

Europe an exciting arena; Asia is next

As mentioned in my last column, Golf Course News attended Golf Course Europe '91 in Wiesbaden, Germany, in early October. Although attendance was less than expected, the quality of registrants was impressive.

Most interesting was the fact that very few superintendents registered for the conference, though the subject matter was to a large extent geared to the maintenance segment of the industry.

I discussed this with knowledgeable industry leaders. They indicated that European superintendents or greenkeepers, generally speaking, have not yet attained the status of U.S. superintendents, nor do they have access to maintenance education such as we have in

the U.S. Furthermore, they simply do not have the travel budgets to attend conferences and exhibitions, as do U.S. superintendents.

I had an opportunity to play a new 18-hole facility near Frankfurt, designed by the Hausers of Austria. (See page 9.) The fog and mist was so thick as we began the round that it was tough following the ball!

The course was interesting. Like the majority of new courses in this area, it is cut out of farmland — in this case, the historic sheep barn



Charles von Brecht

was being totally renovated and remodeled to become the clubhouse, pro shop, etc. The new greens were in good condition but 70 percent sand, which made them quick and hard to hold, even in wet weather.

The greenkeeper is a Scot recruited from his homeland. It's my understanding that more United Kingdom greenkeepers are being recruited on the continent for duties at the newer courses. There are even a few Americans heading up maintenance at new courses.

You may be pleased to learn that the American team (Perry Dye, Matt Dye, Cynthia Dye McGarry and yours truly), retained new-found U.S. supremacy in world golf by defeating on a handicap point basis the European team, 67-61. With no

help from me, Perry and Matt carried the U.S. team to victory.

We continue to consider a European edition of Golf Course News, as well as an Asian edition. The Asian edition would be published in conjunction with the Golf Asia show in Singapore in late March. I will keep you informed of our progress.

The special feature in this issue lists Golf Course Builders and Architects. This ever-growing segment of our business is most important to the quality and consistency of new courses and the renovation of older facilities.

I believe the United States has the best golf course builders, designers and architects. We have reason to be proud of these men and women.

CALENDAR

Some advice: Take part or be taken apart

U.S. Sen. Barry Goldwater of Arizona once said, "A government that is big enough to give you all you want is big enough to take it all away."

Yet, at the heart of our democracy is that it is of and by the people, and we have the right, if not the mandate, to direct our personal input into government decisions affecting us — from town to federal levels.

"Take part or be taken apart," Sen. Alan Simpson, R-Wyo., recently said about an issue before the Senate.

That could as well apply to the golf industry. The industry in Arizona and Florida stand apart from

other states as an example of standing up and taking part in the decision process. People elsewhere should take note.

"We have seen the enemy and he is us," said Walt Kelly of Pogo cartoon fame. But in this case it is not funny. The golf industry is its own enemy. Why? Apathy and excuses.

Not enough time to get involved, people say. It's a universal excuse

— one that has led to legalized abortion, rejection of prayer in schools and other decisions that have eroded our society.

Developers, builders and architects tell tales of mob violence at hearings, with misinformed opponents certain that a proposed course would destroy water resources.

Why don't they, or university scientists and others, show up armed with research documentation to help quell the storm?

Why not take the time to help a colleague — who could turn around and help you some day?

Apathy and excuses.

Today, each person in golf has a special opportunity to participate. And they don't even have to travel to some city council hearing room.

The Environmental Protection Agency has extended, to Dec. 14, its deadline for comments on the proposed wetlands delineation guidelines. (See page 4 story.)

This manual is critical to future development nationwide. Current rules defining wetlands are incredible. This can soften them.

No one wants to develop on real wetlands. But let's use common sense. And let's take part. Or the industry just might be taken apart.



Mark Leslie

GUEST COMMENTARY

Quality, quantity of water a consuming issue

By Charles Putnam

My father was a golf course superintendent for almost 50 years. As a child, I remember how he used to love Mondays. On Monday the course was closed and free of people who would take divots out of his fairways and leave ball marks on his greens. He cared deeply how his course looked and played and worried about it constantly.

