

THE SEPULVEDA EAGLE

SEPULVEDA MEN'S GOLF CLUB

February 2009

**Official publication
of the
Sepulveda Men's Golf Club**

**Visit our website
at
www.smgc.org**

Thursday February Tournament

The monthly Thursday tournament for February will be played at Hansen Dam on February 26. The format is 2 man teams, partners better ball. Call **Gene Vano** at **(818) 703-0749** if you want to play. Sign up on-line and pay by credit card at smgc.org or use the coupon on page 8.

Golf, Corned Beef & Cabbage St. Pat's Party, March 26

Come and get it! A whole day of golf and an evening of corned beef and cabbage, beer or soft drinks and prizes. Our entertainment chairman Allen Weiss promises to provide outstanding Irish entertainment. It's the first big social event on SMGC's 2009 Master Calendar and it's going to be laughs and gags non-stop....a humdinger you won't want to miss.

The tab for golf, sweeps and the best corned beef and cabbage this side of Dublin.....the works, is \$50, honest! Sign up online and pay by credit card at smgc.org or call **Gene Vano** at **(818) 703-0749** if you want to play.



Sunday Tournament

The Sunday tournament for March will be played at Simi Hills on March 8. The price is \$70 and includes carts. Call **Gene Vano** at **(818) 703-0749** if you want to play. Sign up on-line and pay by credit card at smgc.org or use the coupon on page 8.

2009 SMGC ROSTER

Your new Roster is almost ready to go to the press and will be mailed to you with your March Eagle. Addresses, phone numbers and email addresses are being taken from your signup or renewal forms. **If anything has changed** please contact **David Carlson** at **(818) 996-1837** with any questions.

JOHN C. PALUMBO MEMORIAL

River Ridge, Sunday, May 3

Make your plans now for this annual tournament named in honor of our own "Mr. Sepulveda" John C. Palumbo. This is considered a major tournament and you do have to qualify to enter. Qualification is as follows:

- 1) You must have been a SMGC member for at least 4 months, plus a minimum of 8 scores posted in the preceding 6 months.**
- 2) You must have played in at least 4 SMGC sponsored events in the last 12 months (May 1, 2007 thru May 1, 2008).**

This tournament will be an **individual** low net & low gross event using the low index of the last 12 months (as of 4/01/08). Players can only win (the higher prize of) low net or low gross - **not both**.

Starting times will be assigned by handicap (no exceptions) and will be posted on the web. Check next month's Eagle for sign up information.

Annual Thursday Shotgun - April 23

Sign ups will be coming soon for SMGC's annual Thursday shotgun. The tournament will be a surprise location and is limited to 120 players and here's what chairman Gene Vano has lined up: a partner best ball 1 o'clock shotgun start with carts, closest to the pins.

If you like two-man partner's better ball, this is the place to be. Team up or Gene will set you up with a partner. Check next month's Eagle for sign up information.

Dated material -- Periodical



MGA 2009

By Pete Heller

SEPULVEDA TOPS HANSEN DAM TWICE; SENIORS SPLIT WITH GRIFFITH PARK

Rancho Park - Jan 15 2009

The 2009 MGA League season got under way on a warm, clear day that seemed more like July than January. The course played tough though as only a gifted few were able to shoot rounds under net par.

The Sepulveda Men's Golf Club, looking every bit like the Champions they finally are, lost only 3 of 12 individual matches as they dispatched a game Hansen Dam team 42-30 and 19-17.

Todd Wade's Rancho Park served notice that they want the MGA Perennial Trophy back on their shelves as they easily defeated Woodley Lakes 41-28 and 21-15. The Sepulveda Seniors fought hard but could only manage a split with Griffith Park. The Seniors won the two-man handily 24-12, but lost the individual matches 41-31. An interesting anomaly occurred in the final match when Ken Oberg and Dean Abston were set back 2-4 and 0-6 in the singles yet still won the doubles 6-0.

Sepulveda Match Winners

Sepulveda Men's Club - Individual Mike Schell,

Hadi Morshed,

Dan Crawford, Derek Malmsten, Gene Vano,

Len Zambito and George Bryson.

