

GOLF COURSE NEWS

THE NEWSPAPER FOR THE GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY

A UNITED PUBLICATION
VOLUME 6, NUMBER 2
FEBRUARY 1995 • \$4.50

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Supers combat stress, burnout

Poor delegation skills a cause

By J. BARRY MOTHE

SAN FRANCISCO — A failure to delegate work and soaring expectations are the leading causes of stress among golf course superintendents, according to a psychologist who has worked closely with the subject for several years.

"Golf course superintendents tend to be perfectionists and think, 'If I don't do it, it won't be right,'" said Dr. Bree Hayes, who has led stress management seminars for the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA). Hayes will lead another such seminar during the GCSAA Show and

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Survey says: Architects don't agree on very much

By MARK LESLIE

The diversity of golf course architects is matched only by their opinions on such topics as the availability of financing, designing courses with less irrigated acreage, and whether "minimalism" has returned to design.

In an exclusive *Golf Course News* survey of the country's 200-odd architects, respondents shared some up-close insights into a world that spans irrigation technology, corporate finance and turfgrass research.

The most disparate answers came from the questions on minimalism, whether money spent to build courses is declining, and whether clients are finding it easier to get fi-

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GOLDEN GATES BECKON SUPERINTENDENTS

Comprehensive GCSAA Show section with schedules, tourney preview, awards and things to do in S.F. See p. 19

195 Show Me!



The San Francisco skyline seen through the suspension cables on the Golden Gate Bridge, while a cable car (top left) travels down Grant Street through Chinatown.

1994 Openings	9	18	Totals	
Daily Fee	91	89	180	New Facilities
Municipal	9	22	31	
Private	3	18	21	
Daily Fee	94	9	103	Expansions
Municipal	18	3	21	
Private	22	3	25	
Grand Total	237	144	381	

NGF REPORTS RECORD YEAR

Preliminary figures from the National Golf Foundation show that 1994 was another big year for golf course openings — another record-setter, in fact. For more facts and figures, see page 3.

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New Congress might result in mixed golf bag

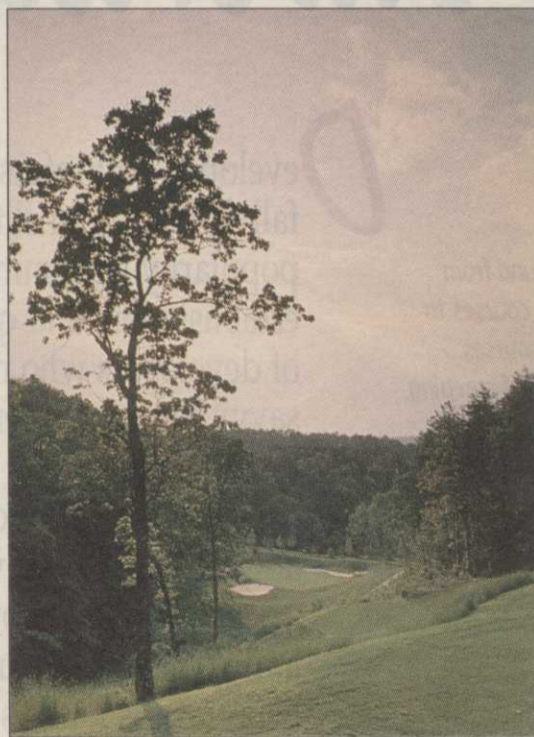
By PETER BLAIS

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The swing to a more conservative, Republican-controlled Congress is good news for the golf industry but could lead the Clinton Administration to employ regulatory agencies to institute more liberal policies, according to industry representatives.

"The new Congress will impact golf clubs for the better," said Elizabeth Kirby-Hart, vice president of legal and government relations for the National Club Association. "The laws and regulations we'll be looking at should be far less onerous than before."

Added Kathy Driggs of the Club Managers Asso-

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CLUTE NAMED BUILDER OF THE YEAR

Paul Clute and Associates, which built Tom Fazio's award-winning Old Overton Club in Vestavia Hills, Ala., has been named the Golf Course News Builder of the Year. For this story and others, including GCN's Best Maintained Course on the PGA Tour, as voted by the players, see page 71.

As distribution shrinks, firms go factory-direct

By HAL PHILLIPS

An increasing number of industry firms are marketing their products directly to golf courses, as the spectrum of distribution lines continues to narrow. Industry observers agree that, as the golf market continues to mature, more and more companies will abandon traditional lines of distribution for the factory-direct approach.

The service-oriented, two-step nature of golf purchasing will never disappear: "You don't just get a Toro Greensmower

in a crate," said Chuck Champion, general sales manager of Overland Park, Kan.-based Kalo, Inc., a manufacturer of wetting agents. "You will always need that relationship with the distributor."

However, manufacturers of chemical and fertilizer products, which don't necessarily require that level of service, are beginning to take the factory-direct route which emphasizes price above all else.

"Magnesium is magnesium is magne-

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Burnout! Delegating authority one of the stress-relievers for supers

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Conference here later this month.

