Kiawah Revisited

Pete Dye's Ocean Course has been purchased at auction again, by the same buyer: VIT

PGR Warning

One researcher believes use of plant growth regulators may induce algae problems in greens

Managers Unite

Brassie & COPM join forces, making the new entity America's third largest management firm

USCCA to offer clubs group buying option

By PETER BLAIS

— A recently formed organization designed to cut costs and increase efficiency at private clubs has ruffled a few feathers among other golf associations. The main focus of the United States Country Club Association (USCCA) is a group purchasing program called the Cooperative Alliance for Purchasing (CAP), according to Jeffrey Dykhouse, USCCA's founder, president and sole stockholder. CAP reportedly leverages the buying power of USCCA member clubs to provide the best possible price for products and services such as insurance, maintenance equipment and supplies, food and beverage products, office equipment, irrigation materials and equipment, golf

Nicklaus hops aboard the public-access bandwagon

By MARK LESLIE

NORTH PALM BEACH, Fla. — The Nicklaus umbrella is about to expand, adding public-access golf clubs and community development and management to its bulky portfolio. Keying on a market tailor-made for his name and the fast-growing segment of public golfers, Jack Nicklaus is starting a network of Golden Bear Golf Communities featuring semi-private, daily-fee golf courses. First out of the gate will be Golden Bear Golf Club at Laurel Springs, north of metro Atlanta in southern Forsyth County. Ground was broken in April. Watch for future communities in Dallas, Chicago, Detroit, Tampa and Nashville, said Golden Bear Financial Services President Ira Fenton.

Sticks & Stones: Firms play the name game

By HAL PHILLIPS

The automobile industry annually spends millions of dollars researching model names that will catch the fancy of consumers. Sometimes the money is well spent; sometimes it may as well have been flushed down the toilet. Who, for example, dreamed up the Ford Probe, a product aimed ostensibly at young women on the move? Unfortunately for Ford, marketing experts believe the name tends to remind young women of pending trips to the gynecologist. The Probe may be the golf course superintendents' equivalent to an herbicide called Leech-Rite. While the dollar value is modest in comparison, suppliers to the golf course industry also spend a great deal of time and money on the formulation of product names. Perhaps because of their sheer number and the often thankless nature of their functions, seed varieties and turf chemicals are tops when it comes to invention. Is it coincidence that so many seed varieties share names with automobiles? "Mustang, Falcon, Dasher, Fiesta," he laughed, although snow did shut down the course for two days on that weekend in 1993. In his 20 years at Keystone Resort, this has been
The Name Game
Continued from page 1

Riviera, Rebel, Nomad, Blazer, Taurus, Taurean, Regal, (La) Sabre, Eclipse, Cutless, Jaguar, Seville," recounted Steve Tubbs, president of Turf Merchants. "I think all of these names, it's important to be unique. One of the best names ever was a turf-type fine fescue that came out in the early '80s called Houndog [from International Seeds].

"Everyone laughed at it, but everyone talked about it, too. I wanted to name something. You ain't nothing but a... so I could make a blend."

A very unscientific survey of seed blend chemists revealed there is a method to the madness of product introduction. Actually, several methods. Most firms pool the resources of different departments into brainstorming groups, formed specifically to name products. Others come upon them by chance. Others farm the project out to firms specializing in formulating appropriate product names.

"There are even computer programs that spit out page after page of 'appropriate' names," said Gene Hintze, marketing services manager at Sanford Agro. Purveyors of Barricade and Sentinel, two names that received their madness after the fact. In the seed world, for example, Jacklin Seed has been successful with the inventive use of golf terms like Putter. Barenburg USA uses the "Bar" prefix to create brand-identity [Bardot and Baron], while Turf Seed, Inc. President Bill Rose has been known to name varieties after good employees [Darcy]. Some firms apply method to their madness after the fact. "People ask us if we named it Sahara because it's so drought tolerant. We tell them, 'No, we just liked the name,'" explained Brenda Dossey, manager, special projects at Farmer's Marketing.

A few years ago, Owen Towne, manager of business development, Turf & Ornamental at Ciba, traveled to San Antonio to observe plots where the firm's new propiconazole product was being tested. He visited the Alamo and learned that "alamo" means cottonwood tree in Spanish. Because propiconazole has arboled applications, the rest is history.

"At that point, all we had was a Section 18, a state-use permit," said Towne, then the product manager for Alamo. "So it could only be used in Texas, which meant it fit even better... I think the point is, a good name cannot save a bad product. I don't know if a bad name can sink a good product, but it can certainly hinder its progress."

Seed Research of Oregon, taking no chances on either side of Towne's supposition, names all its varieties according to a letter-number formula. Each bentgrass, for example, is part of an SR 1000 series; each bluegrass is part of an SR 2000 series; and so on.

"That makes it simple for us, for the consumer and for the universities that test them," explained Skip Lynch, SRO's technical agronomist. "What we're looking for is a very simple, no-questions-asked name that the consumer will automatically associate with our company.

"What really matters is how the product performs. Heck, it's only a name. There's actually a hard fescue out there called Attila [from Turf Merchants]. I'm not sure I want Attila on my golf course."

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