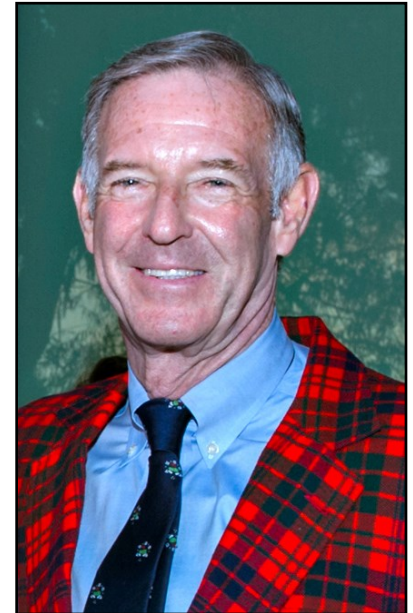

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Seizing the Moment

With this being my final President's Corner, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of my fellow ASGCA members for allowing me the honor to serve and represent our organization. My time as President has been personally very fulfilling. I have been frequently exposed and have gained a much greater appreciation for the creative, thoughtful and passionate commitment that each member displays for his or her business and for our profession generally. It has been enriching to view firsthand how each member approaches their projects with the highest levels of integrity and to witness how they understand that by being a member of the ASGCA it not only enhances their personal career but helps build our organization and profession into a more powerful and respected voice within the industry.

I would also like to recognize the thoroughness and professionalism that our ASGCA staff possesses. Over the last five years the ASGCA has undertaken many major projects and each has been successfully completed in a timely and very cost effective manner. Two examples have been the successful release of the water booklet and the introduction and implementation of the partners program. Both of these initiatives make a very positive statement for our organization, and I'm sure the partners program will supply us with the much needed wherewithal to unveil further imaginative ideas and initiatives that will be beneficial to members of our organization.



Steve Smyers, ASGCA

As the business of our industry has evolved so has the business of the ASGCA. I am confident that Chad and the team at Milwaukee, together with our executive committee, will make the most of our changing environment.

As I discussed in my previous President's Corner column, innovation has been one of the catalysts for the worldwide growth and acceptance of the game of golf. In every decade since 1900 new and innovative products have been introduced into the market place and, because of this, the nature of the game and the design of golf courses has evolved.

Once again, the spirit of change is upon us. I am convinced that our ability to identify, to embrace and to plan for it will help dictate the further growth and development of golf for years to come.

The participants in the game today are more diverse in age, talent and expectations than at any other time in history. Many golf enthusiasts among the younger generation (and not necessarily the most skillful) have swing speeds that propel the golf ball high and very long. It is not uncommon for the accomplished young player to fly a driver 300 yards even at sea level. In contrast, the average member of the older generation has a swing speed that carries the ball at best 180 yards with a ball flight that is much lower and spins considerably less.

Today's golfers - regardless of their talent levels - prefer and demand firm and fast playing conditions. The new varieties of turf grasses perform at their best when they are maintained at a short height of cut with the moisture content in the soil kept at very low levels. Putting surfaces today are typically smooth, fast and firm. Fairways and green surrounds are normally in pristine condition, rarely causing the golfer to experience a poor lie.

All of this favors the younger long ball hitter who imparts a high degree of spin on the ball. This golfer is less concerned about angles of approach and more focused on his ability to control spin and launch angle. The firmer conditions do not assist the older golfer who has a slower swing speed, cannot impart as much spin on the ball and who has a lower launch angle.

The new varieties of bunker sand, combined with modern day maintenance practices, invariably produces an ideal and predictable lie whenever an errant shot finds a bunker.

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER (CONT.)

The inevitable consequence of this introduction of enhanced turf grasses, bunker sands and improved maintenance practices is that the playing characteristics of putting surfaces, bunkers, fairways and green surrounds have all altered tremendously over the last few years. This, along with the trend to water less and to produce courses with fewer areas of highly maintained turf, all points toward a dynamically changing sport.

But equally, this is precisely where the 'seize the moment' opportunities - for us as architects, for our clients, and for the game itself - lie. While the fundamentals of design such as creating a golfing rhythm, a harmonious setting and a special sense of place will not change, adapting to and planning for the way golfers will play the game in the future will be our challenge and our opportunity for development and growth.

I am confident that just as our predecessors responded to the changing scenarios and embraced the various innovations and new introductions to the game, so will we ... and because of this, golf will continue to flourish. I am always happy to hear from you at steve@stevesmyers.com.

- Steve Smyers, ASGCA
2015 - 2016 President