

Relationships the key to cordial relations

“Watershed” may be a bit dramatic, but under the circumstances it’s a doubly appropriate description of January’s Environmental Summit, where representatives of the golf and environmental communities for the first time discussed their differences face to face.

Whereas in January’s *Golf Course News* we presented a golf-centric view of the Summit — through the eyes of attendees like architect Dr. Michael Hurdzan — we concentrated this month on perspectives emanating from the National Wildlife Federation (NWF), Friends of the Earth and Save the Bay, organizations which sent representatives to the Pebble Beach conference. I’m confident their views will interest you (see story, page 3).

Relationships were the most important ramifications of the recent Summit. Friends of the Earth, for example, should no longer evoke images of tie-dyed radicals strapping themselves to centenarian oaks. Instead, those who attended the conference will think of Courtney Cuff, a “friend” of the earth who happened to play golf for Wake Forest and is eager to further understandings reached on the Monterey Peninsula.

On the flip side, environmentalists on hand for the Summit can no longer honestly consider golf course superintendents as chemical dumpers obsessed with maintaining pristine conditions to the exclusion of natural habitats. Instead, they see Tim Hiers, the superintendent at Collier’s Reserve, a man clearly passionate about native plantings, recycling and ecosystem preservation.

“The environmental groups were very receptive to hearing about the positive aspects of golf and its relation to the environment,”



Hal Phillips,
editor

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Hugging the learning curve?

Are government agencies and environmental groups wising up?

We have good signs and bad. I feel like New England Patriots cornerback Maurice Hurst after a disastrous season opener last fall (1994) against Dan Marino and the Miami Dolphins. “First, [you ask] when will you stop it?” he said. “Then it’s can you stop it? Then it’s when is it gonna stop!”

Good ... bad ... good ... bad. Like a tennis game, you could get whiplash keeping score.

The good: At January’s Environmental Summit at Pebble Beach, the co-sponsoring National Wildlife Federation and a number of colleagues from such groups as the Sierra Club, Environmental Defense Fund, National Audubon Society and Friends of the Earth held positive discussions with representatives of the golf world.

The bad: Only weeks before, the National Wildlife Federation’s *Ranger Rick* magazine ran a feature story entitled “Rick and the Gang Visit a Beautiful Golf Course — and Find That Looks Can Fool You.”

The good: The Scottsdale, Ariz., Planning Commission has endorsed Pinnacle Peak Partners’ planned The Estancia golf community, which will include 340 acres of natural preserve.

The bad: A reporter for none other than the *New York Times*, writing about golf development in Asia, quoted Sreela Kolandai of Friends of the Earth Malaysia and a founder of the Global Anti-Golf Movement as saying: “Golf has become a serious environmental threat all across Asia. I call [golf



Mark Leslie,
managing editor

Continued on opposite page

Letters

TAKING ISSUE WITH INTOLERANCE

To the editor:

In regards to the article in the February 1995 *Golf Course News*, “New Congress might result in mixed golf bag,” I found a number of troubling quotes about the new Congress being “good news for the golf course industry.”

Ms. Elizabeth Kirby-Hart quotes, “The new Congress will impact golf clubs for the better” and says “the laws and regulations we’ll be looking at should be far less onerous than before.” She goes on to cite the potentially damaging law under consideration by Congress to afford the same rights to gay Americans that is afforded the rest of society in the Employment Non-Discrimination Act of 1994. This law would amend the Federal civil rights law to protect individuals from discrimination based on sexual orientation.

How being discriminatory toward one group of Americans in employment status will be better for golf clubs is a disturbing and puzzling statement. Webster’s New World Dictionary describes “onerous” as oppressive. I believe, that in this society, there is nothing more oppressive than discrimination against an individual or group based solely on race, creed, sex or sexual orientation.

Truly good news for the golf industry will come when people such as Ms. Kirby-Hart open their minds and broaden their horizons to include, not exclude, Americans with different ideas

MORE LETTERS, SEE OPPOSITE PAGE

and lifestyles than their own. Can’t we all get along!

Thomas M. Morris,
superintendent
Berkshire Hills CC
Pittsfield, Mass.

Ed. Hear, hear.

THANKS FOR RATING COVERAGE

To the editor:

My sincere appreciation to you for taking the time and space to discuss the subject of course ratings [*GCN* January, p. 1]. While the furor has subsided stemming from the demeaning comments Colonial Charters GC received in the 1994 *Places to Play* guide, we are awaiting the 1995 edition [November] to see how well *Golf Digest* “reviewed the methodology and looked at ways of refining the final product.”

Thanks again for the attention dedicated to this subject.

Richard Staughton,
superintendent
Colonial Charters GC,
Longs, S.C.

AIRING NEW IDEAS ON RUNOFF REDUCTION

To the editor:

Nice job with Skip Wade’s Cherry Valley article under Super Focus in the January issue.

On Feb. 4, I was invited to speak at Citizen’s Summit ’95 held at SUNY Maritime College in New York City (in the middle of the blizzard!). The conference was sponsored by the National Audubon Society and the Long Island Sound Watershed Alliance. The topic I was asked to speak on was “Reducing Polluted Runoff from Golf Courses.”

My presentation focused on the specialized cultural practices we

do for soil modification and improvement. These techniques include new deep aerification methods and thatch control. The net result of those IPM strategies are:

1. Loosen the soil profile, thereby reducing runoff.
2. Improve the soil microbiology for sustainable plant life.
3. Create a healthier turf and thereby reduce reliance on chemicals, fertilizers and water.

