

Ask not what the golf industry can do for you...

By DR. MICHAEL HURDZAN

When JFK spoke of "No higher service than service to your fellow man," thousands upon thousands of young people came forward to serve in the Peace Corps. They went to far corners of the world with crash-course language skills and abbreviated introductions to their host country. They went not for a fat paycheck but for a chance and a conviction to better the lives of people they met in some small way. They measured success by improving a village water supply, building a rudimentary school, or teaching the basics of hygiene and sanitation.

It was difficult to be separated from loved ones for that period of service — a time usually marked by deprivation, isolation and physical hardship. But it was also a time of personal growth, independence, and fulfillment that yielded a lifetime memory of sharing and giving for a nobler cause.

Although never in the Peace Corps, I have had the privilege to be one of golf's small missionaries to other less-developed countries. In particular, I have been struck by the incredible opportunities for golf in eastern European countries such as the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic, Hungary and Poland, as well as Mexico and many Caribbean islands.

These countries are prime for golf to be introduced and developed into a national pastime as it is in Scotland and Ireland. The possibilities for growth are staggering and as each new nation embraces golf, it moves one step closer to a universal game.

It is a chance to start as a game of the people — not just idle recreation for rich tourists. Golf must be introduced as the healthy, outdoor, family activity that it is — one that can be played from the cradle to the grave, at a modest cost. The emphasis should be on availability, not exclusivity.

Golf in these emerging countries must offer the entire spectrum of experiences ranging from trendy expensive resorts that attract wealthy foreign visitors down to barebones facilities reminiscent of the cow pasture golf courses of the 1940s and 1950s in America.

In some instances, we are talking about nations that can count the number of golf courses in their entire country on one hand. People who don't know a golf club from a polo mallet. People who think "getting a grip" is coming to terms with your emotions. This is

virgin territory. A place where anyone who can spell golf is considered an expert. This is America in 1887 — one year before the Apple Tree Gang played golf in a Yonkers apple orchard and forever changed the American culture. An awesome thought, isn't it? So let's make a connection. Let us take JFK's Peace Corps concept and marry it to golf. A Peace Corps of golf.



Dr. Michael Hurdzan

Why not take this country's over-flowing pool of golf knowledge and expertise and share it with folks who have none? Why can't just average golfers, with a sense of self-sacrifice and commitment, go out as invited guests to teach the basics of golf, build rudimentary golf courses of three, six, nine or 18 holes, and introduce a game of a lifetime, capable of

overcoming poverty, poor education and hardship? Why not use role models like Lee Trevino, Chi-Chi Rodriguez, and Seve Ballesteros to show what golf can do?

Of course, there is no reason why this can't be done except for an organizer. A figurehead like JFK who would use his personal power, magnetism and influence to initiate this program. A person like Karsten, Arnold, Jack, Mark or Deane. But with a pure interest to simply make golf grow. No deals, no franchises, no exclusives. Just benevolent

giving in the name of a greater good, which has so enriched their personal lives. I personally would be honored to serve in an organizing committee, as would many of you.

In this country and Great Britain, thousands upon thousands of individuals connected with golf have enormous resources of knowledge and would gladly share it with others if there were a vehicle to do it. Young and old golf pros, superintendents, directors of golf, architects, builders, managers, and just

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Leslie comment: The Sierra agenda

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susceptible to chemical leaching than fairways or roughs because beneath that thin layer of turf is a base of 70 to 90 percent sand. Chemicals sometimes leach through sand, especially after heavy rainfalls. If those chemicals eventually migrate into, say, a stream filled with brook trout, which have a low tolerance for pollution, the fish may die."

Should have made that call to Dr. Cohen, friend.

And you might like to know that the "success stories" of

developers and superintendents who respond to environmental concerns can be summed up neatly in one paragraph near the end of the article. The winners? David Stone at the Honors Course in Ooltewah, Tenn.; Tom Cassat at Pine Ridge Golf Course in Towson, Md. (sorry, Tom, we know you're actually in Lutherville, but who's counting mistakes?); and Eagle's Landing near Ocean City, Md.

You'll get more out of this week's *National Enquirer* than *Sierra*. Hey, at least everyone

knows better than to believe what you read in the *Enquirer* — though probably more of it is truth. And the *Enquirer* editors and writers must be much less uptight — what with not having to save the snail darter from cruel mankind.

