

In an effort to lead, *Golf Digest* muddles the message

For months now, the staff here has tried to pin down and report details on an environmental summit first proposed by the Pebble Beach Co. and Denver-based Center for Research Management (CRM) in late 1993. The idea for such a meeting was first surfaced in January of this year and reported in *GCN's* February edition. But try as we might, we couldn't get further information about the conference from either party. We couldn't even get a date.

Now I know why: *Golf Digest* has emerged as the summit's co-sponsor and the magazine wanted to do the announcing. Fair enough.

For the record, *Golf Digest* and the National Wildlife Federation are co-sponsoring the event, subtitled "Charting a Sustainable Future" and

scheduled for Jan. 15-18, 1995, at the Inn at Spanish Bay. CRM Director Terry Minger will facilitate the meeting, designed to create an open forum at which golf industry members and environmentalists will communicate their concerns and desires, face to face.

We at *Golf Course News* support the upcoming summit and the ideals that prompted it. However, the golf course industry needn't attend this conference on the environmental defensive, something *Golf Digest* assumes it will.

In the magazine's September edition, Executive Editor Roger Schiffman weighs in on why the conference is necessary, offering several examples of alleged on-course agronomic



Hal Phillips,
editor

and developmental abuse. For instance, he notes that three courses in the Tampa, Fla. area consume 560,000 gallons of water per day, enough to "meet the daily water needs of more than 5,000 Tampa

residents." I doubt very much that Tampa residents would want 25 percent of those 560,000 gallons because they're reclaimed and non-potable.

And for the sake of perspective, something with which Schiffman wasn't overly concerned, Florida golf courses use 600 million gallons of water per day — most of which is returned to the water table and reused. Commercial users in Florida use 30 billion (yes, with a "B") gallons of water per day, only a small portion of which is

reused. Non-profit institutions in Florida — government agencies, schools, etc. — use an additional 25 billion gallons per day.

In the words of Bob Yount, executive director of the Florida Turfgrass Association, water use on golf courses in Florida is "a pimple on the backside."

Schiffman also quotes a Cornell University study that says, "A newly established site with limited turf cover appears to have the greatest potential for pesticide leaching." Of course, dirt does provide an ideal atmosphere for leaching, whereas turfgrass is one of nature's optimum filters. Funny that we should be worrying about pesticide use in situations where turf is absent...

In his attempt to be even-handed, Schiffman goes on to

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Does the golf course industry need an attitude adjustment?

You've heard about **Attitude Adjustment**. I go through an Attitude Adjustment daily when I look back and repent for how I've messed up. But I've got a couple more Adjustments to enter into The Equation of The American Experience: Aptitude, Latitude, Platitude and Aptitude.

• It's time for an **Aptitude Adjustment**: You know how the Army makes mechanical dummies into mechanics and turns people who want to be firefighters into security personnel? Same as what's happened in politics. In fact, maybe it has the right idea. Even the peanut farmers and school teachers whom we have elected to the presidency didn't do as poorly as the career politician now in office.

When Major League

Baseball's Ozzie Guillen is in a slump he puts eye drops on the bat. Some people all of the time — and all people some of the time — just can't see where their problems really lie. They just need an Aptitude Adjustment.

• Then there's the **Latitude Adjustment**. That is, adjusting how much latitude you give people when their statements are way out and whacky. If it's no big deal, or if nobody is listening to them anyway, or if knowing the truth won't set them free, you can adjust your latitude and let it pass.

Sometimes, though, you must narrow your latitude. A case in point? Those dear folks who stand up at public meetings and spout environmental platitudes



Mark Leslie,
managing editor

that have no basis in truth. The golf industry should give them, and their platitudes, less latitude.

• For that matter, how about **Platitude Adjustment**? A platitude is "a flat, dull, or trite remark,

especially one uttered as if it were fresh and profound," says the American College Dictionary. Some live on platitudes, but should the rest of the world continue to roll along living by them, too? I say, No!

