenges they have faced.

In the summer of 2005, the wooden golf-cart sheds caught fire.

"It was devastating," Mark says. "We lost all 54 individual sheds."

"It certainly was a low point for us. We were in between insurance companies for two weeks, and that's when the fire hit; we weren't covered."

A loan was secured and the sheds were rebuilt, of metal and much better quality this time.

That would have been challenge enough for any family. In 2008, however, the Raiborns faced what could have ended in tragedy.

"Armadillos had been digging on our greens and tee boxes during the dry weather," Mark says. "I was coming in from hunting them when my spotlight quit working."

"I dropped my gun, a 22, acciden-



tally and it discharged."

The gunshot hit Mark in the head, fracturing his skull but not penetrating it. After six days in intensive care and three weeks in rehabilitation, he recovered fully.

"It's a miracle," Mark says. "Since then I haven't hunted for armadillos, but I haven't had a problem with them since then."

"It's a sign."

Mark appreciates the fact that he never had to miss his children's ball games or activities. Either he or Angela usually has been on site, sometimes aided by local high-school students who work part time.

"We've been able to put all three of our kids through college," Mark says.

The challenges continue, as with any golf course.

"Golf is a roller coaster," says Mark. "There are good times and bad."

"Rusk is a blue-collar town; people don't have a lot of money to spend on recreation. But we are seeing growth in and around Rusk."

"People are moving here from California and Michigan. They are discovering the beauty of East Texas."

About 6,300 rounds of golf were recorded at Birmingham Golf Club in 2018, down about six percent from 2017. Otherwise, overall rounds have been fairly steady each year. The Raiborns believe the dip last year was for the most part weather-related, as Rusk had a

Angela and Mark Raiborn (seated) raised their children — Joshua, Lily and Jacob — while living at the golf course.



winter and early spring that were wetter and colder than average. In addition, the nearest 18-hole course (about 15 miles away) lowered its rates, which may have affected Birmingham's rounds somewhat.

The Raiborns advertise in the local weekly newspaper, the *Cherokee Herald*, the oldest weekly newspaper in Texas. They publicize tournament results and golf-course specials on social media. And they create flyers and email blasts to reach even more golfers.

The fee is \$16, with cart, to play nine holes on a weekday, \$20 for 18 holes. On weekends, the fee is \$20 with cart for nine holes and \$23 for 18. Two weekly games are available for anyone to play in, a Tuesday shamble and a Thursday scramble. The cost is \$20, including cart.

Mark, who is an instructor for The First Tee of Tyler, offers three-day, three-hour-a-day junior clinics at Birmingham Golf Club for \$50 per child,

including snacks and drinks.

The Raiborn family recently formed Birmingham Golf LLC, upon their accountant's recommendation, to protect their assets. And not long ago, Angela began planting vegetables and having animals on site for youngsters to enjoy, such as goats and chickens, which also provide fresh eggs every day for the family.

Both Mark and Angela wear several hats. Mark's work is mostly at the golf course, while Angela has extended her talents beyond the facility. Since 2007 she has served as mayor of Rusk, having been re-elected every two years. The pay is nominal, but she finds it fulfilling.

"It's a good experience," Angela says. "We have a talented city manager and staff who take care of day-to-day operations."

"I can't say it has increased business at the golf course, but I enjoy all the hats I wear."

In November of last year, Angela

also began working for CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate), having formerly served as a volunteer. Her job is to check on children who have been placed with family members or in foster homes, communicating with their teachers or daycare providers to make sure they are in a safe environment.

As for the upcoming golf season, Angela says, "Mark and I are trying to figure out how to juggle everything. Two of our kids have flexible schedules, as I do."

"It will be a learning experience for us this spring and summer."

Putting into perspective all the ups and downs the Raiborns have known as proud owners of Birmingham Golf Club, it is certain that their new challenges also will be met with grace and determination.

After all, golf is a game for a lifetime. **GB**

Sally J. Sportsman is an Orlando, Florida-based freelance golf writer.

By Steve Eubanks

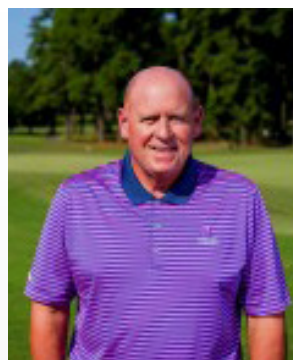
How Do You Plan For A Big, Worldwide Event In Your Town?

Dan Elliott: Masters week is our busiest week of the year, so we staff up, uniform up and make sure we're putting on the best presentation we can. We do 1,300 rounds of golf in the six days (of Masters week), so we start the day earlier than normal.

One of the big things we do is brief the staff on the history of Forest Hills since our golf course was here before Augusta National. In fact, Bobby Jones played the Southeastern Open here in 1930 before going on to win the Grand Slam. It was while he was here that he saw the property that is now Augusta National. So, it's important for the staff to know that so they can educate the customers.

Mike Spiller: We had a U.S. Open (at nearby Pebble Beach) in 2010, so we learned a lot from that. First, we have to make sure we have our rates calculated correctly and posted early. We also make sure all our staffing is in place. Then we get our retail in order so that we have the right product mix.

This year (when the U.S. Open returns to Pebble Beach in June) we're doing a deal where you get lunch and a hat with your tee time. In 2010, we had about 350 rounds



Dan Elliott

DIRECTOR OF GOLF
FOREST HILLS
AUGUSTA, GEORGIA



Mike Spiller

DIRECTOR OF GOLF
BAYONET AND BLACKHORSE
MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA



a day. I sent an email out in January telling our staff to let me know if there would be any problems or conflicts because we're going to need all hands that week.

We just tell folks that the Masters is the hardest ticket in sports to get and we don't have access.

What are the operating problems you encounter from having a big event nearby?

Elliott: You have to understand that your staff is going to want to participate in the activities going on in town that week. So, you have to schedule properly to give your staff that opportunity, but also make sure your operations are covered.

I also warn the staff not to get too involved with customer

requests for access to the tournament. A lot of people in here are looking for tickets. We warn the staff not to say, "Yeah, go down and stand on this corner," or

anything like that. We just tell folks that the Masters is the hardest ticket in sports to get and we don't have access.

Spiller:

We're collecting data from everybody booking – phone numbers and emails – and we plan to send traffic updates to everyone who has tee times during Open week. It might take two or three times longer than normal to get here during an Open.

The other thing is weather. A lot of people think California is all sun and fun, but on the central coast it can be 60 degrees in June and with any wind, it will feel colder. So, it doesn't hurt to send out a weather briefing.

Innovation Insights

BY SCOTT KAUFFMAN

Golfpay Offers Direct Connections

For a lot of course operators, one of the growing channels used for tee-time reservations are third-party companies. Of course, many facilities develop and use their own online booking engines – to gain greater control over consumers and greens fees – and some still count on old-fashioned phone systems.

Now, a new Scottsdale, Arizona-based entrepreneur who "loves golf and solving problems" wants to broaden the industry's traditional channels and help enhance revenue by taking courses where today's tech-savvy consumers want to conveniently be (think text messaging as an example). The answer, according to Dale Merritt, is his "omni-channel" Golfpay platform, now in its second generation after being introduced at the PGA Show in 2018.

"Nothing against third party companies and they're popular channels," Merritt says. "But we saw a need to help elevate the brand of the golf course. ... Our platform's designed to get more golfers to book direct with a better overall customer experience.

"We give the golf course brand new tools. They can white label at the golf course and they can promote all the different channels you can get through Golfpay and it's branded under their course or company."

Golfpay's patent-pending platform or "ecosystem" encompasses a variety of channels commonly used by consumers, including Interactive Voice Response (IVR) options that does not require internet, popular messaging systems like Facebook Messenger, web-based Golfpay Chatbots that can eventually route inquiries to staff members and the ever-popular Short Message Service (SMS) and Multi-Media Service (MMS) text messaging systems.

Most importantly, there are no apps to download and deal with, reducing technology "friction" that frustrates many consumers.

Plus, the Golfpay-generated bookings show up in the course's tee sheet just like Golfnow would, Merritt adds, "so they don't have to worry about all these different channels out there because we maintain the channels."

Ultimately, Golfpay's platform improves and unifies the customer experience across an array of channels that consumers are familiar with and prefer in many aspects, according to Merritt. For courses, more convenient channels that customers can use for communication means an increased likelihood of that consumer doing business with you

Merritt says an estimated 136 courses are currently using Golfpay at an average cost of \$300-\$400 per month.

Undoubtedly, Merritt sees an increasing amount of "conversational commerce" being done through artificial intelligence-driven text messaging. Something other industries are using with great success, namely hospitality businesses like restaurants and hotels.

"Golfers can have conversations through text messaging, book tee times and pay for them, purchase merchandise and check in. ... We have a bunch of conveniences," Merritt says. "That's really the future. That's really where all the (tech) investment is going. Not only with how people communicate through messaging. ... But businesses are starting to do business that way because people are already there."

Scott Kauffman is a golf business writer and the managing director of Aloha Media Group, and is regular technology columnist for Golf Business. You can contact him with tech news at iwritegolf@gmail.com.



