

Who said the RTC had no sense of humor?

I know it's a dangerous precedent, but I was just thinking...

• Don't miss the Landmark auction in Dallas this month. It stands to be the biggest free-for-all the golf industry has seen since the superintendents poured out of an effluent seminar and onto Bourbon Street two years ago. Here's a tip for casual observers: Don't fidget in your seat — you're liable to end up with a controlling interest in Mission Hills or something.

But seriously folks, every mover and shaker in the business will be there. If they're not bidding, you can be sure they're keeping a close eye on their competitors who are. Word has it that foreign

interests will play a major role in the ownership of more than one property.

Then there's the Ross Perot factor (see page 33).

One more thing: If you've ever wondered whether the Resolution Trust Corp. had a sense of humor, the jury is in. Who else would stage the break-up of golf's destination resort royalty on Bastille Day?

• The government is always the last to know.

As many as four weeks ago, my sources told me that GCSAA and Connex were holding discussions regarding a two-show, one-roof extravaganza in Singapore next year. Consider-



Hal Phillips,
editor

ing the "damn the torpedoes" attitude displayed by our friends in Lawrence, this came as something of a shock (see story page 1). Indeed, most suppliers were caught off guard when the news broke around

June 10.

But no one was more in the dark than our friends at the U.S. Department of Commerce, which certifies foreign trade shows for their American constituents. When I got the official news, I immediately called the department for a comment on this unique overseas development — but I was met with stunned silence on the other end. After patriotically

divulging all the information I had, the government guy stole my standard, journalistic phone sign-off: "Hey, thanks for your help." Glad to be of service.

• While we're patting ourselves on the back here, let's have a big round of applause for Associate Editor Peter Blais, whose *Development Letter* topped the 100-subscriber level a few weeks ago — and the subscriptions keep rolling in.

For those of you unfamiliar with it, the *Golf Course News Development Letter* tracks golf course projects under consideration in communities all over the nation and Canada. As subscribers will attest, it's a must read for industry folks who need to find the developer

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Too often, golf courses are fiscal targets

When the Central Arizona Project (CAP) canal was completed in January, the repayment of the federal funds for the 40-year project was supposed to begin. It appears the government believes golf course developers and the like — but never, ever farmers — are the ones to tap. Or is that "Zap!"?

This illustrates a prevalent attitude in America today: "Golfers are fat cats.

They've got the dough. Let's suck the money we need out of their pockets."

It's open season on golfers all year round. At least deer, elk, ducks and their cousins get a reprieve from hunters most of the year.

Scott Nair, superintendent at The Boulders in Carefree, Ariz., puts it bluntly. "It's frustrating when I pay a fortune for my water and they [farmers] get it all basically given to them on a silver spoon," he said.



Mark Leslie,
managing editor

It's cheaper for farmers to pull water out of the ground than pay for CAP water, and how can that change? Most likely, it won't.

"It's hard to convince a guy who's barely making ends meet, or even those who are millionaires with megafarms, to use a commodity that costs three or four times as much money," Nair said.

"That's sad, because if they would take away the [farm] subsidies it would make

things a lot more palatable for people like us. We're considered a commercial or industrial user. We produce a lot of money for the state of Arizona. Farmers do, too. But we're not subsidized by the federal government."

Nair speaks for many superintendents who struggle daily to find and pay for water to keep their turf alive. Which keeps their courses playable. Which attracts golfers to the region.

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Paul Draper photo

Letters

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

To the editor:

Thank you for setting the record straight regarding the Paul Harvey commentary.

I was upset to learn that I had been quoted out of context by a local paper regarding this important environmental symposium in Wilmington, North Carolina. The entire golf industry has worked hard to implement proper design, construction and maintenance procedures to reduce the negative perceptions.

The excellent research and the hard work by golf course superintendents across America did not deserve this attack from under-informed media seeking to energize this emotional issue.

Thank you for the explanation in the May issue of *Golf Course News* regarding how I was misquoted. We work hard every day to protect the precious environments across the United States. The American Society of Golf Course Architects will continue to produce innovative solutions to environmentally sensitive design situations. Your support of the

profession through *Golf Course News* is greatly appreciated.

Thomas A. Marzolf
Environmental Committee
Member
A.S.G.C.A.

WHITHER SCHOLARSHIPS

To the editor:

Some 30 years ago, when some of us older superintendents started in the greenkeeping business, there were very few trained and educated. This has changed drastically over the years. We now have a GCSAA Board of Directors that, to my knowledge, are all college graduates. This of course is quite impressive.

So what is my point? We have been giving out scholarships for a number of years encouraging young people to get into the profession. My feeling is that we need to take a good look at what we are trying to accomplish. Some years ago there was a desire to educate more people in our profession. We have done an outstanding job of doing just that.

