

What good is a golf course?

What good is a golf course?

As a recent attendee of the GCSAA seminar on *Environmental Considerations in Golf Management*, I would like to share some of the topics of discussion.

"What good is a golf course, anyway? Only the rich are able to use it."

This is part of the image problem we in the golf business face when dealing with the general public who do not play golf. Well, here is a list of some of the things that a golf course does for the community.

- Recharge the ground water
- Filter that water through turfgrass
- Rainwater runoff slowed in turf
- Provides a greenbelt
- Provides a wildlife habitat
- Enhances the oxygen-carbon dioxide exchange
- Provides a heatsink to moderate the temperature in the area
- Aids in soil conservation
- Uses less water than a subdivision
- Pays more taxes in relation to services used
- Raises property values
- Provides employment for a number of people

This is just a partial listing but it is important for those of us in this business

to think of all the good that a golf course does for the whole community, for non-golfers and golfers alike.

We must not fail to acknowledge that, yes, we do apply pesticides and fertilizers, but only as needed and in correct rates. Turfgrass is an excellent filter and biodegrader, thus the products that we use are confined to the surface and are consumed on site. They do not pose a leaching problem when applied properly.

Each of us in the golf business has an obligation to see that we do apply all of the materials that we use in the proper manner. One of the best ways to demonstrate our training is to become a certified applicator.

In the water-use area, we are responsible consumers. What water we use either aids the turf growth, cools the climate, or recharges the groundwater.

Do not forget that a golf course is an asset to the community.

-Lee A Webb, CGCS
Northwest Turfgrass Topics
Spring 1989

Victory for truth and reason

For the past couple of years, Daconil — a fungicide — has been under indictment for the death of a golfer from "licking his golf balls."

The case has been covered on several television talk shows, including ABC's "Good Morning America" and "20/20."

After more than five years of sensational reporting, Daconil finally had its day in court.

Daconil, a product of Diamond Shamrock Co. Inc., has been held out by environmental hysterics as proof that lawn chemicals pose a danger to the general public. As recently as May, 1989, *Newsweek* cited the fungicide as cause for concern about lawn pesticides.

The story began in 1982 when Navy Lt. George Prior died of toxic epidermal necrolysis (TEN) 14 days after playing golf on the Army-Navy CC golf course. Prior's widow alleged via Navy pathologist Dr. Jonathan Lord that Daconil was the cause of death.

It took only one day in court for Judge Paul Sheridan to rule in favor of Diamond Shamrock Co., dismissing the \$16 million in damages sought by the Prior estate. Testimony in the case showed that Prior had, in truth, died of TEN caused by the flu and the use of aspirin and tetracycline.

Unfortunately, what was crystal clear to the judge in this case somehow escaped the attention of the media. As usual, a reporter's search for the truth was overshadowed by his zest for a story and it will be years (if ever) before the chemical industry recovers from this all-too-common example of public misinformation.

-Oregon GCSA Newsletter
May, 1989

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"Keeping Golf Courses Green"

Black Diamond must be great

Dear Dan & Irene:

I truly enjoy receiving and reading *The Florida Green* for two reasons:

a) Excellently written, well-timed articles illustrated with good photographs.

b) It keeps me up to date with my superintendent friends in Florida.

Your magazine, containing light humorous articles as well as meaty turf stuff offers the reader a mix that makes for a good, enjoyable publication. A wealth of information and top-drawer pictures.

As you might guess, I am way behind with my reading. More so than usual. Fact is, I just completed the Fall 1988 issue — which prompts me to write. The article and photos on Black Diamond Ranch was a masterpiece! Reading it makes you want to play it! Must be great! And different from most courses in Florida. But simply stated, all your publications contain interesting articles and topnotch pictures — both very high quality.

My best to you and all my friends in Florida. I am really looking forward to being in Orlando again next February and to see you all again (surely would love to play Black Diamond Ranch).

Sincerely,
Robert V. Mitchell
The Greenbrier
White Sulphur Springs, W. Va.

Pleased to recommend

I recently saw a copy of *The Florida Green* and I must tell you that I found it an impressive publication.

As regional sales manager for BioTurf, Inc., it is part of my duties to recommend publications for our product line and I would certainly welcome an advertising rate schedule.

- Dick Campbell

Drooling in Arkansas

I appreciate receiving your fine magazine. The golfing people at UALR and in Little Rock that I show it to drool over the beautiful greens. Everyone says you do a fine job in publishing the magazine.

Have a fine year.

-Jerry Crittenden
U of Arkansas at Little Rock

Student takes us to Ohio

My name is Rob Kloska and I am interested in receiving *The Florida Green* while I am at superintendents school. I recently spent approximately six months at the Polo Club in Boca Raton under the direction of Rich Brogan, the superintendent and my brother. I am presently attending Nova University in Fort Lauderdale and I plan to transfer to Ohio State Agricultural and Technical Institute after Christmas.

Your magazine has taught me much valuable information.

-Rob Kloska
Steubenville, Ohio

Drying out some old joints

Just a quick note to touch base with you — I am moving from my old hometown, Ark City, Kan., to Scottsdale, Ariz. I have got to get out of the snowballs and freezing weather. The year-around sunshine is for me. I have passed the 80-year-old mark and the old joints and body have got to be among the sunshine areas.

I certainly enjoy and look forward to each issue of your publication. It stands alone in this field. I must say that I read it from cover to cover when I receive it. My hat is off to you, Dan. You are a true master of your profession.

My son Craig has been working with Tom Fazio these past five years and I told him to touch base with you when he gets down your way.

Sincerely,
Dick Metz
Scottsdale, Ariz.

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And just what is it you do for a living, anyway?



What do you do for a living?

How about the people who work for you?

When your new employee is asked about his job by Aunt Minerva, will she get a meaningful response? Or will she have to ask, “And what is that?”

As I was scanning the obituary pages this morning — too many of my acquaintances and contemporaries have taken up the nasty habit of appearing in them — I ran across the notice for a 71-year-old man who was described as “a golf course maintenance person.”

How sad, I thought, that this human being had devoted perhaps half a century to maintaining a facility which, during his working lifetime, brought enjoyment and innumerable lessons in humility literally to millions of people... and his legacy is the sterile designation, “maintenance person.”

What did he do?

Was he a mechanic? Irrigation technician? Spray technician? Equipment operator? Turf groomer? Tree trimmer? Ditch digger? Cup cutter?

Or was he a member of a crew that did all of those things? If that’s the case, he worked very hard. The least they could have done is call him a “maintenance worker.” There’s some honor in that.

But it still doesn’t answer Aunt Minerva’s

question, “What do you do?”

I don’t have the answer, but I suggest it’s an important question for at least two reasons:

The first, obviously, is motivation.

When greenkeepers began seeing themselves more as managers than as grass farmers, they changed their job title to superintendent. Their employers went along with the change because they got better golf courses out of the deal.

The same lesson could be applied to your “maintenance persons.”

The second has to do with survival of the industry.

A golf course “maintenance person” helps nurture a complicated ecosystem that returns fresh water to our aquifers and oxygen to our atmosphere. He protects more wildlife than any zookeeper and he preserves parklands that are not just pretty to look at, but actually serve a useful, healthful purpose for more than 20 million Americans.

Give a “maintenance person” a job title that reflects those contributions and maybe the toxo-terrorists, as Tim Hiers has dubbed them, will go pick on the real enemies of the environment.

What do you think?