Two-Man:

Radtke/L. Malmsten, Kato/Morshed, Bryson/Carlson

Sepulveda Seniors - Individual

Bill House, Deron Jones, Ray Stuckert, Ron Abramson and Mike Cornner.

Two-Man:

Skinner/Jones, Lanza/Prieto,

Pearson/Abramson Cornner/Stuckert, Oberg/Abston

| STANDINGS | W | L | T | Points |
|-----------------|---|---|---|--------|
| Sepulveda Men's | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Rancho Park | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Sepulveda Srs. | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Griffith Park | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Hansen Dam | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Woodley Lakes | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |

Next matches: Hansen Dam February 19

9:00 Rancho Park vs Griffith Park

9:45 Woodley Lakes vs Hansen Dam

10:35 Sepulveda Srs. vs Sepulveda

Book a Tee Time

If you have a Los Angeles city reservation card you can now book a tee time online 24/7 for any of the 13 City of Los Angeles courses. This is a new program the city is providing. Go to www.golf.lacity.org and try it out.

Remember you must have a golf reservation card to use this service. You can also call any city course and make a same day tee time without a reservation card, this is based on availability.

2008-2009 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

| OFFICERS | FAX | PHONE |
|---|----------------|--------------|
| Rich Nance, President | (775.9501) | 422-3748 |
| Gene Vano, Vice President | (703.0786) | 703-0749 |
| Craig Kessler, Secretary | (714.994.5407) | 310-941-4803 |
| Dan Crawford, Treasurer | (805.582.5948) | 497-6617 |
| DIRECTORS | | |
| Dean Abston | | 439-4490 |
| Marty Barkin | | 310-487-6565 |
| Virgil Budhu | | 737-1919 |
| Dave Carlson | | 996-1837 |
| Irv Chern | | 348-7626 |
| Ed Cohn | (363.8028) | 363-8028 |
| Said Jabbari | | 310-472-2316 |
| Tom Knickerbocker | | 752-7877 |
| Mark Michelini | | 470-0196 |
| Hadi Morshed | (310.322.9600) | 310-322-4400 |
| Ken Oberg | (763.3226) | 763-3226 |
| Stu Olster | (222.2591) | 222-2516 |
| Gerard Pearson | | 893-2170 |
| Allen Weiss | (360.1286) | 360-8448 |
| Sandy Margolis, Ex officio | (756.8015) | 995-1172 |
| The Board meets at 6:30pm on the first Tuesday of each month. | | |

The Sepulveda Eagle (USPS 13-769) is the official publication of the Sepulveda Men's Golf Club and is published monthly.

Deadline for copy is the 3rd Friday of each month.

Irv Chern, Editor (818) 348-7626 • e-mail: IrvChern@aol.com
Rich Nance, Publisher (818) 422-3748 • e-mail: rich@laproforms.com

Annual subscription is \$3.00.

The Club's office is located at
16821 Burbank Blvd, Encino CA 91436.

This February 2009 issue is Vol. 52, No. 2

Postmaster: Send address changes to:

Sepulveda Men's Golf Club

P.O. Box 57373, Sherman Oaks, CA 91413-2373

Periodicals rate postage paid at Van Nuys, CA

Internet site: www.smgc.org

METAL SPIKES ARE OUT IN SMGC TOURNAMENTS

Your Board of Directors voted to ban the use of metal spikes at all future men's club tournaments and match play events played at Balboa and Encino. Only soft spikes or spikeless golf shoes will be permitted.

This action was taken to help eliminate damaging scrape and scratch marks on Sepulveda's delicate greens. Such notice will appear on our website, future issues of *The Eagle* and tournament instruction sheets.

A motion, sponsored by Handicap Chair Stu Olster, was made and the Golf Advisory Committee unanimously passed the motion and Golf Manager, James Ward, stated the ban would immediately be implemented.