Dale Merritt,
founder of
Golfpay

“Nothing against third party companies, and they’re popular channels. But we saw a need to help elevate the brand of the golf course.”

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ONLINE What's on GolfBusiness.com this month



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In recent reports, business owners were warned of lawsuits over websites not compliant with the American Disability Act. A new Golf Business podcast shares more details at accelerate.ngcoa.org/education/podcasts. And NGCOA members can download an instructional white paper in the Accelerate Advocacy Community.



National Golf Day

Registration is open for the 2019 National Golf Day events in Washington, D.C. on April 29-May 1. See the agenda online at wearegolf.org/nationalgolfdayschedule/



Dreams Take Flight

If you missed this feature from the March issue of Golf Business magazine, check online at golfbusiness.com to learn how the plans for this Florida resort are coming into focus.

WHAT'S HOT In My Shop



Lauren Everett • Merchandise Manager
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Featured clockwise from top: Champion Hills Club, Hendersonville, North Carolina; The Golf Club at Lansdowne, Lansdowne, Virginia; Fairwood Golf & Country Club, Renton, Washington.



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27-year-old Zach Peed, the CEO of the Dormie Network, says, "We are building our network on business and client entertainment."

“There are 15,000 golf courses in America. We’re only looking for about 10.”



Zach Peed with his wife, Morgan, and their sons, Morgan (left) and Miles.

Membership Model Spans Country

High-end operator develops exclusive network

By Steve Eubanks

H

e’s quiet, not just in tone and temperament, but in the way he’s building his business.

When you speak to 27-year-old Zach Peed, the CEO of the Dormie Network, you get the sense that you are talking to a much older man, or at least someone who crammed a lot of wisdom into a few years. There’s none of the verbal upticks that have become ubiquitous among millennials, no sentences ending in “right?” as if every utterance needs affirmation. Peed is a Midwesterner of another sort — a Nebraskan out

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Big Cedar Lodge has some family trips but it's mostly focused on business entertainment.

“The closest project we have to a city is San Antonio and we’re still 25 minutes west of the airport.”

of a Rockwell painting or a feedstore ad. Strapping, clean-cut and serious, he's the kind of young man you listen to, not because of who he is, but because he only speaks when he has something thoughtful to say.

“We are building our network on business and client entertainment,” Peed said when asked to describe what separates Dormie Network from other owners of multiple private clubs that offer reciprocity. “These are private clubs that make sense if you are taking clients out



for a couple of days of golf. Our model is business trips. Take a look at what Big Cedar Lodge has done. They have some family trips but it's mostly business entertainment. That's our specialty. We're training our staff in the nuances of client entertainment so that our members will look at us as the entertainment arm of their businesses.”

Peed's model relies on several factors. Each facility has to have cottages. “If we can't have lodging, the project is out the window,” he said.

He's also steered clear of big cities. “The closest project we have to a city is San Antonio and we're still 25 minutes west of the airport,” he said.

There are no swimming pools or tennis courts at Dormie Network properties. Country Club is not what he's selling. This is golf with high-end, but low-key, lodging and a clubhouse that can accommodate all the needs of an executive bringing his best clients in for a few days.

But at the top of the list, the most important factor in the Dormie profile, is



Briggs Ranch outside San Antonio, is a Tom Fazio designed course.

jaw-dropping golf. “We have to have quality architecture,” Peed said. “If the maintenance has slipped and the clubhouse needs renovating, we can do that — we are doing that — but we have clubs where the architecture is something special.”

On that front, Peed couldn’t have done much better. He bought Ballyhack nestled in the mountains near Roanoke, Virginia, a Lester George design that has been ranked among the best courses in the Mid-Atlantic. Then there is Briggs Ranch outside San Antonio, a Tom Fazio design that is among the best in the region.

Peed owns two courses designed by Bill Coore and Ben Crenshaw: Hidden Creek in Egg Harbor Township, New Jersey and Dormie Club in Pinehurst, North Carolina, the club that inspired the company’s name.

“It’s impressive how under-the-radar Dormie Club is,” Peed said. “Getting off on the wrong foot in 2010, opening in the wrong time window, didn’t help. But we couldn’t be happier to have it.”

He also has a club in Indiana called Victoria National, which has hosted a Web.com Tour event since 2012. “Dormie and Victoria National, side by side, are

next-level tracks,” he said. “They are powerful golf courses but very intimate in a sense.”

Rounding out the portfolio, for now, Peed owns ArborLinks in his home state of Nebraska, a club he bought from Landscapes Unlimited.

They are all impressive properties. But the far-flung geographic nature of the network defies all conventional wisdom for the golf business. Who, for example, will take a client to Newburgh, Indiana, on a golf trip one year, Pinehurst the next year, and Nebraska City the third? The USGA held its annual meeting in San Antonio this past February and the number-one question most people asked was, “Why here?”

To understand Peed’s thinking, you need know his background. He learned the game at Firethorn Golf Club in Lincoln, Nebraska, which was created by Dick Youngscap. Youngscap would later create Sand Hills, the course many consider the first stay-and-play, pure golf experience hundreds of miles from anywhere.

Peed saw people flying in from all over the world to play Sand Hills, driving five hours from Denver and a solid four-and-

a-half from Omaha. He also saw what Mike Keiser had done with Bandon Dunes in Oregon, Cabot Links in Nova Scotia and Sand Valley in Wisconsin.

“What Mike Keiser has done is terrific but those are public facilities,” Peed said. “We’re taking the same stay-and-play mindset to the private market. It’s nothing new. Dick Youngscap started this idea with Sand Hills. We’re just doing it on a grander scale.”

Each club Peed purchased came with a group of local members — none in large numbers — and those members were rolled into the Dormie Network. The rest of the memberships he sells will be national with no individual club affiliation.

How grand the scale of the network will become is yet to be determined. Peed is looking at other courses. But he is discriminating.

“There are 15,000 golf courses in America,” he said. “We’re only looking for about 10. But of those 15,000 there are about 400 that are really special. Those are the ones we have our eyes on.”

Steve Eubanks is an Atlanta-based freelance writer and New York Times bestselling author.

Kemper’s Flexibility a Model for Attracting Women Managers

By Steve Eubanks

Christie Paich knows the anxieties. She understands the constraints. She appreciates the hesitation. As a woman running The Glen Club in suburban Chicago, she gets all the factors that keep women away from the game, both as players and operators.

“Look, we in hospitality are working those hours when the Fortune 500 people aren’t,” Paich said. “We have to be available odd hours and a lot of hours. That’s the nature of the business and that has traditionally turned some women away from careers in the golf and club industry.”

But with this past March 8 being International Women’s Day, Paich wanted women to know that it doesn’t have to be that way. “I’ve been very fortunate working with Kemper Sports (which manages The Glen Club). They’ve been very flexible. I remember when I was first speaking with (the people at Kemper,) I told them I wasn’t sure I wanted to do this because I had children and needed to do something that allowed me to be with them. I was told from the beginning, ‘Look, it’s not the amount of hours you spend at the club, it’s what you accomplish. It’s getting the job done.’ Quality over quantity. That’s the key.

“The golf industry as a whole hasn’t always taken that mindset. And we’ve seen a talent drain because of that, especially among women.”

Paich is doing her part to rectify that, mentoring other women who want to carve a career in the golf industry.

“The big thing I tell young women is that you don’t have to pretend to be one of the guys to be a success in this business. Be yourself,” she said. “I have a 14-year-old daughter and I’m telling her all the time: be yourself. Do what you do. People will respect you more and admire what you do more if you don’t try to be what you’re not.”

From a participation standpoint, Paich acknowledges that women make up the fastest growing segment of the game. But she also understands the challenges.

“A lot of women entering the game are turned off by the time commitment and the learning curve,” she said. “So we do a lot of things to minimize both. We have a program (at The Glen Club) called ‘Show and Go,’ which is a 9-hole outing (for women) where you simply show up and play. No scores are posted. You don’t have to keep score if you don’t want. You don’t even have to finish. It’s a social gathering. That is been well received because the pressure is off. Women get it. This is an afternoon out with friends.

“We also have a learning environment called ‘Wine and



Women.’ We set up food and wine and seating areas on the driving range, right next to the hitting bays, and have instruction in a laid-back setting. It’s been a big hit.”

Paich appreciates that the time commitment in golf will always be an issue for some women.

“With everything else we as women have on our plates, it’s hard to carve out four or five hours for anything,” she said. “That’s why we have to create an environment for golf-related activities that are more flexible and attractive to women. We know that the next generation woman (club) manager is going to come from the girls and young women we introduce to the game now. That’s important (for golf) now and in the future.”

Steve Eubanks is an Atlanta-based freelance writer and New York Times bestselling author.

The True Value of Your Newsletter

What is the value of a newsletter? A lot depends on how it's used.

A calendar of events with the odd sign-up link here and there is worth little when it comes to gathering information. But in today's data-mining environment, qualified email lists of targeted demographics, lists that include things like zip codes, age and marital status are gold to many companies. There is a reason platforms like Google, Facebook and Twitter are free to users: the consumer of those online formats is the product. Targeted ads appear to you based on your search history of the kinds of stories you engage.

