Sierra article yet another lesson in agenda journalism

The Sierra Club magazine "reporter" 1,500 miles away over a telephone line knew exactly my facial expressions as he interviewed me, ... on grass going brown (though we never touched upon that subject and he guessed wrong: I have editorialized in favor of...)

To the editor: As a fellow golf architect, I read with interest Dr. Michael Hurdzan's proclamation that five sets of tees are now the standard for new golf courses. However, I question the need for such a wide selection of tee grounds. In particular, the back tees I've seen on a lot of modern courses are totally unnecessary, and, quite frankly, our success depends on the success of golf course operations all over the country. It's not getting any easier to turn a profit these days, but there are success stories. There are examples of innovation and efficiency that can be duplicated, even improved upon.

In reporting the news of our industry, we come into contact with these successes (and failures) every day. We've handpicked the successful people and invited them to speak, answer questions and communicate their experiences at Public Golf '93.

Pro shop retailing. Marketing. Practice facilities. Cart rental. Management strategy. Public relations and promotion. Food and beverage. Maintenance practices. Golf instruction. What do these things have in common? Money can be made or lost in all these areas, depending on how you handle them.

For example, Vincent Alfonso—owner and head pro at The Rail Golf Club in Springfield, Ill.—will speak about promotion at Public Golf '93. Not only is Vincent a marketing genius (he's got his own radio and TV shows, not to mention 200 outings each year), he was recently named 1992 Merchantiser of the Year by the Gate- way Section of the PGA of America.

Rees Jones is one of America's top golf course designers, but he's made another name for himself through renovation. What does a course renovation accomplish? It adds value to an existing facility—and what owner doesn't want that? Jones will speak at Public Golf '93 with Larry Hirsh, a golf course appraiser who will discuss some very interesting ways to assess value to golf course properties.

The bread & butter items for any daily-fee owner are probably green fees and cart rental. Ken James, vice president American Golf Corp., is involved with the operation of more than 200 daily fee facilities, in locations all over the nation. Who better to discuss innovative ways to maximize profit and reduce expenses?

The two-day conference features some 20 speakers, and I can't do justice to them (or their ideas) in this column. Suffice to say, we think they've...