• And last, though these are all equal in The Equation, is **Altitude Adjustment**. With so much hot air coming from the environmental movement, let's stick a pin in the balloon: a truckload of the facts coming out of *real* scientists' *real* research.

Combine these four — Aptitude, Latitude, Platitude and Altitude — and you get true Attitude Adjustment.

Does the golf industry as a whole need an Attitude Adjustment? Probably. Most of us do individually, as well as corporately. But there's the Good News and the good news. Both can do the trick. The latest good news is the results U.S. Golf Association Green Section-supported environmental research (see story page 1). Three years of extensive investigation have yielded a truckload of dynamite for the golf industry to use in an assault against environmental scareism. This information will be like giving superintendents, architects, builders and developers heat-seeking missiles to take into battle.

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Letters

CONNOLLY: THERE'S MORE TO FIGHTING ALGAE THAN AERATION ALONE

To the Editor:

I would like to comment on the product feature article on pond and lake management in the May '94 issue of *Golf Course News*.

I have a background in natural resource management and have written several articles on water quality and pond management. Every time I see an advertisement for aerifiers being a solution to poor water quality, I cringe. Oxygen levels in bodies of water are a critical part of the ecosystem, but must not be addressed as a single component of water quality.

Aerators, according to the EPA test results, improve water quality in less than 50 percent of the applications!

In the article you published, Mr. Steve Brown, president of Air Lake Aeration Inc., says, "We're seeing more and more algae growth on tees and greens. It's usually caused by bad irrigation water coming out of the ponds." This is a questionable statement.

The major reason for algae forming on greens is because the turfgrass is under some sort of

stress, resulting in turfgrass thinning allowing algae to bloom. Algae is a natural component of most soils. However, algae is not a competitor with turfgrass under normal conditions. There is no substantiation for the statement that algae is pumped onto greens or tees causing algae blooms.

I'm not sure if this article was an advertisement or a technical write-up. However, it is important to review some of the claims by advertisers before you publish them, because some of them are half-truths.

I hope you don't consider my comments harsh or criticizing. The subject of water-quality management is very complex, and I feel that aeration companies are taking advantage of golf course superintendents who are not informed in this area. Many of the statements and articles considering aerators would not be approved by experts in the aquatic management business or the more specialized industry of domestic water quality management (limnology).

Jim Connolly
Sr. Technical Agronomist
JacklinGolf
Post Falls, Idaho

THANKS FROM WFSP-TV

To the Editor:

I want to thank you for the kind words you said last spring about the WSFP-TV production, "Building a Golf Course" [GCN March '93]. So far the series has been broadcast in southwest Florida on Southwest Florida Public Television. Over the coming year, we are looking to distribute the series either via cable television or through public broadcasting.

The nine holes have turned into Hurricane no. 3, no. 4, no. 5, no. 6, and no. 7; Seminole no. 5 and no. 6; and Panther no. 3 and no. 4. The new holes maintain the high quality of the original 27 holes offering golfers many interesting challenges.

Once again, thank you for your kind article in *Golf Course News*.

Kirk Lehtomaa
Station Manager
WSFP-TV
Bonita Springs, Fla.

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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Circulation Manager

Brenda Boothby

Editorial Office

Golf Course News
PO Box 997
38 Lafayette Street
Yarmouth, ME 04096
207-846-0600; Fax: 207-846-0657

Advertising Office

National Sales:
Charles E. von Brecht
227 Second Avenue North
St. Petersburg, FL 33701
813-898-7077; Fax: 813-825-0923

Western Sales:

Robert Sanner
Western Territory Manager
2141 Vermont
Lawrence, KS 66046
913-842-3969; Fax: 913-842-4304

Marketplace Sales:

Mary Anderson
813-898-7077; Fax: 813-825-0923

Golf Course Expo Sales

Michael Lafaso
207-846-0600; Fax: 207-846-0657

Subscription Information

Golf Course News
P.O. Box 3047
Langhorne, PA 19047
215-788-7112

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Phillips comment

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quote Dr. James Beard, who has long maintained that turf actually enhances the environment. Yet, in his penultimate paragraph, the author urges Americans to adopt the Scottish model, which is less lush but requires few pesticide treatments and water.