For Reynolds Lake Oconee, the multi-facility resort in Georgia owned by MetLife, a newsletter subscription list is worth somewhere north of \$16,000. That's the value Reynolds is placing on a give-away designed to increase the resort's newsletter subscription numbers.

The Reynolds 360: 3 + Me Sweepstakes, as it is being called, looks like something straight out of Publishers Clearinghouse. The grand prize, which will be drawn randomly from the newsletter subscription list as of midnight on Monday, April 22,

will receive a massive giveaway. The sweepstakes includes luxury cottage accommodations at one of the Reynolds golf properties, along with three rounds of golf with caddies for the winner and three guests. The winners will also receive coach domestic roundtrip airfare to Atlanta, a rental car, meals, a wine and whiskey tasting, some cool Fairway & Greene apparel, a fully immersive TaylorMade club fitting experi-



A qualified e-subscriber is more than just a random email address.

ence at Reynolds Kingdom (one of the best fitting facilities in the country), some skeet shooting at the Sandy Creek Sporting Grounds and a fishing charter on Lake Oconee.

The whole package has an estimated retail value of \$16,500. Of course, the resort isn't giving this away for no reason. A qualified e-subscriber is more than just a random email

address. Entrants will all be golfers, otherwise entering would make no sense. They will also have originated through a reference point that prequalifies them as a potential long-term customer, perhaps a future homeowner at Reynolds. And they will get the Reynolds online newsletter with all its information and offers in perpetuity.

MetLife is betting that the additional subscriptions will translate into much more future business than the cost of the sweepstakes. And they are probably right. Such lists can sell for anywhere from mid-five figures to hundreds of millions of dollars. With that as a benchmark, the Reynolds sweepstakes, no matter how opulent, is still a great deal.

Steve Eubanks is an Atlanta-based freelance writer and New York Times bestselling author.

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Desert Mountain Club CEO Damon DiOrio says "Desert Mountain is experiencing unprecedented interest from potential new members and residents."

“We want the course to be fun, social and touching the lives of every family member, regardless of skill.”

© 2018 Photo Aitch Photography

By Scott Kauffman

Bucking the Trend

Desert Mountain’s Seven defies private club decline

o build a new, upscale private club these days is a rare feat. The fact this is Desert Mountain’s seventh exclusive private golf club is flat out extraordinary.

The club’s newest layout, simply named Seven, belies how special this place truly is. Originally developed by high-end desert golf pioneer Lyle Anderson in the mid-1980s, Desert Mountain was perhaps best known in its heyday for playing host to The Tradition, the Senior PGA Tour event that started in 1989.

Within a decade, Desert Mountain in north Scottsdale, Arizona, had the distinction of being the only place in the world with six Signature Jack Nicklaus-designed private courses, all of



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This artist's rendering of the Seven gives a glimpse into the design of the par-54 course, one of only two private, par-54-rated courses in the United States.



“In planning for No. 7, it was very clear that we wanted something different and unique.”

which are surrounded by some of the priciest golf-related real estate in the country. While Desert Mountain's newest private course won't have the signature Nicklaus Design team imprint when it opens this month, the layout lays claim to yet another distinction: the par-54 course is one of only two private, par-54-rated courses in the United States.

The course was designed by Bill Brownlee of M3 Companies and Wendell Pickett of Greey/Pickett, both of whom are Desert Mountain Club members. And the design duo is no stranger to fun, unique short courses in the Arizona desert.

They also collaborated on the critically acclaimed “Li'l Wick” nine-hole short game course at Wickenburg Ranch in Wickenburg, Arizona. The latest course was created to be inclusive and challenging for golfers of all skill levels, featuring extensive fairways, ample greens and a lighted 18-hole practice putting complex. Along with Desert Mountain's Renegade course, the club will be the only one in golf-rich Phoenix-Scottsdale that features year-round plush Bentgrass playing surfaces that don't require overseeding from October-November.

“Not only does No. 7 maintain the high standards of golf we embrace throughout Desert Mountain, it provides even more experiences enabling golfers to reimagine how they play the sport,” says Desert Mountain Club CEO Damon DiOrio. “Each course has its own set of special nuances and elevation differences. In planning for No. 7, it was very clear that we wanted something different and

unique. The course will provide fun and memorable 6-, 12- or 18-hole par 3 golf experiences all within 2.5 hours (max).”

For those keeping score and active handicaps, DiOrio points out Desert Mountain Seven can also offer a championship/USGA-rated Par 54 experience from 3,075 yards. But make no mistake, the new No. 7 is exceptionally suited for families and new golfers seeking a manageable 18-hole golf experience with a total length of just 1,455 yards.

“We want the course to be fun, social and touching the lives of every family member, regardless of skill,” DiOrio says. “No. 7 is all that and much more!”

Beyond the 18-hole course, No. 7 will also feature a sleek new modern clubhouse that will serve as a central, family-centric gathering space with an indoor-outdoor gastropub, state-of-the-art sound system, and two bocce ball courts. Set against the picturesque high Sonoran Desert with expansive, collapsible glass walls for indoor-outdoor enjoyment, the clubhouse will be ideal for year-round events with its heated patio floors, indoor and outdoor bars, several fire pits and fireplaces.

The 90-acre enclave that comprises the new Seven course will have its own private entrance and plans for up to 190 custom homes ranging in size from 2,300-6,500-plus square feet. All but three of the homes will sit directly on the course with prices starting at \$1 million. Overall, Desert Mountain spans some 8,000 acres with plans for less than 2,700 homes.

Desert Mountain's latest develop-

ment defies conventional wisdom about private clubs and luxury golf course real estate projects. For instance, the number of private club facilities, many of which are associated with high-end real estate development, has steadily declined in America over the last 20 years, according to data from the National Golf Foundation.

Based on the 2018 Golf Industry Report, NGF counted 14,794 overall golf facilities with 25 percent of them or 3,698.5 being private. That's a 13 percent decline from the 4,251 private facilities in 1998.

With 75 percent of U.S. courses open to all players, it equals the highest public-to-private ratio of facilities in the game's history. At Desert Mountain, on the other hand, the private life is still thriving to say the least.

“Without divulging specific numbers, I can say that Desert Mountain is experiencing unprecedented interest from potential new members and residents,” says DiOrio, who was the CEO at Charlotte Country Club for nearly 27 years prior to leading Desert Mountain Club. “We're seeing great traction at all price levels for homes and all our categories of membership. Like many other luxury clubs, we're being helped by a healthy economy and the fact that people of all ages want to engage in an active lifestyle each and every day, whether they're still raising a family, working, or in any stage of semi- or full-time retirement.”

Scott Kauffman is a golf business writer and the managing director of Aloha Media Group.

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BY SCOTT KAUFFMAN

Mississippi's Reunion Makes Most of Master Plan



Reunion Golf & Country Club in Mississippi.

For those familiar with the Mississippi Delta, that distinctive northwestern part of Mississippi stretching from Memphis, Tennessee, to the north and Vicksburg, Mississippi, to the south, this ag-rich region is known for two things: farmers and blues musicians.

Specifically, Delta Blues made famous by musicians like B.B. King and Muddy Waters. Today, not far from the southernmost fringes of the Mississippi Delta, in the quiet suburbs of the capital city of Jackson, folks are singing a much happier tune in Madison County. And the most popular song is about the good life and a place called Reunion Golf & Country Club.

Indeed, while Mississippi might conjure up more blues tunes than premier country club living, Reunion is starting to change the tone of the Jackson-metro market. And 14 years after the late Robert "Bob" Cupp-designed private golf course opened, this residential development is maturing into one of the most dynamic private club communities in the state.

Some even suggest Reunion is positioned to be one of the best in the entire Southeast. So, what makes Reunion so remarkable?

It starts with a picturesque 2,100-acre property and a developer, well-known Mississippi attorney David Nutt, committed to preserving the natural beauty of the land and developing the finest family-oriented amenities imaginable. For instance, in addition to a Troon Privé-managed championship course laid out in a 275-acre low-density fashion (read: fewer homes),

Reunion features a 400-acre lake with beach, 600 additional acres of open space, neighborhood pool and playground areas, nearly seven miles of recreational trails and an equestrian center that can board 56 horses.

In all, more than half of the property is dedicated to green space with the balance reserved for approximately 2,100 homes that will get laid out and developed in a spacious manner. That's a far cry from the estimated 2,900 residential units originally designed for Reunion, which now features homes ranging in price from the high \$300,000s to the low millions.

This type of mindful master-planning, consistently embraced since Nutt's development team sold its first lot in 2003, is driving significant post-recession growth and one main reason Reunion now has some 800 homes and grown its membership to an estimated 600 members from 500 about three years ago.

General manager Casey Smith, a Mississippi native in his third year at the club, sees both Reunion's real estate and club life business growing.

"It seems like the growth is still coming our way," says Smith, whose course was originally managed by Birmingham, Alabama-based Honours Golf, which is now a division of Troon. "Most of the families are wanting to move away from Jackson towards this area because we have the best schools in our state (Madison Station was a 2010 National Blue-Ribbon School), quality neighborhoods and all of the attractive amenities and lifestyle we feature. With everything we have to offer, Reunion really doesn't compare to anything in our region. Maybe even in our entire state."

