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**Inside**

16 **Computers** the future of irrigation

21 **Iraqi** neighbors non-plussed by crisis

23 **Course** cover sales increase

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**News**

- FF-II problems worse than thought
- Pebble Beach sale complete
- Coeur d'Alene island green in place
- Yeutter to talk to agronomists
- Gulf, government forces gather
- Coeur d'Alene island green in place
- Pebble Beach sale complete
- Yeutter to talk to agronomists
- Gulf, government forces gather
- Regional reports from superintendents

**Departments**

- **Comment**
- Florida could lead to something big

- **Letters**
- Notes of appreciations

- **Super Focus**
- Kocher on maintaining the 'revered' #2

- **New Courses**
- Crumpin-Fox Rulewich's personal favorite

- **Government Update**
- Sherman Hollow project shot down

- **Association News**
- New association targets public courses

- **Business News**
- Barenburg Holding buys into Normarc

- **On the Move**
- Backner makes management changes

- **New Products**
- New irrigation equipment hits market

- **On the Green**
- Staffed mixes art and greenskeeping

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**Club directors face tests**

**By Peter Blais**

The biggest threat facing the private club industry is that its members are perceived as elitists, according to a National Club Association lawyer.

The typical private club member appreciates traditions, is trying to conserve something of worth, likes to relax and enjoys some financial success, said Thomas Ondeck at the recent NCA Annual Club Director Conference in Palmhurst, N.C.

But private club opponents often view that same person as "reactionary, Republican, elitist and rich," said Ondeck, who has represented the club industry in more than 20 lawsuits, including three selective admissions cases before the U.S. Supreme Court.

Because of this inaccurate perception, private clubs are sometimes portrayed as bastions of racial and sexual discrimination, said Ondeck. That has led to local and national legislation — like Congressman Charles Rangel’s proposed national tax code amendment denying tax-exempt status, deductibility of dues and charitable contributions — that threaten the private club industry, he added.

Legislative victories and media assaults have mounted over the past 25 years, coming to a head this summer at Shoal Creek in Birmingham, Ala., said Ondeck.

Things looked pretty good for private clubs in 1964 when Congress exempted some as a candidate for best public course of the year. For information on this and other courses around the United States, see page 11.

**Continued on page 9**

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**War stories**

**Reaction to Gulf mixed...**

**BY MARK LESLIE**

As the Persian Gulf crisis turned 1 month old, month, investors, builders and architects in the U.S. golf industry took varied degrees of caution and optimism.

The length of the crisis is crucial to determining its impact, everyone agrees.

Michael Dunkan, an architect based in Columbus, Ohio, predicted an "incredible impact" from the crisis and hardened back to the Arab oil embargo of 1974 when the golf construction "virtually dried up."

"I think this situation is so unsettling that developers in the U.S. who have not already committed (to a project) are going to wait and see. I think that some of those who are committed and who are on the fine edge are going to say, 'Hey, I'm going to cut my losses and stop right now.'"

Perry Dye, president of Dye Designs in Denver, Colo., and of the Golf Course Builders of America, said: "We're in the recreational, extra-dollar industry. We're the first to go and the last to come back. But until it happens we won't feel it."

Dye said developers whose projects have been in the permitting process...

**Continued on page 20**

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**Fla. summit will draw all parties**

**BY PETER BLAIS**

Item: A Florida water district considers instituting a $1 per 1,000-gallon surcharge on golf courses for water pumped out of courses’ own wells.

The move could add $10 to the average round and $800 to the typical private club membership fee.

Item: The governor and cabinet shoot down a golf course development on an environmentally sensitive stretch of Panhandle shoreline, even...
Summit
Continued from page 1

though developers promise to install state-of-the-art water treatment equipment and offer to move golf holes away from the shore.

Item: A state legislator proposes cutting golf courses’ water allotments 80 percent by the year 2000 (they don’t convert to effluent, even though this would present a host of technical problems at many of the state’s 1,000 golf facilities.

"The first place you read about those things is in the newspaper. That’s not right. That’s why we formed the Florida Golf Council and are having the Florida Golf Summit," said Raymon Finch, chairman of Emerald Dunes Golf Club and one of the organizers of the Summit, scheduled for Oct. 11-13 in Orlando. The focus will be government relations.

Among the speakers at the inaugural summit will be Gov. Bob Martinez, Florida Secretary of Commerce Bill Sutton, National Golf Foundation Executive Director Joseph Bediza, golf course architect Tom Fazio and golfer/designer Gary Player.

