

### COLBERT GOLF ACQUIRED

SANTA MONICA, Calif. — Golf Enterprises, Inc., has acquired the Las Vegas-based golf course management company, Jim Colbert Golf, Inc.

It will be operated as a wholly owned subsidiary, and the acquired properties will be managed under the name of Jim Colbert Golf.

Golf Enterprises now manages 20 public, private and resort properties in nine states. The company will manage all facility operations, including food and beverage and pro shops.

Golf Enterprises was founded in 1990 by Bob Williams, former president and chief executive officer of American Golf Corp., and E.C. "Sandy" Burns, former senior vice president of acquisitions.

Colbert, a 22-year veteran of the PGA Tour, will compete on the Senior PGA Tour but remain affiliated with the company in an advisory capacity.



Bob Williams

### PRIVATE CC INSURANCE AVAILABLE

MANCHESTER, N.H. — The New Hampshire Insurance Co. has introduced Coverage Par Excellence, a comprehensive protection program for private country clubs.

It offers an extensive array of coverages and options, including expanded building and fine arts coverages, pesticide and herbicide applicator coverage, and Hole-In-One coverage for tournaments.

Input was obtained from club managers, golf pros, course superintendents and others who live the business to ensure total tee-to-green coverage. Building coverage has been expanded to include bridges, walkways and other paved surfaces, and business interruption coverage ranges beyond vandalism to include revenue replacement.

Paul Budde, director of the standard commercial accounts department, is in charge of the program for the insurance company.

### FERREE JOINS COLLETON RIVER

HILTON HEAD ISLAND, S.C. — Long-time Hilton Head resident and PGA Senior Tour member Jim Ferree has joined Colleton River Plantation as director of golf.

While Colleton River continues construction on the Jack Nicklaus-designed golf course, Ferree will serve as an adviser to the course developers, Colleton River Co.

He will advise on the construction of the course, design of the planned 23,000-square-foot clubhouse, hiring of the golf professional and greenskeeping staff, formulation of club policies and golf course operations.

# Japanese style memberships could provide capital for U.S. developments

By Bernard Baker

Japanese-style international memberships are appearing on the American scene and may provide the foundation for new capital markets for golf projects.

By U.S. standards, golf club memberships bring astronomically high prices in Japan. Many Japanese clubs sell memberships for more than \$1 million. Memberships at Koganei near Tokyo recently traded for \$2.7 million. The average Japanese membership trades for about \$200,000.

The high prices reflect the scarcity of

land, high development costs (often more than \$50 million) and the mere 1,800 courses for the country's 20 million golfers.

Yet another factor has sent the cost of Japanese memberships soaring. Tradeability.

Most memberships in Japanese clubs can be traded. Some people invest and speculate in club memberships. There is an over-the-counter market for memberships with brokerage houses specializing in them.

A unique feature of many memberships is that "use" rights can be "stripped" from other membership rights and handled separately. A person may own the membership for its investment potential and "rent" the right to use the club facilities to another person approved by the club as a "designated user." The membership can be traded subject to the rental arrangement with the designated user.

This transferability makes memberships suitable for purchase in blocks for later re-

Continued on page 41

# Managers can win at the TV interview

By Peter Blais

The Book of Lists indicates the 10 Most Feared Things in Life. No. 6 is Death. No. 7 is Divorce. No. 1 is Having to do a Major TV Interview.

"It's that awesome for a lot of folks," said Kevin Delaney, a 30-year veteran of print and broadcast journalism who spoke at the recent Club Managers Association of America Conference in Dallas.

With charges of racial discrimination and environmental negligence being leveled at golf clubs, any club manager who hasn't yet received an interview request from a reporter may be hearing from one in the not-too-distant future.

But there are ways to deal with the television interview that can make it a much more

pleasant and productive experience for the club manager, Delaney said.

"Like it or not, you are very logical targets for reporters. As the club manager of important institutions in your communities, you're the source, the expert. You're the one they want to call and ask, 'Hey, what's going on over there? What's the problem we're hearing about? And how are you dealing with it?'"