Scott Kauffman is a golf business writer and the managing director of Aloha Media Group.

Historic Sequoyah Club Gets Modern Makeover

Sequoyah Country Club and its Mediterranean-style clubhouse that overlooks San Francisco Bay is living golf history.

It's a private place where Bay Area power brokers have hobnobbed for 106 years, making it the oldest private club west of the Mississippi.

And it's a place where golf icons Ben Hogan and Byron Nelson once walked Sequoyah's timber-lined golf course during various tournaments. Now, what's old is new again — courtesy a recent architectural and design overhaul by HGHB Architectural, Planning Urban Design out of Monterey, California, and Denver-based Kimberly Timmons Interiors.

At least that's one way to view the historic Oakland, California, club now that Kimberly Timmons finished redesigning Sequoyah's numerous dining/meeting rooms, common space and fitness center. Of course, one of the more exciting elements of Sequoyah's recently renovated clubhouse was the addition of a new upstairs fitness center and adjoining exercise room.

The sweeping KTI-inspired interior design touches are just some of the exciting changes at Sequoyah

County Club since nearby Bay Area native Bryan Richardson took over as Sequoyah's new general manager in late 2017.

Indeed, within a year of Sequoyah's board hiring Richardson as the club's new day-to-day leader, Sequoyah underwent a dynamic new membership marketing campaign fueled in part by some of the club's new dining and fitness amenities and overall reimagined clubhouse.

"We're fortunate to have a leader like Bryan Richardson steer us through this exciting time," Sequoyah member Steve Callaway was quoted as saying last when he was serving as the club's then-board president. "Sequoyah is on the move, with the fitness center and other improvements and community partnerships planned."

Sequoyah Country Club's ongoing three-year facilities and renovation master plan started with the highly anticipated 4,000-square-

foot fitness room and golf performance center. An aerobics studio and high-definition golf simulator were also part of the club's phase one additions.

"There's a buzz at the club around the new fitness center, which is a prominent example of Sequoyah's mission to offer its members a variety of activities and experiences they have asked for," Richardson was quoted as saying in a Bay News Group report. "I'm proud to be part of the team as Sequoyah navigates its second century."

For Kimberly Timmons Interiors, recognized as one of the country's leading clubhouse interior designers, it's not often the firm has the opportunity to touch up a piece of hospitality history. Design consultant Wendy McTague was KTI's senior designer

tasked with the assignment of reimagining Sequoyah's stately clubhouse with some modern flair.

"The challenge was keeping this early 20th century, Spanish Colonial architecture but updating it with these reimagined finishes and color palette," McTague points out. "The club was a bit dated. Now, the style is geared toward that younger country club member."

The successful Sequoyah redesign process, thanks in part to Club Resources that was hired as a consultant during the club's leadership transition, is paying dividends already with some 150 new members reportedly joining the club during the recent membership marketing push.

Scott Kauffman is a golf business writer and the managing director of Aloha Media Group.



Sequoyah Country Club in Monterey, California.



The Pillsbury Effect

By Steve Eubanks

ClubCorp's **expanding,** but still true to its roots

David Pillsbury can juggle. Not with his hands or his feet; not like a clown with bowling pins or like a bored teenage golfer with a new sleeve of balls. Pillsbury is far better than that. The balls he has in the air would make a magician blink. And he keeps them there with ease, catching one and tossing another while talking to you like a long-lost friend from high school.

"Everything old is new again," Pillsbury said recently. "The units in our business are still about dues, member retention and new member growth. And how you use your amenities to drive those three levers."

Pillsbury hasn't been the CEO of ClubCorp, the largest owner and operator of private clubs in the world, for a full year yet. But you marvel when hearing him run through the litany of seemingly disparate interests that

David Pillsbury took the helm as CEO of ClubCorp June 1, 2018.

TAKE THE MULLIGAN AND TRY PAYMENT PROCESSING DONE RIGHT

Everybody loves a do-over, both on and off the course. How you handle payments is no exception.



ClubCorp sees the BigShots Lounge concept as a tremendous market opportunity.



“We sell lifestyle and community...
Every passion has a community.”

Through our integrated payment solutions, we are helping businesses just like yours simplify business management. First American partners with software providers who specialize in golf-centric ops management, integrating the services you need:

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make up the company. In no time Pillsbury has you believing that there is no philosophical conflict, no space at all, between the company built by Bob Dedman Sr. on the philosophy of private membership — a company that, at one time, owned more private dining clubs that required jackets and ties than many fast-food restaurants had stores — and a brand like BigShots where patrons in Drew Brees jerseys drink beer, yell “Booya,” and hit balls into a simulator while playing games called Knockout, Pinball and Island.

“BigShots is clearly an opportunity to take advantage of the great work TopGolf has done in introducing the game to people in massive numbers,” Pillsbury said of ClubCorp’s most recent acquisition. “Our goal is to broaden our funnel through BigShots, to introduce people to the sport in an incredibly low-friction environment. We hope to then use programming to migrate those people to our clubs and make them consumers of our core product.”

That core product is still private club membership. But as Pillsbury quickly adds, “Having said that, (BigShots) happens to be a good business in and of itself. It really is the perfect combination for us, especially as we transition into more of a lifestyle-centric company with golf still at our core and as our most valued membership category. We’re broadening our entry point through BigShots and through other things like wellness and fitness and renewed emphasis on racket sports and things like pickleball.”

BigShots is the big deal for the first part of 2019. With a footprint smaller than TopGolf and an emphasis on smaller markets,

there is room for more than one brand in the golf/entertainment space. The big differentiator for ClubCorp is the fact TopGolf facilities are all corporate owned while BigShots is a franchise. “Anyone who is interested in getting into the space, who has some capital and some land, that option is now available,” Pillsbury said.

There is also something called BigShots Lounge, which is simulator golf with all the technology but in a small corner of your restaurant or store. According to Pillsbury, whose voice draws you closer as he’s describing the scene, “You buy the franchise and use it as an add-on to any sports-bar environment. So it could be a self-serve kiosk with all the BigShots gaming. The franchisee can work out a revenue share with the restaurant owner.

“We think BigShots Lounge has tremendous market opportunity. It’s a terrific enhancement to anyone trying to improve their retail experience.”

But BigShots and BigShots Lounge are only two of the balls Pillsbury has airborne. He’s also retrofitting driving ranges at ClubCorp facilities with similar technology, although most likely without the game components.

ClubCorp Gets Physical

Then there is the emphasis on fitness. In Georgia, at one of the clubs ClubCorp purchased from Sequoia Golf, a new state-of-the-art fitness facility has been packed every morning at 6 a.m. since it opened. The two-story facility, complete with a full complement of classes by certified instructors, has put a big dent in the mom and pop gym business in the area.

That is not an accident. Pillsbury knows that when a recession hits and family budgets get tight, if the cost cutting comes down to dad’s golf membership or mom’s yoga classes, mom will win.

“We’re creating world-class fitness facilities and programming,” Pillsbury said. “The programming is where we’re evolving rapidly so that our members don’t feel they need to belong to a fitness facility anywhere else.”

ClubCorp is also looking to acquire a few freestanding gyms away from their existing clubs but in an area where one fitness center could facilitate a concentration of ClubCorp members.

The Core Values

As passionate as he is when he talks about fitness and pickleball, Pillsbury is, at his core, a golf guy. After graduate school at Southern Cal where he got his MBA, he joined American Golf and rocketed up the ranks to become co-CEO with Joe Guerra. Ironically, Guerra was the founder of Sequoia Golf, which was purchased by ClubCorp before Pillsbury’s arrival. And in another ironic twist, Jim Hinckley, former CEO of ClubCorp, is now the CEO of American Golf.

Pillsbury left American Golf in 2003 and went to Nike for a year before landing at the PGA Tour where he ran the TPC properties until 2008. Then he was promoted to executive vice president of championship management. He was responsible for 10 PGA Tour events including the Players Championship.

After that, he made a hard left turn. “I wanted to run a company,” Pillsbury



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said. “An old friend of mine, Bill Horne, came out of the golf business. Bill and I had met at a conference and tried to do a deal. We were never able to make that work but Bill and I became close friends. Then, he created Laser Spine Institute (a collection of minimally invasive spinal surgery centers) in 2004 because he had a neck injury that was resolved with that technology. “Well, the PGA Tour had selected Jay

ClubLife, and an under-the-radar division called The Collection that provides a range of services to high-end, member-owned clubs that need help on the sly. “The Collection might end up being 20 clubs that are ultra-high-end and member owned,” Pillsbury said. “If I’m a member-owned free-standing club that has the same needs for professional management as any other club, and I want to cherry-

build it for you.’ And we structure an agreement in a way that works for everyone. “On the other hand, ClubLife management solutions is designed to compete directly with Troon. “Then you have ClubCorp, which is divided into Premium clubs and Classic clubs. And those are your business verticals on the club side. They target different audiences and leverage each of those verticals



“What I found
is that health
care **is very
much like
hospitality.**”

Monahan to be commissioner. So (becoming commissioner) wasn’t an avenue for me. Bill contacted me. He stepped aside and asked me to be his successor as CEO of Laser Spine Institute. I thought it would be great experience.” Pillsbury stayed at LSI until ClubCorp’s new owners came calling. “What I found is that health care is very much like hospitality,” he said. “You’re caring for people and impacting their lives. But I’m very happy to be back in the golf business where I don’t have to worry about billing codes and the regulation and the massive complexities associated with health care.”

