

## Asian market remains strong

Just returned from Singapore where the annual Golf Asia Exhibition was held for the fifth time and, from all accounts (or all those that matter, meaning exhibitors), this show ranks with the best in terms of foot traffic.

At Golf Asia, the trade show floor is divided into a Commercial section (where exhibitors sell golf balls, clubs and shirts) and an Industry section, featuring maintenance equipment. The Industry section enjoyed strong, qualified attendance for three of the four days, while the Commercial side was consistently packed, especially over the weekend. Good news for exhibitors, to say nothing of Golf Asia '96 organizers, International Management Group of Cleveland and Singapore-based Connex Private Ltd.

Despite the show's apparent success, expect some changes in 1997. For example? Well, architects will likely move from the Commercial to the Industry side next year, as designers more naturally fit in with mowers than titanium shafts. However, there may be fewer architects exhibiting in 1997. Why? The Southeast Asian market has matured to the point where developers needn't attend trade shows to discover which architects are working in the region. Savvy developers — and there are an increasing number in Asia-Pacific — already know who the architects are.

Golf prospects in Asia-Pacific remains strong as new markets are emerging faster than older markets fade away. A good sign. Further, these older markets refuse to crash and burn. Rather they are downshifting from white-hot development markets into more mature, dependable maintenance-driven markets.

The Philippines is the new hot spot, as virtually every golf course architect active in Asia-Pacific is either working or looking for work there. India is running a close second, with Vietnam and Indonesia still developing courses at a strong pace.

China remains the mystery guest. The sheer numbers there — people and dollars — prompt many to salivate almost continually. But others remain dubious, skeptical of the



Hal Phillips,  
editor

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## In terms of genetic advances the future is definitely now

Remember all those old jokes about what you get when you cross a rhinoceros with a banana tree, or a giraffe with a blowfish? Well, we're there, at that very point in man's history when he can play creator (lower-case). My favorite for instance is that geneticists actually have inserted firefly genes into tobacco to give us that suave day-glow effect.

This is beyond Orwellian. If we were discussing something other than turfgrass, this could get scary. Thankfully, I think our friends at the turfgrass genetics labs won't be causing the trouble for mankind that may possibly be coming out of the hospital and animal laboratories of the world. There are no Dr. Frankensteins here, methinks; and, therefore, the golf industry can rest easy.

A whole new turf world has opened up — propelled into the future by extraordinary scientific advancements borrowed from other fields of research.

You want herbicide-resistant bentgrass? It exists, is growing in the fields, and will be on the market before you know it. You want dwarf turfs? Cold-resistant? Drought-tolerant? Salt-tolerant? You can hold your breath for the wait — we'll get them that soon. With funding in hand, it will take three to five years maximum, says Dr. Mariam Sticklen of Michigan State University (see story page 15). And that is but a mere millisecond in the normal timeframe of turfgrass development.

How important is this new world of genetic research in what Dr. Sticklen calls the Green Revolution? She tells this story of another revolution from the 1830s: The mayor of New York writes to President Jackson, saying, "Dear Mr. President: There is a new revolution called the railroad industry. It has enormous vehicles called trains that move at the breakneck speed of 15 miles per hour. Not only do they make fire in farms, but they frighten cattle and women and children." The mayor asks the president to stop the revolution.

"Mr. Jackson did many stupid things," says Dr. Sticklen, "but,



Mark Leslie,  
managing editor

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## Letters

### IN DEFENSE OF ALGAE FANS

To the editor:

I am confident that superintendents will continue to feel comfortable in sharing ideas through your "On the Green" column. Freely comparing maintenance practices in the interest of propelling our profession forward and simply helping each other out is one of the many facets of our profession that make it unique. I have read many articles, including some in your publication, that have been very helpful. Some, of course, can not be used on every golf course, or in every situation.

Mr. Ray Kimmel of Parkway Research, hopefully realizes the importance of open discussion of new ideas, knowing they may not work in every application. Mr. Kimmel, therefore, was out of line to completely disregard the use of a fan to help combat algae problems (*GCN, April, page 10*). In giving Mr. Kimmel the benefit of the doubt, I am sure he knows the fan works in many instances — and what an opportunity for some free advertising!