JANUARY SCORE BOARD

THURSDAY TOURNAMENT ENCINO JANUARY 12

Two man teams - one best ball

"A" Flight

59 \$50 each

Jim Robison Mark Michelini

65 \$35 each

Donald Pistotnik John Halloran

Gene Vano Paul Barrere

66 \$20 each

Charles MacDonald Sean Mac Donald

67 \$10 each

Alfredo Picolomini Mark O'Keefe

"B" Flight

63 \$50 each

David Jochen Kris Kapur

65 \$40 each

Dean Abston Gary Pearson

66 \$20 each

John Lanza Ken Carlson

Victor Cervantes Irv Chernov

Rick Kopper Peter Heller

Gross Skins \$37 each

5 Rich Nance

9 John Halloran

10 Mark Michelini

12 Dean Abston

15 David Jochen

13 Charles MacDonald

17 Mark Michelini

Net Skins \$33 each

3 Kris Kapur

4 Kris Kapur

9 John Halloran

12 Dean Abston

13 Charles MacDonald

15 David Jochen

Closest to the Pins \$50 each

3 Ted Johnson 9' 4"

6 Arthur Schonfeld 7' 11"

15 David Jochen 10' 2"

17 Mark Michelini 7' 3"

Prize Money

All tournament place winnings are paid in gift certificates redeemable in the Encino/Balboa Pro Shop.

THURSDAY TOURNAMENT WOODLEY LAKES JANUARY 22

Stableford Scoring

"A" Flight High Net Point

40 Kris Kapur \$40

40 George Bryson \$40

40 Wayne Lura \$40

38 Victor Cervantes \$25

38 Taira Kato \$25

38 Michael Radtke \$25

37 William House \$15

37 David Jochen \$15

36 Bruce Fortune \$10

36 Tom Knickerbocker \$10

Gross Skins \$70 each

3 Tom Knickerbocker

10 George Bryson

12 Bruce Fortune

Net Skins \$33 each

1 Gene Vano

3 Tom Knickerbocker

10 George Bryson

12 Bruce Fortune

Closest-to-the-Pin \$40 each

7 Tom Knickerbocker 7' 3"

12 Bruce Fortune 4' 5"

15 Tom Knickerbocker 20' 7"

SMGC GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE

The SMGC Board of Directors established a standing "Grievance Committee" which will investigate and recommend resolutions of disputes arising within the Club.

The Grievance Committee will operate under procedures that assure the opportunity for a full hearing to any member bringing, or responding to, a grievance before it. When the Committee formulates its recommendations, and presents them to the Board, the Board will issue a decision in the matter, and that decision will be final.

We don't have many disputes in our Club that require the services of the Committee. But, having such a committee in place and ready to go will help assure that any disputes that do arise will be taken up and decided promptly and fairly.

SUNDAY TOURNAMENT BUENAVENTURA JANUARY 25

Individual - Gross, Net and Honey Pot

The Honey Pot had one winning team. Kessler/Vano with a 63 split \$150 for the team.

Low Gross

73 Beeri Meza \$65

78 Neil Zaniboni \$30

80 Phil Kapsimallis \$20

81 Asher Kamiel \$10

81 Rich Nance \$10

Low Net

70 Gene Vano \$65

72 Craig Kessler \$30

73 Randy Hammock \$20

74 Hadi Morshed \$10

41 Sepehr Raafat \$10

71 Roy Hay \$10

Gross Skins \$44 each

2 Craig Kessler

3 Rich Nance

8 Phil Kapsimallis

11 Gene Vano

17 Asher Kamiel

Closest-to-the-Pin \$25 each

5 Steve Goldstein 11' 7"

7 Beeri Meza 15" 0"

11 Wayne Johnston 11' 6"

14 Alan Stewart 2' 0"

17 Asher Kamiel 13' 6"

Net Skins \$31 each

2 Craig Kessler

6 Ken Carlson

8 Phil Kapsimallis

18 Randy Hammock

Sepulveda Phone Numbers

Many players program the starter's window and cart shack numbers into their cell phones to cover possible emergencies. Here are the Encino/Balboa numbers:

Starter's window (818) 995-1170

Cart shed (818) 788-9793

Coffee Shop/Bar (818) 789-1919

Don't abuse them, keep them silent during your round!!

HANDICAP CHATTER

By STU OLSTER, Handicap Chairman

This year more than 150 members of our Club were unceremoniously dropped from the rolls of Public Links Golf Association of Southern California and the SMGC roster when they failed to renew their memberships in time to get into the January 1 update. This calculates to 36% of our Club's December membership! Not only did these former members lose their posting privileges, they are ineligible to play in any Club events until they are back in the fold. In the past, they've also paid extra money to belatedly rejoin.