One of the worries he didn't have, there in Seattle, was the quality or quantity of water available. He and his contemporaries, in the 1930s and 1940s they were called "greenkeepers," had lots of good water that was cheap. Although I don't know for sure, I believe the quality, quantity and cost of water were not major concerns anywhere that golf courses were being built in those days.

All of that changed sometime in the late 1960s or early 1970s. My first recollection of anyone suggesting the possibility of serious water problems, in terms of quantity, was at an Irrigation Association technical conference in Dallas. The year was 1973. The speaker was Professor Edward Hiler from Texas A&M University. He warned about

the rapid depletion of our ground water supplies and what the future would hold if we didn't take serious action now.

Coincidentally, at that same conference, Francisco Jimeno spoke on "Reclaimed Effluent in Golf Course Construction." We talked a lot, in those days, about sludge disposal and effluent use. It was a relatively new topic and had the interest of the irrigation community, both agriculture and turf. Jimeno's comments were interesting because he approached the subject from the standpoint of water and power conservation, rather than just disposal.

This was the year, you might recall, that the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) turned off the taps. Considering our situation today, a couple of Jimeno's remarks are worth repeating. Remember, please, that these statements were made 20 years ago.



Charles Putnam

"The outlook in the availability of water for the irrigation of turf is leading us to consider that the scarcity of this important resource will become critical before the decade of the 1970s comes to an end," Jimeno said. "The development of turf or grass-covered areas has proved of great value in providing a better living environment, helping control air pollution, furnishing better climatic conditions and adding beauty to the landscape."

Both Hiler and Jimeno suggested that better, more sophisticated management practices, more efficient sprinklers and state-of-the-art controls would all be necessary to deal with this growing problem. How prophetic were these two men? To answer that, look at what happened only a few years later, and where we have come in the past two decades.

In the 1970s, we experienced drought in areas where it would be least expected. Northern California, western Washington, parts of the Northeast and Great Lakes region all suffered from a severe lack of water at some time in that decade. Later, the depletion of the Ogallala Aquifer and other ground water supplies gave real cause for concern

among all irrigators, including those concentrating specifically on golf course work.

As the cost of building a golf course increased and energy costs rose dramatically, more efficient irrigation systems were more than just desirable, they were a necessity.

Some irrigation markets were slow to accept new technology. This has been especially true in the residential/commercial market. For the most part, this was probably due to economics. This has not been true of golf course irrigation, however. More than any other segment of the irrigation business, golf course developers and superintendents have been ready to accept and apply technological advances early in their introduction.

This, too, is probably due to economics to a large degree. For example, Roger Gordon, a widely known West Coast designer of golf course irrigation systems, points out an Arizona law governing golf course construction and irrigation. The law limits a golf course to 90 acres per 18 holes. To make matters worse, annual irrigation is limited to 4.8 acre-feet per acre. That is

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Editorial Office
Golf Course News
PO Box 997
38 Lafayette Street
Yarmouth, ME 04096
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Charles E. von Brecht

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Simone M. Lewis

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Water a consuming issue

Continued from page 10

just a little over an inch of water per week. That, it seems to me, can make it pretty tough to grow grass. It is certain that, with those kinds of constraints, you don't want to waste any water.

According to Gordon, all maintained areas are trimmed with part-circle sprinklers. He tries to limit heads to no more than two per zone. This gives the superintendent the ability to eliminate small portions of the course if rationing is imposed.

You would expect, I guess, that Arizona would have laws regarding irrigation and that special consideration would be given to water waste. Arizona is, after all, a desert. Jim Barrett, a widely known irrigation consultant from Montclair, N.J., indicates that although there aren't any laws, yet, regarding golf course irrigation, the same concerns exist in the Northeast.

According to Barrett, designs are much different today than even 10 years ago. There is much more concern, he says, with uniformity and spacing. There is a great deal of concern with power consumption.

"Management is the buzz word in golf course irrigation today," Barrett indicates. "I can't remember the last design I did that didn't have computer controls. Our problems are not as severe as some other parts of the country. We don't have continuing water problems, but we are learning from the problems in California and Arizona."

"Better control is the name of the game," says Gordon.