Some day an unbiased article may appear in *Sierra*. Until then, they are preaching to a choir of happily misinformed-and-wanna-stay-that-way folks.

As for me, I'm going to watch who I share my innermost silences with. Bruce, you're forgiven even if you don't ask. That's my duty.

Hurdzan comment

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plain golfers who would be willing to staff a Peace Corps of Golf. Willing to travel to a land or region without golf — be it eastern Europe, Mexico, South America, or an American Indian reservation to establish golf.

I am not so naive as to think that this would be a simple undertaking. But with cooperation of the U.S. ambassador corps and personal invitations from host nations, the big guys in

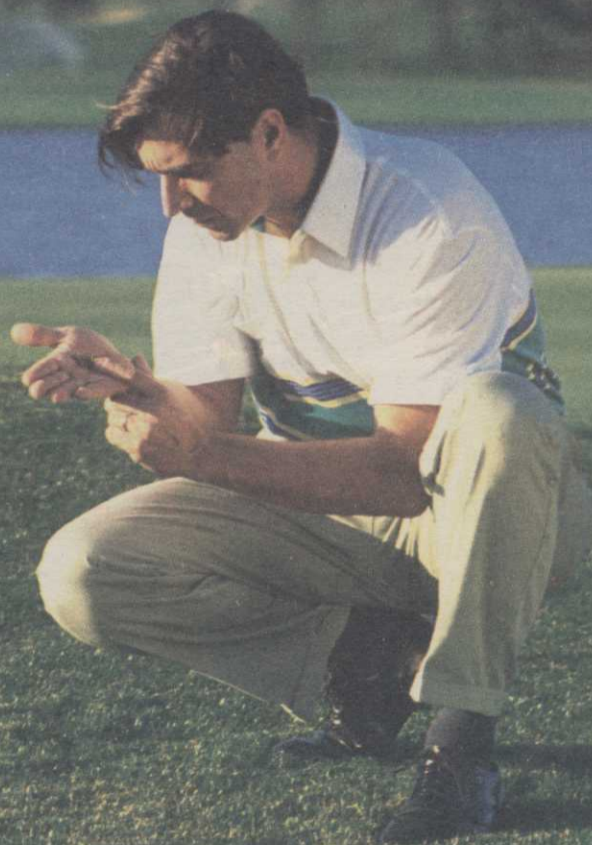
golf could make it happen.

What is the long-range incentive for each of us beyond personal fulfillment? First, there is a financial incentive that if golf becomes a national pastime it opens up new markets for professional expertise and equipment.

Second, it enhances the possibility of a world tour. Third, it would foster peace between nations. It would make golf a universal sport and not the idle, rich, white man's game it is perceived to be now. Golf would have little opposition to becoming an Olympic event.

And lastly, many of us would have a lifetime memory of sharing and giving to a nobler cause ... a game we love called golf.

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CIRCLE #106

Public Golf '93

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assembled a blockbuster program that will more than interest you — it will help you make money.

Public Golf '93 is scheduled for Nov. 14-17, at Wild Dunes in Charleston, S.C. Yes, there will be a tournament held at the Tom Fazio design on the 14th. Not just any tournament, mind you — the first annual Editors' Tourney, where *Golf Course News* editors Mark Leslie, Peter Blais and myself will display the form that earned us three places in the nation's Top 10 People You Don't Want In Your Scramble.

In any case, we think Public Golf '93 will be worth your while. For more information, contact the Golf Course News Conference Group at 207-846-0600.

AGC spinoff

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able for purchase on attractive terms.

"Further, management believes that a substantial number of these courses are managed by *ad hoc* organizations of golf professionals and property managers that lack the expertise and centralized management capability to operate, market and maintain such courses efficiently.

"The Company believes that by acquiring such golf courses and installing experienced golf course managers and management systems, its revenue and income from acquisitions can increase."

Apparently, investors agree. The 9.7 million shares of common stock hit the New York Stock exchange Aug. 10, selling at \$20.375 per share. Two weeks later, it closed at \$20.625, a 1/4-point jump.

NGP is very happy with the reception investors have given its initial public stock offering, according to a company official.

"It's gone very well," said Executive Vice President and CEO Ed Sause. "The underwriters are very happy. It was well priced and successfully marketed."