



# RIGA NEWS

Newsletter of the Rhode Island Golf Association

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

What a difference a year makes. In 1994 the season never seemed to end while in '95 it came to an abrupt end. Well, what do you expect living in New England – "The Unpredictable."

Regardless of the weather, we're busy getting ready for the '96 season, and it looks like it will be another exciting year.

We plan to have five newsletters this year which is an increase of one. There will be four seasonal issues and the Annual.

Our tournament schedule has something for every golfer – 27 Weekly Invitationals and 20 major events. In recent years we've had good participation in most of our events and oversubscribed in a few. Hence, we'll be fine-tuning

some to make them better and more enjoyable.

An ongoing concern for most of us is slow play. In '96 we'll be playing "ready golf" in many of our events. When you're ready – hit it. Hopefully the slow player or players will get the hint and follow suit. With this approach I'm sure we'll play in four hours or less.

Joe Jr. will be taking on new duties during the '96 season. He will be our Tournament Director and will be much more active in the major events.

We're looking to make '96 our best season yet for membership. Ask a fellow club member to join. The popularity of the Four-Ball makes it necessary for us to make some adjustments. The field will

be limited and the combined handicap lowered.

The USGA has voted at its recent Annual Meeting to continue the popular State Team Tournament on alternate years. It will be held again in 1997. The top three spots in the Players' Rankings will be even more meaningful now.

Watching golf on TV makes one itchy to get started again. I guess the next best thing for most of us is practice putting and stretching exercises or, better yet, head for the warmer climates.

Hang in there, everybody. April can't come soon enough.

– Joseph J. Sprague

## GHIN UPDATE

According to RIGA Handicap Consultant Jules Cohen there are only minor changes to the USGA's Golf Handicap and Information Network (GHIN) for 1996. However, there has been a major overhaul of the Tournament Pairing Program (TPP), and early indications have been very favorable. There will be a GHIN meeting conducted by Jules which is tentatively planned for early April.

### 1996 Handicap Revision Schedule

Scores Posted	Date Mailed/Transmitted	Effective Revision Date
April 8 to April 21	April 22	April 25
April 22 to May 5	May 6	May 9
May 6 to May 19	May 20	May 23
May 20 to June 2	June 3	June 6
June 3 to June 16	June 17	June 20
June 17 to June 30	July 1	July 4
July 1 July 14	July 15	July 18
July 15 to July 28	July 29	August 1
July 29 to August 11	August 12	August 15
August 12 to August 25	August 26	August 29
August 26 to September 8	September 9	September 12
September 9 to September 22	September 23	September 26
September 23 to October 20	October 21	October 24

## USGA MUSEUM: A GOLFER'S DREAM HOUSE



by Joe Sprague, Jr.

There are few pastimes in this modern era which evoke more passion than the game of golf. From the weekend warrior to the touring professional, each golfer has something he or she wants to accomplish. Whether it be breaking 100 for the first time or winning a major championship, the single-minded devotion is the same.

Most golfers also have a wish list of places they'd like to play which usually go by names like Pebble Beach, St. Andrews, Pine Valley, Ballybunion, Shinnecock. The list is almost without limits. Many, however, may be limited either by funds or accessibility.

### WELCOME TO GOLF HOUSE

There is one place which should be on every golfer's wish list, and you don't have to make a tee time – the USGA Museum and Library. Located in the rural town of Far Hills, New Jersey, it is well worth the trip. From Providence it will take you

about four hours to arrive by car, and will only cost you a tank of gas. Admission to the Museum is free, and it's open seven days a week.

I left Providence on a cold, sunny January morning with, surprisingly, no snow in the forecast. My sister Liz, who works as a scorer at some of the RIGA tournaments, agreed to come along for the ride.

We arrived around lunch time and began searching for a place to eat. We discovered that there's really not much around the Far Hills area besides very nice homes. Finally, the guy at the gas station told us about a little deli called Krauzer's right around the corner. We ate in the car and were on our way.

Golf House was originally a private residence built in 1919 and purchased by the USGA in 1972. It has been used solely as the Museum and Library since 1987 after the USGA erected an administration building and research and test center on the

expansive property. When we opened the front door the gentleman behind the reception desk said, "Welcome to Golf House. Would you please sign the guest register?"

### KID IN A CANDY STORE

I felt like a kid in a candy store. I didn't know where to begin. The tour of the Museum is self guided, i.e. you get a copy of the floor plan and you're on your own.

I walked towards the library with its 10,000 volumes, the largest collection of golf-related books in the world. Before I made it there I was stopped dead in my tracks by Ben Hogan's one iron. The one iron. In a glass case by itself in front of the equally famous photograph, the club stands perched like some holy relic from another world. The worn sweet spot on the club face bore evidence that the shot was no accident. I paused and paid silent homage.

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Marcus Munsill, Agawam Hunt

I would like to express my thanks for being elected President of this fine organization. Being President is not only a great honor, but carries with it many responsibilities.