Members allowing their memberships to lapse who intend to rejoin the Club create extra work and quite a bit of concern to our Board. Every year the Handicap Chairman fields more than a few calls from members who just can't figure out why the posting computer says it never heard of them. Then there's the bother of posting all the rounds played while they were "out of bounds."

Our Board does its best to alert the members to deadlines for the payment of renewal dues by publishing them for many weeks in the Eagle and on the Club website at www.smgc.org. It's the members' responsibility to obtain that information and act on it, or bear the consequences.

I would be remiss if I failed to recognize the accomplishment of Gene Vano in reducing his index from 16.3 to 12.9 during 2008, an improvement of more than 20%! Other members who had the most improvement during the past year are Douglas Rockford, Thomas Jackson II, Arde Nozari, Steve Porter and Bill Brandel. Nice going gentlemen.

Questions or comments may be addressed to the author at slolster@yahoo.com

Have Your Say and Win Some Golf Balls!

Got a gripe? A question? A comment about the game or the Club? The Players Forum on the SMGC website offers members the opportunity to get it out in the open for all to read and comment on. Only one problem: we haven't been using it to its full potential.

So, The Board has opted to resort to bribery in order to beef up usage of this valuable communications tool.

Every month, the writer of the Forum "message of the month" will win two sleeves of ProV1s! Members of the Board of Directors will judge each month's entries, and present the winners with their Titleist prizes.

Can't think of a topic? How about rules, etiquette, pace of play, golf carts, course conditions... you get the idea. Just about everything and anything (within reason) that has to do with the game we all love. Click on the Forum page and put in your two cents worth!

TEE/CUP Chips

By Irv Chernow
Eagle-Eyed Editor

Talk about a stimulus package! SMGC's Board of Directors have voted unanimously to lower the cost of belonging to our Clu-b!

For new members, the entrance fee is now \$85 (down from \$100); and for those renewing their memberships, the dues are now \$75!

And when you consider that entrance fees for our monthly tournaments have remained at \$35, even after the City raised all fees last July 1, being a member here is the smart way to go. Of course, when we have a luncheon or dinner following tournaments the fee goes up slightly.

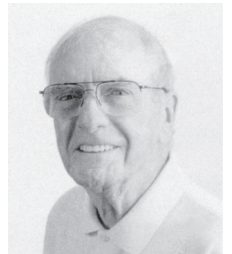
Times are tough. We all know that. Country clubs are losing members left and right; some are even going out of business! Attendance is down at our own events (yet the Sepulveda Seniors Golf Club still manages to attract 70-plus players every month). Golf stores, even the web golf shop sites are having huge sales. Economy experts agree that it'll take a couple of years to start seeing light at the end of the proverbial tunnel.

Rest assured that we've got your back where golf is concerned. These days, one of the smartest things you can do is be a member of Sepulveda Men's Golf Club! Our two home courses are in great shape from tee through green and fellowship is at an all-time high.

Above all...your Board of Directors know the score when it comes to taking care of our own!

In Memoriam

Jimmy Vollmer, one of our part-time marshals at the Encino/Balboa golf courses passed away on January 23 at the age of 79. Jimmy worked for us since 1992. Before retiring and beginning his part-time work for the city Jimmy worked as the Maitre D' at two of the world's greatest hotels (The Beverly Wilshire Hotel and the Bel Air Hotel). Before his death, he had just published a book "On the Outside Looking In" writing about his Maitre D' memoirs.



HOLES- IN-ONE

If you have knowledge of a hole-in-one by a member of the SMGC please contact **Leonard Zambito** by email at leonardzambito@hotmail.com or by phone at (818) 761-3846.

PROPOSED GOLF TAX SPEAK UP NOW OR FOREVER HOLD YOUR PEACE!

Lawmakers in Sacramento are SERIOUSLY talking about taxing golf. That's a tax on greens fees, driving range balls, cart rentals, lessons, club memberships and dues . . . on and on it goes! This unfair tax, which averages about 10% statewide, singles out golfers for taxation. Other sports and recreational activities are not being similarly taxed.

