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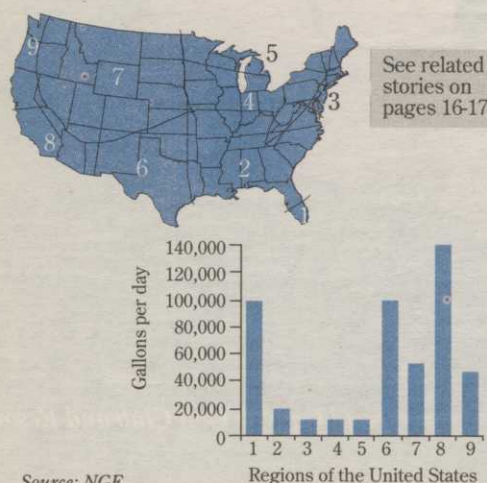
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Reaction to Gulf mixed...

BY MARK LESLIE

As the Persian Gulf crisis turned 1 month old, investors, builders and architects in the U.S. golf industry reacted with varying degrees of caution and optimism.

The length of the crisis is crucial to deciding its impact, everyone agrees.

Michael Hurdzan, an architect based in Columbus, Ohio, predicted an "incredible impact" from the crisis and harkened back to the Arab oil embargo of 1974 when the golf construction "virtually dried up."

"I think this situation is so unsettling that developers in the U.S. who have

not already committed (to a project) are going to wait and see. I think that some of those who are committed and who are on the fine edge are going to say, 'Hey, I'm going to cut my losses and stop right now.'"

Perry Dye, president of Dye Designs in Denver, Colo., and of the Golf Course Builders of America, said: "We're in the recreational, extra-dollar industry. We're the first to go and the last to come back. But until it happens we won't feel it."

Dye said developers whose projects have been in the permitting process

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... as Supers, others fear domino effect

BY MARK LESLIE

The domino effect of an oil shortage would be felt in construction and a range of operations on a golf course, superintendents and others agree, but how much is up for debate.

"I'm dead budget-wise," lamented Dan Jones, superintendent at Banyan Golf Club in West Palm Beach, Fla.

He said his first delivery of oil after Iraq invaded Kuwait cost 16 cents a

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Crumpin-Fox Club in Bernardston Mass., is "my personal favorite," says Roger Rulewich of Robert Trent Jones Inc. This view shows the 14th hole from the tee. Crumpin-Fox is being touted by

some as a candidate for best public course of the year. For information on this and other courses around the United States, see page 11. Photo courtesy of Crumpin-Fox

Club directors face tests

BY PETER BLAIS

The biggest threat facing the private club industry is that its members are perceived as elitists, according to a National Club Association lawyer.

The typical private club member appreciates traditions, is trying to conserve something of worth, likes to relax and enjoys some financial success, said Thomas Ondeck at the recent NCA Annual Club Director Conference in Pinehurst, N.C.

But private club opponents often view that same person as "reactionary, Republican, elitist and rich," said Ondeck, who has represented the club industry in more than 20 lawsuits, including three selective admissions cases before the U.S. Supreme

Court.

Because of this inaccurate perception, private clubs are sometimes portrayed as bastions of racial and sexual discrimination, said Ondeck. That has led to local and national legislation — like Congressman Charles Rangel's proposed national tax code amendment denying tax-exempt status, deductibility of dues and charitable contributions — that threaten the private club industry, he added.

Legislative volleys and media assaults have mounted over the past 25 years, coming to a head this summer at Shoal Creek in Birmingham, Ala., said Ondeck.

Things looked pretty good for private clubs in 1964 when Congress exempted

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Fla. summit will draw all parties

BY PETER BLAIS

Item: A Florida water district considers instituting a \$1 per 1,000-gallon surcharge on golf courses for water pumped out of courses' own wells. The move could add \$10 to the average round and \$800 to the typical private club membership fee.

Item: The governor and cabinet shoot down a golf course development on an environmentally sensitive stretch of Panhandle shoreline, even

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NCA

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an individual's home and private clubs from the provisions of the Civil Rights Act, Ondeck said. The industry's last major legal victory came in 1966 when the Supreme Court repealed a 20-percent excise tax on private club dues.

"The late 1960s was the last time private clubs weren't under attack," he said. "Today, clubs are the flashpoint."

What happened? The two biggest changes were the advent of single-interest groups and a media that moved from informer to adversary, said the NCA lawyer.

Groups like the National Organization for Women and the American Civil Liberties Union spearheaded many needed reforms in the 1970s, said Ondeck. By the 1980s, they had accomplished their major goals. But the organizational structure was still in place. To justify their continued existence, they had to find secondary targets. Private clubs were one they aimed at, he added.

As for the press, Ondeck recalled the days when reporters and cameras ignored the difficulties a sickly President Franklin Roosevelt had getting out of his wheelchair or the extramarital affairs of President John Kennedy.

"In the 1960s, the media still reported rather than inflamed stories. Today, they see themselves as adversaries. They have the same back-grounds as the single-issuers. And they've realized that targets=controversy=ratings=money," he said.

What the media is zeroing in on now is discrimination, Ondeck said. But every club discriminates in two ways.

First is economic. To run the operation, clubs charge hefty up-front fees to members. Critics will argue in the 1990s that dues should be eliminated or reduced, and replaced with daily fees that allow everyone access, Ondeck said.

