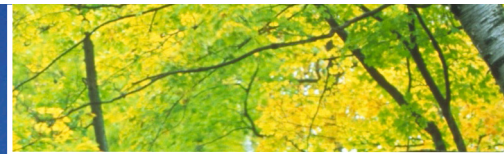




Birdie Newsletter December 2012

abriola Golf & Country Club



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CHRIS JANS

Manager's report



*Why is Chris so happy?
Read on and see.....*

We're making it happen down at the Club! Events booked in December (every Saturday was booked for a party) made for some good times and some good revenues for the Club. Our own Jordan Sorrenti was instrumental in providing some excellent dining experiences for those attending a couple of these parties. The Club Christmas party was a smash with food and favours skillfully provided by the Social Committee.

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Treasurer's News

Happy holidays everyone. As you'll read on Page 2, the AGM highlights, our membership voted a rate increase. The best news is that with the elimination of the HST we will all actually be paying less this year. Your membership chairman, Deane Farley will be sending all our membership due's invoices early next year, dated April 1st to take advantage of the GST only. We ask that when you receive your invoice you consider paying your dues early. At that time of year we are using our line of credit for operations and even though we get a good rate, the club still incurs needless interest expense. Thanks to everyone in advance! ■



Memo

**Attention
last minute
Christmas Shoppers!**

**Great stocking stuffers
& more available in your
clubhouse.**

Balls, tees, toques, hoodies,
jackets & more.....

Support your
Pro-Shop!

President's Note

By most accounts we had a successful AGM on December 16, 2012. Thirty voting members attended and 8 proxies were submitted. I want those of you who didn't attend to know some of the issues the club faced and what we've done to address them.

The major challenge has been revenue... and how do we get some.

Since 2010 the club has experienced a 24% decrease in playing memberships. In 2010 we had 186 playing members. In 2012 we had 142. A reduction of 44 playing members in two years which translates as a net loss to us in revenue of more than \$30,000.00 a year.

This came as no surprise. Last year, 19 playing members resigned.

CONTINUES
ON PAGE 2



Matt Richards
President

President's Report

Club demographics are such that we expected to lose members due to age, health and leaving the island. But several of those who quit cited "change of priorities". This means something became more valuable to them than the value they were getting from being a member of the club—the value they were getting for their memberships wasn't worth the money they were paying.

Last year at the AGM I told you if we hoped to increase our membership and green fee revenues we needed to make the golf club:

1. The best possible value it can be; and
2. Entertaining and fun for its members and guests.

We searched for ways to do this; and, while membership numbers and greenfee revenues are recovering, other ways to generate revenue.

This is what we've done:

The Clubhouse

This is the most obvious revenue alternative. As I've said before, we can't make money if the clubhouse is closed; and, we can't open the clubhouse if we aren't going to make any money.

So we changed the clubhouse hours to balance staff time with the most lucrative times to be open which is usually later in the day. During times that are traditionally slow we created regular events like ping pong on Saturday afternoons. This year we've reestablished limited winter hours for the first time in several years and organized regular events like the Thursday night jam to attract customers. We've advertised these events so the public is aware we're here and open for business.

When customers arrive we can feed them from our new menu which would make Gordon Ramsay proud: simple, tasty food, at a great price. We've cut costs where we can and increased some prices modestly to offset the rising cost of sales. But most importantly we've given our manager more autonomy to run the clubhouse like a business and do what he gets paid for.

All of this seems to be working. As our treasurer reports, clubhouse revenue was up \$20,000.00 or 17% over 2011. We expect further increases in revenue in 2013 when this winter's revenues are factored in and the community becomes increasingly aware of what we offer.

The Course

We're keeping up with the general trend in golf all over North America to make courses more user-friendly and enjoyable.

We've changed the stakes on holes #6 and #9 from white to red and created a drop zone on #6 to reduce the penalty for hitting an errant ball. We think this also speeds up play.

Golf courses everywhere have installed new forward tee boxes. The

.....

I am not saying my game went bad, but if I grew tomatoes they would come up sliced.

Lee Trevino

one's I've seen look just like ours, tee boxes set up on the fairways or designated areas of the rough. The "tee-it forward program" is huge all over North America and we were one of the first courses in our area to try to make this happen. The tees are designed to accommodate shorter hitters, juniors, higher handicappers and beginners, but I predict that once they're rated they'll become popular with all the members. They will offer different views, different club selections and a whole different game. I'll be playing them frequently once they're rated and I can't wait.

