Relationships the key to cordial relations

Hal Phillips, editor

We have good signs and bad. I feel like New England Patriots corner back Marc Hurst after a disastrous season opener last fall (1994) against Dan Marino and the Miami Dolphins. "First, [you ask] when will you stop? he said. "Then it's when is it gonna stop? Good ... bad ... good ... bad. Like a tennis game, you could get whiplash keeping score.

The good. At January's Environmental Summit at Pebble Beach, the co-sponsorning National Wildlife Federation and a number of colleagues from such groups as the Sierra Club, Environmental Defense Fund, Audubon Society and Friends of the Earth held positive discussions with representatives of the golf world.

The bad. Only weeks before, the National Wildlife Federation's Roger Rick magazine ran a feature story entitled "Rick and the Gang Visit A Beautiful Golf Course — and Find That Looks Can Fool You.

The good. The Scottsdale, Ariz., Planning Commission has endorsed Pinnacle Peak Partners' planned The Estancia golf community, which will include 340 acres of natural preserve.

The bad. A reporter for no other than The New York Times, writing about golf development in Asia, quoted Sreeja Kolandai of Friends of the Earth Malaysia and a founder of the Global Alliance for Movement as saying Mr. Hiers' project has serious ecological threat all across Asia. I call golf

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Letters

TAKING ISSUE WITH INTELLIGENCE

To the editor:
I disagree with the article in the February 1995 Golf Course News, "New Congress might result in mixed golf bag," I found a number of troubling quotes about the new Congress being "good news for the golf course industry."

Ms. Elizabeth Kirby-Hart quotes, "The new Congress will impact golf clubs for the better" and says "the laws and regulations we'll be looking at should be far less onerous than before."

Sure, but that's not poten- tially damaging law under con sideration by Congress to affect the same rights to gay Americans with different ideas as Ms. Kirby-Hart open community, which will include 340 acres of natural preserve. She goes on to cite the poten- tially damaging law under consideration by Congress to afford the-open to enjoy grass, trees, birds and such. Golf courses create jobs and help or generally contribute to the environment. We must not lose sight of all the earth's species.

THANKS FOR RATING COVERAGE

To the editor:
My sincere appreciation to you for taking the time and space to discuss the subject of course rat- ings (GCN January, p. 1). While the furor has subsided stemming from the demeaning comments Colonial Charters GC received in the 1994 Places to Play guide, we are awaiting the 1995 edition (November) to see how well Golf Digest rates us. Our best approach was a basic understanding of what we do.

Richard Raughton, superintendent, Colonial Charters GC, Longs, S.C.

REMEMBER TO COUNT HUMANS AMONG EARTH'S SPECIES

To the editor:
In regard to the article (GCN, January) concerning the ecosys- tem research proposal being supported by Jim Snov, USGA, along with the Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, National Wildlife Federation, Neo tropical Migratory Bird Conserva tion, and several other organizations and government agencies, I think this is a very positive move on behalf of all these individuals. It is this reader's opin ion that we, as the environment, as earth's inhabitants have the obligation and right to be concerned about envi- ronmental matters, we must not lose sight of all the earth's species. Mankind and his environment is the most important! Our cities are growing at a rapid rate. We stack people into 20-story apartment buildings to live.

For not for parks and golf courses, most people would not have the change to get out into the open to enjoy grass, trees, birds and such. Golf courses create jobs and help or generally support themselves.

If have been our experience with working with DNR, Corps of Engineers and PCA, that while they have rules and laws to up hold, they still do what is best for all. The Green Section working with these governmental agencies should be able to make for a better environment.

Michael J. Pierce, president Dakota Peat & Blenders Grand Forks, N.D.

PATE SETS RECORD STRAIGHT

To the editor:
I am writing regarding your February 1995 article on the most utilzed Paul Clute being named Builder of the Year. In the clip on the front page of this issue, you made reference to the award-winning Old Overton Golf Club in Vestavia Hills, Al. This course was indeed de signed by Tom Fazio. However, this was a collaborative effort with Jensen, pre now has his own design firm, and should have been listed as a co-designer.

