

'Oh, say can you seed'

JAMUL, Calif. — In the weeks since Sept. 11, Americans have been so fervently patriotic that there is a nationwide shortage of flags. Steele Canyon Golf Club, located just outside of San Diego, solved the problem by mowing a pattern of Old Glory into the third hole at its Ranch Course.

Crew member, Arnulfo Sanchez Olvera, came up with the idea, said superintendent Phil Fitzgerald. Olvera picked the third hole at the Ranch Course because the fairway sits 300 feet below the tees, giving golfers an ideal view of the flag. It took him two hours to cut the pattern into the turf using a



A pattern of Old Glory on the recently overseeded third fairway at The Ranch

fairway mower for the stripes and a triplex tee mower for the stars.

Fitzgerald plans to keep the flag mowed into the fairway as long as it looks good.

"We just overseeded with ryegrass so it striped up really well," he said. "I don't know if it will look as good with the Bermudagrass."

— Andrew Overbeck

MAILBAG

Aloha,

The effects of the WTC tragedy have been startling in Hawaii. The economy is dependent upon visitors from abroad. Hotel occupancy levels have dropped from 80 percent to 30 percent in just one week. Golf courses are losing 20 to 30 percent of their business due to the lack of visitors.

We are expecting this to be a long war, but we anticipate people overcoming the fear of flying eventually. Please, if you take a vacation, come to Hawaii!

*Mahalo,
Ron Huffman
Director of Golf
Coral Creek Golf Course
Oahu, Hawaii*

Hirsh on impact

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NARROWING THE GAP

Putting the markets now out of balance back into balance will take time.

As we wrap up the fall season, it seems as though some operators are ready to sell properties in anticipation of seasonally declining revenues. Of late, there has been a reluctance of sellers to accept what they feel are artificially low prices, resulting in a gap between buyers and sellers. My sense is that some sellers seem more ready to move now in order to dispose of unwanted assets. In the golf industry's game of "wolf" it seems like sellers may be the first to cry, thereby closing the gap that has existed for the past eight to 10 months and, frankly, precluded many deals from happening.

Much like the stock market, the golf market is in a "correction" from the high prices of 1997 and 1998. Like many industries, those with sound fundamentals and strong reserves will survive; the others will be absorbed by the strong. As usual, there are strong markets with much opportunity and some that are saturated. Those investors who do their homework will remain a step ahead of the rest. ■

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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