Setting the Table for the Next Course

Caring for a variety of people in his new role at ClubCorp keeps a few more balls in the air. Two of the new projects are a fee-for-service management division called

pick the resources of ClubCorp without actually becoming a part of ClubCorp, how do I do that? The Collection gives the board that opportunity. “It might start out as a consulting agreement where we bring a team in and look at ways they can do things differently to add some efficiencies. It might be that we bring in our purchasing benefit, which is significant. We might need to review the membership strategy. “The truth is, we have the full range of business solutions for a high-end club that has the same challenges as the club that needs fee management. (The exclusive high-end club) still needs to be relevant. It still needs to focus on wellness and fitness and be contemporary in dining. We can help them conceptualize all of that. If (the board says) they want a fitness center but they aren’t ready to pay to have one built, we can say, ‘Okay, we’ll do that. We can

against this massive infrastructure we have created, which is unlike anything else in the industry.” At this point Pillsbury has a shag-bag full of balls in the air. But that doesn’t stop him from making a final point, which is, to him, the most important point of all. “We sell lifestyle and community,” he said, punching each word so you don’t miss it. “The club is a gathering place for people with common interests. Every passion has a community. We are a gathering place for those communities. Whether it’s wellness, fitness, food, racket sports or golf, we’re your gathering place. “It’s not about exclusivity. It’s about connecting. If you go to our clubs, you’ll see that connection. You’ll feel that community. That’s what it’s about.”

Steve Eubanks is an Atlanta-based freelance writer and New York Times bestselling author.



by Emily Safrin

From Blunder to Wonder

How Companies Successfully Bounce Back from Mistake

Remember 1993? It was a terrible year for a particular major national fast food chain. It was an even worse year for four families who suffered unimaginable losses after their children ate contaminated meat at the establishment.

Unsurprisingly, the chain found itself on the verge of bankruptcy. However, in a matter of years, it had not only recovered,

but also doubled its number of locations — a feat that is now considered one of the most impressive comebacks in contemporary business history.

If this is the first time you’ve heard this story, you may be shocked that a company responsible for something so horrific was able to salvage its sales at all, let alone become the fifth-largest burger chain in the U.S. just years thereafter — but that’s exactly what happened.

The reality is that no enterprise can escape at least some degree of error. And while there is certainly a vital difference between an erroneous invoice and unintentionally causing the unthinkable, certain damage-control strategies have proven successful time and again, no matter the blunder.

OWN THE GAFFE — AND FAST

Especially in today’s well-connected world, official statements get around fast. So does radio silence.

As soon as possible after disaster strikes, offer a firm and heartfelt apology. However, refrain from being overly apologetic or defensive. Instead, focus on action. The old adage, “Actions speak louder than words,” has stood the test of time for a reason.

Nevertheless, judicious and impactful action takes time to implement. So, while you get to planning, make sure from the get-go that your words reflect a sense of accountability and the intention to fix the problem.

WATCH YOUR WORDS

Word choice is paramount when delivering a public statement.

If your company serves an international market or consumers who speak a language other than English (as is the case of most businesses in the social media age, whether by design or not), take extra care that your mea culpa reaches your audience unscathed. The last thing you want is to create another mess when you’re already in damage-control mode.

For example, an international bank fell victim to a simple yet costly translation slip-up in 2009 when its catchphrase, “Assume Nothing,” was infamously mistranslated as “Do Nothing.” The mishap cost the company \$10 million for a new ad campaign alone.

Be aware of variants in widespread languages like Spanish and English that can make or break how your message is construed. Avoid embarrassment by hiring a professional translator who’s well versed not only in English, but the language and culture you aim to reach. Imagine, for example, how confused American consumers would be if a fast food restaurant referred to its French fries as “chips” (the British variant).

Furthermore, if there were ever a time to avoid using machine translation services, this would be it. There’s no room for error when it comes to cleaning up after a misstep, so make sure human translators — who are able to adequately interpret nuance and impact — craft the message in the new language before it reaches the public.

MAKE IT RIGHT

Words are vital when it comes to apologies, but they must be backed by tangible actions that illustrate genuine concern.

In the case of the fast food chain, the company offered to cover victims’ medical expenses, settling for amounts of up to \$15.6 million. The COO and chairman-cum-CEO attended mediation hearings to show their concern. The chain also

opened a question hotline and made a generous donation to research efforts seeking treatment for infections caused by the bacterium behind the outbreak.

This demonstration of remorse and accountability in actions big and small communicated the company’s commitment to doing better.

ESTABLISH LONG-LASTING CHANGE

Once apologies have been made in both words and deeds, it’s crucial to ensure the mistake isn’t repeated. It may be tempting to make the blemish disappear from sight, but finding a long-term solution is an indispensable step.

The fast food chain began cooking its burgers at temperatures guaranteed to kill the guilty bacteria. It also implemented additional safety measures to ensure the food was handled properly from producer to consumer. In fact, this system was so successful that it was later endorsed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Food and Drug Administration and came to be considered the gold standard among fast food chains.

The company didn’t stop there: It became so invested in harm-free dining that it continues to receive honors for its leadership in food safety to this day.

TURN LEMONS INTO LEMONADE

Believe it or not, mistakes can be a blessing in disguise. For this to be true, decision makers must think glass half full. Slip-ups present an opportunity to demonstrate your brand’s leadership, transparency and trustworthiness — and all of this at a time when you’re already in the spotlight. Just make sure it’s for better, not for worse.

A well-known pizza chain faced a rude awakening when one of its employees shared a video of himself tarnishing food in the kitchen. When the video went viral, it turned out the company had an even bigger problem on its hands: They admitted that customers had been complaining of pizza that tasted “like cardboard” and sauce

Bottom line:
Businesses are no more perfect than humans. Every organization will face its day of reckoning, big or small.

that tasted “like ketchup.”

Instead of succumbing to an apparently imminent downfall, the company’s leaders decided to come clean and promised to improve their product. Shortly thereafter, they introduced a new pizza recipe, as well as a novel on-line ordering system designed to appeal to the younger generation. Their shares increased 60-fold and the company is now worth \$60 billion.

NEXT TIME YOU’RE CAUGHT IN A MISTAKE, STAY CALM AND INNOVATE

Businesses are no more perfect than humans. Every organization will face its day of reckoning, big or small. Luckily, history demonstrates that it’s not the mistake itself, but the response, that leaves a lasting impression. And as in the case of the fast food chain, if addressed properly, a foul-up can even be turned into an asset.

So, next time your business finds itself in a rough spot, remember the importance of accepting blame and saying you’re sorry. Then roll up your sleeves, fill your metaphorical glass, and turn the blunder into your next wonder.

Emily Safrin is a certified Spanish-to-English translator and an active member of the American Translators. For more, visit atanet.org.

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Speculation Rampant About “The Wall’s” Impact on Golf

BY
STEVE
EUBANKS



“The way the eminent domain laws are written, **we have no rights. That’s abhorrent to me.**”

As with everything dealing with Pres. Donald Trump’s proposed border-security barrier, the politically-charged “wall,” speculation is running rampant about who will be affected. Golf is a big part of that. Low-lying areas of the Rio Grande basin in Texas have been perfect for golf courses for years.

The Max A Mandel Municipal Golf Course in Laredo, for example, sits nestled between the river to the south and highway 69W to the north. Should the wall come to Laredo, it will likely be right along the course.

“We welcome Border Patrol to come in and put their sensors, their cameras,” said Mauricio Vidaurri, who owns 140 acres along the Mexican border in the Laredo area. But Vidaurri, like many residents, worries about where a wall will be built and how the government will take the land.

“The way the eminent domain laws are



Max A Mandel
Municipal
Golf Course in
Laredo, Texas.

written, we have no rights,” said Gary Jacobs, a 77-year-old retired banker in Laredo. “That’s abhorrent to me.”

For some, the questions are not hypothetical or philosophical. In Brownsville, the Fort Brown Memorial Golf Course has been gone so long there is almost no trace that it ever existed. Located on a peninsula in one of the Rio Grande’s many bends, an Obama-era fence, one of the ones with slats that has been shown in the news lately, cut off the course from the rest of Texas. Only one small gap in the fence remained for golf traffic.

But while the fence has been cited as the final blow to Brown Memorial, other factors played a large role.

Several additional golf complexes opened in the Brownsville area, putting pressure on rounds in the depth of the Great Recession.

There was also gunfire. As drug activity increased on the Mexican side of the border — one of the main reasons the fence was erected in the first place — membership at Brown Memorial dwindled.

No one knows if any golf courses will be affected by the proposed wall, just as no one knows how much, if any of it, will be built. But that won’t stop speculation from running rampant.

It already is.

Steve Eubanks is an Atlanta-based freelance writer and New York Times bestselling author.

Course Lessee Proposes Innovative Solution to Capital Expenditure

By Steve Eubanks

Golf's capital expenditures are like wisdom teeth. They're big, you know they're there, and you know you have to do something about them. But the dread, pain, expense and the time necessary to take care of them makes it much easier to put them off.

