

Development Letter designed to fill a need

One of the things I enjoy doing in this space is pointing out how far-flung, seemingly irrespective stories which appear in the current issue are actually connected by industry trends — some subtle, some not so subtle. Such is the case on pages 1, 3, 24, 30, 31, 34, 35 and 54 this month.

The aforementioned stories may seem disparate but, as some of our readers already know, they have everything to do with a new *Golf Course News* publication called the *Development Letter*, a newsletter which

tracks golf course projects from conception through gestation to their birth.

The *Development Letter* is designed to let builders, architects and their suppliers know exactly where the golf course projects are being considered, and by whom. This is becoming increasingly important because the mini-boom is over. Projects aren't about to fall into anyone's lap these days.

As the story on page 1 indicates, National Golf Founda-



Hal Phillips,
editor

tion figures indicate a slow, steady dropoff in golf course openings over the next few years. Financing remains very hard to come by and this will be reflected in the number of golf courses christened during 1993, '94 and '95.

Those involved with the construction of golf courses will have to scramble for business — some are already scrambling. We believe the *Development Letter* will aid the effort.

The front-page story jumps inside to page 31, where a similar article (on page 30) talks about prospects in the golf range and alternative facility marketplace. The *Development Letter* will also track these projects because, as we learned at Golf Summit '92, these things are bonafide profit centers. The construction of golf ranges at existing 18-hole facilities, incidentally, is the fastest growing portion of this market.

On page 3, a story details the possible settlement of the Michigan Homestead project which — like the Canadian Three Sisters project described on page 24 — has been slowed by nagging environmental concerns. The *Development Letter* will routinely feature environmental news of note because anti-growth activism is a major hindrance to golf course construction — second only to the lending crisis.

Sadly, we must also turn to pages 34 and 35, where the trusty course charts appear this month. Because the *Development Letter* will issue updated charts every two weeks, these charts will appear in *Golf Course News* only on a quarterly basis. The twice-monthly *Development Letter* charts will be bigger and better — complete with more thorough contact information, i.e. more timely entries, better project descriptions and phone

Do they really have ears for hearing?

Did you hear about Mack, the man who thought his wife was going deaf?

While his wife sat at the kitchen table one day, Mack walked to the far side of the room, turned his back to her and said, "Can you hear me?"

There was no reply, so he moved closer. "Can you hear me?" he repeated.

Still no answer, so he walked right up to her back and asked clearly, "Can you hear me?"

"For the third time, yes, I can hear you," his wife said.

Mack's problem seems pervasive in society today. And I'm not saying I'm immune. This human "condition" keeps people apart and at odds.

One group believes it hears perfectly, is totally tuned into "the whole truth and nothing but the truth," has its mind made up, thinks "the others" are deaf, yet itself refuses to hear opposing or alternative ideas.

Those on the other side of an issue are the same. Thus the twain shall never meet.

This appears the case with golf course superintendents and extremists in the environmental movement.

Even your proving a theory, exposing a misinterpretation, expounding on scientific data cannot turn the ear of some.



Mark Leslie,
managing editor

"Better to meet a bear robbed of her cubs than a fool in his folly," Proverbs 17:12 tells us.

A millenia or so after Solomon penned that statement, at a time when politics had become even more

the shaper of culture, Henry Adams added a new dimension to this truth. He said: "Practical politics consists in ignoring facts." newsnewsFriends, believe this: There are many who do not want to have "ears to hear and eyes to see."

They prefer blessed ignorance and a cause.

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Letters

EUROPEAN VISION LACKING

To the editor:

Congratulations for your guest commentary by Ronald Fream: "European development lacks long-term focus," in the November issue. He touched on several habitual problems which seem to be plaguing the European market. Most notably an absence of vision on the part of developers. As a previous resident and golf course superintendent in Europe, I couldn't agree more with Mr. Fream's analysis.

What Mr. Fream failed to note sufficiently, however, is the degree to which Americans are culpable in the creation and perpetuation of these problems. We as Americans have an inane belief that every country wants to be like America. We assume everyone speaks American and that they don't care if we naively launch into a narrative in English... because of course, everyone wants to speak English.

Accordingly, we assume that Europeans want American-style golf courses. Yet we don't stop to contemplate all the socio-economic factors involved. In France, for instance, golf is very much the game of the upper-class, virtually inaccessible to the average citizen. In fact, contrary to popular opinion, the average French person could care less about golf. It

follows then, that very few public courses are built. Without public courses to take the game to the masses, the game has no chance to develop and flourish. So here we find ourselves building exclusive, high-profile, private golf courses, constructed to American standards. Virtually unsustainable (and unmaintainable) from an economic standpoint, they stand little chance of survival. Hence this contributes to the stagnation of the game.

