What's Audubon and what's not

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the system founder — has thrown its full support to ACSS. In other words, just because your course is an ACSS participant, "Audubon" in their title, and only one — New York Audubon, or even a Signature member, don't expect other Audubon organizations or members of the environmental movement at large to throw you their undying support.

It's kind of frustrating," says Ron Dodson, executive director of Environmental, the golf-oriented nonprofit organization founded in 1994. "We're not just talking about Audubon in their title, but about the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System (ACSS) and Signature Program, widely hailed inside the golf industry for their practical marriage of business, recreational and environmental concerns. Duval Audubon is a chapter of Nation Audubon, which doesn't necessarily look fondly on New York Audubon and the ACSS.

Every year or so, we think it's important for golf to take a reality check with regard to the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System. It's a fascinating program, but folks must recognize that ACSS participation doesn't necessarily mean your course is environmentally friendly.

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Leslie comment

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media with explanations of why the golf courses in that state were not in top-notch condition. The blame was displaced from superintendents to its rightful place, the weather.

"The GAM has done a great job communicating, with the advent of Brett Marshall as the director," he said. "He has a definite feel for golf courses and superintendents and he just does a marvelous job in communications."

This could be a lesson for state golf and superintendents' associations to take forward in the future. News releases are easy to do, and phone calls easy to make. Most sports editors will lend a caring ear to your side of the story — even as the snows rage outside their window. • • •

In our interview (see page 35) it was gratifying to hear that even an icon like Arnold Palmer, as busy as he is, reads Golf Course News each month. "I enjoy Golf Course News very much," Arnold said. "I know all of us at Palmer Course Design enjoy it as well. It provides current and accurate information in every publication."

In fact, Arnold helped Golf Course News kick off our Public Golf Expo in 1994 in Orlando, Fla., when he keynoted the national event. And his company has supported our ventures into Asia-Pacific, from our newspaper to the regional golf shows with which we are affiliated.

For more than 30 years he has captured the nation's attention — and adulation — and his appeal has not lessened even with the drop in Tour victories. The reason? His power is multifaceted, but every single person who has ever relived with me a meeting with Arnold Palmer — be it a round of golf at a pro-am tournament, or at some other sort of event — mentions his humility and kindness.

"It's as if he'd known me for years," folks are apt to say. Arnold exemplifies the great qualities that we all love about golf and the best characteristics of those who play it.

Too bad more would-be icons do not act that way. Will the next generation of Americans miss having an Arnold Palmer? • • •

When Palmer's design partner, Ed Seay, was asked his advice for superintendents interested in working in Asia-Pacific, he replied: "If you get the opportunity, take it. First, it's going to put the superintendent on his own. In most cases, what is mundane and a daily routine in the U.S. becomes major over there. He is going to have to be inventive and creative. Whereas here he will have tools to do a job, over there he's going to have to make the tools. What we do in a week here may take 60 or 90 days over there. And that's even at an upscale new golf course that has a lot of financial support. Then, he can have a marvelous five-or seven-gang mowing unit or triplex, but no one to run it besides himself. So he gets the education of training people.

"When a guy goes over there, he's going to be put under a tremendous amount of individual performance. He's got the opportunity to make some money. And when he gets ready to go back home, he could almost take any job in the world, because the opportunities and situations he will face will be a piece of cake to him. It is very trying."

The growing retirement community, he said, "is certainly driving a little bit of the golf. Our economy has been running good the last few years, and people who have done well in business and are buying resort homes in golf course communities: that helps."

Eldredge also said the marked increase in new high-end daily-fee facilities is a fallout from the tax law change removing private club membership costs as a deduction.

Those former private club members "still want the quality and it's a little cheaper to play the high-end courses than join private club," he said. "A lot of the private courses we used to build in connection with developments are now going high-end daily-fee."

Can you name the most deadly weather phenomenon in the United States? Hurricanes? Floods? Tornadoes? Uh-uh. Lightning takes an average of about four lives a week, killing more people than hurricanes, floods and tornadoes combined. Global Atmospheric, the lightning guru, says 180-200 deaths are annually attributed to lightning. For more help, check out our report on weather stations on pages 31-34.

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