No capital project invokes more procrastination than replacing an irrigation system. Not only is a new system always shockingly expensive, but ripping up fairways and collars to replace pipes and heads also tears out of a chunk of the business season. Then, unlike new bun-

kers, renovated tee boxes or redesigned greens, when an irrigation replacement is over, the customer can't immediately see the improvement. So, too often, operators let the system slide until it's too late.

That's exactly what happened in Meridian, Idaho, at the city-owned Lakeview Golf Course. Built in 1978 by a local developer who donated the course to the city, a good portion of Lakeview's irrigation system hasn't been touched since it went in the ground 41 years ago. As a result, at a city council meeting in February, Erik Oaas, who leases Lakeview from Meridian, called the course's irrigation system, "a catastrophic failure now."

Just like with wisdom teeth, every-

one knew the day of reckoning would come. But for years, everyone in Meridian pushed the problem away. Oaas assumed the lease in 2005 under the same terms as the previous lessees: He pays \$6,000 a year in rent and assumes all maintenance and operational expenses, but he keeps the operating profits.

In February, because of the irrigation failure and the estimated \$2.5 million needed to replace the system, Oaas went to the city council with an in-



No capital project invokes more procrastination than replacing an irrigation system.

triguing proposal. If some of the land around the course could be designated as a "community infrastructure district," a CID, bonds could be issued to cover the cost of the irrigation system. But in order to qualify as a CID, Oaas needed the city

to give him 10 acres to develop as high-end condominiums for adults over 50 years old. Each condo would have a fee. Those fees would be used to relieve the bonds. It's a convoluted plan, but one other lessees should watch closely. If Oaas' condo project is successful, he not only can use

the funds from the assessments to pay off the bond, he has submitted a plan to the city to refurbish tee boxes and renovate the clubhouse. He will also have residents adjacent to the course, which could provide a built-in base of players.

Necessity sparks all manner of innovation. This creative financing plan might fail. But if it succeeds, it could set an example for municipal lessees everywhere.

Steve Eubanks is an Atlanta-based freelance writer and New York Times bestselling author.

Golf Course Operator's Bill of Rights for Marketing and Distribution of Tee Times

1. Operator shall have total ownership of his or her tee time inventory, including the ability to share access with or restrict access to any tee time agency.
2. Operator shall have full control of all pricing for all tee time inventory across all channels of distribution and online tee time agencies, which includes retaining the right to lowest price guarantee on his/her own website.
3. Operator's tee time availability and pricing shall be accurately displayed and free from misrepresentation.
4. Operator shall receive comprehensive and transparent data related to all performance and activity with all distribution partners, agencies and affiliates, including but not limited to customer name and email address, tee time reservation data, revenue, price paid for tee times, impressions and clicks.
5. Operator shall have the option to pay cash for all technology and marketing services.
6. Operator shall retain all rights associated with his/her business brand, name and likeness, which shall not be used in marketing by any agent or affiliate without the Operator's written permission.
7. Operator shall have the right to cancel any agreement with any tee time agency or affiliate without being subject to excessive fees, penalties or evergreen terms.
8. Operator shall have the right to enforce their own policies and procedures, including but not limited to cancellation or no-show policies, when such policies are in conflict with partnered or affiliated tee time agencies.

This "Operator's Bill of Rights" is presented by the Golf USA Tee Time Coalition as a quick reference for golf course owners, golf course operators and PGA Professionals to consider when evaluating and negotiating for services related to tee time software and distribution. Consideration of the concepts articulated in this Operator's Bill of Rights will assist in positioning your facility to develop an industry leading service relationship with its providers.

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Final
THOUGHTS

Randy Solis
Golf/Recreation Supervisor
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How does operating a golf course for a city government differ from other golf operations?

Operating a golf course for a city government allows a certain level of flexibility as it relates to programs/activities offered compared to those offered at other golf operations. For example, at Fairmount Golf Course we are testing the market with non-traditional programs and events for the community. This includes youth activities/camps, movies on the range, adult clinics, lunch and learn sessions, FootGolf and basic instruction. This has been a great tool for attracting individuals and families that have never visited a golf course before. Many continue to visit the golf course after these events.

Have you encountered any problems finding qualified employees?

Like many other golf operations, it has been difficult to find qualified employees. Our recruitment efforts are targeted to the local colleges and universities within the region. Many of our staff have a background in golf, but it is not a requirement for employment.

Being a city course, what are Riverside's prime demographics?

Fairmount Golf Course attracts a high volume of senior athletes annually (approximately 70 percent). However, we have experienced a recent spike in our youth participation level. We attribute this to our efforts in offering youth programs at the golf course. Additionally, Fairmount Golf Course hosts local high school matches and is the home course for several schools in the area. This brings the athletes back.

What was your most recent marketing campaign about?

The most recent marketing campaign was a full-page spread in the city's winter/spring activity guide. In the spread, all programs, events and services at Fairmount Golf Course are highlighted. Every resident in the city receives a copy of this brochure in the mail. With a population of 300,000+ residents, it has been a great marketing tool for the golf course.

What is the most popular event you host at the course?

Beginner clinics for adults have proven to be extremely popular at Fairmount Golf Course. These group clinics provide a fun and non-intimidating atmosphere for novice golfers to learn the basic skills and rules of the sport.

Have you had to deal with any severe weather/fire conditions in Riverside?

Fortunately the most severe weather conditions experienced in Riverside are high temperatures (100+ degrees in the summer months), some rain and occasional high winds. Fairmount Golf Course is open 363 days of the year.

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Name _____

Title _____

Company _____

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City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Fax _____

Email (required) _____

Are you a current member of the National Golf Course Owners Association?

☐ Yes ☐ No

1) Do you wish to receive/continue to receive *Golf Business* FREE?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Signature X Date _____

2) Which one option best characterizes your organization? (check one only)

- 01 ☐ Golf Course Facility/Group of Facilities
02 ☐ Off-Course Golf Retailer
03 ☐ Golf Industry Manufacturer/Vendor/Distributor
04 ☐ Golf Course Consultant

3) What one option most closely matches your job function/title? (select one only)

- 01 ☐ President/CEO
02 ☐ Owner/Operator
03 ☐ Chairman of the Board
04 ☐ CFO/Financial Manager
05 ☐ General Manager
06 ☐ Club Manager
07 ☐ Director of Golf
08 ☐ Executive/National/Regional Director/Manager
09 ☐ Purchasing Manager/Buyer
10 ☐ Golf Professional
11 ☐ Golf Superintendent
12 ☐ Member, Board of Directors
13 ☐ Marketing/Sales Manager/Director
15 ☐ Other (please specify) _____

4) Which one best describes the nature of your organization? (select one only)

- 10 ☐ Private
11 ☐ Privately-Owned Daily Fee
12 ☐ Semi-Private
13 ☐ Resort
14 ☐ Municipal/State/County
16 ☐ Military
17 ☐ University/College
18 ☐ Driving Range/Practice Facility
20 ☐ Development Company
28 ☐ Golf Course Builder
21 ☐ Other (please specify) _____
21 ☐ Not Applicable

5) Are you affiliated with a golf course management company?

01 ☐ yes 02 ☐ no

6) How many facilities, in total, are you personally responsible for?

- 80 ☐ less than 2 83 ☐ 10 or more
81 ☐ 2 - 4 99 ☐ Not applicable
82 ☐ 5 - 9

7) What is the average greens fee for a typical round of golf at your facility? If you work at multiple facilities, please indicate the average greens fee across all facilities.

- 01 ☐ nothing/private 05 ☐ \$75 - \$99
02 ☐ o less than \$25 06 ☐ \$100 - \$149
03 ☐ \$25 - \$49 07 ☐ \$150 or more
04 ☐ \$50 - \$74 08 ☐ not applicable

8) What is the total annual budget or expenditures for which you are responsible?

- 50 ☐ less than \$99,000 53 ☐ \$500,000 - \$999,000
51 ☐ \$100,000 - \$249,000 54 ☐ \$1,000,000 - \$2,499,000
52 ☐ \$250,000 - \$499,000 55 ☐ \$2,500,000 or more

9) In which ways are you personally involved in your organization's purchasing decisions?

