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# From America to Europe, busy times ahead

There are a couple of upcoming events I'd like to preview for you.

First, *Golf Course News* has arranged with ExpoConsult of Holland, organizers of Golf Course Europe, to cover this European conference and show in Wiesbaden, Germany, Oct. 7-9.

*Golf Course News - Europe* will publish a special section in the October issue.

Second, the Golf Course News marketing conference will take place Sept. 16-17 at the Oakbrook Hills Conference Center near Chicago. This two-day conference will address the problems in marketing products and services to golf facilities and, hopefully, develop some solutions for the industry suppliers'

marketing and sales efforts.

As I mentioned in last month's column, the 1992 editorial calendar is now published, so I'd like to review it for you. Our editorial department has added some new features, as well as four special sections that will expand coverage of particularly "hot" topics in the industry.

Here's the rundown:

**January** — GCSAA Preview: *Golf Course News*' Annual Awards (Architect, Builder, Resort Developer,



von Brecht

Best Conditioned Course).

**February** — GCSAA Show.

**March** — Golf Course Utility Vehicles — Special Advertising Section.

**April** — Pre-emergent Herbicides.

**May** — Driving and Practice Ranges — Special Advertising Section.

**June** — Rotary Mowers.

**July** — Fungicides.

**August** — Ryegrass Seed Producers and Research — Special Advertising Section.

**September** — Soil Blenders.

**October** — Irrigation and Pumping Stations — Special Advertising Section.

**November** — Architects, Build-

ers and Developers.

**December** — Hi-tech Developments in Golf Course Maintenance.

My recent column on slow play garnered some interesting response.

All disagreed with my suggestion to allow players to hit on par 3s while the group ahead has not completed play.

This is a regular practice at some courses, even though it could result in injury.

I must agree with my critics, who point out that a rule for speeding up play should not be posted. Aside from that one point, respondents agree there is a need for continuing education for faster play.

Keep your comments coming!

## COMMENTARY

# Get tests straight before announcing them

By Mark Leslie

Henry Adams once said: "Practical politics consists in ignoring facts."

Time and again we've seen proof of this in America. Time and again men have spoken too soon, thought too little, voted too quickly, compromised too much, pressed on when they should have let go, or given up when they should have hung on.

Time and again the results have been ominous. People suffer, families are disrupted, neighborhoods are uprooted, companies go belly-

up, cities go bankrupt, and states survive only by raising taxes.

All this is nothing new. But this is a plea for it to stop.

It follows the dioxin scare, which is perhaps the most damaging — and costly — illustration of the danger of no-think-quick-response-overstatement tendencies. In 1982, the government ordered evacua-



Leslie

tion of 2,232 residents of Times Beach, Mo., saying traces of dioxin were found in the town's soil. The Environmental Protection Agency spent \$33 million to buy up the town, posted signs on Highway 44 warning motorists to keep their windows closed and not to stop or leave their vehicles. Syntex Corp. was blamed for contamination of Times Beach and 16 other Missouri sites because one of its subsidiaries had bought a plant that had once supplied dioxin-tainted waste oil to a contractor who had sprayed it on the town's streets.

Syntex last year signed a consent decree agreeing to clean up the sites and incinerate 100,000 square yards of contaminated soil.

The estimated cost over the next decade? As much as \$200 million.

My beef? The scare, the evacuation and all the consequent hullabaloo were a mistake.

Dr. Vernon Houk, the center of Disease Control official who had recommended the evacuation, now believes it was unnecessary. He says the scientific theory and methodology that led him and others to

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## GUEST COMMENT

# A list is a list, but take note, address problems

By Jim Gilligan

Lists attract our attention. They enumerate our problems, pleasures and needs. They are a condensed index of things to do, we should have done, and could have done.

Lists are powerful documents. We respond to them quickly, whether it is a shopping list, a Christmas list, a work list, a sports list or a problem list. It must be the simple declarative style of a list that triggers a quick response. I responded quickly when I read the list of "Golf Course Superintendents' 10 Deadly Problems." Then I saw that they were "The Top 10 Sins of Golf Course Maintenance" as seen through the eyes of 12 USGA agronomists.

The list was the result of a survey requested by a group of golf course owners. Observations were tabulated and the results listed according to frequency in the survey. These problems not only were sinful. They were deadly; a fatal combination.

The list implied that superintendents might be responsible for these problems. Golf course maintenance is a career for super-

intendents; it is a matter of job security. Industry leaders who listened to the talk or who read the article may erroneously interpret the tone of the list.

Jim Connolly, USGA agronomist who presented these facts at the Maine Golf Turfgrass Conference and Show, stated that it was not his intention to fault the superintendent but to make the industry aware of the problems. There is no denying these problems exist.

In presenting the list in this column, I changed the order to reflect my views of the importance of each problem. The comments following the category are my thoughts.

Following is the list of ten important problems facing golf course superintendents. The number in parentheses indicates the original ranking.

1. Labor (9). Size alone puts this problem at the top. Labor comprises the largest percentage of golf

course budgets. The human element demands attention. Low wages, few benefits, seasonal employment, poor working conditions, lack of training and scarcity of qualified people contribute to this problem.

Labor needs a strong planning effort equal to or greater than other maintenance programs.

2. Communications and Public Relations (1). To resolve this important issue, communications should begin at the top and set the pace throughout the golf course organization. A positive attitude must be developed in the organization to make it effective. The forms of communication should be kept simple. The quality of writing, speaking and listening must be emphasized.

Public relations can be easy: be courteous to everyone; golfers, staff administrators and sales reps. Community activities are a means of establishing a solid public relations image.

3. Green Speeds (3). An important concern because of its impact on overwatering, pesticide use, equipment and labor. Fast greens

and low-cut fairways perpetuate the problems of maintaining the grass in a constant state of stress. Pressure is exerted from all sides in this question of keeping fast greens. As superintendents, we are not entirely blameless.

4. Overwatering (2). A significant problem that a superintendent may be forced into to preserve the "green" look. The stress of present maintenance standards are a contributing factor to this problem.

Automatic systems left unmonitored overwater; manual systems left in inexperienced hands overwater.

5. Pesticide Use (4). Pesticide misuse is the problem.

Superintendents today are taking a judicious look at their use of pesticides. Using diagnostic tools to identify pests, employing longer application intervals, and carefully selecting the correct pesticide are means superintendents are using to eliminate any misuse of pesticides.

Superintendents understand the complexities of pesticide use and the financial and environmental cost

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Jim Gilligan