This is a REAL threat to our game in California. Without ACTION NOW, this tax could become law on **APRIL 1, 2009.**

The California Alliance for Golf (CAG) is working to mobilize golfers in California to stop this tax now. Visit www.forecalifornia.com today to learn more about this **THREAT** and the practical ways you can make your voice heard. The site takes you straight to the E-mail addresses of your Assemblyman and State Senator when you type in your street address. It provides sample E-mail communications and letters. It allows you to sign up for E-mail alerts as events unfold in Sacramento.

California needs a budget fix, but it should not come at the expense only of California's golfers and the California golf industry. There are other broad based, common sense solutions, and lawmakers need to hear from California's golfers about them today.

If pain there must be, then so be it. But it should be a shared pain -- one that doesn't single out certain industries and activities for disproportionate targeting.

Make your voice heard. Get involved. Visit www.forecalifornia.com today and learn how.

USGA RULE OF THE DAY

27-2a/4 Three Balls Played from Same Spot; Only Second Ball Was Provisional Ball

Q: A player, believing his tee shot might be lost or out of bounds, plays a provisional ball. His provisional ball is struck in the same direction as the original ball and, without any announcement, he plays another ball from the tee. This ball comes to rest on the fairway. What is the ruling?

A: If the original ball is not lost or out of bounds, the player must continue play with that ball without penalty.

If the original ball is lost or out of bounds, the player must continue play with the third ball played from the tee as, when this ball was played without any announcement, it rendered the provisional ball lost, regardless of the provisional ball's location. The player would lie 5 with the third ball played from the tee.

In both situations, the third ball bears a relationship only to the previous ball played, i.e., the provisional ball.

PUBLIC LINKS (PLGA) UPCOMING GOLF TOURNAMENTS

As a member of SMGC you are eligible to play in all of the many tournaments put on by our parent golf association. You can always get applications at www.plga.org or through the PLGA office (800) 272-7542. The two tournaments now taking applications:

LAUGHLIN OPEN

March 2-3

Rivers Edge (Needles) & El Rio (Bullhead City, AZ) Golf Courses
Edgewater Hotel – March 1 & 2, with March 3 Optional
Individual Low Net (36-hole and daily prizes)

Fee: \$195-\$215

Application Deadline: February 12

PLGA AMATEUR CHAMPIONSHIP

March 21-22 Net Flight Qualifying

“A” Flight (4.5 - 9.4) Mountain Meadows & Santa Anita

“B” Flight (9.5 – 13.4) Marshall Canyon & La Mirada

“C” Flight (13.5 – 17.4) Mountain Meadows & Santa Anita

“D” Flight (17.5 -) Marshall Canyon & La Mirada

March 28-29 Championship Flight Qualifying

(+ - 4.4) Rancho Park & Wilson

Final 36 Holes (27% of field makes cut)

April 4 – The Links at Summerly (Lake Elsinore)

April 5 – East Valley (Formerly PGA Champions

Course in Beaumont)

Individual Low Net for Flights / Low Gross for Championship

Fee: \$135

Application Deadline: March 6

Tournament applications soon to be released:

NEVADA OPEN

May 4 & 5

Location: Primm Valley Resorts Cost: \$TBD

Release Date: 4th Week of January

Closes: April 6, 2009

Format: Partner Better Ball

Max Field: 144 Teams

CORONADO CLASSIC

June 20 & 21

Location: Coronado G.C. – Coronado Island Cost: \$TBD

Release Date: 4th Week of January

Closes: May 15, 2008

Format: Individual Low Gross & Low Net

Max Field: 144 golfers

POST AT THE RANGE

There's a new posting computer at the Driving Range shop! It's convenient following a round at the new Balboa...and it's available until closing time at 10 pm!

AN *ICY* BLAST

from Dr. Warmth
aka GENE VANO

Last month I spoke harshly about the Maintenance schedule on our public golf courses. Some people in the Rec and Parks department didn't like what I had to say. Others agreed that the public gets the short end of the stick.

My story wasn't two days old when what to my crying eyes did arise? Mayor V and a bunch of smiling sycophants on TV announcing a new campaign to bring tourists to Los Angeles. The campaign tossed out a marketing catch phrase that was so galvanizing that I didn't catch it. "Viva LA" or "Visit LA" or "You Must Be Kidding LA."