- 60 ☐ Determine annual budget expenditures
61 ☐ Authorize final purchases
62 ☐ Determine needs of the operation
63 ☐ Specify/recommend vendors or suppliers
64 ☐ Specify/recommend specific brands
65 ☐ Evaluate brands for purchase

10) Which products/services listed below do you specify, recommend, buy or approve the purchase? (select all that apply)

- A ☐ Golf Cars
B ☐ Turf Equipment
C ☐ Course Design/Construction/Renovation
D ☐ Irrigation & Drainage
E ☐ Chemicals, Fertilizer & Seed
G ☐ Clubhouse Design/Construction/Renovation
H ☐ Financial Services
I ☐ Legal Services
F ☐ Course Accessories
J ☐ Insurance
U ☐ Marketing Services
L ☐ Pro Shop Apparel
M ☐ Pro Shop Equipment
P ☐ Food & Beverage
R ☐ Computers/Technology
V ☐ Furniture/Fixtures
W ☐ Human Resources/Staffing
K ☐ Consulting

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PEPSI	BC	813.361.9583	pepsico.com
RAIN BIRD	4	844.458.1032	rainbird.com
TORO	2-3	866.747.4027	toro.com/RM5010H
TROON	21		troon.com
YAMAHA GOLF CARS	IFC, 1		yamahagolfcar



Cleveland Country Club Shelby, NC

Just 40 minutes west of Charlotte, private, 1926 championship course with large southern style clubhouse with pro shop, bar/grill, dining room, meeting rooms, locker rooms, offices, two pools, tennis courts and more. \$1,350,000. Possible lender financing available. Contact Brett at Miller Management Associates, Inc. 828-775-7765, brett@mmagolf.com

Confidential - Retail Store Carolinas location

Yes, a retail store that is profitable and more than just supplemental income. Includes the business, equipment, trade name, inventory (fluctuates) Has been around over 12 years with two owners and this year is best year ever! \$145,000 plus current inventory. Call Brett at Miller Management Associates, Inc. 828-775-7765, brett@mmagolf.com.

Crosswinds Signature Par 3 Greenville, SC

Unique upscale lighted, 18 hole Par 3 course located in incredible location in the heart of the thriving Upstate of SC. Hotels, retail, rooftops at the doorstep of this facility with full visibility to the 385 beltway. Clubhouse, maintenance facility, and more. **JUST SOLD**

immense potential for new revenue streams. Contact Brett at Miller Management Associates, brett@mmagolf.com 828-775-7765 for more info. \$625,000. Possible owner financing.

Mount Mitchell Golf Club & Condos Burnsville, NC

NEW LISTING LEGENDARY MOUNT MITCHELL GOLF CLUB AND CONDOS - One owner (almost 50 years) and first time on the market. This stunning mountain classic sits at the foot of the largest peak in the eastern US and has the beautiful Toe River trout stream flowing beside it and just off the Blue Ridge Parkway. Bent grass greens and fairways, this championship course has always been in the rankings and on everyone's must play list. Clubhouse, restaurant, bar, grill, meeting room, 10 condos building site. Call us for more information. Miller Management Associates, Inc. Brett D. Miller, brett@mmagolf.com, 828-775-7765. In conjunction with Hilda Allen Real Estate.

Retreat at Lake Toxaway Country Club Lake Toxaway, NC

NEW: Stunning mountain home/lodge/retreat at one of Western NC's premier communities Lake Toxaway Country Club. Incredible 60 mile mountain and lake views from all rooms in this 5700 square foot custom home. Recent reappraisal at \$1,345,000, priced now at \$849,900. Call Brett at Miller Management Associates, 828-775-7765 or brett@mmagolf.com.

Silver Creek Plantation Golf Course Morganton, NC

Western North Carolina, 18 hole championship design, rolling terrain with bermuda fairways and bent grass greens. Includes excellent practice facility that is golf school ready, practice green, pavilion, spectacular clubhouse. NO deferred maintenance. Contact Brett at Miller Management Associates, 828-775-7765 or brett@mmagolf.com additional lots and land available. PRICE REDUCTION NOW \$1,150,000 Owner Financing Possible.

Skyland Lakes Golf Club Fancy Gap, VA

Beautiful, rolling 18 hole course located ON the Blue Ridge Parkway near the VA/NC state line. Includes pro shop, snack bar, rec room and 6 lodge rooms in clubhouse. Also, 39 lots included!! Separate maintenance facility, includes equipment. Great owner operator option and owner finance option available. Only \$750,000. Contact us for more information. Brett Miller at Miller Management Associates, brett@mmagolf.com; 828-775-7765 In conjunction with Hilda Allen Real Estate.

Springdale Resort Canton, NC

Stunning 388+/- acre property with development potential for a variety of uses from equestrian, Summer Camp, winery, RV/campground, etc. Includes improvements such as clubhouse, maintenance buildings, water plant and more. This is a true opportunity in Western NC with limited golf courses and large land tracts. Close proximity to Asheville. Contact Brett at Miller Management Associates, brett@mmagolf.com; 828-775-7765.

AUCTION Aspen Lakes Golf Course Sisters, Oregon

Aspen Lakes Golf Course & Development Land in Sisters, Oregon. Three (3) Lots/800+ Acres - a once in a Generation Development/Investment opportunity! One of the last remaining Parcels Zoned for a Resort/Residential Development. Bid Deadline May 28, 2019; Auction Date June 4, 2019. Contact Doug Greenspan, Keen-Summit Capital Partners LLC 646-381-9218, dgreenspan@keen-summit.com. <http://www.keen-summit.com/projects/bankruptcy-sale-aspen-lakes-golf-course-and-development-sisters-oregon/>

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NGCOA In Action

INDUSTRY EVENTS



Give Your Golf Business a Voice on Capitol Hill on May 1, 2019



On Wednesday, May 1, WE ARE GOLF, the NGCOA and other industry partners will show key legislators the importance of golf in communities across the nation when we converge on Capitol Hill for National Golf Day 2019. At NGD19, industry leaders will meet with Members of Congress, the Executive Branch, and federal agencies to discuss golf's 15,000 diverse businesses, two million jobs impacted, tax revenue creation and tourism value. If you'd like to join other NGCOA members at this critical event, please email Ronnie Miles, NGCOA's Director of Advocacy.

Visit WEAREGOLF's National Golf Day web page for details, to view a tentative schedule, and to read more about the Community Service project. (If you need accommodations in

Washington, please contact the Sheraton Pentagon City at 703-521-1900 by April 8.) **Visit WEAREGOLF.org for details.**

SAVE THE DATE for Golf Business Conference 2020, January 20-22 in Orlando!

We know it's a year away, but you should mark your calendar TODAY for Golf Business Conference 2020, at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, FL.

Expert speakers, relevant education, the annual Yamaha Golf Outing and Celebration & Awards Dinner, access to the PGA Merchandise Show exhibition hall, and abundant opportunities to connect with hundreds of your peers and industry suppliers... all in one place!

More information about the event is coming soon...visit **golfbusinessconference.com** for details.



INDUSTRY EVENTS



Engage, empower and support women's golf at Women's Golf Day, June 4

Why host a Women's Golf Day 2019 event at your course? Join the voices of 900 locations in 52 countries for a greater cause, affecting people around the world, and be recognized as an official participant in a growing movement that inspires women and girls to learn the skills that last a lifetime. Additionally, promoting your participation will result in more visibility and positive exposure for your course, increasing business year-round!

Register your golf course and receive:

- Placement on the WGD homepage interactive map
- With the ability to be geolocated from anywhere in the world once registered on the website
- Unique, editable profile page on the WGD website
- Digital marketing toolkit including social media, posters, graphics, and more
- Multimedia coverage including TV, magazine, newspaper, blogs and more
- Access to unique golf-industry offers and opportunities such as seminars, webcasts, etc.
- Other benefits including discounted merchandise and more!
- And you'll give new customers in your area the perfect way to get into golf!

Visit womensgolfday.com/register to learn more and register your course.

#WOMENSGOLFDAY



June 4, 2019
WWW.WOMENSGOLFDAY.COM

#inviteHER to play at your golf facility!

The #inviteHER campaign is a golf industry initiative powered by **WE ARE GOLF** and **LPGA Women's Network** designed to encourage golfers to make a concerted effort to invite more women to play golf. inviteHER recently announced partnerships with some of the golf industry's most influential brands, management companies (including some NGCOA members!) and governing bodies, including Arcis Golf, Billy Casper Golf, ClubCorp, Destination Kohler, Landscapes Management Company, Marriott Golf, PGA of America, LPGA Teaching and Club Professionals, Touchstone Golf and Walt Disney World Golf.

#inviteHER

The #inviteHER movement seeks to create an enjoyable, welcoming experience for those interested in trying the game or picking it back up—whether through a group lesson, complimentary clinic, driving range session or on-course experience. **Many owners/operators have committed to transforming existing women's programs into official #inviteHER sponsored events;** facilities can access complimentary programming toolkits, best practices, and marketing templates for hosting #inviteHER events of their own. **Visit lpgawomensnetwork.com/inviteher to learn more.**

COMMUNITY



What are Other NGCOA Members Talking About on Accelerate?

Did you know there are Accelerate Members-Only Communities you can join, based on your interests, needs and engagement with NGCOA?

Visit accelerate.ngcoa.org to read more about and add to the discussion of critical issues in golf business.

- Accelerate (General) Community for all NGCOA members
- Supplier Community for NGCOA's Corporate Members
- Advocacy Issues & Alerts
- Golf Business TechCon and Golf Business Conference for event attendees
- Trading Post where members can buy and sell used equipment

Here is a sample of recent discussions; reply to these, or post your own for member feedback!

Golf Cart Sponsors
“We are looking to get a sponsor for our carts and was curious as to other courses that have done this before.”

Why GOLFPASS May be the Worst Thing for Golf Courses Since the Bartered Tee Time
“While the economic pie of rounds and revenue seems to shrink, one can't help but notice the prosperous rise of Online Tee Time Agencies (OTTAs).”

Membership IDs
“Wondering what ideas might be out there to identify members on course.”

