

# Turtle Creek Club

Mr. Tom Burrows  
Grounds Superintendent  
Turtle Creek Club  
Club Circle Drive  
Tequesta, Florida 33458

Dear Tom:

In view of the questions surrounding the grass certification program in Florida, you asked for my comment about the importance of golf course quality. My guess is my thoughts might be somewhat different than yours or those of other superintendents.

I know you and your crew members work very hard to produce high quality playing surfaces for the golfing members of our club, because you want to meet your responsibility for doing a good job. And you are justifiably proud of the results of your labor and your expertise. Thus, to you, and I'm sure to the hundreds of other golf course superintendents in Florida, it is an end in itself to provide quality playing conditions and the consequent pleasure that gives to all golf club members.

But to me, as a golf course user, course quality is a necessity. If the quality is poor, I wouldn't be here, and I believe there may be tens of thousands of golf club members in Florida who feel the same way.

Also, I realize you are aware of the very large and very favorable effect the golf course maintenance industry has on the economy of Florida. With 815 golf courses, and 6,000 people employed in this industry in Florida, it is, as you indicated, a 200 million dollar industry. But you may not have taken into account the "multiplier" effect. Many studies have been made of this effect, the most conservative one being made by U.C.L.A. some years ago. That

study indicated that for every such employee (plus their family members), 1.2 more employees are hired in other businesses to service them — in drug stores, gasoline stations, banks, automobile agencies and repair shops, grocery stores, etcetera. So the golf course maintenance industry, in fact, produces a much larger favorable impact on Florida's economy than might be realized.

As impressive as these effects may be, the major economic impact comes from the people who use these courses, well over two hundred thousands of them. If the golf course maintenance business is a multi-hundred-million dollar industry, then the golf course users constitute a multi-hundred-billion dollar "industry."

Many, if not most, Florida golf courses are the centers of housing or resort developments designed to attract winter residents from the North, or year-round resident retirees, or tourists. There are some renters, but most buy homes. The multiplier effects of these purchases and residential statuses is enormous — on the home and other construction businesses; on service trades such as grocery and drug stores, gasoline stations and repair shops, lawn and building maintenance businesses, and banks; and, of course, on payment of millions of dollars in property taxes, gasoline, and sales taxes.

Although Florida's climate is very important in attracting these hundreds of thousands of residents and visitors, it is not the sole reason. For there are other places like California, Arizona, Nevada, and other southern states where the climate is as good or almost as good as it is in Florida. For tens of thousands of part-time or full-time residents, the other most compelling attraction is the existence of so many attractive, quality golf courses.

The existence of quality golf courses, as well as the construction of new ones, is dependent on many factors — such as proper use of chemicals, fertilizers, and pesticides, good equipment, and expertise in maintenance techniques. But like the old saying — "You can't make a silk purse from a cow's ear" — golf course quality is first

*(continued on page 54)*

## LANTANA PEAT & SOIL

1123 State Road 7  
Boynton Beach, Fla.

732-4116  
1-800-433-5552

STERILIZED SOILS • TOP DRESSING  
TOP SOIL • MULCH • POTTING SOIL

"Keeping Golf Courses Green"

(continued from page 53)

dependent on the use of quality grasses. If the grasses are contaminated, or weak, or disease ridden, no amount of money or expert care can change such grasses into quality playing surfaces. Instead the surfaces will be weedy, thin, and not conducive to gaining pleasure from playing golf.

Most Northern part-time and retiree full-time residents who play golf are affluent; can afford the cost, and demand quality playing surfaces. If quality courses are not available, they will not move to Florida in the first place, or if the quality deteriorates, many of them will move to another agreeable climate state where quality courses are available.

In this respect, golfers are somewhat like boaters. Various governmental agencies have spent and are spending many millions of dollars to provide facilities (like drawbridges) and services to make boating safe, convenient, and pleasurable for the tens of thousands of boaters who visit or move to Florida from the North.

It is money well spent, for the boating industry, along with the users, provide an enormous favorable economic impact on the state of Florida, as well as huge tax incomes for various government entities. But the boating industry, too, like the golfing industry, is greatly dependent on quality facilities.

Of course, it cannot be claimed that all boaters and all golfers would leave or not come to Florida if the quality of

facilities and services is allowed to deteriorate. But it is a certainty that any such deterioration would have devastating adverse economic and tax effects on Florida.

As stated earlier, in the case of golf courses, quality starts with quality grasses. Unlike boaters, golfers receive very little governmental help in the establishment and maintenance of their facilities. So it would seem to me that at least a sufficient amount of dollars should be spent by the state to help insure the availability of quality grasses through a certification program, and thus help to protect the economy of Florida and provide for the pleasure of many of its citizens and visitors.

Very truly yours,

Vernon A. Johnson  
14 Turtle Creek Drive  
Tequesta, FL 33458

Note: *Before retirement, the author of this letter was a Senior Vice President of the Lockheed Aircraft Corp., with offices in Washington, D.C. He spent 10 years on the Board of Congressional Country Club, including several years each as chairman of the golf and greens committees, and was in charge of building what is now the 2nd. nine of Congressional's championship course. He also served as President of the Burning Tree Club, after several years as a member of the greens committee and as chairman of the golf committee. At Turle Creek, he was chairman of both the greens and golf committees, and served two years as President of the club. ■*

# LIQUA-TECH\*

1-800-282-8473

FULL LINE OF LIQUID FERTILIZERS

—Specially formulated for golf course uses—

COMPLETE SERVICE FOR ALL FERTIGATION SYSTEMS  
PLUS NEW INSTALLATIONS

TWO LOCATIONS IN TAMPA & WEST PALM BEACH

SALES REPRESENTATIVES:

**WEST COAST**

Mike Cook  
813-685-2043  
David Bouck  
813-863-5521  
Dick Rodgers  
813-685-3399

**CENTRAL & NORTH  
FLORIDA**

David Miller  
305-396-1721

**EAST COAST**

Jay Baker  
305-964-5815  
Will Corder  
305-755-2359

**EAST COAST  
Service Representative**

Dan Adkins  
1-800-282-8473

**CENTRAL & WEST  
COAST**

Tommy Sangster

\*SUBSIDIARY OF SUNCOAST SALES SPECIALTY PRODUCT, INC.