

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.

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The Sanford-designed Waimea Country Club is high in Hawaii's mountains in Kamuela.

IN HAWAII

Sanford takes to the mountains

Sanford & Associates has just completed a project in Kamuela, Hawaii, and is working on others in the U.S., Egypt and China.

The Kamuela course, Waimea Country Club, is located 3,500 feet above sea level. Its mountain location and cold air allowed Jupiter, Fla.-based Sanford to use bentgrass on the 18-hole, par-72 course.

Sanford also hopes to open Quest Golf Course in Houghton Lake, Mich., this summer. Designed with professional golfer Ken Green, the 14-hole course is

part of a new resort/residential community there.

Two recently announced projects include The Sharm El-Sheikh Resort & Golf Club in Sinai, Egypt, to be routed through cliffs overlooking the Red Sea; and the Great Wall Country Club in Beijing, People's Republic of China, which is still in preliminary design.

Other current projects include: Hickman Hills Golf Club, East Fishkill, N.Y., designed with Lee Trevino; Sawmill Golf Club, Saginaw, Mich.; and Quarry Hills Golf Course, Quincy, Mass.

Grand Cayman gets first full-length track

GRAND CAYMAN, BWI—On an island known more for diving and snorkeling, visitors to the Caymans can now add "teeing off" to their list of vacation activities. Golfers can test their skill at The Links at SafeHaven, Cayman Islands' first 18-hole championship golf course. Located five miles north of George Town, the new 6,500-yard, par-72 course cost \$8.5 million to develop and complete.

Designed by Roy Case, and built by Gregori International SARL of France, The Links at

SafeHaven was built according to U.S. Golf Association standards. SafeHaven Ltd. Chairman Owen Matalon noted the challenges his international team of developers overcame in completing the project.

More than 60 acres of the 103-acre course were planted with hybrid Bermudagrass which, for the first time in the Caribbean, was cultivated using spraying technique hydro-mulching.

The landscape is planted with more than 4,000 indigenous tropical trees and shrubs,

including coconut and thatch palms, mahogany, cordia, oleander and mahoe.

Case, who has designed more than 50 courses throughout the Caribbean and southern United States, said that, because of the originally "hostile" environment, The Links at SafeHaven provided critical information about the problems of growing grass in soil-less, salt-laden material.

"It's by far the most difficult project I have ever undertaken, and I am extremely proud of the results," he said.

Attitude Adjustment, anyone?

Continued from page 10

Instead of golf industry proponents going into a fray at a public hearing wearing nothing but a flak jacket, the world will see environmental scare-ists tied up in straight jackets.

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One warning for an Attitude Adjustment: Many in the golf industry have over-reacted in the past against people who have released "balanced" reports that not only point to the ecological harmlessness of golf but address practices or products that should be improved. "Shame on you," people holler when there are any negative tones to a report from the Green Section or Golf Course Superintendents Association of America.

Listen up! If there were no balance, if only the rosy research findings were released and if the unflattering were withheld, the golf industry would sink to the level of the Sierra Club, Worldwatch and their cronies. Golf would lose all credibility.

Let Sierra bury itself in the eyes of the public with its one-sided, self-serving rhetoric. Then unstrap the heat-seeking missile from your hip.

...

WHAT YOU SAY?

Statements coming out of D.C. are sometimes bewildering, aren't they?

Carol Browner told an audience in July: "My job is protecting the health of the people of this country and the health of the resources we all share — the air, the land and the water. But I can't do my job if the people of this country don't have health care."

What? You can't keep the environment clean if we don't have health care? A bit of a stretch there, Ms. Browner. As the protesters have said: "The deal is raw. Take it back to Arkansas."

Then there was President Bill Clinton who, during a speech at a church on Aug. 14, referred to the presidency as a "ministry." Seed Research of Oregon Director of Marketing Skip Lynch responded: "That's a short leap from the bullypulpit to the pulpit."

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Trouble with poa annua being trafficked onto your course from other courses on golfers' spikes?

Try what Kevin Ross at Falmouth (Maine) Country Club and Terry Buchen at Double Eagle in Galena,

Ohio, are doing (and I do think you guys swiped my brilliant idea!). That is: Set up a spike brush station at the pro shop and require golfers to clean their cleats before walking onto the course.

Ross is putting up a sign: "Due to weed seed from other courses, all golfers must clean their spikes."

He joked that members at his private club can hassle their guests: "Clean your spikes before you walk on my course, you weed-smuggler!"

Informing club members through newsletters, signs, or other media will help them all pitch in. No one wants to "ugly up" a course they play on.

If you have valets at your course, they can help you with your bag and shoes from the car and just pass it onto a person to clean the shoes.

Meantime, arming golfers nationwide with Softspikes could resolve much of the poa annua problem, too.

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Instead of Jack Nicklaus, it will be Nicklaus the First who will win the Russian Open, joked Robert Trent Jones Jr. about Moscow Country Club in Nahabino, Russia.

Building a course during the turbulence of the late 1980s and early 1990s in the former Soviet Union was not without challenges. Jones said that at the time of the "revolution" the standing comment was: "When a Russian says, 'Take a shot on our golf course,' do you drink, duck or hit it?"

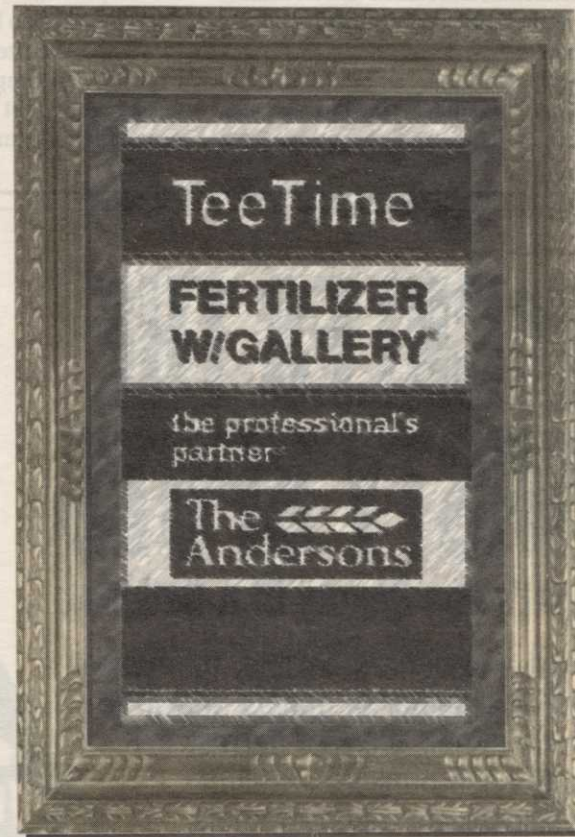
The deal for Jones to design the course was actually signed at the summit in 1988 between then-Soviet Foreign Minister Chevardnadze and U.S. Secretary of State George Schultz. "Schultz said, 'Now that you're going to have fewer weapons, you ought to play golf and try to get those little missiles in the correct targets,'" Jones recalled.

...

Global gadabout Bobby Weed, the chief golf course designer for the PGA Tour, made this observation: "Golf is not really a fad in Japan. But you could relate it to all the fads that have ever come down the pike in the United States — Hoola hoop, skateboard, Frisbee, everything — roll them all into one and that's how the Japanese feel about golf."

Observation Number Two: "Golf is the most migratory game in the world. It's enjoyed by the biggest, most diverse age group in the world."

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