Bob Tolmie is leading the effort to get the course re-rated so that men, women and juniors can all play a course of a length which suits their game. Check out his report for more information on that.

We received the usual complaints about the condition of the course this year. The complaints were mostly about cosmetic issues. Despite these blemishes, I can confirm that our course is substantially better than it was in 2003. Mike Stewart, our Greens Superintendent has done a phenomenal job. Don't take my word for it. Look at the Turf Advisory Report (posted on our website) given to us out of the goodness of his heart by Brian Youell who is the master superintendent at Uplands in Victoria and consults with courses all over the world. Brian has an annual budget of one million dollars per year. He did a report for us in 2003 and compared it with how the course is now. Mike and I spent 5 hours on the course with Brian, taking soil samples and analyzing the course. Brian could not believe the work that Mike had done given his budget and staffing.

The Membership

One bright spot last year was that we acquired 10 new or returning playing members. Our challenge was and continues to be, getting more.

We waived the initiation fee for returning past members. We tried to make it financially easier for new members to join by allowing initiation fees to be paid over time. We also tried to entice potential new members to the course by offering monthly passes, weekly passes and a variety of pre-paid coupon books.

Coincidentally, our membership started to seriously decline when we started to increase our membership dues annually in an amount equivalent to the cost of living increase. The membership took a nose dive when we closed the clubhouse during the winter period.

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Fun with Golf...

Top Ten Signs You're Golfing Too Much

- When you pick up something off the floor, you have to lean on your putter
- The only number on your speed dial is 1-800-TEETIME.
- You have your priorities in order: food, shelter, greens fees, job.
- You dream you go to prison but still get conjugal visits with your driver.
- You tell the lost motorist that the gas station is only a par 4 away on the left.
- You'd like to take off your glove but hey, why bother?
- Whenever you see a hole in the ground, you squat, squint and read the line.
- You're vaguely aware of living with a woman, allegedly your wife.
- You ask the shopper ahead in the checkout line if you can play through.
- Before you pick up the salt shaker, you mark its position with a dime. ■

Bad Day

A very bad golfer is playing at new course and he is having a very bad day.

He is on the 18th hole, and he sees a lake.

He says to his caddy "I think I'm going to go drown myself in that lake".

The caddy says "I don't think you can, you can't keep your head down that long!" ■

2012 AGM HIGHLIGHTS

Your new board

At the annual general meeting held on Sunday December 16th, new board members were voted in and some of our board are returning for another year.

Welcome new board members Dallas & Curtis Smith. Returning as your president, Matt Richards, Jordan Sorrenti as your Treasurer, Bob Tolmie as our new Vice President and Carolyn Pickett as our new Secretary. Returning as Directors, Al Tanner, Gerry Nitel and Jerry Ellins.

Some directors will retain their previous portfolios but all committee chairs and responsibilities will be determined at a board meeting to be held in early January.

Special thanks to John Doak who resigned his position but has generously agreed to return as a volunteer on the the house and grounds committee.

New membership fees for 2013

It doesn't happen too often. Your board at the AGM recommended zero increases in membership but the membership in attendance felt

A playing couple will save over \$25.00 next year!

..... that a small increase was necessary in light of increased costs. A motion was passed to increase all membership dues across the board by 5%. The good news is that these dues, being due and payable by April 1st will only be subject to the 5% GST as HST will be phased out at the end of March. A playing couple will save over \$25.00 this year! The good news is the club receives additional needed revenue and it is not going to the government! The new fees are posted at the clubhouse and on the membership page of the website. ■

ON THE COURSE & AT THE CLUB

Regular events at the Clubhouse

Friday Night Social Darts

Darts started in October and runs from 7-10:30 pm on Fridays at the clubhouse. Random teams are drawn each week. This is a social league and beginners are more than welcome. Darts are available for new players. The dart season continues to mid-April. ■

Thursday "Jam" night

Every Thursday evening starting around 8ish you can experience some of the best musicians on the island. The regular "house" band is led by Kelly. Musicians come in through the evening to play and generally to "jam" with their fellow musicians. The club is open from 5:00 pm to encourage everyone to come in and sample some of the great meals and snacks put out by Deirdre. ■

Ping Pong

Weekends are great for ping pong, especially Saturdays when you will find other players anxious for a game. Drop in or bring your friends. Paddles and lots of balls available at the club. ■

New Year's Eve

See Page 4 for all the details.