The plan is to lure countless numbers of out-of-towners and their shrinking vacation dollars to LA and Voila! our budgetary problems...gone in the blink of an eye.

Now when the City talks tourists and their dollars, they are dabbling in an area that I have some familiarity with. I own a travel agency. So I reached back for brochures from all the warm weather resorts and cities that attract the visitors that "Hooray L.A." wants to exploit. In every area, in every city, right in the first paragraph is always reference to great or exceptional golfing opportunities. They show brilliant TV ads or print ads with beautiful facilities for the golfer and enticements that are really attractive.

Then we look at what "Show me the way to LA" has to offer. Our really famous courses are all private...Not a chance John Q can play them.

But wait ! We have Rancho Park and Griffith Park and there are three really great courses in those two facilities. Well John Q, go play there, you say.

An out-of-towner can not make a reservation on a city course for any amount of dollars, and if he shows up unannounced maybe he gets to play, maybe he doesn't. Okay, we got a time at Rancho lets hit some range balls. Wow! Look at this clubhouse.

It looks like it belongs on Tobacco Road. How about that driving range! If the Sahara ever runs out of sand they can get Rancho to deliver. Of course, it is helpful for gauging distance cause when the ball lands, you can see a little puff of dust as it rubs the last few dimples off. The restaurant needs one more lighting fixture so then there would be two. Of course, with more light you would see that it was freshly painted as recently as 1963. Did I mention the locker rooms ? Same painter, same day.

And then there is Wilson and Harding at Griffith Park. Built in 1923, the clubhouse still has the plaque from the WPA or CCC who built it, and the same coat of paint on some of it. The restaurant is nice but the bathrooms are absurd.

Now with the economy in the dumper, maybe we can get the 2009 version of the Make Work Stimulus group to remodel it.

The four Valley courses are not as famous, but they are in much better shape maintenance wise. But the driving range at Sepulveda looks like they surfaced it with material from the Martian Landscape.

The clubhouse at Hansen Dam. What can I say? For at least five years, the main door into the bar/restaurant from the golf course side requires Herculean strength to open. It was automated once and never fixed, so if you are in a foursome get your buddies to help open the door. The bathroom is an embarrassment.

The clubhouse at Woodley was built with the blueprint for San Quentin.

And so it goes. "Welcome To Hollywood" Oh did I mention the CARTS at all the courses ??? Most are dangerous to drive. If they ever get replaced they go straight to the Smithsonian. By the way the people who work at all these places are nice people.

The political/bureaucratic system that runs these courses, even George Orwell couldn't have imagined. The obstacles and road blocks are constantly in play.

So the upshot is The City will spend two or three million on ad campaigns. 26 tourists will respond. They will tell all their friends, "Go elsewhere. Go to Phoenix, Tucson, Palm Sprinkles or the ever ready anywhere in Florida resorts." We will have done our civic duty. We will have stimulated the economy.

Is this a great Country/City or what?

BACKSPIN SHOTS

by The Gapwedge

The definition of insanity, some say, is doing the same thing over and over yet expecting a different result next time. By that definition a whole lot of golfers, maybe even most of us, are insane.

Physical laws apply to golf, and they're rarely broken. So everybody knows the only real way to change how your shots fly is to change other things. No amount of yelling, wishing or even praying will make your ball go anywhere the physics doesn't want it to go.

Steely Dan must have had a golfer in mind when they sang, "...you go back, Jack, and do it again." Seems Jack the golfer usually goes back and does it again—and again, naturally with the same result.

No real golfer would admit he doesn't want to improve. So why is it so hard to make changes we know can help? The Gapwedge has some theories, but yours are just as good as his. The fact is changing just ain't that easy.

The Gapwedge wants to welcome all you new members of the Club. He thinks you will find much to like as a member. We share a variety of competitions on various courses in the area, good fellowship, an interest in community golf affairs and an overarching affinity for the game.

CITY CORNER

By Craig Kessler

I expected negative reaction to my column last month about privatization of the city golf system – “You Can’t Beat Something with Nothing.”