I witnessed more than one project doomed to oblivion by poor planning, bad advice, lack of sufficient forethought, and uncompromising architects possessing an infatuation with name-making. Still Americans are trying to force feed high maintenance designs to ravenous Europeans.

Mr. Fream noted the importance of using financial realism in the planning design and how it effects long-term maintenance. Bravo! Ron. I have seen Mr. Fream's work in France firsthand, and he has perhaps the best grasp for this long-range vision. He is to be commended on his desire for quality while maintaining some sense of the economic impact of the design.

Some clients admittedly demand U.S.-style courses at whatever cost. But a certain responsibility rests with the architect/

consultant to explain in depth the consequences of such impetuous behavior, even at the cost of forfeiting that "name golf course." Financial stability and longevity will benefit the architect, client, and the game of golf.

Steven M. Cook
Golf Course Superintendent
Wakonda Club
1400 Park Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa

TOP 10 ANNOYANCES

To the editor:

Golfers are a funny lot. And sometimes they can really test your nerves. Not that I'm complaining! After all, I'm a golfer myself, and the game of golf is the source of my bread and butter (and sometimes laughter).

Since spending my teen-age years and present adulthood as a greenskeeper, I have noticed that there are certain questions and comments that consistently come from the mouths of players.

And you know what? I'm getting tired of hearing them.

Here they are:

The Top Ten Worst Questions and "Humorous" Quotes from Golfers

1. When moving the tee markers: "Just a little closer to the hole, fella."

2. When the crew is working in

the sandtraps, and a golfer's ball happens to land in it: "Why didn't you just kick it out?"

3. "These greens don't hold very well," says this one guy after hitting a low 1-iron into the green from about 250 yards out. He was a 21-handicapper.

4. After putting the buckets of drinking water out for the day: "You've got vodka in those things?"

5. After changing the cups, a golfer's ball dribbles on the green, and the guy points to his ball (which happens to be three inches from the old cup, and 50 feet away from the fresh one) and says, "Why didn't you leave it here?"

6. Another time while changing the cups: "You should make a trench that begins at the edge of the green and narrows down toward the cup." (I almost like that idea).

7. "Ooops! Sorry, I didn't think I actually came this close to hitting you," while picking the ball out of the grass bucket on the greensmower.

8. "What are those white stakes for?"

9. "These greens are slow," when the golfer has a bad day.

10. "You guys really have the course in great shape," when the golfer has an unusually good day.

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Soil blending, root zones

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"namesake fiber" dominates its makeup.

This simplification serves us well for root-zone mixtures, since each of these general types differs markedly in basic physical and chemical properties, and in the peatland from which they originate.

I advise you to look at each peat type as a potential component in turfgrass applications. Since all have potential benefits, each will perform differently

and all are available from North American producers. But this grouping by peat type is only a beginning.

Why differentiate between peat types for use in turfgrass culture?

Locally available peat types may be initially inexpensive but may not be physically compatible, especially over time. Some peats are too decomposed or too coarse to match with the selected sand. This affects the root-zone mix's mechanical

stability, capillarity and structure — free air space and density.

An analogy would be the physical instability and density changes of mixing golf balls and marbles. With any surface activity, a mixture like this would be very unreliable.

Also, some coarse or raw peat materials may not be biologically stable over time, and decompose too quickly when exposed to turf practices such as fertility management. This may result in subsidence and surface irregularities, anaerobic conditions and formation of

impermeable residues. Proper selection of peat improves dependability and control of your root-zone media.

It is most important for our industry to contract laboratories which use USGA standardized test methods and services which fully characterize the root-zone components, including the peat. Our industry has made recent strides in the use of standard methods for organic carbon of the mix (using Walkley-Black, 1960) and ash content of the peat, but that effort is not complete.

Additional emphasis should

be placed on organic carbon, particle size distribution and the quality of the peat alone. The quality of the peat fiber can be described by its "biostability." The carbon:nitrogen ratio is one good indicator of biostability.

Where peat is used in top dressing or core aeration, the compatibility of these materials to those of the original root-zone media is also essential. Laboratory and blending services with peat expertise help us produce superior turfgrass media consisting of quality components for lasting performance.