Jeff Case, CGCS  
Quail Ridge Golf Course  
Memphis, Tenn.

### WALKING SHOULD BE A MATTER OF CHOICE

To the editor:

I just finished reading the column, "A good walk missed ...,"

by J. Barry Mothes in the March issue of *Golf Course News* and couldn't agree more. Walking is one of the fundamental traditions of the game of golf, and it's inconceivable that more golf course developers, owners and operators can't figure out a way to maintain cart revenues while enhancing customer service.

Last spring, Greenwood Development Corporation announced an unrestrictive walking policy on all three of our courses at Palmetto Dunes — the Robert Trent Jones, George Fazio and Arthur Hills — as well as our Robert Cupp course at Palmetto Hall Plantation. Our guests simply pay one fee, whether they take a cart or walk, so there's no lost cart revenue. No one has complained about the one-price, ride-or-walk policy. In fact, they appreciate the fact that instead of saying "no" to walking we can now say "yes" ... anytime.

Speed is not the issue; I agree with you that the pace would be quicker, because it's usually the better player that wants to walk. As for volume, our courses that allow unrestricted walking play more than 160,000 rounds a year. The key is customer service ... and preserving the traditions of this great game.

Brett Borton, Director  
Advertising and P.R.  
Greenwood Development Corp.  
Hilton Head, S.C.

### THE NTEP NEEDS YOUR HELP

To the editor:

Just this week, with the presentation of the FY97 budget by President Clinton to Congress, the United States Dept. of Agriculture (USDA), Agricultural Research Service (ARS) canceled its funding of the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP) effective Oct. 1, 1996.

The USDA, ARS apparently considers the U.S. turfgrass industry a very low priority because with this action, the USDA canceled essentially its only funding in support of the turfgrass industry. If this decision is not reversed, the USDA will have severed ties to the turfgrass industry after more than 70 years of financial support.

The good news is that there is still time to reverse this decision. The USDA, ARS needs to know the following:

1. Turfgrass is a \$30-35 billion industry in the U.S.
2. The turfgrass industry is growing faster than any other segment of agriculture. Many states including Florida, Maryland and North Carolina have documented that turfgrass is their number one or two agricultural industry.
3. NTEP fits perfectly into USDA objectives such as Integrated Pest Management and Sustainable Agriculture (reduction of inputs while maintaining quality). NTEP is an excellent

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example of how private industry, state universities and the federal government can cooperate to address critical issues in a cost effective manner.

4. Much positive publicity has resulted from past USDA support of turfgrass research and the NTEP. This publicity is crucial to a positive image of USDA among a growing urban population.

If you are interested in saving this program, we would appreciate you contacting your senators and congressmen and telling them you support turfgrass research funding by USDA. Also, the following individuals within USDA need to hear from you:

**Secretary Dan Glickman**, USDA  
Jamie L. Whitten Federal Bldg.  
Room 200A  
14th & Independence Ave. S.W.  
Washington, DC 20250  
Phone 202-720-3631  
**Floyd Horn**, USDA, ARS Administrator  
Room 302A  
14th & Independence Ave. SW  
Washington, DC 20250  
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**Dr. Edward Knipping**  
Deputy Administrator  
USDA, ARS, NPS  
BARC-West, Bldg. 005, Room 125  
Beltsville, MD 20705  
301-504-5084

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact NTEP by phone (301-504-5125), fax (301-504-5167) or via the Internet (kmorris@asrr.arsusda.gov).

Kevin Morris  
National Director, NTEP  
Beltsville, Md.

# GOLF COURSE NEWS

THE NEWSPAPER FOR THE GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY

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**Subscription Information**  
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Publishers of specialized business and consumer magazines.  
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## Lassiter comment

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of a professional golf course designer. The end result enhances the golfer challenge, freshens the look of the layout and makes it more playable and enjoyable. The additional greens-fee revenue can be substantial. This option requires significant capital investment, moving dirt and, often, shutting down the course.

