

# News

## WORKSHOPS

### Daily fee management workshop focuses on innovation, service

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Golf course owners and managers were barraged with information to help improve the efficiency and profits of their daily fee operation. The 170 attendees listened for 3 days to guest speakers give brief how-to or how-I-did-it lectures with ideas that could be applied to their course. And just a few of the 23 speakers wavered far from two key themes for a successful golf course: innovative, aggressive business practices and customer service.

The National Golf Foundation's daily fee golf course management workshop at The Abbey Hotel in Fontana, Wis., last month was attended primarily by owners and managers from the midwest. There were 20 persons from Illinois and 16 each from Ohio and Michigan. But the smattering of representatives from the east and west coasts broadened the exchange of ideas.

Although some of the ideas offered by the speakers at first seemed off-beat, many are just

common sense. Employee training has helped Michael Payette, owner of Oaks Knoll Golf Course in Independence, Ore., earn steady profits from new golf club sales. Payette responded to numerous complaints by owners that they can't sell new clubs to their customers because of the low prices offered by golf discount stores. "We've kept up our new club sales through a super-aggressive used club business," Payette said. Even though a number of discount stores surround his course, Payette says the repair service has allowed him to sell his new clubs at a 40 percent markup for the past 6 years. "We have all our people trained in refinishing clubs and popping the grips," he said.

Jim Dorian, owner of Hidden Lakes Golf and Country Club in Wichita, Kan., has purchased a Sony videotape machine that records half of the foursomes at the 18th green each Saturday and Sunday. The golfers can then

watch themselves hitting out of bunkers or sinking a 30-foot putt on a screen while sipping a beer in the clubhouse. William Howard, of Grand Rapids, Mich., pays a skin diver 10 cents for each ball he retrieves from ponds on his Saskatoon Golf Course and sells the balls for 75 cents. Howard had 30,000 golf balls after 2 years and began selling them by the pound.

Their were fresh ideas on a variety of other topics: employees, water management, and irrigation. Howard says he hires housewives to mow Saskatoon's greens. "They take care of the course well. They'll stop and pick up beer cans." He talks even more highly of retired persons, saying his clubhouse manager was paid \$3,000 during his first year and works now for even less. "They're our greatest source of manpower. They want something to do besides go to the coffee shop," Howard says.

Dr. Gene Nutter, president of GolfScape, a subsidiary of ChemLawn, told the owners that



Speakers at the NGF daily fee workshop included Bill Lyons, Lyons Den Golf, Canal Fulton, Ohio; Dr. Gene Nutter, president

of GolfScape, a subsidiary of ChemLawn; and Bill Amick, president of the ASGCA.

many plants on their courses can grow well with less water. "Most golf courses overwater; I don't think there's any question," he said. Dr. Nutter also told owners with poor or expensive water supplies to consider two other options; reseeding the golf course, since it is less expensive than heavy watering, and changing turf. He pointed out that some kinds of grass, such as fescue, need less water than others. Dr. Nutter and William Amick, president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects, also told owners they should consider using sewage effluent to irrigate since water supplies are becoming more scarce.

The owners also received a lesson in customer service etiquette from Pete Garcia, pro at Marriott's Lincolnshire Resort near Chicago.

Although Garcia's talk focused on merchandising goods in the pro shop, those who listened closely found his operation oozing with service. "I have a staff of 22 people," Garcia said. "Every Sunday night, there is a staff meeting. We discuss everything from a lost putter to inventory." To help push new club sales, he offers two free golf lessons on Monday night (his day off), and sold about 35 sets this year. Garcia also pursues groups for tournaments and banquets at his course and sees the head of each group a few days before the event to discuss details. He explained his reasons: "The groups will usually have a secretary to run things, but sometimes they make mistakes. If things get messed up, you look bad."