Jerry's involvement in the project was extensive. During construction, Jerry lived in Bir mingham, and with Fazio's ap proval he re-routed the back nine. Michael J. Pierce, president Jerry Pate Golf Design Inc. Pensacola, Fla.
First, we hope to make 1995 a year of tremendous progress for the image of our profession. "Par for the Course" segments we are producing for ESPN are, of course, the anchor of this effort. We also plan to initiate the largest public relations campaign in the association's history. Our goal will be to provide the residents with easy-to-use tools (such as posters, brochures, videos and fact sheets) to promote themselves and the profession at the same time. What "Par" accomplishes in the mass media, these new tools will accomplish at the grassroots level.

What's in it for you? Better communication with the employers, golfers, government and media will be your daily jobs. Second, 1995 will be a year when GCSSA continues to build stronger ties with our chapters. This virtual association has been so successful with the awareness and participation of the chapters. At the same time, the "national"

must be a more effective support system for our affiliates. Look for us to emphasize the importance of strong chapter relations at every possible turn this year. What's in it for you? Stronger, more ef- ficient, more positive relations that help you meet the daily, often, local, challenges of your profession.

Finally, we plan to make 1995 a year in which GCSSA will em- brace the positive impact of golf on the environment. We plan to underscore golf's contributions to communities and to ac- knowledge the contributions and professions that help you meet the daily, often, local, challenges of your profession.

Well, in this coming year — where golf course superi- tendents, managers and developers continually face environ- mental activists — we may see some light ahead. There are reports of more sensible people on the Far Side — what has been an abnormal group too closely resembling the violent Earth First! members. Williamsburg (Va.) Environment- al Group President Ron Boyd reports: "Four years ago we were taking golf course projects to the localities or fed- eral government for permitting, and it was more of a fear of the unknown on their part. They [Corps of Engineers, EPA, state departments of natural re- sources, etc.] didn't know what was going to happen. They thought you were going to clear off 125 acres. Oh my God, what about all this poison runoff? And, oh my God, oh my God..." But as they slowly have gotten used to these projects in place, it's not as hard to get them [projects] through the process any more.

Regarding environmental organizations, Boyd said: "I see less of them being vehemently outspoken against projects. There is always concern, but not like there used to be. There used to be almost a blind rage against projects. You don't see that much any more. I think the information illustrating golf courses' positive ef- fects on the environment is be- ing disseminated better. Once people start looking into it, there's not that negative they can draw off of. Sometimes they dredge up events that happened eight or 10 years ago. But, that might as well be light-years ago." This all looks good. We can only pray that right minds re- main in control. There is no law that members of environ- mental groups will follow the leaders. The fact that the Na- tional Wildlife Federation was co-sponsoring a positive meet- ing with golf industry folks while at the same time feeding foolish drive to the poor little Ranger Rick readers illustrates the point.

Now the monster goes even deeper - 24 inches.
Nothing else even comes close.

Even Steven Spielberg couldn't dream up a more piercing scenario for killing turf..."introducing the Model 405.250 Verti-Drain? No other machine do- ing the same basic job knows in golf. What? Why? What is wrong with settling for some natural player volume across the country (like ev- ery other participant sport) — be this 15 million or 30 million players? Why does there have to be a constant heavy "push" to develop more golfers? The only answer is to satisfy the self-serving purposes of those who grow financially when the game grows. i.e., manufacturers, developers, operators, golf organizations and the media.

Natural marketing to bring more players to the game, instruction programs for begin- ners—fine. But to label player develop- ment as one of the three "overarching prob- lems" in golf is a mis-characterization.

Because of the inherent value of the game of golf, I personally feel half America would play golf given legitimate opportu- nity. What prevents this? I suggest: 1) the lack of fundamental instruction through- out the game, especially within the pre- dominant public sector; 2) the lack of effective practice facilities; and 3) the lack of a sufficient number of golf courses.

The NGF is looking to exacerbate the problem now as it seeks to raise $2 million (first year only, with more to come) to fund a public-relations campaign in- tended to correct golf's poor (elitist) image — an image that is really a "red ber- ret." Of course, any public-relations firm will gladly accept the assignment and off everyone will go. When they are finished spending all this money, the same basic problems facing golf today will still be there.

The reality is that golf presently lacks informed national leadership and, there- fore, appropriate vision. National golf or- ganizations (NGF, PGA, USGA, the Three Tours), while well intended, are so occup- ied with addressing their own agendas they see only the "trees" and not the shape of the "forest." Golf's merit will be ultimately proven, with the prevail- ing game's approach to its natural level via what is now an inefficient process that, I expect, will gradually be refined.

Jim McLoughlin
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