Fist attacks effluent issues
Superintendent solves water quality problems by getting homeowners to switch water softening agents.

Management company listing
The complete list of golf course management companies, contact information, and number of courses, new for 2003.

Redstone GC ready for ’03 Tour stop
By DEREK RICE
HOUSTON — After a couple false starts due to bad weather in Houston, Redstone Golf Management was finally able to open its first 18-hole course at Redstone Golf Club in early December.

Audubon sets 50 percent goal for 2007
By ANDREW OVERBECK
SELKIRK, N.Y. — Audubon International has an ambitious membership drive to attain 50 percent participation from the 17,000-plus golf courses in the United States over the next five years.

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BY ANDREW OVERBECK

Selkirk, N.Y. — Audubon International has an ambitious membership drive to attain 50 percent participation from the 17,000-plus golf courses in the United States over the next five years.

Currently 13 percent of the courses across the country have joined either the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program or the Audubon Signature Cooperative Sanctuary Program. Two percent of all courses in the U.S. have achieved Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary status.

“This is an ambitious effort, but we are making progress. We have five objectives, said Kevin Fletcher, director of programs. “Now is the time to be bold and make this happen.”

The plan has five objectives, said Fletcher:

• Make sure that all 17,000-plus courses know the Audubon International program exists.
• Find out why those who know about the program have not joined.
• Do a better job of explaining the benefits of the program to the environment, job satisfaction and overall golf course budget.
• Dispel any myths about the program and its difficulty.
• Work more with the industry as a whole by communicating more with golf course managers, owners, management companies, developers and suppliers.

Why haven’t more joined?
At the core of the membership initiative is figuring out why.

continued on page 13

Gotham Golf merger hits snag in court

By DEREK RICE

New York — The long-planned and now shareholder-approved merger between First Union Real Estate Equity and Mortgage and Hershey, Pa.-based Gotham Golf Corp. hit a snag in early December when the New York Supreme Court for New York County granted an injunction blocking the transaction.

At issue is compensation for preferred shareholders vs. that for common shareholders. One preferred shareholder, George Kimmel, filed a lawsuit in April seeking class-action status.

Under the original plan, First Union shareholders

Continued on page 3
Irwin designing Minnesota gem

Continued from page 10

course designer and three-time U.S. Open champion Hale Irwin.

And then there are two new golf course homeowners, Minnesota Gov. Jesse Ventura and his wife, Terry. Ventura has announced plans to live at the Jewel sometime after he leaves office in November. Greg Matz, director of sales at the Jewel, said he realized what the project meant to the city of 4,500 recently when an elderly gentleman who had lived in Lake City all his life said, "Well, it's finally happened: Lake City has been discovered." The project has been moving quickly after several years of work to gain city approval. Most of the course shaping, which is being done by Sema Golf of Scottsdale, Ariz., will take place in 2003, with an eye toward a July 2004 opening.

The Jewel is one of several golf courses currently being developed by Hale Irwin Design, a company Irwin founded in 1986. Mississippi Jewel Land Development, which is putting $8 million to build the golf course and $50 million on infrastructure to develop the land, Matz said. The eventual retail value of the land is expected to be $250 million to $300 million. The golf course will have five sets of tees, bentgrass throughout and stretch to 7,000 yards. "No two holes will be alike," Irwin said. "We have some dynamic holes and others that may have started out bland but will be very nice."

It will open as a public course and gradually become restricted to members only, Matz said. In addition to designing 25 courses, Irwin's company is part owner in three others, including the Jewel.

By buying into the courses it is building, Irwin's company "can add value to the project, and that will help us gain entry into more projects," Meyer said.

By becoming a partner in a project such as the Jewel, Irwin said, "We give investors and owners confidence that we're in for the long haul with them." Stan Gentry, who has been with Irwin since 1991, is the on-site architect responsible for overseeing Irwin's designs. Meyer said, "What sets us apart is the owner - Hale's personality," Meyer said.

"The same seriousness and vigor, the way he approaches competitive golf, is the way he approaches his business." Irwin said he always has felt comfortable with designing courses. "My greatest learning curve has come from knowing the needs of the owner/developer. I didn't know that much about that side," Irwin said.

"His philosophy, he said, is to design courses that are enjoyable and challenging for handicaps. That approach was summed up by Meyer. "At the end of the day, Hale doesn't want people to say 'Who designed this?' but 'That was fun, and, oh, by the way, who was the designer?'" Meyer said.

"I always felt that the project meant to the city of 4,500 recently when an elderly gentleman who had lived in Lake City all his life said, "Well, it's finally happened: Lake City has been discovered." The project has been moving quickly after several years of work to gain city approval. Most of the course shaping, which is being done by Sema Golf of Scottsdale, Ariz., will take place in 2003, with an eye toward a July 2004 opening.

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Irwin designing Minnesota gem

Continued from page 10

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Among the improvements Jacobsen and Hardy made to the course were the installation of a computerized Toro irrigation system and TifEagle greens and TifSport fairways.

Jacobsen said the course will play with a level of difficulty for everyone, from the pros on down to juniors.

"I think the pros will find it difficult because of the length of the course (7,000 yards), but also fun and interesting because of the variation of the holes, he said, "When you need to make a course harder, just make it longer. We also made sure the course is playable in all types of weather, with particular attention given to drainage, given the weather in Houston."