### Option 2: Irrigation System Renovation

Updating the irrigation system costs much less than re-designing the course, yet can have a significant effect on attracting golfers back to an established course. Although this still requires a capital investment, it is much less than moving tees and reshaping fairways and greens. Optimally spaced sprinklers create uniform water coverage, eliminating brown spots. And central control optimizes the watering window, allowing more play time.

Ultimately, though, powerful central irrigation control provides flexibility in system programming and adjustments ensuring healthy, beautiful turf.

Televised golf has created an expectation among golfers that anything less than wall-to-wall, green grass is unacceptable. Irrigation systems often can't support that. After renovation, courses have enough sprinklers, along with better control capabilities, to meet increased expectations while staying within the operating budget.

It's all about having the right irrigation design and getting the right system. But how do you get the right design and system? The best bet is a qualified irrigation consultant who can evaluate a course based on a superintendent's requirements; redesign the system and act as the golf course's agent throughout the entire process.

Manufacturers today are recognizing the trend toward golf course renovation in their product development efforts. Toro has led the way with reliable wireless central irrigation control systems — more than 800 have been installed in the U.S. alone. We continue to expand the market with the latest in that technology: TouchNet.

New golf course openings are exploding in the U.S. The real effect of 1,500 new golf course openings since 1992 may prompt existing golf courses to evaluate whether or not it is time to renovate. "Keeping up with the Joneses" is serious business for the course losing revenue to its competition down the street.

Manufacturers have the products. Designers and irrigation consultants are available to help. The next step is for superintendents to evaluate the benefit of updating their golf course to entice golfers back to their course so they can recapture precious greens fees.

## Leslie comment

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happily, he did not listen to the mayor of New York."

The rest of the rail travel revolution is history. Now, superintendents and others in the golf industry can simply sit and wait for the results of this Green Revolution. Some of the fallout may be very interesting.

"This is a very technocratic area," said Dr. Michael Kenna, director of Green Section research for the U.S. Golf Association. "It's very technical, but with a lot of bureaucracy. For every scientist there are two lawyers standing behind him. The

biology and biochemistry is easier than the law regarding it.

"Whoever can learn the most, the fastest, and patent significant parts of it will be able to springboard into the future. That's the race. If you figure out all the genes that affect, say, drought stress, do you own it for other applications like corn?"

Just what we need, right? — more work for lawyers.

For those in turfgrass — the poor sister to farm crops — the problem is funding.

"If it were corn..." Dr. Sticklen lamented.

Well, it's not corn. But those universities and companies that get the fast jump

could reap a huge harvest, in both seeds and money, in the years ahead.

Let's just pray no one splices grass's green gene into a bluejay.

•••

Pete Dye and Jack Nicklaus could have been comedians playing off each other — Nicklaus the straight man, Dye the Jerry Lewis type.

Both men spoke on Pinehurst #2 at the 50th anniversary meeting of the American Society of Golf Course Architects at Pinehurst, N.C. (see full coverage starting on page 23).

After Nicklaus referred several times to

Continued on next page



## ROBBIE HELLSTROM TALKS:

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grow-in. I've been amazed at the quality of the reels. We originally budgeted to replace all ten reels on the 3215's because we knew the kind of abuse they'd take. We saved that money because all we had to do after grow-in was re-grind them. We are still cutting our fairways with the same reels—which is unbelievable to us."

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## Leslie comment

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his winning the North and South Open at Pinehurst in 1959 when he was 19 years old, Dye said: "I never made it past the first round of the North-South. It's kind of hard to follow a fellow when you know you're just 20 Majors back — and time's running out.

"In 1946 or '47," he said, "I was playing a round, probably the practice round because I hadn't been beaten yet... I was introduced to Donald Ross and J.C. Penney. Later, the guys all talked about how we had met J.C. Penney, but I don't remember one person say they had met Donald Ross."

Speaking of Tour players getting involved as golf course design consultants, Nicklaus said: "I started out with Pete in '67. I went through it in a little different fashion than a lot of these guys do. I made 23 trips to Harbour Town and Pete never did pay me a dime."

Dye interjected: "You got what you were worth."

Laughing, Nicklaus continued: "I was trying to learn and do some things. The guys today don't all do that. They're out there working on the first day, but they don't go through the rest of it."