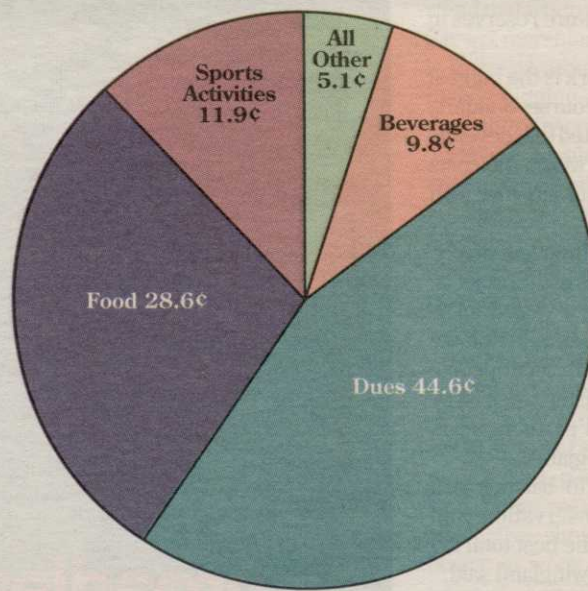
### Offensive weapons

Before dwelling on the negatives, club managers should realize they have many positives to discuss — the millions of dollars clubs donate to charities, the thousands awarded in scholarships, tax dollars and economic activity generated within the locality and state, the many community projects, and

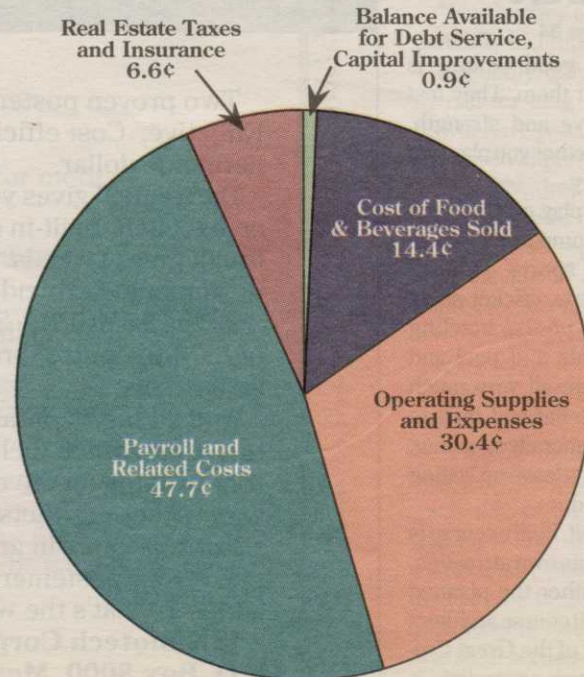
Continued on page 38

The graphs below show where money comes from and where it goes at private country clubs nationwide.

### 1990 Country Club Income Dollar



### 1990 Country Club Expense Dollar



Source: Pannell Kerr Forster

# Why can't I have bentgrass and firs?

*Editor's note: This is the first in an occasional series on golf course maintenance designed to give the club manager a basic working knowledge of maintenance issues confronting the superintendent. Dave Fearis, CGCS, is head superintendent at Blue Hills Country Club in Kansas City, Mo., and has given seminars on golf course maintenance for the Club Managers Association of America.*

By Dave Fearis

The United States can be divided into three grass-growing regions — cool-season, transition and warm-season. Certain grasses thrive in each particular region while others struggle to survive.

The cool-season region covers roughly the upper half of the country, running from northern California in the West, across the mid-section of the United States and tapering up to the northern half of Cape Cod in Massachusetts.

Temperatures drop as low as minus-40 degrees in the winter and occasionally venture into the 90s in summer. The optimum root soil temperature for most cool-season grass growth is 50 to 65 degrees with a foliar range of 60 to 75 degrees.

Bentgrass is perhaps the most cold-tolerant of the cool-season varieties. Improved creeping bentgrasses can be spread by seed-

Continued on page 40



# Setting own agenda and sticking to it is the key

Continued from page 36

the thousands of people employed by clubs.

"All these are things you have a right to talk about. This is your ammunition when you go into an interview," Delaney said. "If we asked you to list your 10 biggest problems you could rattle them off right away. But if we asked you to list the 10 biggest positives, you'd have a problem. People have a tough time talking about their positives. But it shouldn't be that way, especially when the television interview is concerned."

