

## Seeing the light 'down the Cape'

**N**ews item: The National Park Service and U.S. Coast Guard have decided to move historic Cape Cod Light back from the raging Atlantic, which has encroached to within 115 feet of the aged beacon, built in 1798, making it the second-oldest in the country.

Golf angle: Highland Light, as it's known colloquially, will soon take up new residence some 450 feet inland — seven feet off the 7th fairway at Highlands Golf Links in Truro, Mass. A classic 9-hole design first laid out in 1892, the course is an historic landmark in its own right; too bad this grand dame will soon suffer all manner of miniature golf references. "We'll get a windmill from Eastham and put it on No. 1," superintendent Shawn Callahan told the *Boston Globe*. "We'll get a whale and put it on No. 5."

Let me tell you a few things about Highland Links. First of all, it's one of the few courses in New England open year 'round. I grew up in Boston and many diehard golfers, like my dad and I, would routinely travel to Truro in February to scratch the winter itch. As the only public-access course on the Cape's outer reach (that's the "forearm" for you foreigners), the Links have been administered by the town of Truro since 1967 under a concession from the National Park Service. In truth, the course is a rugged links hybrid, designer unknown, featuring five outstanding holes, a couple so-so holes and two dogs. But the atmosphere is everything here, akin to the west coast of Wales.

The course was originally built as part of a 19th-century resort called the Highland House, which now houses the Truro Historical Society and sits between the 8th green and 9th tee. In the lighthouse parking lot, separated from the 7th fairway by a weathered snow fence and scrapes of Cape heather, are signs that read "Golf in Play. Park at your own risk."

There's a lesson here for all of us — friends and foes of golf alike. In New England, where the game has been part of the culture and landscape longer than almost anywhere in America, there exists a fuller understanding that golf courses are part of the environment. That means give and take. Nowhere in the debate over Highland Light's new resting place does one hear, "Absolutely not!"

According to Mark Tabor, a landscape architect with the Park Service, installation of shatter-proof glass will render the lighthouse "relatively ball-proof." The \$1.6 million moving bill will be split by the federal government (\$950,000), state government (\$500,000) and Truro Historical Society, which has raised some \$200,000 by selling lighthouse souvenirs: coffee mugs, T-shirts, even golf balls.

Nick Nickerson, a member of Truro's golf advisory committee, isn't thrilled with the idea ("You don't save one historic object and destroy another," he told the *Globe*), but he isn't digging his heels in, either. Course manager Manuel Macara is nervous the move won't be completed by April, when golf season really picks up in Truro. But he has resigned himself to the continuing prospect of peaceful co-existence with Highland Light and its visitors.

As a veteran Highland Linkster, I applaud both sides for their cooperation and long-sighted approach to the situation. Besides, a round at Highland is enjoyable precisely because of the severe obstacles: biting cold, 35-mph winds, impossible heather and the hardly-Augustan playing conditions befitting a links-type course. What's not to love about a lighthouse abutting the 7th fairway?

"We wanted to have the least amount of change to the topography and character of the place," Tabor told the *Globe*. "You'd have to hit a pretty goofy ball to hit the lighthouse."



Hal Phillips  
editor

## Coming to a theater near you

**F**rom my golf bag to yours, here are some movies (accompanied with a hint to their plots) you might want to check out as fall approaches:

• *Who Needs Enemies When Earth First's Your Friend?*

In this expose of modern environmental activism we see that those poor folks at *Earth First!* may unwittingly physically damage, if not kill, their own home-cultivated terrorists. Perhaps they should call themselves *Ohhh, Darn!* Here's the scoop: A couple of months back *Earth First! Journal* printed a Dear Ned Ludd column (or perhaps it's Nedd Ludd; they have it spelled both ways) illustrating how to destroy a golf course irrigation system, one head at a time, using a hammer and flathead screwdriver. Well, don't be surprised if you hear about someone getting killed by doing this. When you snap a head off an irrigation system you are unleashing 120 pounds of pressure per square inch. That pressure can propel the irrigation head 30 feet into the air. If someone gets their own pea-head in the way of one of those rocket-launched heads, some superintendent somewhere might find a dead *Earth First!-er* laid out in his eternal resting place on the 13th fairway. Talk about an ill omen.

• *Invasion of the Zebra Mussels...*

Sounds like a bad "B" movie, doesn't it? And, we're not talking about muscle-bound zebras stalking Kansas City, but zebra mussels — miniscule mullosks that can wreck havoc with pumping stations and irrigation systems. Best beware. Especially if your golf course uses water from a public waterway (See page 13).