"You came out to The Golf Club more than that," Dye said.

"No," Nicklaus said, "I came out there three or four times, just to keep you from ruining my four holes."

•••

Dye remembered being on a train and meeting a man who had played Pinehurst three times. "He told me, shot by shot, about his rounds of 107, 109 and 113," Dye said. "'And,' he said, 'the greatest thing about that place: I never lost a golf ball.' Well, that really impressed me, it still does, and I feel badly about all the golf balls that everybody's lost on the courses I have built."

Thanks, Pete, I'll accept that sorrow on my personal behalf.

## Piersol comment

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programs around the country to meet the huge demand.

Many schools don't want to start such a program for such perceived reasons as: it is too expensive to operate; there really aren't many jobs; the jobs are low paying; and it doesn't have the prestige of starting a turf program. (The latter is a whole other issue. What is a turf program? It is any school that has one turf course, or maybe two?)

When I hear these reasons, I know such schools are not really in touch with the golf industry. The golf industry will help a school start a program although, again, the right instructor who knows how to build relationships with industry is critical.

As superintendents are aware, the job market is huge and the pay scales we see are excellent. In Florida, an experienced, property trained turf equipment manager can earn \$40,000 to \$50,000 and above. Not bad!

Prestige? Well, most superintendents will quickly admit the "right-hand man" on their golf course management team is the turf equipment manager. This position is now a skilled, professional position offering excellent career opportunities.

The biggest problem today is the general public really knows nothing about this specialized mechanics field. That is why more people aren't seeking the training and why school officials are often confused about the potential of this career.

Superintendents across the country can help! Imagine if every local superintendent chapter across the country established a Recruiting Committee with the objective of getting superintendent volunteers into area high schools to explain the opportunities in the golf industry as a turf equipment manager. If this were to happen, it would be possible to get the word into a majority of the high schools in the U.S. Done year after year (like any marketing), this would create tremendous demand for this training. Informed students, and their parents, would then put pressure on local community colleges or vocational schools to offer the program.

Superintendents could do a great service for themselves if they would do the above.

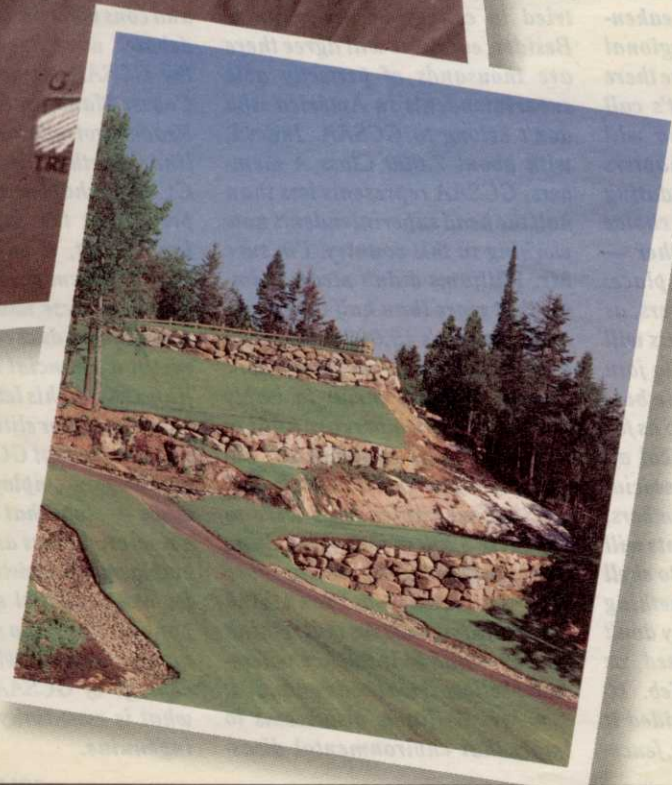
The market for good, properly trained turf equipment managers is hot! In my opinion, it will be that way for quite a few years. It is a segment of the golf industry deserving of much more attention.

We have 26 students graduating from our Turf Equipment Management program May 3. These students should really go out as assistant technicians working under a skilled turf equipment manager.



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