Finch moved to Florida from South Carolina two years ago. He was one of the organizers of the July 13-14 Florida Golf Leaders Conference that gave birth to the council and proposed the summit. Finch and others hope their efforts will inform people of the need for a strong trade organization that can lobby and provide information on behalf of Florida’s $5.5 billion golf industry, one of the largest in the state.

"I saw dozens of golf organizations when I first came here, but a total vacuum in terms of a trade organization that treated golf like an industry," Finch said. "A strong organization usually brings people in the industry together. They trade ideas, raise money and become a voice in government. We need to keep the legislature and regulators informed about issues that concern us.

"Golf is good for everybody in Florida. But the government won’t realize that unless we tell them. As a result (of the lack of a trade organization), the golf industry is threatened with being seriously curtailed by water, pesticide, land-use and environmental regulations.

"The government is our partner in everything we do today. Unless they understand our side, anything can happen...The golf industry is at risk in Florida."

To get golf’s message across to the government and public, Finch sees the council raising funds to pay lobbyists, provide expert witnesses to testify at government hearings and establish a public relations program that will stop golf "from being eaten up by misinformation."

"Unfortunately, the people who make decisions are just getting information from one side. We need to get our side out there, too. We want the information they get to be the truth," he said.

The Florida Golf Council has learned much from the successful experiences of the Arizona Golf Association in representing that state’s golf interests, said Finch. Florida’s and Arizona’s efforts “need to be repeated elsewhere,” he added. "We need a national voice in Washington, too. But that’s a little farther down the road."

The preliminary speakers list at the summit includes PGA Tour Commissioner Deane Beman; Florida State Golf Association Executive Director Cal Korf; Florida Turfgrass Association Executive Director Bob Yount; Arizona Golf Association Executive Director Ed Gowan; Riverside Golf Group President and CBS Sports announcer Steve Melnyk.

Also, Jay Landers of Landers & Parsons; Roy Case, president of Case Golf Co.; Gene Bates of Gene Bates & Assoc.; Paul Courtwell, attorney with Gunster, Yoakley & Stewart; Thomas M. Latta, president of AmeriAquatic, Inc.; Charles Sine, editor of Golfweek; architects Pete and Alice Dye; Ed Scag, executive vice president of Palmer Course Design Co.

Also John Johnson of Leventhal & Horwath; Erling Speer, president of Willoughby Golf Club; W. Lee Brandt, director of environmental services of Golden Bear Enterprises; Allen E. Salowe Sr. of Fishkind & Assoc.; Rich J. Budell, bureau chief of the state Bureau of Pesticides; John Wodraska, executive director of the South Florida Water Management District; Robert G. Nave, division director of Resource Planning & Management.

Mark Latch of the Division of Water Management; Tim Hiers, golf course manager at John’s Island Club; Wade Hopping, managing partner of Hopping, Boyd, Green & Sams; F. Michael Wiles, senior vice president of marketing at Hammock Dunes Private Community; Ron Safford, director of sports development with the Florida Department of Commerce; David Pearson of Pearson, McGuire & Assoc.; Dennis Wise of Fazio Golf Course Designers; William L. Barton, Continued on page 23

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Raymon Finch

These Pros Know A Great Bentgrass When They See It.

It takes a real professional to recognize the benefits of a superior turfgrass. These superintendents are pros at growing grass. Their expertise is invaluable in evaluating new turfgrass cultivars. So when you develop a new cultivar, you want to show it is superior.

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Bentgrass is a perfect choice for fairways. Ben Crenshaw and David Dugout have chosen Bentgrass for their fairways. Bentgrass is a perfect choice for greens. Ben Crenshaw and David Dugout have chosen Bentgrass for their greens.

These Pros Know A Great Bentgrass When They See It.
**The great coverup**

**Course cover sales rise in wake of killer frosts**

BY PETER BLAIS

Turf cover manufacturers are expecting sales to increase this fall, especially at transition zone courses where last winter’s record cold temperatures caused extensive turf damage.

Turf covers have grown in popularity over the past five to 10 years as a way to protect established grasses, like bentgrass, on wind-swept Northern and Central courses from desiccation (drying out, often resulting in death of the plant).

But increasingly, superintendents in the transition zone between cold and tropical climates are discovering covers can also protect warm-season turf, like Bermudagrass, especially on those rare occasions when the mercury drops well below the freezing mark and the wind howls.

“We’ve already seen a substantial sales increase in the South because of the fears of another cold winter,” said Emory Hunter, sales manager with Washington-based Dayton Seed Corp., the manufacturer of Warren’s Terrain turf cover.