I would like to wish everyone a very happy 1996. I hope that we can increase our RIGA membership in the new year.

With all the snow we have on the ground it probably seems as though the golf course will never show itself. However, spring will come and we at the RIGA are striving to have the best golf season ever. With this in mind, I would like to say "thank you" to the many golf courses and their members for allowing us the privilege of conducting our tournaments.

In these days with all the stress and pressure, the game of golf still offers a window of relaxation and comradeship. To all who play the game of golf, may your swing and game turn into a perfect 1996.

### NOTICE

*Don't miss any news or updates. Be sure to renew your RIGA membership for '96 so you can continue to receive RIGA News.*

## RULES CORNER

The USGA and the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews met in 1995 for their quadrennial review of the Rules of Golf. There were no major changes but many Rules were fine-tuned to make them as clear as possible. All amendments to the Rules went into effect on January 1, 1996, and are conveniently described on pages 2-8 in the 1996 edition of the Rules of Golf.

The companion publication to the Rules, the Decisions on the Rules of Golf, has also undergone some changes. There are 12 new decisions and 51 revised decisions for '96. The new decisions range from playing a ball from an environmentally sensitive area to the status of a footprint made by a burrowing animal, reptile or bird.

Here's a sampling of the new decisions:

**Q.** In a match, a player and his opponent play their second shots on a par-5 hole. Unexpectedly, neither ball can be found. Rather than proceeding under Rule 27-1, both players agree to a half. Is this permitted?

**A.** Yes. An agreement to halve a hole being played does not of itself constitute an agreement to waive the Rules. However, if the players agree to consider a particularly difficult hole halved without either player making a stroke, they should be disqualified under Rule 1-3 for agreeing to exclude the operation of Rule 2-3 by failing to play the stipulated round.

**Q.** Is the use of a golf ball which is purposely warmed during a round of golf with a golf ball warmer, hand warmer or any such device a breach of Rule 14-3?

**A.** Yes.

Remember, no golfer should be without a Rules book in his or her bag. To order a copy of the 1996 Rules of Golf you may call the USGA Order Department at 1-800-755-0293.



It wasn't the Blizzard of '78, but it was a lot of snow. The Weather Channel is surely getting more play than the Golf Channel this winter. At press time the warm spell had melted most of the snow, but don't put your shovels away yet. There's always February and March.

## ASSOCIATION NEWS & MISCELLANY



Paul Quigley yuks it up with Ed Mauro. Nice legs, Paul.

Who says you can't wear shorts at an RIGA event? Paul Quigley accepted his 1995 Player of the Year Award attired with the requisite coat and tie but with a twist; he also had on a pair of Bermuda shorts which he had worn underneath his slacks. Everyone got a hearty laugh out of the good-natured barb at the RIGA's no-shorts policy, even Joe Sprague himself.

After receiving his award Quigley keenly observed, "My tee time for the Amateur next year will probably be around midnight."

In response to concerns by some of the players, the Player of the Year Points System has been adjusted for the 1996 season. The RIGA is always striving for equity in the awarding of points in the major tournaments.

It seems difficult to fathom right now but the RIGA season is not too far away. The first Weekly Invitational will be April 15-16 at Pawtucket Country Club. Bring your snow blower.

The Parent-Daughter Tournament is in its second year; this year it is being played at Potowomut GC on July 22. We had a good first year in '95, but we're hoping even more mothers or fathers will sign up to play with their daughters in '96.

For all you Net surfers, golf has found its way into cyberspace. Translated: The USGA has established its own site on the World Wide Web (WWW) of the Internet. The site can be accessed through either of two addresses that the USGA operates: <http://www.usga.org> or <http://www.usopen.com>.

The USGA's "Home Page" on the site has a set of eight flags accessible to viewers by clicking with a computer mouse. Each flag features one of eight main topics which include Rules of Golf, Championships, USGA Handicap System, Hot Topics, Membership, About the USGA, Green Section and a Guest Book where viewers can log their comments.

Comments thus far have been very positive. This summer you'll even be able to obtain score updates from the three National Opens within one minute after players hole out on each hole thanks to on-site computer services.



<http://www.usga.org>  
<http://www.usopen.com>

Joe Benevento has resigned as head pro of Metacommet after 18 years of service. He has purchased a nine-hole golf course near Fitchburg, Massachusetts. The RIGA wishes him every success in his new venture.

The Four-Ball Championship will undergo a few changes for 1996. Last year we tried to accommodate too many teams and we ran out of day-light. This year the combined handicap limits will be reduced from 12 to 10 and the field will be limited to 100 teams. Both of these provisions will be strictly enforced which should make for a more enjoyable tournament for everyone. We will continue to monitor the tournament and make any other necessary adjustments for 1997.