Super Bowl Sunday February 3rd

The clubhouse is the perfect spot to watch and cheer on the game. Game time is 3:30 pm, festivities at the club will pickup after 2:00 pm. Be sure to come early, the Grey Cup game was almost a full house! Watch for emails in the new year. ■

.....
More Club events happening in 2013 !



Best ever Winter Golf day

HOW TO TELL THE TALE

Best Golf Story EVER

One of my favorite sports writers, Bill Simmons at ESPN.com, recently wrote a column that included a funny section on how everybody loves to tell a fantasy football war story, but no one wants to listen to them. It struck me that this is EXACTLY the same in golf. At the conclusion of every round, we sit together, each of us desperate to explain how the forces of nature and other golfers conspired together to rob us of a stroke (or three or four), pretending to listen to the others and hoping they'll shut up soon so we can start OUR story.

There's actually a real structure to the process:

1. It was a Dark and Stormy Night. The story always opens with an extremely dramatic description of the backdrop for the story, involving Earth ("It was a 450 yard par four, with at least a 225 yard carry to carry the crap, and then a tiny green WAYYYYY up hill"), Wind ("Dude, the wind was just HOWLING – I mean, this was probably at least

a four club quartering head wind") or Fire (okay, I haven't heard one of those yet).

2. In Da Club. "I was thinking maybe 7 iron, but then I would have to really nuke it, so I decided to go with an easy 6." Why would anyone in the world ever care what club you used? In what possible way could this have any impact on my life? And secondly, we all know that you have absolutely no ability to "nuke it" or hit a "stinger" on command...

3. Diplomatic Immunity. "So I absolutely PURE the ball – I mean I caught it about as well as I can hit it." This is clearly the set-up – what this literary device does is make it clear to the listener (who really couldn't care less) that what happens next

is without a doubt not the fault of the storyteller.

4. The Perfect Storm. Enter the villain of the day – this is a continually changing cast, which can include the OB stake, the idiot who didn't rake the bunker, the shadow of one of your playing partners, and my personal favorite, the groundskeeper who pointed the tee box the wrong direction. "So then the ball goes OB right. Can you believe that? It's just ridiculous that I have to deal with [enter the

name of the villain]. If it hadn't been for [enter the name of the villain], I would have at least been putting for par. It totally sucked."

5. It's a Fine Line Between Stupid and Clever. As your friend concludes his tale, the key is to nod just long enough to seem like you care before you launch into your own saga. Jump in too quickly and they'll likely still diesel on a bit, knocking and pinging to interrupt your story with insights like "Oh yeah – that's totally just like what happened to me. I still can't believe that. I mean seriously..." Nod too long, and they'll think you want MORE and give you the 12" extended dance re-mix of their story. "I mean who, I mean who, I mean who, I-I-I-I-I-I mean who doesn't rake the bunker – the bunker – the bunker – the b-b-b-b-b-bunker? That reminds me of LAST week, LAST week, LAST week, when I was s-s-s-s-standing on the tee box..."

But hey, who are we kidding? We're not going to stop telling our own stories. And we're DEFINITELY not going to start actually listening to other people's stories. Let's just accept that it's all a part of the secret pact of golf and move on. So did I ever tell you about the time I almost birdied the par 3 16th at Cypress Point? I pulled out driver because the wind was whipping...

(reprinted from www.Criticalgolf.com BLOG.) ■

President's Report

It all relates to the value people perceive they are receiving when they sign up to be members of the club.

We've tried to increase the membership value by doing the things I've already talked about. There are members in their 70's and 80's who debate every year whether they should rejoin or not. They want to support the club, but there comes a point when it's just not worth it any more. There are working couples who have been members that say they can't get home until 6 pm. And when they finish their 9 holes, the clubhouse is closed. What kind of value are they receiving from their memberships?

