

# Golf industry intrigue in the Crescent City?

It seems a good amount of research and development was conducted at this year's Golf Course Superintendents Association of America Show. Unfortunately, it was R&D of the clandestine variety.

Several industry folks have told me they were troubled by the amount of competitive snooping in New Orleans.

Innocent visitors and potential consumers may have been preoccupied with the hail of new products, hurricanes and gumbo. But show security was at an all-time high in 1992, and expect an increased presence in Anaheim next year.

"We had all sorts of people taking pictures of things they shouldn't be taking pictures of," said one interested party, who shall remain nameless. "We even saw people lifting up hoods and taking pictures. It was ridiculous."

Another industry executive said some of his people didn't feel comfortable answering certain questions, for fear they might gift-wrap some key knowledge for the competition. What's next, a ban on all cameras (this is no

joke; it may happen)?

How about airport-style security, complete with infrared scanning — "Good morning sir, could I show you our new product line? Great. All I need is your license, social security number, and shoe size... Okay, now hand me your keys and step through the metal detector..."

But seriously folks, the whole point of a GCSAA show as you know is to display wares for the whole golf industry to see. Thousands of people mill about the floor, stop to look, test where appropriate, and move on.

A good number of exhibitors had security on duty during show hours; but how does one distinguish between a person shopping around and one scheming for that competitive edge?

Many firms hired after-hours security guards to complement the normal night watch, which included a contingent for the convention floor and another for the hallways outside. Colleague Peter Blais spent a frustrating



Hal Phillips  
editor

hour trying to retrieve a briefcase from the *Golf Course News* booth: 30 minutes on the phone with different security forces, and another 30 explaining his story to a particular guard (who kept an eye on Peter as he walked through the great hall).

In a way, I suppose, this intrigue indicates a healthy industry. But competition not only breeds excellence, but contempt, as well.

Had the opportunity to play a pair of fine golf courses in May — one brand-spanking new, the other firmly established. While both tracks provided excellent playing conditions, Mother Nature was not so cooperative.

During the annual American Society of Golf Course Architects meeting on Long Island, attendees played The Atlantic Club, Rees Jones' newest creation. Jones must have known his cohorts were coming because the pins were in championship spots all the way around.

The course was a challenging joy to play; deftly carved from rolling (sometimes sharply!) farmland in the Hamptons. But the day we played, a shifting 30-mph wind blew throughout. With the gale in our faces for 15 of the 18 holes, my playing partners — Tom Johnson, Bill Love, Roger Rulewich — and I felt like a school of salmon looking for a place to spawn.

Later that week I traveled to Minnesota for 18 at Hazeltine National, one year removed from its second U.S. Open stint but still in magnificent fettle. My hosts — superintendent Patty Knaggs and pro Mike Schultz — couldn't have been more accommodating. However, they overdid it on the weather. Two days removed from a raw, windy day in the Hamptons didn't prepare me for 80-degree temperatures in Minnesota.

Mind you, this was early May in the nation's coldest urban area!

Well, better to have played Hazeltine and perspired profusely than never to have played at all.

## COMMENTARY

# All actions have an effect — sometimes deadly

Everything, without exception, has an "afterwards."

Sometimes that "afterwards" is likable, laughable, fun. Sometimes it is dangerous, poisonous, deadly.

The Environmental Protection Agency has released its National Home and Garden Pesticide Use Survey, a "one-time snapshot" of the non-agricultural use of pesticides in and around urban and rural homes in the U.S. It reeks of the dangerous-poisonously-deadly variety of "afterwards."

Among the findings:

- Of the American households that dispose of concentrated pesticides, 67 percent used the regular trash, 16 percent used special collections, and 17 percent either gave it away, poured

it down the sink or toilet, on the street, in the gutter or sewer or on the ground.

- Of those disposing of leftover diluted pesticides mixed from concentrates, 36 percent poured the mixture down the toilet, 29 percent use the regular trash and 35 percent either burned it, gave it away, poured on the ground, in the gutter or sewer, or sprayed it elsewhere.

- In households with children under 5 years old, 47 percent stored at least one pesticide within reach of children.

- An estimated 85 percent of all households have at least one pesti-



Mark Leslie  
managing editor

cide in storage in and around the home; most families have between one and five pesticide products stored; and 27 percent of single-family households have more than six.

The well-educated, certified and licensed pesticide applicators in the golf industry are far different from their neighbors — right? A superintendent out on the golf course has rigid rules by which he and his crew handle chemicals.

Hopefully, they do the same at home.

I have to plead guilty to misuse in

disposal. It was the "I'm only one person; what harm can it do?" syndrome. It won't happen again.

I knew dumping old engine oil was not a brilliant idea. It was convenient.

Now people aren't stupid. But they lean toward convenience.

Our entire society needs a major attitude readjustment.

Here's the bottom line: The Golden Rule applies to all areas of life, including how we deal with the environment. Let's do unto the earth as we would have others do unto us: Be kind to it. (And let's fill the neighbors in on this attitude as well.)

Because, for every action there is an effect.

## GUEST COMMENT

# Many improvements necessary in the industry

By Eliot Roberts

Amazing progress in turfgrass research and cultural practices mark the last 40 years, but the green industry must be alert to government regulations and remain an active force in the years ahead. Here are some observations from my perch at The Lawn Institute.

- Select a few of the better varieties of turfgrass with broader adaptability. In the past 40 years, great improvements

have been made in turfgrasses. Starting with Merion Kentucky bluegrass, more disease and insect resistance have been incorporated as well as better stress tolerance and vigor to compete with weeds. Now, some 300 new varieties are available and there are more to come. That would seem close to market saturation.

- Modify the National Variety Trials testing. Standard methods of evaluation help provide a reliable assessment of performance under widely varying soil and climatic conditions. Thus, one variety may look excellent in one location, good in another and poor in a third. This provides some lead concerning areas of adaptation and thus market potential. When data



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from all trial locations are averaged together, much of the variation from one location to another is lost. On this basis, conclusions on which variety is best may be misleading.

- Improve the practical understanding of soil-turfgrass relationships, which are the key to development of cultural practices for production and maintenance of high-quality turf. The genetic diversity of grasses is great and the variability of the soil system, square foot by square foot, is tremendous. Combine with this, ever-changing climatic conditions, temperature and moisture, and we have perhaps the ultimate in variable growing conditions. Without this understanding, the professionalism of turfgrass management is lost.

- Improve education concerning microbiology and biochemistry, which are key to understanding the living nature of all root zones. We seldom grow grass in hydroponics. The biological nature of these latter root zones is limited and at times becomes pathogenic. In more natural or moderately amended soils, biological systems are active in formatting humic acids and humus in the presence of fibrous root systems of grass plants. These microbiological and biochemical processes are important also in purifying water and degrading all sorts of pollutants that wash down into the root zone.

- More emphasis will be placed on "organic" turf management during the years ahead because biologically active soils are rich and productive. With increasing public concern for environmental contamination with all sorts

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