Golf Digest has its heart in the right place, but positions taken by the magazine over the past 10 years make some of this pap hard to swallow. Remember the *Golf Digest* "Where To Play" series? When a course was deemed to sport subpar playing conditions, it was derided as "a goat track" or the like. I wonder how many courses would make *Golf Digest's* "Top Whatever" list if they adopted a linksland approach to maintenance (which, of course, is only possible in marine climates like the Scottish coast).

The magazine has asked readers to call (203-373-7033) with their strong opinions on the "complicated issue" of golf courses and the environment. Call and tell them to read *Golf Course News*.

•••

Massachusetts, my home state, is often derided for its liberal bent and governmental propensity toward taxation. "Taxachusetts," it's often called.

However, I'm here to tell you about a progressive law already on the books in the Bay State — a law that saves golf courses money and widely promotes the notion that golf courses are open spaces to be appreciated, not exclusive playgrounds for

rich, white males.

Under Chapter 61B in the Massachusetts tax code, any non-profit corporation may receive a 75-percent reduction in taxes on all land that is open for "recreational" use. Golf courses and open land qualify, while clubhouses and most other buildings are taxed at full value. A club does not have to be public-access to get the reduced rate, but it must be a non-profit organization. Clubs must apply individually for the tax break.

In return, the club commits itself to keeping the land undeveloped and agrees to reimburse the town for all tax breaks if the parcel is ever developed. The reimbursement provision ups the ante for a developer with every year of reduced taxes, notes Frederick D. Herberich, general counsel for the Massachusetts Department of Revenue.

Back in April, *Golf Course News* published a guest column from David MacDonald of Maine Coast Heritage Trust. MacDonald urged course owners to explore conservation options and, perhaps, lower their taxes in the process. In states with regressive tax codes, property is taxed at its "highest and best" potential use — but owners can keep their taxes down and maintain open space by negotiating long-term easements with their communities.

Drafted by the Massachusetts Golf Association (MGA), Chapter 61B was passed into law in 1978 following a public referendum. Some have objected to the tax breaks, especially those given to private country clubs. But even Tim Storrow — director of land protection of the Massachusetts Audubon

Society — calls the law an "important tool for helping keep open land in the state."

Walter Lankau is owner of Stow (Mass.) Acres Country Club, site of next year's U.S. Golf Association Public Links Championship. He's also president of the New England Golf Course Owners Association, and he puts it best. "If I had to pay taxes at the regular rate," said Lankau, "this course would be houses."

This law would provide a win-win situation for many golf course owners in states with regressive tax codes. Questions? Contact MGA Executive Director Richard Haskell at 617-891-4300.

•••

We have a winner!

National Mower, which has been turning out product since 1919, recently sponsored a contest to determine the oldest National Mower still in operation. Their winner was Steve Devine, superintendent at Tagalong Golf Course in Birchwood, Wis. Devine is still using a 30" model manufactured in 1961.

Now that's reel longevity...

Japanese water study

Continued from page 3

samples for 30 pesticides in ponds, drains, rivers, municipal waters and elsewhere in and around three golf courses. Some 4,485 detections of pesticides were recorded, with seven samples containing pesticide levels over HAL.

In 1991, 14 samples exceeded HAL out of 3,709 detections, which came from 89,713 samples. In 1990, 10 exceeded HAL out of 2,342 detections, which were out of 46,016 samples analyzed.

"That's an enormous, incredible amount of analysis," Cohen said. "Clearly, this is something the Japanese government felt important enough to spend millions of dollars on."

"These results can only be reviewed as favorable."

Cohen said that, in his experience, "the number of detections seems about right... The number of hits over HAL seems a little low."

Renzetti: What every player should know...

