Flood devastates Texas courses

By Peter Blais

Jack and Melissa Fletcher stood along the banks of the Brazos River Christmas Eve watching the rain-swollen waters rise at the rate of an inch per hour and drown their nine-hole course.

"It died a slow death," recalled Jack, who helps daughter Melissa manage Valley Lodge Golf Club in Simonton, Texas, 30 miles west of Houston. "It was a very helpless feeling."

Valley Lodge was one of many courses suffering major damage from the heavy rains that deluged eastern Texas in late December and January.

Strategic plan critical challenge to club managers' association

By Peter Blais

Jack Sullivan found his bride and a career on the golf course.

The New Club Managers Association of America president was a high school teacher in Fairfield, Iowa, when he met Darcy. Darcy's house bordered the 5th tee at Fairfield Golf & Country Club.

The two played a lot of golf together and Jack eventually got a part-time job as the club's bar manager. He quickly became the club's assistant manager and his career was off and running. That career has taken him to The Whiconsia Club in Des Moines, Iowa, Nakoma Golf Club in Madison, Wis., and his present employer, Grosse Pointe Yacht Club in Grosse Pointe Woods, Mich.

"This is the first time I've been at a club without a golf course," said Sullivan, who came aboard Grosse Pointe in 1987. "Basically, I've traded in the golf course for a harbor. Where I used to worry about greens speeds, weather conditions affecting the course and helping the superintendent deal with turf diseases, now I worry about water levels, how weather conditions affect the fleet and helping the harbor master plan boating activities."

"I grew up in the golf business as a manager so I closely follow the golf industry. I'm still a golfer, although my game has suffered from not having a course out the back door. My handicap used to be in single digits. My handicap used to be in single digits. Now it's up around 18."

"As CMAA president, I represent the entire club industry. Two-thirds of our members manage country clubs with golf courses. As the association goes through our strategic planning process over the next 18 months, what we do will be strongly dictated by the golf industry."

Completing that strategic plan will be Sullivan's primary goal during his term in office.
Hawaiian agency charged with golf policy

State report says golf must be more restrictive

The Hawaiian Legislature has charged the Office of State Planning with creating new golf course policy recommendations, the result of recommendations from a state-funded report.

Most of the recommendations would make it somewhat harder to create new golf courses. There are 68 golf course in Hawaii, 13 of them on the Big Island, with 95 more proposed for Hawaii, 31 of them on the Big Island.

The city and county of Honolulu have been charging impact fees, development taxes and community benefit assessments, all special fees.

Golf course developers now must supply an environmental impact statement, but the state report says the government needs to be more restrictive, saying there should be no new golf courses in conservation districts and only very limited golf development on agricultural land.

A final report will include criteria for establishing areas of development.

One new golf course proposal, part of a development, has become part of the solution.

A semi-municipal golf course at the Keauhou Kona Resort at Kona will include a beach field, for a $42 million sewage treatment plant.

Effluent from the plant is to be used to irrigate the course. The plant is under contract to provide a million gallons of effluent daily.

Poly-S technology also makes the fertilizer granules more abrasion-resistant than SCU, so that they are applied to the turf without the need for the waxes and conditioners often used to mask coating imperfections in traditional sulfur coated products.

So mask coating imperfections in traditional sulfur coated products.

The developers wanted to cut 148 oak trees to make way for nine holes of golf and some housing.

A Santa Clarita developer will redesign a golf course for the second time to preserve an oak savanna.

The plans call for an 18-hole course and 1,880 housing units to be built on 800 acres in portions of a Significant Ecological Area near Magic Mountain.

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Harry Eckhoff dies at 88

JUPITER, Fla. — Col. Harry C. Eckhoff, whose career with the National Golf Foundation spanned 31 years, died Dec. 25 at his home in Lake Park, Fla., after a prolonged illness. He was 88.

He is survived by his wife, Jo, and two sisters, Violet Eckhoff and Dorothy Owen, both of Kansas City, Mo.

"Other than Herbert Joe Graffis, who founded the NGF back in 1936, I can't think of anyone who has had more influence on the foundation than did Harry Eckhoff," said Joseph Beditz, NGF president and chief executive officer. "Harry was a walking encyclopedia of golf course development information and a great communicator, which was of tremendous value and help to all of us who had the good fortune of working with him. He also touched their lives of hundreds upon hundreds of NGF members who sought him out over the years for his special expertise ... and I know the news of his passing has saddened them as well."

Col. Eckhoff retired from NGF in 1986. He joined the foundation in 1957, following successful careers as a band leader, teacher, writer, and a colonel in the U.S. Air Force.

He served in many capacities, beginning as a field man and East Coast director, then two years as executive director before moving onto director of information services, and finally to director of golf facility development in 1970. In this capacity, he oversaw the vast library of information the NGF has on golf course development.

A prolific writer and editor, he was responsible for creation of Planning and Building a Golf Course and the Golf Operations Handbook, two works that remain the cornerstones of NGF's library of publications.

The NGF established the Harry C. Eckhoff Award in 1979, to recognize excellence in local and regional golf journalism.

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