It is my opinion that scholar-

ships are great to a point. The question is: Are we encouraging too many young people to get into a field that already has a number of college graduates that may have little on-the-job training. This is where the monster comes to the surface.

Let me give you a little background information. When my assistant applied for a position at a club in Wisconsin, there were over 80 applications. In fact they stopped opening letters at 80. And of those applying there was a GCSAA past president. Another interesting point: Those superintendents in the Chicago area looking for assistants this past winter had 30 or 40 applications. Some of these people did little advertising other than word of mouth.

If we are encouraging people to get into the business, we need to be sure that they understand they need to spend some years in training before they might secure a management position, even if they have a college degree.

So do we really need to give out more scholarships? How many other professional groups

give out scholarships in their own profession? Who is going to be the first superintendent (probably has already happened) that is let go because of one of the monsters we have created.

There are those of you saying, "Mike, just keep up with the times and you will not have to worry." You are correct for now. But maybe it is money that starts talking. We need to look at the future of the profession. Should we also look at what we are giving to our own people and clubs today, and maybe tomorrow?

What is in the future for you? Think hard as to what we are doing with scholarship money. There still are some jobs available in the profession. Is this going to be true in the near future? The compensation is quite good for those coming out of college. Do we need to pay for their schooling too? Are we talking more foreign aid for Japan? You know what I mean. We need quality, but not quantity. Give the subject some thought.

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Tipping our caps to Messrs. Cornish and Whitten

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"A lot of courses claimed to be Donald Ross designs that weren't. When that first edition came out, I got many calls from club presidents and members upset that we'd dare publish something saying Ross hadn't done their courses," Cornish said.

But it's hard to imagine anyone staying angry with the affable Cornish. And it's even harder to imagine anyone coming away a winner in an argument regarding architectural history once confronted

with the knowledge he's gained in his 79 years.

We're all extremely grateful to those who assemble such valuable publications as the National Golf Foundation's *Directory of Golf*, the *Farm Chemicals Handbook* and GCSAA's *Who's Who in Golf Course Management*.

Here's just an extra tip of the hat to Messrs. Cornish and Whitten.

•••

The Architects of Golf costs \$50. It is available in bookstores or by calling 800-331-3761.

Golf an unfair target of water pricing

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Which earns money for hotels, restaurants, gas stations, what-have-you... Which generates taxes for, guess who? — all levels of government.

Since farmers haven't been using CAP water, repaying the billions of dollars for the canal system is extraordinarily difficult.

The search for other people to foot the bill seems to have ended at the front door of golf courses. (See story, page 1)

You can almost hear the bureaucrats saying, "Golf courses can still afford the water. How much can they afford? How

much can we get away with bleeding them? Ah-hah! Let's find out!"

It's time some definitive studies were made public showing the economic impact of golf courses on local economies. Then those studies should be publicized, plastered on bulletin boards and television screens, hammered home in golf publications and your hometown newspaper — whatever-and-wherever.

Then, it will be time to apply those figures to government decisions and create a level playing field — or should I say a level cornfield?

There will be no excuses for unrighteous judgments and one-sided decisions that dog golf courses across the nation. There will be no more whipping-boy status for golf. There may even be a "thank you" from an official or two for the money pumped into local economies.

Then, perhaps, "No Hunting" signs can go up at the doorposts of those golf courses.



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Phillips comment

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first — i.e., before the hiring decisions have been made. Kudos for Peter, who also makes his debut on the editorial page this month. (Questions about the *Letter* can be directed to Peter at 1-207-846-0600.)

- Recently played a true hidden gem in the Portland, Ore. area — Oswego Lake Country Club, an old H. Chandler Egan design. The layout was the hilliest I've seen on the West Coast, and the greens — thanks to superintendent Richard Fluter — were quick and true. Each hole was a treat, but the majestic views of nearby Mt. Hood sealed the deal.

- Still nothing doing on the military course bill.

- During June, I was out in Oregon for the many seed company field days. Some colleagues and I learned a valuable lesson in Canby, Ore., where I stayed in the Willamette Valley. If you want to bowl a few strings on a weeknight, get there early. We showed up at Canby Bowl at 7:30 p.m. on a Thursday, only to find a two-hour wait! The place was absolutely packed and, no, it wasn't league night...

Quote of the Month

"Frankly, golfers care more about maintenance than they do about design. You give a guy a choice between playing a well-maintained but poorly designed golf course or a well-designed, poorly maintained one, and he's always going to take the good maintenance. So maintenance is more important than design. It's a fact of life.

"So when you construct a golf course, you construct it for good maintenance. And zoysia is a constructive tool. You know the old saying: *As ye sow, so shall ye mow.*"

— DR. MICHAEL HURDZAN