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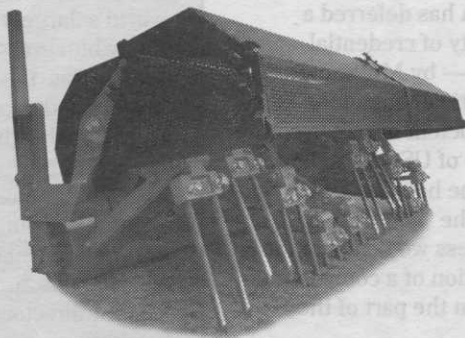
ball marks. Studies have shown that taking 5 seconds to repair your ball mark will result in a healed area in 5 days or less. Left damaged and unrepaired, however, this same area would take over 5 weeks to heal. A little preventative maintenance can go a long way.

Spike marks can also effect how "true" a ball rolls. Though the rules of golf prohibit the repairing of spike marks that might "improve the line of putt" prior to putting, golfers are encouraged to tap down spike marks after the entire group has "holed out." Another alternative, supported by U.S. Golf Association, studies is to switch to the spikeless shoe.

With the advent of new cup liners, the definition of cupping edges are more easily maintained. The golfer still must exercise caution, however, when removing and then replacing the flag. Done carelessly, the sharp edge of the cup is diminished.

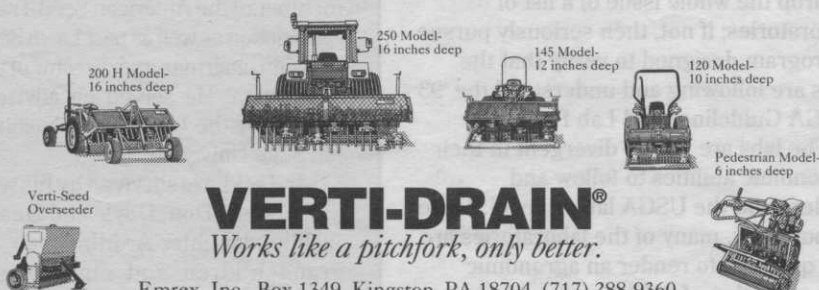
Golf courses today are in better condition, and play more consistently than ever before. This is balanced against increased labor costs and skyrocketing material prices to maintain these standards. More rounds, played by more people, who in turn, have increasingly high expectations of golf course conditions.

The diligent efforts by the golf course superintendent and his staff to provide these conditions can be dramatically improved with the cooperation of the membership. By demonstrating etiquette, obeying course rules, and thinking of those players to follow, the golfer make significant individual contributions. And yet, it is a team effort — with the end result being a winning golf course that the membership can be proud of.



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Forget composting: Clippings make Golf Paper

Continued from page 4

papermaking and a little magic," said Gustafson. "I'm convinced a lot of people thought we were crazy during development, but the finished product speaks for itself."

Indeed, the finished product comes after much testing by Four Corners' inhouse chemists, and with cooperation from The Boulders' superintendent emeritus Carl Snyder and Resort Management of America.

Since grasses ferment, compost and dry out too much, scientists had to develop a system to collect the grass and keep it green until it was run on the papermaking machine. The clippings must be dried, blended, and suspended in the pulp solution.

Tests last fall found that ryegrass and Bermudagrass were not as consistent as bentgrass. Their broader leaves made suspension in the pulp difficult.

Arrangements were then made to collect clippings from the area's Resort Management of America golf courses on days when the greens are free from chemical

applications.

The 144 greens at the four courses provide enough grass for a month of papermaking at current demand, Richardson said.

Just how big is that demand?

"It's too early to tell how great the demand will be. We've made tons and sold tons, and we're making more. And we've had a tremendous response from Asia and Europe," Richardson said. "In Asia, so far we've only heard from people in the paper industry who sell in stationery stores. Once the golf industry finds out about it in Asia, it will go bonkers."

Golf Paper is stocked in 80-pound text weight, equivalent to 32-pound bond. A matching heavyweight cover — 90-pound weight — is also available. The stock is 100-percent recycled, with a minimum of 20-percent post-consumer waste, he said.

"To the golf enthusiast it's the ultimate in recycled paper," Gustafson said.

People can pick, choose and order Golf Paper from Le Desktop Catalog by calling 800-LE-DESKTOP.