That's why I'm disappointed that 19 members with 2 proxies who attended the AGM was a sufficient majority to raise the membership dues by 5% across the board for 2013. GGCC conventional wisdom appears to hold that an annual increase in dues is an inevitable requirement: that if a particular board doesn't raise the fees they look good to the membership and put the burden on succeeding boards to do the dirty work. I don't agree. Annual increases are not inevitable. They may sometimes

become necessary, but not until all other alternate sources of revenue have been exhausted. The executive committee made one recommendation to the membership and that was that dues should remain as they were last year. We are optimistic we'll reach our revenue goals next year, and we can't afford to lose one member due to an unnecessary fee increase. If we don't lose any members because of it, we'll have an additional \$5,000 to work with and the board will be thankful for that.

If the increase is the final straw for just 7 playing members, we lose that \$5,000 and all the spinoff money they would have spent in the clubhouse. We'll be going backwards.

Those 21 votes had every right to make this decision on behalf of the 183 voting members. This is a democracy and if you don't like it, I suggest you come out and vote next year.

Let's have a great 2013. Matt ■



Do you ever wonder how the tree on #8 gets decorated? Christmas elves apparently. Thanks to Dyan Dunsmoor-Farly, Olga Korinek and Barb Gillen (the photographer).

At the Clubhouse

The Gabriola Golf and Country Club
New Year's Eve Celebration



Monday December 31, 2012
8 p.m. to 1a.m.

Tickets \$10.00
Bring an appetizer
Recorded Music

Complimentary
Noisemakers, Hats &
Champagne at Midnight

designated driver available

Tickets for the New Year's Eve Party are now available at the Club. Tickets are \$10 each and include complementary noisemakers, hats and champagne at midnight. Each couple should bring an appetizer. It'll be a great time and we hope to see you there.

If you have any questions, give Ev a call at 247-0152 or e-mail her at social@gabriolagolf.com.

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Thanks to everyone who contributed articles and sent along pictures.

Report from the Golf Director - 2013 Club Tournament Schedule

DAY	DATE	TOURNAMENT NAME	CAPTAIN
Sunday	April 28th	Tombstone	N/A
Sunday	May 19th	Men's Sole Survivor 1, 2 & 3	Bill Reynolds
Sat / Sunday	June 1st & 2nd	President's Cup	Andre Lemieux
Monday	June 17th	Lefty / Righty	Bob Tolmie
Sunday	June 30th	String Tournament	Pat Tisdale
Sat / Sunday	July 20th & 21st	Men's Amateur	Jim Wightman
Sunday	July 28th	Mixed Sole Survivor	Bill Reynolds
Monday	August 19th	Past Presidents	Alex Hart
Saturday	August 24th	Ladies Amateur	Bev Bickerton
Friday	September 13th	World Cup	Doug Cavil
Sat / Sunday	Sept 21st & 22nd	Club Championship	Ted Caldwell
Sat / Sunday	October 5th & 6th	Ryder Cup	Jim Simpson



The Club treated the staff to an "appreciation party" at the end of the busy summer season. Everyone had a great time, including the board members who donated their time. Thanks to all the members who contributed to the "beverage" fund!

MANAGER'S REPORT FROM P1

The Power Squadron, Silva Bay Yacht Club, Village Foods and Coastal Community Credit Union all enjoyed fantastic Christmas parties here, as well.

Radio After Dark performed their version of Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer to full houses on two different nights, creating more of a "buzz" about the club as well as being darned entertaining (if I do say so myself). Thursday nights have become a big hit lately with our weekly music jam. All sorts of music, from country to folk to reggae and even a little rock and roll can be enjoyed from 8 until late. Friday night darts has continued to be popular, and there's even a group of ping-pong players that come out every Friday afternoon. If you're looking for something fun to do on a Friday, we have it going on here!

All of these activities have helped to boost our profile within the community and the positive comments have been plentiful. Those who haven't spent much or any time here come away with a nice, warm feeling and there has been overwhelmingly positive reviews on all counts. We will continue to create a warm, welcoming atmosphere and foster continued growth for our Club in the new year!! ■ Chris



**PHOTOS &
ARTICLES !**

Your Birdie is always looking for fun photos of your events or just a great day on the course.

Also looking to publish any awesome achievements. A bunny or two anyone?

**Thanks to Everyone
for the pics!**



Christmas at the Clubhouse



Special thanks to all the ladies in the Social Club for a wonderful dinner and evening.