

The critical hire — superintendent — was omitted

To the Editor:

In the December 1990 issue of *Golf Course News*, the article "Golf Course Europe" contained comments by ASGCA (American Society of Golf Course Architects) President Dan Maples stating that "the key to a successful golf course development is assembling a professional team. Included should be an experienced land planner, civil engineer, golf course architect, housing architect, attorney and financial consultant."

How sad that the golf course superintendent was omitted from his statement. Who is better qualified to assist in grass selection, determine initial start-up costs, labor requirements, maintainability and the necessary equipment, in addition to establishing budgetary demands?

Would new developments have an increased success rate if a qualified golf course superintendent were included as part of this professional team?

Could maintenance costs and construction problems be reduced while maintainability is increased?

Would developments be better prepared for the tremendous start-up costs of golf course construction and maintenance — primarily the first year, but certainly second and third years as well?

Food for thought, certainly.

Sincerely,
Mark J. Hoban, CGCS
President
Georgia GCSA

Not mixing irrigation with great architects

To the Editor:

In November's issue were listed golf course architects headquartered in the United States. I was honored to be on the roster with such great people as Jay Morrish, Tom Fazio, Bob Cupp, Art Hills, Roger Packard and Scott Miller. The truth of the matter is, Larry Rodgers is an irrigation consultant to golf course architects, not a golf course architect, as you listed.

My only attempt at design was a three-hole course on a friend's ranch. It was this humbling experience that taught me just how important selecting a quality golf course architect is. I am quite happy in my role as the irrigation designer on the many fine projects I have been involved with.

Thank you for putting my name in print in

association with such great architects. My role in the golf course design field is an important one, but the art and strategy must come before the mechanics of golf course architecture.

Sincerely,
Larry Rodgers
Lakewood, Colo.

Comment

Continued from page 12

tens of thousands of people who would no more have Sundays with their families?

Let's be **golf-ologists** and be a part of the solution.

Jerry Gelinas, vice president of marketing with Club Corporation of America, said potential club members "want benefits that fit theirs' and their families' needs. We've found a strong trend toward the entire family becoming part of the club environment."

Gelinas said families offer a major opportunity and a more stable membership for a club.

So, business-wise — as well as good neighbor-wise and plain good citizenship-wise — getting entire families involved in golf is a positive for golf courses everywhere.

What can you do? Ski areas are finding success with one tactic: Giving "first-timers" the opportunity to ski free of charge (including skis, poles and boots in some instances) on a particular day. Other ski areas offer ongoing teaching programs for very little money.

This is all geared to teach young and old alike the sport so that they can enjoy it to its fullest — and return and keep returning.

Would this be difficult for golf courses to do?

Courses could offer special "family" green fee discounts, or father-son discounts, husband-wife discounts... the list goes on. Biting the bullet today could mean eating a meal of success tomorrow.

Let's give the many "golf widows" new life by bringing them out, showing them respect, and honestly illustrating that they are welcome.

Junior programs, women's programs, teaching for the physically challenged... the opportunities are boundless, the untapped ideas endless.

Let's be inventive. It will help our business, our society, and perhaps even our self-esteem..

Roberts: Answering tough questions

BY ELIOT C. ROBERTS

Reports of municipalities in the more densely populated parts of the country considering landscape restrictions and ordinances have become more common. To some degree, this is related to increasing interest in Xeriscape, which emphasizes use of native vegetation with proposed reductions in water and energy use for maintenance. A back-to-nature or natural practices philosophy has appeal, particularly in densely populated regions where in recent years much of nature's value has been tarnished by pollution of various sorts.

Of the many questions asked The Lawn Institute, seven are key to better understanding landscape quality and environmental relationships. These are:

- 1) Which are better, trees or grass, in taking carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere and returning oxygen?
- 2) What does landscape sustainability have to do with landscape value?
- 3) What is really the goal of most new landscape ordinances?
- 4) How can we deal with landscape plans, regulations and specifications?
- 5) Are energy costs unreasonable in landscape maintenance?
- 6) How much idealism is behind demands for landscape change?
- 7) Why do we so often read in news stories that turfgrasses are an enemy?