## BRAD FAXON DELIGHTS CROWD AT THE 7TH ANNUAL BANQUET



*Brad Faxon (R) with friend and former RIGA Player of the Year Brett Quigley. Brett will be playing the Nike Tour full-time in '96.*

You could hear a pin drop in the room as Brad Faxon read aloud a personal note he received from Raymond Floyd. Brad received the note of congratulations after his heroic final-round 63 at the PGA vaulted him onto the Ryder Cup team.

The occasion this night was the RIGA's 7th Annual Appreciation Banquet held this past December which, for the first time, also included the RIGA Annual Meeting. Those invited included all the tournament players as well as club presidents and golf chairmen, superintendents, head pros and club managers. It is an evening for the RIGA to extend its thanks to everyone involved in making a successful golf season.

Though this evening has grown in popularity in recent years, it was quite clear why the crowd of more than 200 had gathered. It wasn't to hear the 1996 schedule approved at the Annual Meeting. It wasn't to listen to Joe Sprague or out-going president Bill Lunnie. They had all gathered to hear Brad Faxon. And he did not disappoint.

Brad recalled his beginnings in golf in Rhode Island from caddying at Rhode Island Country Club to winning the state juniors. He suggested that the less-than-ideal conditions in Rhode Island during the spring and fall months can make you a better player because you need to learn to play different shots. He recounted with much appreciation all the letters of encouragement he received both before and after the Ryder Cup.

Brad's talk had its humorous moments, too. When relating his experience at the Ryder Cup, he finally came to his final-day singles match against European David Gilford. Standing in the 18th fairway Gilford was one-up and first to play. Faxon knew he needed to win the hole. "(Gilford) pulled out a four-wood," Brad said. "My caddie and I thought it was way too much club. I said, 'I hope he hits it real good.' It was the first time I rooted for him all day."



## BURKE FUND NEWS

*By Leon Boghossian, President*

The Burke Fund experienced one of its better years in 1995. One of the most exciting highlights was the continued growth and support the Burke Fund received from all the area golf clubs. The rise in bag tag fees from \$10.00 to \$15.00 did not deter any supporters as most of the clubs reported records contributions.

In addition, because of the change in the eligibility requirements for a Burke scholarship allowing golf course maintenance and pro shop personnel to receive awards, many of the clubs which do not have caddy programs renewed their long-time support and actually had new scholars selected. The Burke Fund is extremely grateful.

During 1995, the Burke Fund conducted its second phonathon to raise money from its alumni. Again, all of those who were called reiterated their gratitude for receiving the scholarships and all were more than willing to give something back to the Fund.

The Northeast Amateur graciously allowed the Burke Fund to collect donations during its tournament. All of the volunteers were, once again, past and present Burke scholars donating their time to raise money to help current and future Burke scholars.

The minimum scholarship amounts were increased in 1995 to levels that now make more of a difference in defraying the costs of education and related expenses. Projections for 1996 indicate that those minimums will be raised even further much to the delight of our existing and future scholars.

Finally, the Burke Fund is extremely indebted to the following people who have recently passed away, but who remembered the Burke Fund by allowing memorial gifts to be made:

Cliff West

George Peters, Sr.

Elda Carlson

Robert E. Wallis

Elizabeth A. "Betty" Sprague

## USGA's Museum...

Continued from page 1.



*The King is prominently featured at Golf House.*



My sister tried her best to look enthusiastic as I pointed out the collection of clubs from the 19th century. There are also scores of clubs used by past USGA champions: Gene Sarazen's wedge, Henry Cotton's putter, Tommy Armour's mongrel mashie and Glenna Collett Vare's spoon are just a few. For me, the most amazing had to be the mashie used by Horace Rawlins in winning the first U.S. Open in 1895.

## EVERYTHING GOLF

There's an entire section of the Museum dedicated to the evolution of the golf ball. Did you know that 1848 was the year that the gutta percha ball replaced the feathery? You'll also find examples of every type of golf tee ever created. There are also sections on golf fashions, golf paintings, photographs, ceramics and trophies. And you'll be amazed at the two club makers' work studios – one replicating a workshop from 1895 and one from 1995.

Then there were my sister's two favorites. One was the Moon Club used by Alan Sheppard to hit his famous shot off the lunar surface during the Apollo 14 mission. The other was the CD-I (Compact Disc Interactive) exhibit which allows you to test your knowledge of the game, compare swing styles of the game's greats and even design your own golf course. She designed a diabolical hole with water, sand and trees everywhere. I think it must have been a par 6.

There's a portion of the Museum dedicated to the USGA Centennial which runs through December 1996. It includes trophies, medals, photo galleries and even a small movie theater showing a centennial video.

From the game's beginnings in Scotland, to the first British Open in 1860 and up to the modern day, everything golf related is at the USGA Museum. From Charles B. Macdonald to Babe Didrikson Zaharias to Jack Nicklaus, the USGA has designed a showcase for the ages. They have built it. You must come.



*The first room on the left when you walk into the Golf House is the Bobby Jones Room. I dove inside briefly but decided to save it for last. I had a feeling it was one of the most special*