Even though it was clear that I was merely reporting all the behind-the-scenes and behind-closed-door machinations regarding the subject, I understood that I was openly discussing the jobs and careers of persons who work in the golf system. No matter how you trim it, privatization is bad news for public employees.

Well, instead of negativity, I received mostly appreciation for telling the truth – “appreciation” from the men and women who work the windows and the courses, that is. I heard nothing from those who manage them from on high in City Hall.

Perhaps, it was because so many know that I was one of the principal architects of golf privatization’s defeat back in the 1990’s, and that as one of those principal architects I too have much personally invested in the success of the public sector system that we fought so hard to protect from private encroachment. Or perhaps, it was because so many of the hard-working men and women who tend those windows and our courses know that I have always appreciated and respected their efforts -- and more importantly, recognized that when things didn’t always go as well as we all would have hoped, it had more to do with flawed systems than flawed workers.

But I have gotten one question repeatedly: If we have “nothing” to beat privatization with today, what was the “something” that you beat it with back in the 1990’s?

We certainly didn’t beat it with the status quo. That was indefensible even back then. We beat it with a vision of a viable alternative to both that status quo and what we referred to as the “American Golf Corporation Model of Municipal Golf Management” – a third way as it were, blending the best of private and public sector virtues, a businesslike, efficient, incentive laden system fully consistent with unionized public sector employment.

That “vision” required a number of structural changes -- among them a credible institution of public oversight (Golf Advisory Commission), a unitary Golf Division, a professional manager to oversee that unitary Division, a new set of job and/or Civil Service classifications to create and reward a truly professional cadre of golf specialists, and finally, an enterprise fund to guarantee the accountability central to any business activity that hopes to compete successfully against the private sector.

The golf community in the 1990’s thoroughly understood that this alternative “vision” would likely result in a more expensive municipal golf system than

its similarly situated LA County cousin; however, the community’s response at the time was a proud pronouncement that it didn’t mind paying the marginal increment necessary to protect the integrity of the workforce that delivered its golf product.

A naïve “vision?” Perhaps. But keep in mind that a number of those “structural changes” moved forward in rapid succession -- first, a Golf Advisory Committee that reported to the Board of Recreation & Park Commissioners, then the creation of a unitary golf division from the ashes of the old Balkanized regional parks structure, followed by the hiring of golf managers from outside the system, persons with experience operating municipal golf programs. The drafting of new job classifications, which had the 100% support of organized labor, was underway when progress began to stall.

But golfers are a patient lot. They understand that sometimes progress means two steps forward followed by one step back. And many, including me, believed that the march toward fulfillment of the “alternative vision” would pick up where it left off in short order.

“Many” were dead wrong!

Instead of marching forward, the Department retrenched. It began to treat its Golf Advisory Commission more as a nuisance than a partner. It stopped looking outside for leadership and instead turned inward. It retreated to old comfort zones. It stopped speaking confidently of competing successfully against its privately managed cousins and began whispering about its inability to stand on its own. It rejected an enterprise fund. Indeed, it rejected all discussions of meaningful structural reform.

To make a long and extremely painful story short, the Department ultimately backslid almost all the way toward the status quo that we all had deemed incapable of fending off privatization in the first instance, but with the added disadvantage of significantly higher prices the second time around.

We know the backslide will be complete when we hear that the persons who work in the Golf Division (it’s still a division in name if not in function) are being reclassified as “park attendants,” so that they can again move interchangeably with other parks employees just like back in the good old days -- “good old days” with higher prices, that is.

That’s where things stand today. The only surprise is that it took so long for the industry’s lobbyists to figure out that the system is now completely undefended, ripe for private plucking.

Do I have any regrets at having invested so much in a vision that ultimately failed? NOT IN THE LEAST! The men and women who toil every day on our golf courses under the most trying of circumstances were more than worth that failed effort.

Scripture tells us that “where there is no vision, a people perish.” It’s time for a new vision.

READY GOLF TIP

by James Pugliese

The Correct Way to Introduce Your Child to Golf

I have often been asked, "James, at what age should I start my child in golf?" The simple answer to that question is any age. I do not put an age limit on starting the game. Kids of all ages can be taught the game of golf. As a proud father, I have seen the growth and development of my two-year-old son. He is already swinging a plastic club at 2! From birth, he was watching my DVD "Better Golf for Kids" and can now pick up a plastic golf club, stretch, and swing naturally...at 2-years old.