Second is an ad hoc selection process that accepts some potential members and rejects others. Critics will continue applauding those allowing all-black, all-Jew or all-women clubs, while taking issue with those that are all-white, the NCA lawyer predicted.

The major legal argument opponents will throw in the face of private clubs is the U.S. Constitution.

"They'll argue the Constitution forbids discrimination, so clubs must be illegal under the 5th and 14th amendments," said Ondeck. "But the Constitution says the government is not allowed to discriminate. They forget about the 1st amendment, the right of free speech and the right to associate with whoever one wants. Justice William Douglass argued in favor of the right of people to open their homes or private clubs to whoever they want."

Opponents will attack clubs on other fronts, Ondeck said. They will claim the government passively accepts discrimination by making public land available to clubs, granting liquor licenses, offering reduced property taxes under greenbelt laws or bestowing tax-exempt status.

Existing members will continue bringing lawsuits against their own clubs if they sponsor a potential member person who isn't accepted.



Thomas Ondeck

But the most ominous development is the change in emphasis away from the courts and into legislative bodies, said Ondeck.

"Club opponents weren't always winning in the courts because courts

apply rules. So they said 'Let's change the rules.' Now they're bringing a lot of pressure on city councils and state legislatures," he said.

The best example is a New York City law (NYC LL 63) that changed the definition of a private club to one that has no more than 400 members, has no regular meal service and generates no revenue from non-members. The Supreme Court upheld the law two years ago.

NYC LL 63 has spurred other states and localities to propose ordinances ranging from membership thresholds as low as 100 to retain private club status, to affirmative action quotas requiring five female members be accepted for every two men, to a state law making it a crime to belong to a club that discriminates.

LETTERS

Appreciation

To the Editor:

Just a note to let you know how much we appreciate your newspaper. We are relatively new in the golf business and need publications such as yours to educate and keep us informed on the latest in this growing industry.

Sincerely,
Richard Miller
Sumner County Tractor
Hendersonville, Tenn.

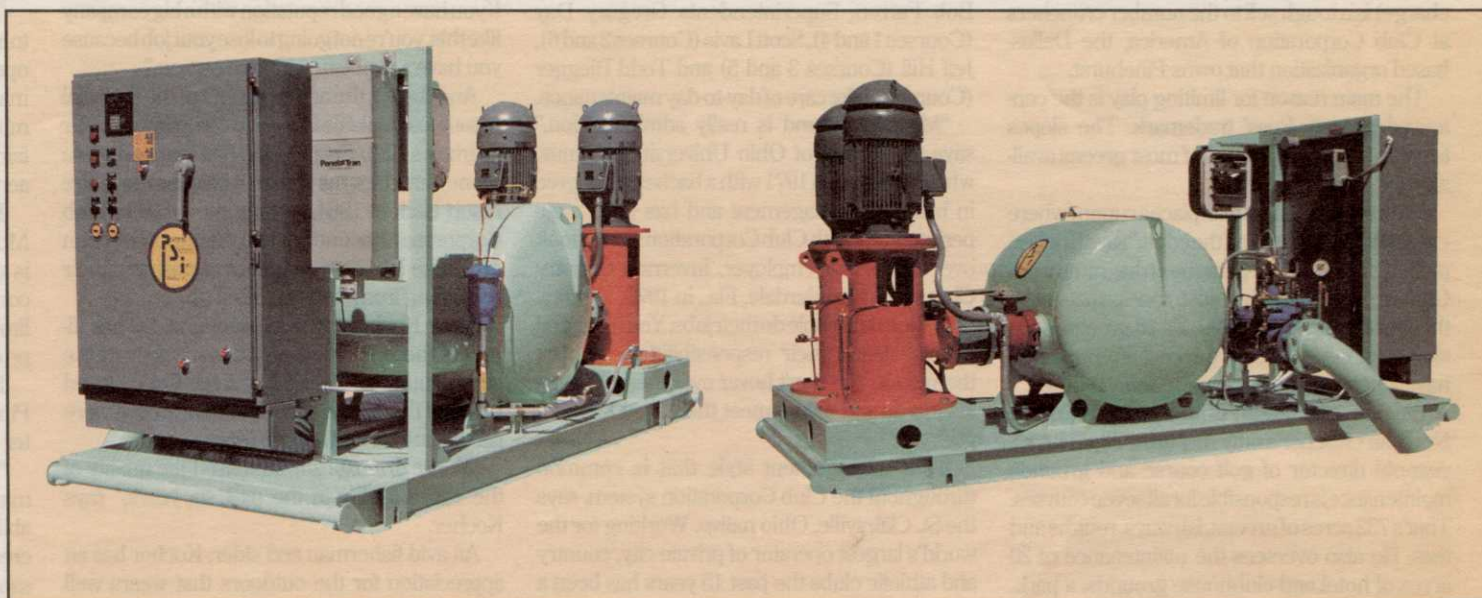
To the Editor:

I would like to congratulate your organization on publishing the finest, most informative golf/development publication around.

I am presently completing my bachelor of science degree in professional golf management/marketing from Ferris State University and find your publication invaluable in my job search.

Best regards,
Roger L. Reveyard
Palm Springs, Calif.

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