

# Behold, the very principles you've been waiting for



Hal Phillips, editor

The second conference on Golf & The Environment, held at Pinehurst in mid-March, was not the unprecedented meeting of minds the first incarnation was.

From all accounts (the press was not invited to last year's conference at Pebble Beach), the inaugural Golf & The Environment seminar was no less than an epiphany, whereby golf industry types and environmental activists realized they had far more in common than previously believed. In the 14 months since the Pebble Beach event, select attendees seized upon their newfound commonality by hammering out the "Environmental Principles for Golf Courses in the United States," written testimony to these shared beliefs.

Because this year's event built on the ground-breaking relationships established last year, the Pinehurst meeting was more love-in than summit. However, this year's meeting was significant because it marked the unveiling of these much-anticipated principles, the bulk of which appear on page 16. Read them. Study them. Copy and distribute them to members of your staff.

It's important to remember these principles are a work in progress. They will change over time, so don't be timid in offering your input on specific issues. Your allied golf association — and we here at *Golf Course News* — fully expect and encourage your feedback. To further encourage you, I humbly offer a few opinions on the principles.

I was surprised by how broad they were, especially those regarding superintendents and their work. It's my feeling a goodly portion of course managers already abide by most of the ideas spelled out in the maintenance section. Of course, the principles weren't designed to be specific and limiting (note how many times the document uses the word "should").

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# Chase after wisdom via new batch of golf books

The Book of Proverbs urges us to chase after wisdom. Well, what do you know, all of a sudden, the heavens have opened in a deluge of wisdom in the form informational books being published for folks in the golf industry. No matter what your appetite, it seems there is something hot off the presses (or due out soon) meant just for your consumption.

So, it's fitting in this year of the book that "Infomeister" Ron Whitten is honored by the American Society of Golf Course Architects as the recipient of its Donald Ross Award. A man of integrity, esteemed by the entire industry, Whitten walked away from a career as a district attorney to work in the game he loves. Golf, especially those impassioned about course design, have been indebted ever since to this architectural editor of *Golf Digest* and *Golf World*.



Mark Leslie, managing editor

It certainly speaks volumes that the person in charge of *Golf Digest's* Best Course polls has apparently remained in the good graces of every architect on this planet. You'd think he would have to wear a flak jacket to dodge bullets at ASGCA meetings, rather than a dinner jacket to receive the society's top award.

Yet, there Whitten stood March 28, accepting the Ross plaque. And perhaps more is owed him than we at first think. This plethora of new golf industry books may be directly related to the success of his collaborative efforts with architect Geoffrey Cornish: *The Golf Course* and *The Architects of Golf*.

Now, there is no more sitting around helplessly waiting five years for Whitten and Cornish's next update. A sampling of what's on the book menu is revealing. Hold the salsa, for me, but here goes:

- Looking for course reviews? *Confidential Guide to Golf Courses* by Tom Doak is both witty and intense as well as insightful. You might say, full of wisdom.
- Interested in biography? Check out Sid Matthews' *The Life*

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## Letters ..... more letters on page 15

### PUBLIC COURSE OWNER RESPONDS TO NICKLAUS

To the Editor:  
Title: "Nicklaus: Public-access now driving the market, as golf comes full circle" [GCN Feb. 1996, Guest Commentary].

1. This golf rush exposed a void between the upscale private golf clubs... and their ragged counterparts charging \$8 a round.

2. As designers or developers, we are able to do golf courses which go beyond the \$6 and \$8 dark ages of public golf.

3. Public course golfers are insisting on value. Today's players will pay \$25, even \$200, to play a quality golf course... a golfer who plays 10 times a year only spends \$2,000 compared to the \$50,000 entry fee being charged across town. This concept of bringing real value back to public golf means there's finally enough margin in the green fee to make public golf a financially viable business.

4. Back in the days when the most a public-access course could charge was \$8, developers and designers were handcuffed. The "muni courses" of back then could be identified by their bland, bunkerless lack of character.

NOW! I am one of those ragged, bland, almost bunkerless, dark ages, not financially viable public golf course owners. Horse hockey! We are a very successful nine-hole track located in southwestern Michigan. A challenging, you gotta hit it straight and plan every shot, fun,

lots of hills, water, woods, only two adjacent fairways, wildlife to the max, member of Audubon International, absolutely gorgeous and nicely laid out by myself.

Try to explain to us why we are not a contributor to the game. It is dedicated people like ourselves who promote and educate all golfers to the point that they may think of joining the upscale private golf clubs he talks about; and we charge \$7. I wonder where he is coming from, other than trying to convince us we need him in the equation so we can become financially unviable!

Ed Schnurr, owner  
Gun Ridge Golf Course  
Hasting, Mich.

### ON THE SUBJECT OF ALGAE

To the Editor:  
I received the March issue of *Golf Course News* today, and read with great interest your article on page 23, "Case makes his case for inventive algae cure" [GCN March 1996].

It never ceases to amaze me how publications will validate crackpot, and technically ineffective or often dangerous "home" remedies for turf care, while overlooking the science developed for that care, and simultaneously overlooking the interests of their advertisers.