NGCOA Member Trading Post

Did you know Accelerate Member Community has a “Trading Post” where you can buy and sell used equipment? Visit accelerate.ngcoa.org/communities and join the Trading Post community today.

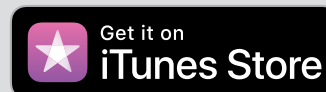


Please help us maintain accurate membership information; confirm your NGCOA member profile at ngcoa.org/profile.

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In each Golf Business Podcast episode, you'll enjoy a selection of segments on Inside Golf Business, Owner to Owner, and House Chat—original, curated, informative content to help your golf course business thrive and grow. Listen now!



PARTNERSHIPS



Get significant savings from NGCOA Insurance Services, no matter the size of your staff or the size of your course

NGCOA's newest member benefit, **NGCOA Insurance Services**, makes comprehensive and flexible insurance services affordable and available to golf courses of all sizes.

NGCOA member golf courses and their employees will have access to best rates on:



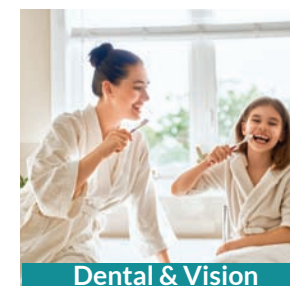
- **Medical & Pharmacy:** (includes Dental, Vision, Life and Disability insurance). NGCOA members can save an average of 10% on their healthcare and pharmacy spend.
- **Property & Casualty Insurance:** NGCOA members eligible for captive solutions can earn an average 30% of premium, less for guaranteed cost plans.
- **Flood Mitigation Services:** NGCOA members receive a detailed flood risk assessment, 24/7 flood monitoring, and 24/7 flood mitigation and defense.

“The majority of our member courses are small and medium-sized businesses, which are often challenged to find comprehensive and well-priced benefits and insurance for their employees and their properties,” said Jay Karen, Chief Executive Officer of NGCOA. “With the purchasing power of more than 3,500 member courses, our insurance partners are perfectly positioned to deliver great value for all our member courses—no matter the size.”

Visit ngcoainsuranceservices.com to learn more and get a quote for your golf business!



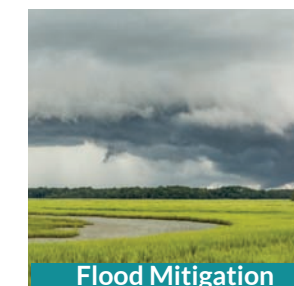
Medical & Pharmacy



Dental & Vision



Property & Casualty



Flood Mitigation

AFFILIATE NEWS



Save the Date for the North Carolina GCOA (NCGCOA) Annual Meeting October 8-9, 2019 at Pine Needles Lodge and Golf Club in Southern Pines, NC

Join owners and professionals at Pine Needles Lodge and Golf Club for a two day event of education, networking and golf. The event is open to all North Carolina owners, operators (whether or not NGCOA members at present) and their guests and/or CMAA members, Carolinas PGA professionals, CGCSA members, club reps, and vendors. Preferred rate accommodations are available on-site. Visit ncgolf.org or contact David Norman at 804-708-9760 or Dnorman008@gmail.com for more information.

NGCOA In Action

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SAVING
NOW

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NGCOA members get significant **discounts, rebates and value-added packages** from hundreds of the most recognized names and reputable, industry-leading companies. Many of these companies offer exclusive deals not available anywhere else.



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Members converting from a competitor receive \$50 per-car for purchase or lease. Members renewing their fleet receive a free registration for Golf Business Conference or TechCon.



Human Resources & Payroll
30% discount on new ADP services.



Business Credit Card
No Annual Fee with Unlimited 2% Cash Back.



Television Programming
Up to 60% savings on programming.



Food and Beverage
Typical savings is 7% to 15% on more than 800 vendors, including Sysco, Gordon Food Service, Performance Food Group, and many others.



Alternative Golf
15% discount on lowest pricing available at FlingGolf.com.



Pre-Owned Turf Equipment
Discounts on tiered pricing plus 120-day extended warranty (normally 90-day).



Automotive Vehicle Manufacturer
Significant factory direct fleet discounts on 2019 GM products.



Golf Simulators
5% discount off MSRP.



Insurance
Comprehensive employee benefits (health, dental, vision, life and disability), property casualty insurance, and flood risk assessment services at competitive rates.



Performance Reporting & Benchmarking
30%-50% discount on all reporting packages.



Beverage Supplier
Rebates on various Pepsi and Gatorade fountain, bottle and can products; includes equipment and service programs.



Customer Experience Solution
Free survey tool and 55% off Players 1st's top-tier Combined Package.



Irrigation Solutions
1.5% rebate on Rain Bird Golf Irrigation products.

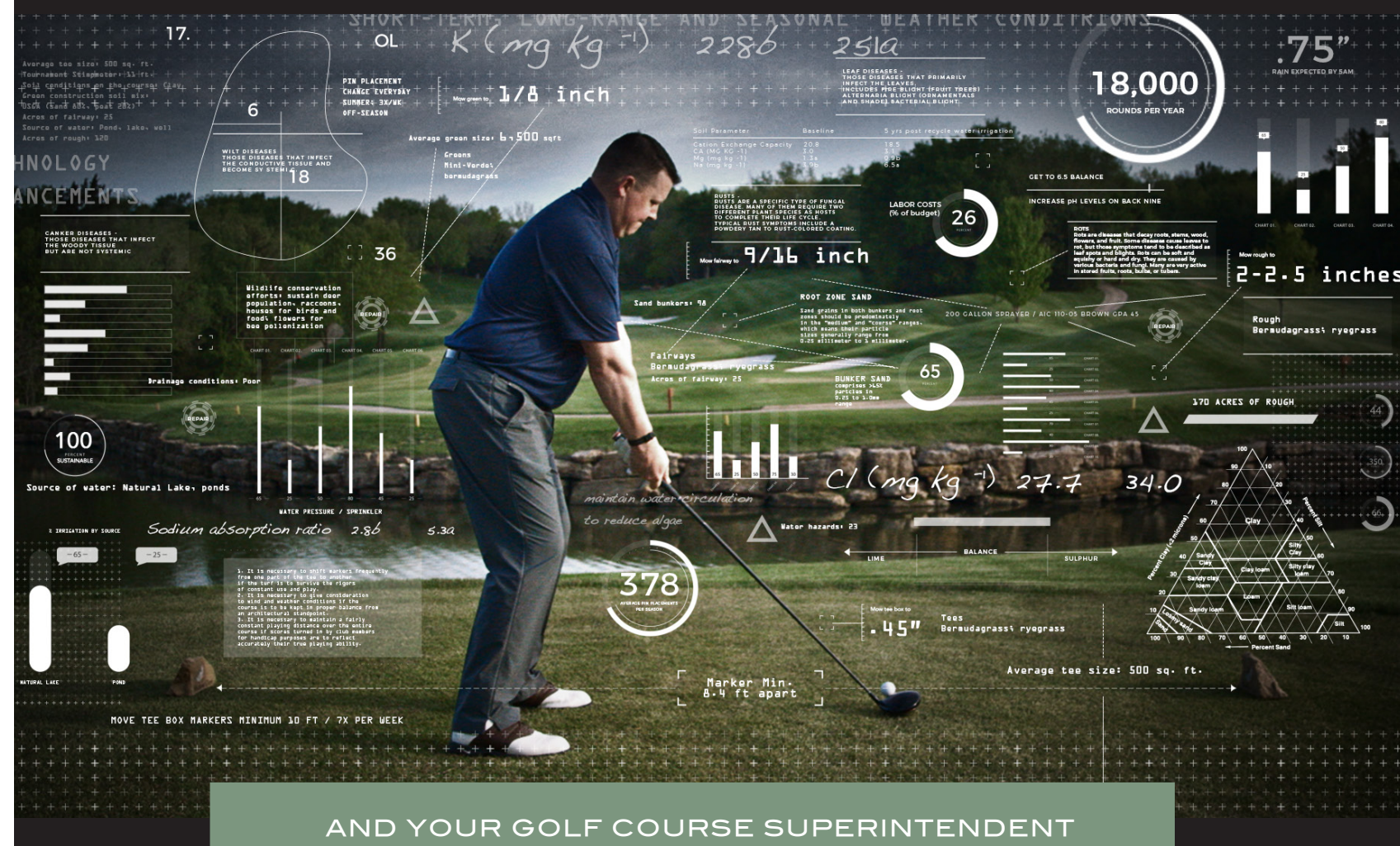


New and Used Turf Maintenance Equipment
1% rebate on new and/or 0.5% rebate on used Toro branded turf maintenance equipment.

FIND DETAILS AND TERMS ON SAVINGS
FROM THESE BRANDS AND MORE AT NGCOA.ORG/SMARTBUY



THERE ARE A MILLION THINGS
THAT NEED TO HAPPEN FOR
YOUR COURSE TO BE PLAYABLE.



AND YOUR GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENT
IS THINKING ABOUT THEM ALL.

The pH of this.
The growth of that.
Too much moisture.
Not enough moisture.
Managing resources.
Balancing an ecosystem.
And that's just over coffee.

So say thanks to your golf course superintendent. Or make that, thanks a million.





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