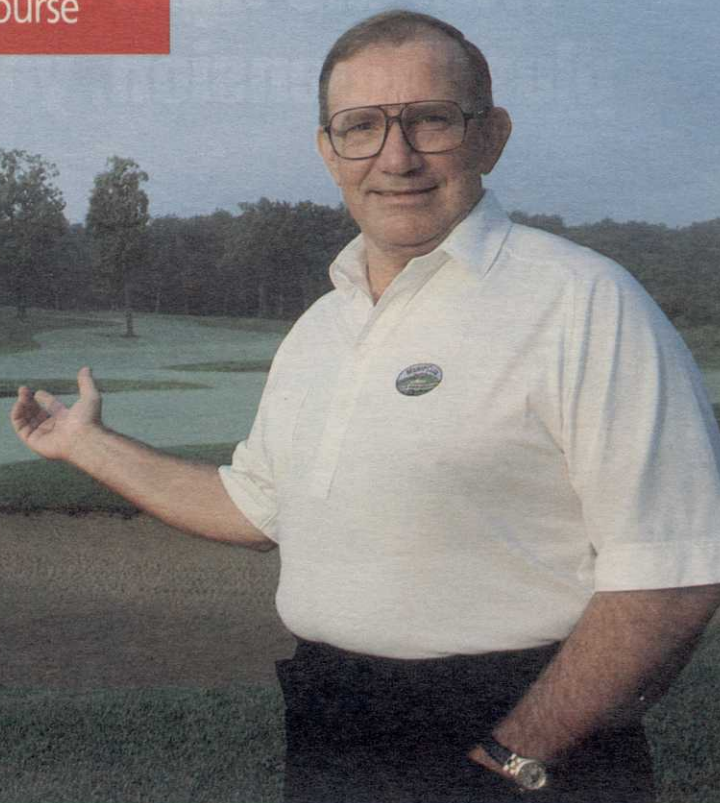
As a golf course superintendent or builder, you may ask, "What are the benefits of being more discerning in my use of peat?"

The use of a specification peat materials will ultimately result in lower costs of establishment, maintenance, renovation and general management of your turf. The peat should be consistent, compatible to the sand component in particle size distribution, and free of weed seeds, sticks and phytotoxic residues.

Through proper use of peat, you will realize some of the following benefits in your turfgrass culture and performance: improved green-up and establishment; better rooting stability and wear; reduced compactibility; improved stress resistance and overwintering; improved irrigation response and control; better nutrient management; improved gas exchange; increased microbial activity; and longer life of your root-zone media.

The many benefits and advantages of peat warrant our careful attention to its selection and use in turfgrass culture.

The Penn Pals: Right on Course



Oscar Miles, CGCS, overlooks the 6th hole at the Merit Club, Libertyville, Illinois.

PennLinks Greens. Penneagle Fairways. Penncross Tees. The 'Penn Pals' Are Picture Perfect At The Merit Club.

Superintendent Oscar Miles, with Club President Ed Oldfield's affirmation, specified all the grassing of this Robert M. Lohmann designed club. With a clean canvas and open palette, Oscar began with PennLinks greens, Penneagle fairways and Penncross tees, framing them with bluegrass/fine fescue/wildflower and prairiegrass roughs. You couldn't paint a more attractive picture.

Oscar chose PennLinks greens for its rapid establishment, marvelous root system, a crown and stolons that take topdressing, upright, grainless qualities and good, consistent color ... the best putting surface available.

He selected Penncross for tees because they recover from divot scars more quickly.

And the Penneagle fairways? Oscar chose Penneagle for its upright growth, reduced thatch development, low nitrogen requirement and good drought and dollar spot resistance. He seeded at 80 lbs. per acre for immediate turf development and

erosion control. The fairways were playable in 8 weeks. Oscar's crew usually mows fairways in the evening and leaves the clippings; recycling nutrients while reducing removal and fertilizer costs.

Oscar articulates it best: "The unique coloring of the 'Penn Pals' contrasts beautifully with the grassing around them, defining the target areas. And with the dew on the bents early in the morning, they're a marvelous work of art."

Tee-2-Green Corp.

Post Office Box 250
Hubbard, OR 97032
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Oscar L. Miles

CIRCLE #108

Development Letter

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numbers.

We started mailing and faxing sample issues of the *Development Letter* in November of 1992, and the response has been overwhelming. Another sample audience should be receiving its complimentary issues any day now.

Frankly, the *Letter's* positive response doesn't surprise us because the news therein contained is clearly of use to golf course designers, builders and their suppliers. And because this information sometimes can't wait a month to reach its audience, we publish it twice a month, via the fax machine if you like.

Finally, on page 54 you will find an advertisement for the *Development Letter*, including information on whom to contact here at *Golf Course News* about subscriptions... It seems silly to have you turn 40 pages when I could do it right here... I may as well tell you: Associate Editor Peter Blais is handling the *Letter*. You can reach him at 207-846-0600.