The biggest advance in golf course irrigation management in recent years has been the acceptance of the computer, according to Scott Kuhn of Carl Kuhn Inc. in Seattle.

Scott emphasized that water conservation is not the only concern facing golf course irrigation designers today. "Energy costs have gone through the roof," he says. "With the computer and multi-stage, variable-speed pumps, we are able to save lots of kilowatt-hours as well."

"Some of the new sprinklers will perform very well at much lower pressures than was

the case in the past. This helps greatly to reduce pumping costs."

The use of treated effluent to irrigate golf courses has become widespread. System cost increases slightly due to the requirement of specially colored pipe and other equipment. As the demand for these products increases, costs will go down.

The use of weather stations, incorporated in the irrigation system, is becoming very common. The weather station drives the computer, Gordon explains. It measures wind speed, direction, evapo-transpiration, rainfall, temperature and anything else you can think of.

We have obviously come a long way in the past 20 years. Golf course superintendents have been in the forefront of this water-conserving technology. We, of course, have a long way to go. There are still a lot of courses out there with old, inefficient systems.

There are also some very sophisticated systems not being used to their fullest. This is an educational problem that must be addressed.

What is the next step? My guess would be soil-moisture sensing. This is a concept that has been around for almost a century. New technology will make soil-moisture sensing a practical tool in the management of an irrigation system. It will be a valuable weapon in the fight for water conservation.

I can honestly say that my father would be proud of the great strides his colleagues have made in managing their systems and their facilities. He would applaud the technological advances available today. He would certainly like the opportunity to manage a golf course with the tools available now, compared with what he had to work with a half-century ago. I guess that's called progress, isn't it?

The Irrigation Association is dedicated to the conservation and intelligent use of water and all our precious resources. We salute the efforts of the golf and turf management community for their success in this regard. *Charles S. 'Pepper' Putnam is the new executive director of the Irrigation Association.*

An informative 'read'

To the editor:

I want to congratulate you and thank you for your Golf Course News publication. It is the most informative publication of its kind that I have seen in my 20 years in the golf industry. I read it cover to cover and I am always amazed at the wide variety of subject matter and the intelligent commentary that comprise each issue.

You have a great magazine and everyone I have talked to in our business has had nothing but praise for your publication. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,
Richard M. Kopplin
Director of Operations
Desert Mountain Properties
Scottsdale, Ariz.

Letters accepted

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OF ALL THE ELEMENTS
THAT GO INTO MAKING A GOLF COURSE GREAT,
WE'D LIKE TO SHARE OUR THOUGHTS
ON THE TWO WE VALUE MOST.



Many people have the idea that planning a golf course happens with some quick sketches on a cocktail napkin and a hurried glance at the property. Construction begins with a champagne reception, and ends after a few local celebrities tell jokes on the first tee.

We know better.

Good results require good people. People who take the time to acquire first-hand knowledge of the site. People who are knowledgeable to begin with.

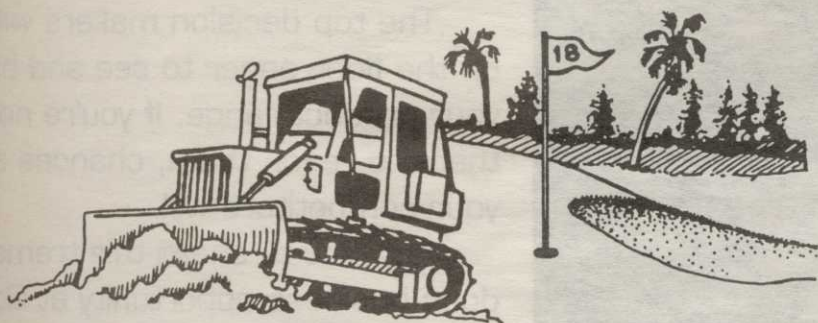
It takes a group that's willing to walk the land. It takes a commitment to walk it again. And again. In a nutshell, it takes lots of walking.

When it comes to details, we prefer those that make sense. Responsibility doesn't end after the grand opening. Simply put, the details of today shouldn't detract from the bottom line of tomorrow.

We know better.

We'd be pleased to discuss your needs. We promise to use the door mat.

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