• *PhD: 'USGA OK'*

A drama of reconciliation? This will remind you more of *On Golden Pond* when the character played by Jane Fonda kind of err, ahh draws closer to a dad who had long spurned her. This flick involves the U.S. Golf Association and golf course architect Mike Hurdzan, a past critic of the USGA green construction specifications. "The fact the USGA is opening up new research to allow for a better evaluation of materials is really encouraging," said Hurdzan. "I applaud [Green Section National Director] Jim Snow and the USGA for being open about looking at all the alternatives. The USGA and I find little to disagree on since the new specifications have been published."

• *Battle of the Titans*

Thanks to Mark Jarrell, CGCS, of Palm Beach National, for this full-length documentary setting apart the Audubon Society of New York (ASNY) and National Audubon Society. Mark's column in *The Florida Green* said: "There are more than 500 Audubon Societies in the United States, separately incorporated, each guided by its own board of directors with their own programs and positions. The ASNY, the sponsoring organization for the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program (ACSP), was the second state Audubon Society to be formed, founded in 1897 by Theodore Roosevelt and others. The National Audubon Society was formed in the 1940s to focus on issues beyond the scope of the state Audubon Societies.

"Given this fact, the suggestion by members of the National Audubon that the ASNY was attempting to exploit 'the good Audubon name' when it instituted the ACSP, seems arrogant and presumptuous. The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of New York apparently agrees, since it ruled against the National Audubon's lawsuit in 1987 in their attempt 'to permanently enjoin the use of the term "Audubon Society" or any variation thereof by the Audubon Society of New York State.'"

The National Audubon has been at odds with the New York Audubon for years because of New York's attitude of "wise use," rather than environmental idealism.



Mark Leslie,  
managing editor

## Letters

### SUBSURFACE DRIP FEEDBACK

To the editor:

I found your story on subsurface drip irrigation (*GCN August*) interesting. Because of major water constraints on my golf course, I have been experimenting with drip irrigation for three years on a 20-by-80-foot teebox, and I can shed some light on the issue.

Running a nine-hole course at an elevation of 8,500 feet is not an easy task. I have only one full-time and one part-time employee and a very small budget, and trying new ideas makes the task even more difficult.

When I took the job in 1992 as manager/superintendent, Valle Escondido golf course was still

limited to 1.1 acre feet of water per year as was ordered by the 10th Appellate court back in the 1980s. Originally, the water was applied by means of a garden hose, two Rainbird sprinklers and many hours of labor. So the first task was to find as many extra manhours as possible. It was determined automatic sprinklers would accomplish this. Within about two months, implementation provided not only lower labor costs, but more efficient use, and better playing conditions. By the end of the next year, we had automated half of the nine holes, and installed a Netafin drip irrigation system on one of the combination men's and women's teeboxes. The

teebox covers 1,000 square feet. Using 10 tons of sand to, first, level the enlarged site and serve as a base, we then added a four-inch bed of sand for the Toro .6 GPM Netafin drip irrigation system, two inches of black dirt, and sod. The sod had eight- to 10-inch roots and was being played within two months.

Three years later, we've got some positive results and some negative. I've found that drip irrigation is expensive and time-consuming to install, but is low in maintenance.

On the positive side: The turf is still fast to recover from play and drought; root structure is immense and almost undiggable; the Netafin design has held up

(so far) against clogging, and there is no hindrance to the play of the turf.

On the other hand: Surface watering is still occasionally needed for fertilizer and surface turf softening; we had to change the tee markers to short spike cage style to prevent puncture; aeration has been limited to shallow tine or HydroJet; the system had the tendency to migrate toward the surface in the early stages.

We ruled out drip irrigation for use on our greens because the system would have to be buried too deep to be effective.

Michael Wiergacz, manager  
Valle Escondido  
Taos, N.M.

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**Editorial Office**  
Golf Course News  
Box 997, 38 Lafayette Street  
Yarmouth, ME 04096  
207-846-0600; Fax: 207-846-0657  
hphilip@gcn.biddeford.com

**Advertising Office**  
**National Sales:**  
Charles E. von Brecht  
Box 997, 38 Lafayette Street  
Yarmouth, ME 04096  
207-846-0600; Fax: 207-846-0657

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

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207-846-0600; fax: 207-846-0657

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Golf Course News  
P.O. Box 3047  
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