Some bureaucrats can’t see the issues for the red tape

A friend of ours owns a farm in rural Maine. One day she went out into her yard to find a coyote standing in the driveway eyeing her dog, who was hitched. The coyote had just killed a sheep, was drooling blood, and may have had rabies since he was already eyeing his next kill and he was out in the open in daylight. A lady in the doorway by the road where she crossed to the other side of the street and hollered over, “Patty, don’t you know about our lease laws?”

Consumed by an apparent violation of a minor law, that woman entirely missed a real danger.

Do you ever wonder if the same thing is going through the minds of certain bureaucrats?

Do you sometimes wonder if they are talking without thinking and regulating with no common sense whatever?

It was, after all, EPA Administrator Carol Browner who described her job as “… protecting the health of the people of this country and the health of the resources we all share — the air and the land and the water.” She was doing fine until she added, “But I can do my job if the people of this country don’t have health care.”

Say, what?

This all comes to mind because of the case of Pennington Enterprises, Inc. versus the United States of America (see page 61).

Pennington was absolutely and foolishly wronged by a bureaucrat — supported by other bureaucrats — costing the seed company $250,000 and a hundred of other companies another $790,000.

Sonny Peronnet was the only one to go around the farmers, the ones promoting the long road ahead. And he was indeed proceeded on June 9, 1989, when he said, “The government’s got thousands of attorneys on salary who can drag the thing out forever,” and added, “I can sue and possibly win $250,000 and it will cost me $200,000.”

Still, indeed, some 2,200 days later, the U.S. Treasury has paid Pennington $250,000 for his losses, plus interest. There was no compensation for the $170,000 in lawyers’ fees that was paid to the USGA.

To the editor: I saw the “Truce” in bold print on the front page of the April edition of Golf Course News. I was aghast and furious at the implication that any worker for any USGA laboratory was being “protected” by the USGA. I was shocked and embarrassed by the implication that the USGA was the source of any scientific integrity.

Yes, indeed, the USGA has the highest standard of scientific integrity of any organization in the world. But it is not true. It is not true. And it is not true that the USGA is protected by any USGA laboratory.

Hal Dickey
Director of Advertising
PBI/Gordon Corp.
Kansas City, Mo.

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TDD TAKES ISSUE WITH ‘TRUCE’

To the editor:

I saw the “Truce” in bold print on the front page of the April edition of GCN in regard to the relationship between the USGA and the current physical evaluation laboratories supporting the 1993 USGA Guidelines. I was confused, because in order to have a truce, you first have to have a “War” and at best Mr. Jim Snow’s fear was only the need to deal with the potential of angry lab technicians. But I am sure that the mob of Green Section personnel that was in attendance would have gallantly protected Mr. Snow. However, I can’t fault GCN for the tone-setting headline of the article because, as Mr. Stross was quoted in Mark Leslie’s column in April’s edition, it sells newspapers.

The meeting that the USGA set up in San Francisco with the American Association of Laboratory Accreditation was in no small way historic. The USGA deserves credit for taking a major step forward in resolving the controversy over the qualifications of the laboratories that protect the integrity of the 1993 USGA Guidelines. It was clear to me that there was no opposition to the requirement for accreditation of the laboratories and there therefore would probably be a list of accredited labs by the 1997 GCSSA show. However, please let me clarify the somewhat less than optimistic picture of the accreditation process that was attributed to me.

Continued on next page
Phillips comment: All ahead into the 21st century

Continued from page 12

Peter Blais, Diana Costello-Lee and myself — can now be reached at this address, which will also appear monthly in the masthead.

I honestly believe this will allow better communication between Golf Course News and our readers. Besides, those of you with postal phobias can now e-mail letters to the editor, story suggestions, likes, dislikes and agronomic epiphanies.

For those of you not yet on the Net, get with the program! Don’t wait until your kids have to show you how...

This just in: The Colorado Golf Association (CGA) has gone spikeless. In the four tournaments it has scheduled for this year, use of metal spikes has been prohibited. Alternative cleats will be provided by Rockwell, MD-based Softspikes Inc. for all those participating in the events: June 5-8 at Bear Creek Golf Club in Denver; Sept. 12-14 at Battlement Mesa Golf Club in Battlement Mesa; Sept. 16-17 at Sheraton Steamboat Golf Club in Steamboat Springs; and Sept. 22-24 at Fort Collins Country Club.

According to the CGA’s stated policy, players will not be allowed to wear metal-spiked shoes, period. Apparently, upon entry the CGA will send each player a set of alternative spikes. Otherwise, players must wear spikeless golf shoes, tennis shoes, or other soft-soled shoes.

Say what you like about spike alternatives in general, but superintendents have every reason to like the idea. Greens aren’t chewed up by nearly the same rate and Poa annua doesn’t weasel its way onto unsuspecting golf courses.

There remain some legitimate questions about spike alternatives — namely, slippage on wet inclines and the liability a course might incur.

But several ritzy clubs have already banned traditional spikes and only more will follow.

It’s interesting to note there has been some resistance to spike alternatives in various consumer golf magazines. However, much of it has centered around the author’s attachment to the “plinkety-plinkkey” sound spikes make on concrete and bathroom floors. If you can’t come up with anything more compelling, don’t bother raising the subject.

The dust has cleared since San Francisco, where the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSSA) held its first conference and show with the significant financial backing of several golf industry corporations.

GCSSA Chief Executive Officer Steve Mona said his members liked the new approach and attendees can expect more corporate-sponsored events down the road.

“We got very good reviews on the corporate involvement at the San Francisco show and we’re taking that as a mandate that we can continue with them,” said Mona. “The corollary to that is that we could possibly see more in the future.

“If we had received a hue and cry from our members, our attitude would be different. We don’t want to offend the sensibilities of our members. But because we got good reviews, I feel comfortable saying we have a clear mandate to continue and look at other opportunities.”

Video workshop targets performance

KOHLER, Wis. — The “Superintendent’s Video Workshop,” a video training series designed to enhance staff training and managerial skills for golf course superintendents, has released a new training workshop to teach managers how to get consistent peak performance and enthusiasm from employees.

Videotaped at Blackwolf Run in Kohler, the “Superintendent’s Video Workshop” provides golf industry superintendents with the significant financial backing of several golf industry corporations. The series will also be available to superintendents through the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSSA), the association’s corporate sponsors, and local distributors.

The new workshop, “The People You Manage,” targets performance and practical tips for motivating and enhancing the quality of their work as managers do. Manager workbooks and video training workshops are available for purchase from EPIC, a golf course management consulting firm.

The “People You Manage” workshop is available for 14 days free trial period for your key staff members. You won’t find a better tool to help you keep your facility in peak condition — or one that gets your staff to work so early.

As impressive as your colleagues’ comments might be, there’s only one real way to sell yourself on the Workman vehicle: try it for yourself. Call your local distributor to set up a demo and try it for yourself.