"Superintendents are not very good at delegating," she continued. "These people tend to be fairly organized and orderly and have a keen sense of aesthetics and how things are supposed to be. Those kinds of people don't trust other people's opinions."

Hayes and several golf course superintendents interviewed say the potential

for unhealthy levels of stress has never been higher for golf course superintendents, who are frequently mentioned in surveys of the most stressful jobs.

Unpredictable weather, increasing environmental and labor regulations, and shrinking maintenance budgets push superintendents to 70- and 80-hour work weeks and beyond. That can lead to emotional, psychological and physical illnesses. It can also take its toll on personal and

family lives off the golf course.

"I've definitely seen some divorces," said Tim Hiers, a superintendent at Collier's Reserve, a private 18-hole course in Naples, Fla. "And plenty of burnout."

Hayes, who has led several stress management seminars at regional golf course superintendent's association meetings, concurred.

"Golf course superintendents are perfect candidates to get distressed," she said.

"Everything's changing in their field all the time. One of the major causes of stress in anyone's life is a great deal of responsibility and little control. Often the control for golf course superintendents is taken right out of their hands by a board of directors or a green committee."

The encouraging news for superintendents is that, while stress levels are increasing, so are the chances to get help.

Hayes, for example, worked

with the GCSAA to develop an innovative correspondence course. Superintendents can take the course for credits, and, hopefully, for a calmer mind and soul.

GCSAA figures show 83 golf course superintendents are taking the course, which was launched in 1993. The program tries to help superintendents understand the differences between good and bad stress, and to assess their personal stress level. It also has exercises to help manage their feelings.

Stress management seminars have become almost a standard offering at regional and national superintendent's conferences, right there with effluent and practical tree management.

"We have traditionally provided a lot of technical training to our members, but we recognize there's a lot more to their lives than the management of turfgrass," said Steve Mona, chief executive officer of the GCSAA. "We're trying to help our members deal with all the different components of a complex job. Dealing with stress is a big part of that."

Chip Fowkes, the superintendent at the 18-hole, public-access Emerald Dunes in Palm Beach, Fla., said it took him a few years to get a better grip on managing his stress.

"I have a family and I have to realize that they're the center of my life," said Fowkes. "It's important for me to be able to go home and spend time with my wife and daughter and not be a time bomb."

Fowkes has worked outside hobbies into his week, like martial arts, riding his motorcycle and surfing. He said he's also become a better manager by learning to delegate.

"I try to have two guys working under me as assistants at all times that are essentially superintendents in training," he said. "That enables me to go away for a weekend once in a while. You can't be an island. If you can't be away for a day from your course, under normal conditions, then I think you need to look at the reasons why and try to fix that."

Not all stress is automatically bad, said Hayes. She breaks stress into two simple categories — bad (distress) and good (eustress) — in line with the principles of Hans Selye, a stress management guru.

"Certain kinds of stress are very important to us," said Hayes. "It's motivating. If we didn't have deadlines and needs for change we wouldn't do anything. But too much stress is distress, and that has the opposite effect. It's paralyzing and potentially very unhealthy."

Continued on next page

GOLF COURSE NEWS



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Many, varied factors increase stress

Continued from previous page

Bad stress has been proven to affect a person's health, whether it causes anxiety, depression and other emotional disorders; or heart problems, digestive disorders and even, eventually, some forms of cancer.

Looking ahead, superintendents like Fowkes indicate they think people's expectations about golf course conditions — whether they're average golfers or more involved green committee members or club officers — must be scaled back. Picture-perfect conditions and lightning-fast greens on

national TV every week have helped create the idea that every golf course should be that way, without explaining the cost and time involved, said Fowkes.

"We need to be more practical about golf course conditions," he said. "I think the expectations will change because those expectations are why the costs are going up for green fees and assessments. People are going to get tired of paying a lot of money just to see a lot of [cross-mowing] stripes."

Mona said he thinks the current GCSAA-created television show "Par for the Course," now airing on ESPN,

'Maybe through the television exposure people will begin to understand that a golf course doesn't magically stay in championship conditions.'

— Steve Mona
GCSAA executive director



and 40 or more "infomercials" to air during PGA tour events on ESPN, will provide an excellent forum to educate the public about golf course maintenance and superintendents work. Hopefully, this will help reduce unnecessary pressures.

"Maybe through the television exposure," Mona said, "people will begin to understand that a golf course doesn't magically stay in championship conditions."

That alone would be a healthy place to start, for everyone.

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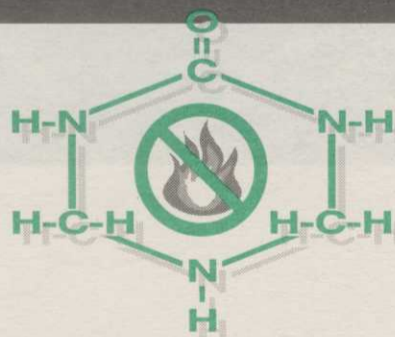
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