“The Terrain was very successful in protecting greens throughout the South,” said Hunter. “I don’t know of a single course that lost a (Bermudagrass) green last winter that was covered with our Terrain Style 3301 cover,” added Gary Anderson, market development account executive with Reemay, Inc. of Old Hickory, Tenn. “We’re expecting good sales this year because of the terrible freeze last winter.”

Ironically, while Terrain 3301 helps insulate turf from wind and cold, the black cover is primarily designed to block sunlight.

“Most manufacturers use grass from an unseasonably warm winter day, temporarily emerging from dormancy, and sapping the plant of strength and nutrients it needs to grow up in spring, Anderson explained.

The desiccation protection was an additional benefit during last winter’s frigid conditions.

“The black cover helps insulate the grass from the wind and cold, but also keeps it from getting too warm,” Anderson said.

Reemay also manufactures the more traditionally accepted covers, which company president Doug Anderson termed “natural” Terrain Style 3301 cover. This type of lightweight (1.9 ounces per square yard compared to three ounces for black) cover, designed to protect cold-season grasses from desiccation, remains the biggest seller for turf cover companies.

“Most of our business is in lightweight covers for Northern and Central courses,” said Anderson. “Covers aren’t generally used on courses below the transition zone, except maybe to help grow in a newly sodded area.”

And the ‘natural’ Typar Style 3201 cover. This type of lightweight (1.9 ounces per square yard) made primarily of acrylic, is designed to protect cool-season grasses from direct sun and wind. But if not properly installed, the cover can increase the risk of direct low-temperature kill, Hunter said.

“Still, the extreme cold that occurred last winter was severe enough to cause desiccation. The covers can help a lot,” Roberts said.

Additionally, the cover allows for quicker release of nitrogen and does not encourage disease, Hunter said.

The cover reduces the possibility of freeze-damaged grass returning to life, but the grass is more susceptible to desiccation than green-covered greens in the spring. Hunter said the cover reduces the possibility of freeze-damage. Covers ‘have little effect on direct low-temperature kill. But if the wind is blowing, they can help a lot.’ — Professor John Roberts

“‘The main protection is from the wind, the UNH professor said. ‘Covers have relatively poor heat retention. They only keep the turf between one and three degrees warmer overnight, although that can increase to 10 to 15 degrees in the afternoon.’

“So they have little effect on direct low-temperature kill. But if the wind is blowing, they can help a lot.”

The cover reduces the possibility of freeze-damage. Covers ‘have little effect on direct low-temperature kill. But if the wind is blowing, they can help a lot.’ — Professor John Roberts

“Still, the extra few degrees of warmth provided by Terra Shield ‘made the difference’ at some Southern and transition zone courses last year, said Hunter.

“They’re especially helpful in the spring, when you’ve got through the desiccation cycles,” he added. “When the grass begins coming out of dormancy, water gets in the tissue, freezes and ruptures the cell tissue. The cover reduces the possibility of freezing.”

Covers are generally placed over greens in the late fall and removed about three weeks before the course is covered. Covers are not generally used on courses below the transition zone, except maybe to help grow in a newly sodded area.

And they must be securely fastened to the ground to prevent wind from getting underneath “or you can end up with something that looks like a huge kite in the nearest tree,” said Anderson.

To hold down the cover, Reemay recommends a 3/8-inch concrete bar laid around the exterior of the fabric. Cover and bars are secured to the turf with U-shaped metal staples passing through fabric and turf every two to three feet.

“That system has effectively held covers down in winds over 45 miles per hour,” Anderson said.

If not securely fastened to the ground, today’s synthetic covers shield greens from the drying effects of wind and cold while allowing beneficial sunlight, water and air to penetrate.

“If a superintendent fertilizes properly, the cover allows for quicker release of nitrogen and quicker green-up in the spring,” Roberts said.

According to Anderson, the additional warmth provided by covers on Northern courses gets grass growing between one and three weeks earlier than on uncovered greens in the spring.

“If a superintendent fertilizes properly, the cover allows for quicker release of nitrogen and quicker green-up in the spring,” Roberts said.

Robert’s said four or five covers on the market are very similar in performance. However, there are no laws requiring a cover to meet certain criteria, as with pesticides.

“As with its U.S. counterpart, Jacobsen’s course cover business is a nascent one, said Anderson. “But those that have been around three to five years and have proven effective are very reliable.”

It costs about $500 for a (white) cover for the size of the green. Covers are generally placed over greens in the late fall and removed about three weeks before the course is covered. Covers are not generally used on courses below the transition zone, except maybe to help grow in a newly sodded area.

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