In reading the article, Mr. Case was clear that this method (using a fan to dry algae) can be dangerous, and must be manned

at all times by a maintenance worker, and can take up to three hours per green. What Mr. Case doesn't say, or perhaps doesn't know, is that blowing air over algae may temporarily dry it out, but doesn't necessarily kill the algal organism. To accomplish that, turn to page 52 in the same issue of your own publication, and you'll find an advertisement for PBI Gordon's product "Algaemec," which is EPA-registered, biodegradable, university-validated and a field-proven cure for algal pathogens on turf. Additionally, based on the time necessary for Mr. Case to accomplish his task with a maintenance worker in attendance, the cost of using "Algaemec" would be one-tenth of the cost of having a maintenance worker standing around to "watch carefully" so that no damage is done by the fan.

I agree that it's occasionally nice to show some "natural alternatives" to some things in the industry, but for heaven sakes, please research it a little better.

P.S. — We are the formulators for PBI Gordon's "Algaemec," as well as the Scotts Co.'s product "Algaen-X," so we know from whence we speak.

Ray Kimmel, president  
Parkway Research Corp.  
Houston, Texas

Ed. — Our "On the Green" column is meant to share innovative maintenance ideas with superintendents. Mr. Kimmel refers to an article spelling out how to control algae by using a fan to dry it,

along with some cultural techniques to address the problems leading to the disease. Our intent was to show another tool, not the one definitive tool or single answer to algae. Indeed, U.S. Golf Association Mid-Continent Region Director Jim Moore said: "I haven't seen a surefire cure for algae. Like any disease, weed or insect, there is no chemical or technique that will permanently get rid of algae unless the conditions that favor its development are corrected as well."

"Sometimes you get a very small area where it is difficult to eliminate algae, and it can be easier to tackle that spot with a fan. Just as chemical control is usually a stop-gap measure rather than a cure, so too is this fan. The fan changes the microclimate of that algae by blowing air down on it. You also have to correct other problems that have led to that area being too wet for too long."

### GCSAA SETS RECORD STRAIGHT

To the Editor:  
I would like to point out several gross inaccuracies contained in the February *Golf Course News* article about Golf Asia [GCN Feb. 1996] written by Rob Glucksman. The unfortunate thing about these inaccuracies is that they could have been prevented with one investigative phone call to the GCSAA headquarters by Mr. Glucksman or you. Instead, false information

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# GOLF COURSE NEWS

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## Leslie comment: Chasing wisdom

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and *Times of Bobby Jones*. Here is a true American hero, not one of these 1990s-style persona-non-integrity types.

• Want to know the down-to-earth particulars of design and construction? *Golf Course Architecture* by Dr. Michael Hurdzan and *Guide to Golf Course Irrigation System Design and Drainage* by Edward Pira will leave few questions unanswered.

• The latest in maintenance techniques and research? Dr.

J.M. Vargas has released his long-awaited *Management of Turfgrass Diseases* and Dr. James B. Beard and Toshikazu Tani have co-authored *Color Atlas of Turfgrass Diseases*. Any further questions, class? Then you might find them in a book about the secrets of greenkeeping by former GCSAA President Mike Bavier and former Canadian GSA President Gordon Witteveen, or Beard's upcoming *Fundamentals of Golf Course Maintenance*. Both are due out in

early 1997.

• Want to read the greats? Books are coming from even beyond the grave. *The Spirit of St. Andrews* by Alister Mackenzie is a full diet of design, with a morsel of playing tips tossed in. And due out this spring is *Golf Has Never Failed Me*, the lost commentaries of Donald Ross compiled by (guess who?) Whitten.

All this adds up to one thing: wisdom. So, pursue it, eh?

•••

Right now, like an older professor, Robert Trent Jones

Sr. wants to add more "use" into the game of golf. Thus he is enthusiastic about his collaboration with son Bob on a course in the Disney Co.'s town of Celebration outside Orlando, Fla. (see story page 37). This short, par-3 course is geared to children as well as adults. Jones Sr. wants children to play the game. How does he intend to draw them in? Far-forward tees, even to the extent of building tees up on the doglegs of par-4s.

"This way, youngsters can play the course without being embarrassed," said Bob.

•••

Asked if superintendents who don't belong to chapters are a threat to the profession, our Super Focus subject of the month, Jean L. Esposito, said: "What I fear are the ones who have little or no connection with anyone at all. There is so much going on in regulations that they could accidentally get themselves caught up in. Government reactions [to mistakes] come back through the ranks, even those who are doing things the right and legal way.

"Your whole industry gets a bad reputation because of one individual who uses a product in the wrong way... This has happened with the poor landscape industry because of one person who just hangs out a shingle. All landscapers all of a sudden get painted with the same broad brush."

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## Morrish comment: Designing it for the whole family

Continued from page 11

the architect determines that six water features fit his strategy, he probably will design those holes so that the water is on the left in four instances and on the right on the other two. The reason for this is simple. When good players miss a shot, it is usually hooked to the left, whereas poor players will slice to the right seven out of eight times when missing a shot.

The last, but very important item concerning family-friendly design is maintenance. Architects and superintendents should work hand in hand to make the courses play fair. One problem constantly encountered is the length of roughs. For everyday play, roughs should be mowed at a height that will help players. This means that it is short enough so you can easily find your ball, but long enough to keep balls from rolling into a worse lie. In other words, the rough should "help," not "hurt."

Golf courses afford one of the best chances for families to spend time together and experience the great outdoors. No, strolling a beautiful fairway is not the same as hiking a wilderness area. But then again you can't chase a little white ball in the wilderness — that is, unless you're really wild off the tee.