Of course, the negative is probably what prompted the reporter's interview request in the first place. And it must be dealt with directly.

"You do have an alternative. You can hunker down in your office or issue one of those nice, terse 'No comments' and hope you get away with it. But that usually doesn't wash anymore, not in this day and age. So you eventually have to deal with them," Delaney said.

By using multiple practice sessions before a camera, Delaney's television workshops help executives, politicians, astronauts, or anyone who has to get in front of a microphone and get their message across in the clearest manner possible. The goal is to control the interview rather than being controlled by it.

"If you go into an interview and say, 'Hey, what do you want to ask me today, anyway?' you're setting yourself up. It's better to say, 'Thanks for coming to my office. I have two or three things your audience is going to be very interested in?' That's different. That's setting the tone. That's control. Don't be passive, because you can't afford to be," Delaney said.

Preparation is the key to taking control of an interview. Doing your homework so you have your facts straight and your agenda in order are important because any good reporter will have done his homework before the interview, Delaney said.

Attitude is also important. The camera picks up an 'I-don't-want-to-be-here' attitude, Delaney said.

"You've seen it, that tight, defensive demeanor. That comes across. Don't do it (the interview) if that's your attitude. It's really a mindset. The mindset should be 'This is a terrific opportunity. That reporter is a conduit to a large audience and we've been wanting to get our message out. This is great,'" he explained.

Within 24 hours, the audience has forgotten 60 percent of what the manager said. Ninety-five percent is gone by the end of a week. That means the impression a club manager leaves, and perhaps one or two ideas, are all the audience will retain. Surveys show final impression is based less than 10 percent on what is said, 40 percent on voice and more than 50 percent on general appearance. In other words, 90 percent of a final impression is based

on cosmetics.

In this era of television news and five-second sound bites, first impressions are becoming increasingly important.

"The American public has a very short attention span. People want information. They want it in concise terms. Get to the point and don't meander or I'll change the dial. Be succinct, get the key point right up front and be conversational," Delaney advised.

Proper gestures, eye contact, posture, energy level and clothing

all contribute to a positive first impression.

"The first rule-of-thumb in a television interview is to sit in the front third of your chair," Delaney explained. "It is more attractive and allows you to think more actively."

"Watch the 'Today Show' or 'Good Morning America.' For two solid hours they're on the front third of their chairs. It allows you to stay with it. So when you're in an interview, don't settle back in your chair like Mr. Fat Cat. That registers with the audience, too."

"We even recommend the semi-starter's position with one foot in front of the other. It propels your body forward slightly to help make your point. Another advantage is that it frees up your hands to use gestures. These may sound superficial. But little edges are important in an interview situation."

Gestures and eye contact are important, Delaney said. Gestures are a release for the anxiety of the interview situation and a substitute for annoying habits like constantly adjusting glasses or tugging on earlobes.

George Bush used to wave his hands annoyingly up and down at his sides "like little flippers," before television advisers worked with him for the 1988 election, Delaney said.

"Now he has these broad, attractive gestures. He can't stop gesturing. In fact, 'Saturday Night Live' makes fun of him. But it's much more attractive than those little flippers," he said.

Interviews should not be a one-way street with the reporter asking questions and the club manager simply responding, Delaney said.

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# to a successful television interview, expert says

The manager should get his points across and cite any positives. Positives should be identified and put down on paper. But without a concrete example of how the positives have benefited someone, a list simply sounds like platitudes. The story of how a club's donation to the CMAA scholarship fund gave an underprivileged student the chance to attend college is a "sparkler" that can make the platitude interesting and liven up an interview.

The best sparklers are anecdotes, analogies, personal stories or unusual

statistics. "Go into an interview with eight or 10 positive points you want to get across and under each one have a sparkler," Delaney recommended. "Every time the reporter asks a question, work one in. If you did very well, the audience will remember one or two of those stories and have a favorable impression of you."

One of the best sparklers involves interpretation. For example, a chemical company executive's assertion that his product makes up just one part per billion of the local water supply may not calm the fears

of a concerned public. But his statement that one part per billion is the equivalent of one second every 32 years may help the audience realize there really is no problem.