Garcia, whose Marriott pro shop took in \$400,000 in sales this year, believes good service helped him reach that figure. Others shared his idea. Frank Jemsek said his St. Andrews Country Club in Chicago has its golf cars available unless the course is nearly unplayable. "If a golfer knows that if someone spits on the ground your golf cars won't go out, they'll go play somewhere else." Jemsek has also "winterized" about 20 of his golf cars, installing plexiglass windshields, canvas roofs, and heaters to keep players hands warm.

Cecil McKay Jr., owner of a real estate firm that sells and appraises



*The newly formed Alco Battery Co., headquartered in Costa Mesa, Calif., will produce lightweight but heavy-duty batteries for golf cars. The principals are: John Anderson, vice president; Morri Kirk, chairman of the parent company, Alco Pacific; and George Collins, vice president.*

golf courses, suggested that owners offer a lower rate for senior citizens to help increase play during weekday afternoons. An NGF survey of 44 courses represented at the workshop found that less than 40 percent offer a discount rate. Yet another idea on service came from Dorian, owner of the Wichita course, who advocated finding flaws in a competitor's service. "The pro at the University of Wichita course won't take personal checks. I do, and I'll bet I haven't lost \$50 in 3 years."

The National Golf Foundation and the Professional Golfers' Association of America offered the owners of each daily fee course in the country at least two ideas to improve their operations.

NFG teaching consultant Carol Johnson informed course owners that the foundation has begun a program that provides teaching pros to daily fee courses that do not offer golf lessons. The NFG is initiating the program after discovering that only 20 of 125 courses attending a daily fee workshop 2 years ago offered lessons to its customers. The cost to golf courses is \$30 each day, plus meals for the teaching consultant. The NGF suggests, however, that at least a nominal fee be charged to customers to pay for the service. Owners and managers can begin setting up the clinic by contacting the NGF office in North Palm Beach, Fla.

The PGA is attempting to place about 100 third-year students of a professional golf management program in intern positions at courses throughout the country. The students attend Ferris State College in Big Rapids, Mich. to pursue a bachelor of science degree with an emphasis on golf management. They receive instruction in all facets of golf course operations, such as agronomy, food and beverage management, and pesticide application, and each student must have a 7 or less handicap to gain admittance into the program. The student must be under the supervision of a PGA member during the internship. Owners who would like to employ a student should contact the PGA office in Lake Park, Fla.

## COMPANIES

### Pinseeker stock sold to Metzger

The capital stock of the Pinseeker Corp., Pacific Grove, Calif., has been sold to Michael Metzger of Costa Mesa, Calif. The announcement was made by John Murray, Jr., who is retiring as board chairman.

It was also announced that

John Riley will continue as chief of research, development, and manufacturing.

Pinseeker manufactures a complete line of custom woods, irons, and utility clubs. The clubs are sold through PGA professional golf shops.

## PESTICIDES

### Fungicide chemical reviewed by EPA

The Environmental Protection Agency is reviewing the safety of cadmium, a chemical used in some fungicides used on tees and greens, after discovering it has caused prostate cancer among workers in battery, rubber, and metals smelting plants.

The EPA says the chemical may also cause mutations in human blood and in rats, mice, and bacteria. The agency further said women of child-bearing ages exposed to cadmium used in home lawn treatment products could produce children with birth defects. It says that rats, mice, and hamsters fed or injected with cadmium have borne offspring with decreased brain growth, cleft palates, and other deformities.

Cadmium is used in products that help remove dollar spot, copper spot, helminthosporium, and curvularia, said Dr. Roger Funk, of Davey Lawnscape Service in Kent, Ohio. The brand names of products containing cadmium include Caddy, Vi-Cad, Cad-Trete, Puraturf, Miller 531, and Crag Turf Fungicide 531. Dr. Funk also said that Daconil 2787, Actidione-Thiram, Dyrene, and Turfsan LSR can be used instead of cadmium-based products.

The EPA review allows product manufacturers and users, and health and environmental groups to comment on the risks and benefits of pesticides that may be dangerous. The agency then decides to restrict product use, remove it for sale or let it stay on the market. The product may continue to be sold and used until a decision is made.

Persons who want to express an opinion about cadmium should