I believe you can teach kids golf at any age by demonstration. Kids naturally mimic and learn by watching. Since kids mature at different ages, I do not teach by age, but treat each child individually. Your child is a unique individual. Very simply, two people can be the same age, but can have different golf handicaps or skill levels. Some kids are more mature than others at the same age, or can handle more direction earlier on. I am not saying you should force your child into golf at birth, but I do stress that you should introduce the game of golf to him or her correctly.

James Pugliese is a staff instructor for Ready Golf Centers at the Sepulveda Driving Range. James is offering private golf instruction and clinics for both adults and kids! He is the host of "Better Golf for Kids," and an Honorable Mention Top Kids Instructor by U.S. Kids Golf for 2008. Phone the driving range and get a lesson with James now!

Tournament Sign-Up Coupon

To sign up and pay for a future tournament, check the appropriate boxes and mail with a separate check (payable to the SMGC only) for each event to:

SMGC
P.O. Box 57373
Sherman Oaks, CA 91413

- Feb 26 Hansen Dam \$35
- March 26 St. Pat's \$50

Tournament chairman is Gene Vano (818) 703-0749

COMING EVENTS

| | | |
|------------|---|------|
| Feb 19 | MGA Team Play - Hansen Dam | |
| Feb 26 | Thursday Tournament - Hansen Dam | \$35 |
| Mar 2-3 | PLGA "Laughlin Open" El Rio & Rivers Edge | |
| Mar 3 | Board Meeting | |
| Mar 8 | Sunday Tournament - Simi Hills | \$70 |
| Mar 19 | MGA Team Play - Balboa | |
| Mar 21-29 | PLGA "Amateur Championship" Qualifier | |
| Mar 26 | Thursday Tournament - Encino St Pat's-Dinner | \$50 |
| Apr 4-5 | PLGA "Amateur Championship" Finals | |
| Apr 4-6 | LA City Junior Golf Championship | |
| Apr 7 | Board Meeting | |
| Apr | Sunday Tournament | TBA |
| Apr 16 | MGA Team Play - Woodley Lakes | |
| Apr 23 | Thursday Tournament - Robinson Ranch Shotgun | |
| May 3 | Sunday Tournament - The Palumbo - River Ridge | |
| May 4-5 | PLGA "Nevada Open" Primm Valley Resorts | |
| May 5 | Board Meeting | |
| May 16 | Saturday, SMGC Senior Championship-Balboa | |
| May 17 | Sunday, SMGC Senior Championship-Encino | |
| May 21 | MGA Team Play - Encino | |
| May 28 | Thursday Tournament - Member/Guest-Encino | |
| June 2 | Board Meeting | |
| June 11-14 | LA City Men's Golf Championship | |
| Jun 18 | MGA Team Play - Harding | |
| June 20-21 | PLGA "George Collup" Coronado Classic Coronado G.C. | |

FROM THE READY GOLF SHOP

(Country Club Service-Warehouse Prices)

By Mark Karge-Head Golf Professional

Ready Golf Centers has just received a few new items we would like to share with you. As you may or may not know the PGA trade show has just concluded in Florida and the manufacturers have unveiled their new product lines. We have already received the new Cleveland Launcher drivers along with the Cleveland hybrids (they look great). If you have not seen them yet, stop by and take a look. Along with their new clubs, we also have in stock the Cleveland carry bags and putters which are on sale.

We have also received the new Diablo and Warbird golf balls from Callaway. There will most definitely be more new items to come in the next few weeks from TaylorMade, Ping and others.

Always available with a new shipment just in are the ever popular Footjoy socks. As you know, we have an unbelievable price on the six-pair purchase. And, don't forget, we still have the best price on the 2008 product of the year...the Click Gear push cart.

Our new "Sale of the week" table has done very well and we plan to keep that going full force, so stop by and see what is featured this week.

As always, if you need something we don't have "in stock" we can get it for you at the best price. Remember, we beat the "big box" stores on price and service ever time. If you don't see what you want...just ask.

Thank you for your patronage.