Answers to these questions should help clarify some important issues.

Q — We hear a lot about photosynthesis using carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere and releasing oxygen. What does it all amount to? Which are better doing this, trees or grass?

A — This type of comparison makes woody plants look good and turfgrasses look poor, but it doesn't present the whole picture. All carbon fixed in organic matter (biomass) oxidizes in time. This may be fast — such as burning — or slow (by) decomposition. In decomposition, micro-organisms are involved and humus is formed, enriching the soil.

Woody plants contain a lot of carbon and therefore may take years to die and decompose. Or they are harvested for construction, pulp or fuel. Ultimately, virtually all of this carbon ends up back in the earth's atmosphere and there is very little net gain in oxygen.

With turfgrass, clippings decomposed continuously as long as temperatures are warm and the soil is moist for microbial activity. This enriches the soil and improves its structure so that water drains better and erosion is reduced.

This benefit is far more important than the so-called balance of carbon-dioxide and oxygen.

When considering a closed system where wood may be removed and replaced regularly with immature plants, the gain in oxygen cited for woody plants may be expected.

In an open system, characteristic of the real world, biodegradation of wood is continual so that atmospheric gains in oxygen are not realized.

The "liability" of turfgrass not accumulating more carbon over time becomes an asset in providing carbon energy for some 45,000,000,000,000,000 [quadrillion] microbes living in every 1,000 square feet of turfgrass root zone. These soil-building organisms require carbon as a source of energy for natural humus-forming processes.

Since terrestrial plants that fix carbon through photosynthesis all biodegrade, and consume oxygen and release carbon dioxide back to the atmosphere, where has our at-



Dr. E. Roberts

mospheric oxygen come from?

The 20 percent oxygen found in the atmosphere is quite stable. Much more or less would make life hazardous for both plants and animals. The biotic origin of oxygen is aquatic, or at least plants and animals that have their final resting place under water where anaerobic decomposition is prevalent. Deposits of carbon containing coal, oil and natural gas have all formed under these anaerobic conditions.

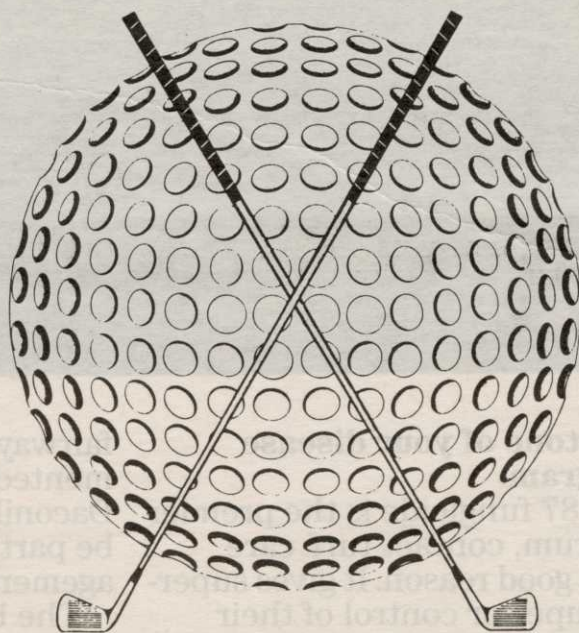
Thus, our fossil fuels of stored carbon, which originally came from carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, are only now being burned. Had these sources of carbon not been discovered and used, we would most likely have been limited to burning wood as a source of energy.

With finite amounts of fossil fuels available, we must look for other sources of energy.

Providing positive levels of carbon storage and oxygen productivity are the least likely of all landscape benefits to be realized. To be sure, every little bit helps, and we should promote the concept of living plants in the landscape. They are infinitely better than the alternative — dust and dirt, asphalt and concrete.

Continued on page 54

Formost Construction Co.



IRRIGATION SPECIALISTS

"Doing One Thing Well"

P.O. BOX 559
TEMECULA, CA 92390

(714) 676-6819
FAX (714) 699-4300

STATE LIC. #267960

Serving the nation for over 30 years