How do you work sparklers in? The interviewer's "softball" questions are the easiest lead-in. Questions like "What's happening these days?" or "What are you doing to benefit the community?" are perfect openings to slip in two or three. While the reporter is shuffling through his notes to make sure he's asked everything is another chance to elaborate on a previous

question and use another sparkler.

"There are no Marquis of Queensberry rules in interviews. Take it where you want it to go. That's the key," Delaney said.

Inevitably the difficult and even hostile questions come out. The best way to address them is to acknowledge the problem and then bridge into a sparkler, Delaney said. Politicians are masters of the acknowledge-bridge technique and it should allow a manager to answer the most difficult question.

"Respond, but minimally. For ex-

ample, 'Yes, we've had that problem. But let me tell you what we're doing about it and why it will never happen again.' And then bridge into something you want to talk about. 'Yet,' 'but,' 'however' are all bridge words," Delaney said.

## Defensive weapons

Gestures, eye contact, sparklers and the like are all offensive weapons for the interviewee. But how about defensive weapons?

"No Comment" is a traditional defensive weapon, but won't work with any reporter worth his salt, Delaney said.

"If you can't comment, tell people. 'I can't because this is in litigation or it's a proprietary issue or whatever.' Otherwise, flesh it out a little. IBM, if it's working on something new, will say something like, 'Well, as you know, it's our policy never to discuss future product development.' That's basically a 'No Comment' but it's more palatable, a more acceptable way of saying the same thing," Delaney said.

"And don't be afraid to use the three greatest words in the English language — 'I don't know.' It is a wonderful response. It raises your credibility rather than lowering it. (White House spokesman) Marlin Fitzwater says, 'I don't know' dozens of times a day. You can't know everything about your club or industry. 'But I'll find that out and get back to you' is a perfectly acceptable response.

"If you don't know the answer, you never want to just pick a fact out of the air and try to get by with it. It's not only the wrong thing to do, it's dumb because it will come back a few days later and bite you."

Keeping your cool is one of the cardinal rules for a successful interview, Delaney said. If a club manager begins ranting and raving at a reporter it's a sure thing that interview will be one of the first ones to air on that night's news.

"That's the sort of thing they love on television, conflict. Editors see that and say, 'Hey did you see how Jones lost his cool? Move that up to the No. 1 story.' That's what they call great television," he said.

Negatives are a big problem. People remember them longer than positives. So don't repeat negatives and don't use the word 'problem,' Delaney suggested.

"Say your piece and get off. People tend to ramble and that's when they get in trouble. Someone once asked Mike Wallace what his most effective question was. He said 'And?' People think they have to jump in and fill dead air space. Wrong. 'I think I've said about all I need to on that, Mike' is the best response," Delaney said.

The media generally descends when there is a crisis. If handled correctly, a crisis can strengthen a club or company, as was the case with Johnson & Johnson during the Tylenol poisoning scare, Delaney said.

"The first thing is to move fast, to give the appearance to the public, at least, that you're dealing with the is-

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## Delaney

Continued from page 39

sue," he explained. "You let people know what the issue is, how you're dealing with it and why it won't happen again. You can't backtrack and change your story three or four times. People don't believe you after awhile."

Perrier, Audi and Exxon are good examples of companies faced with crises that suffered public relations nightmares when it appeared they weren't moving fast enough and began changing their stories, Delaney said.

"Give the media what you can and don't let them go elsewhere for speculation," he added. "You want to be the source if you have a real crisis on your hands. Give them what you can and say, 'I hope we'll have more for you in a couple of hours. I hope you'll stand by.'"

### Emergency plan

An emergency plan should be established and placed where it can be easily found in a crisis. Test the plan and correct any flaws, Delaney advised.

Another pre-crisis step is to get acquainted with the local media. "Invite them over for your open house. If they know you, they're more likely to give you a break when an emergency occurs," Delaney said.

"And let the media stay as long as they like. Don't try to move them

out. The media has a short attention span, anyway."

Delaney started his journalism career in 1952 as copy boy for the New

York Daily News while attending Columbia University journalism school. Along the way he worked for the Peace Corps in the Far East, U.S.

Rep. Hugh Carey, the U.S. State Department and 20 years with ABC and CBS News. He was evacuated from Saigon on the final day of the collapse

of South Vietnam. He is a Williams College graduate with masters degrees in journalism and political science from Columbia.

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