

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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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.

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,

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Mark Leslie,
managing editor

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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

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:

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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).

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