The presentation was well received. Hopefully, some of the “bad press” of the past was countered by a better understanding of what we do.

Patrick Lucas, CGCS
The Innis Arden Golf Club
Old Greenwich, Conn.

REMEMBER TO COUNT HUMANS AMONG EARTH’S SPECIES

To the editor:

In regard to the article (*GCN*, January) concerning the ecosystem research proposal being supported by Jim Snow, USGA, along with the Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, National Wildlife Federation, Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation, and several other organizations and government agencies, I think this is a very positive move on behalf of all these individuals. It is this reader’s opinion and belief, while the environmentalists have the obligation and right to be concerned about environmental matters, we must not lose sight of all the earth’s species. Mankind and his environment is the most important! Our cities are growing at a rapid rate. We stack people into 20-story apartment buildings to live.

If not for parks and golf courses, most people would not have the chance to get out into

the open to enjoy grass, trees, birds and such. Golf courses create jobs and help or generally support themselves.

It has been our experience with working with DNR, Corps of Engineers and PCA, that while they have laws and rules to uphold, they still do what is best for all. The Green Section working with these governmental agencies should be able to make for a better environment.

Michael J. Pierce, president
Dakota Peat & Blenders
Grand Forks, N.D.

PATE SETS RECORD STRAIGHT

To the editor:

I am writing regarding your February issue discussing Paul Clute being named Builder of the Year. In the clip on the front page of this issue, you made reference to the award-winning Old Overton Golf Club in Vestavia Hills, Ala.

This course was indeed designed by Tom Fazio. However, this was a collaborative effort with Jerry Pate, who now has his own design firm, and should have been listed as a co-designer.

Jerry’s involvement in the project was extensive. During construction, Jerry lived in Birmingham, and with Fazio’s approval he re-routed the back nine. He was also responsible for many bunker locations and playing strategies of the holes.

Congratulations are in order to Paul Clute being named Builder of the Year and Tom Fazio for his contributions to make Old Overton such a success. However, Jerry Pate should also be given the credit he is due.

Scott Pate, vice president
Jerry Pate Golf Design Inc.
Pensacola, Fla.

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Firms donate to Delhi College

DELHI, N.Y. — The State University College of Technology at Delhi's approach to preparing students for careers as golf superintendents is drawing industry support from around the country.

• Buckner/Hunter of Fresno, Calif., donated a COPS Genesis computerized irrigation system and all its components; Lofts Seed Co. of Bound Brook, N.J., contributed all the seed for greens and mounding; Dakota Peat and Blenders of

Grand Forks, N.D., agreed to offer greens blending and mixes at significantly reduced prices; AgriTurf Inc. of Hatfield, Mass., and Seed Research Inc. committed seed to cover all tees and some fairways; Hancor of Waverly, N.Y. donated 2,000 feet of drainage piping and systems and will provide the remaining 9,000 feet at reduced cost; and Commercial Pump of Swanton, Ohio, made provisions to supply a pump station at cost.

Phillips comment

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reports attendee Phil Arnold, executive director of the Golf Course Builders Association of America.

"They sent us a lot of receptive signals that they're interested in finding out more. They were surprised and encouraged by what golf has already done in regards to being an environmentally sound activity.

"The education and so forth have to start somewhere — and the best place is at the top. If we can persuade and educate the

leaders of as many environmental organizations as possible, it will trickle down. If some guy gets an article across his desk some day that's inflammatory about golf, he might say, 'This is not really the story on golf.' "

The first Environmental Summit was a great first step. But let's remember it was simply that: A first step.

Further, assembling a group of people to represent the entire golf industry — or the entire environmental movement — is next to impossible, notes Paul Parker of the Center for Resource Management, the orga-

nization that facilitated the meeting. In other words, not everyone walks in lockstep with Courtney Cuff and Tim Hiers.

There will be plenty of disputes down the road. The Sierra Club is a long way from buying a corporate tent at the U.S. Open.

However, progress — slow though it may be — is being made.

•••

Two quick things before I forget:

First, get your hands on the most recent U.S. Golf Association (USGA) Green Section *Record*. The January/February issue reports on every USGA research project now underway. It's a wealth of information. Call Jim Snow or Dr. Kimberly Erusha for subscription information (908-234-2300).

Second, there's a small story on page 4 this month detailing the election of new officers at the National Golf Foundation (NGF). Go read it. I'll wait...

Look at the diversity of the new NGF board! A club management guy (ClubCorp's Robert Johnson) will soon ascend to the chair and sources tell me an individual facility operator won't be too far behind.

If this keeps up, critics will be loath to peg the NGF as strictly a manufacturers trade association.

Steward winners

Continued from previous page

Golf & Country Club (private), Downsview, Ontario.

•••

Finally, merit winners may be named on the quality of entries competition within regions and other criteria. This year, 15 entries from the U.S. and one from Canada were named as merit winners:

Daniel P. Higgins, Winchester Country Club, Winchester, Mass.; Kevin Pryseski, CGCS, Cattail Creek Country Club, Glenwood, Md.; Frank A. Rendulic, CGCS, Kittyhawk Golf Center, Dayton, Ohio; Gregg Rosenthal, Little Bennett Golf Course, Clarksburg, Md.; John R. Johnson III, Arrowhead Golf Course, Mebane, N.C.; David S. Downing II, CGCS, Wild Wing Plantation, Myrtle Beach, S.C.; John FitzGibbons, Meadows Golf Club, Littleton, Colo.; Terry Concannon, CGCS, Heritage Park Golf Course, Olathe, Kan.; Michael V. Giuffre, Tournament Players Club of Michigan, Dearborn, Mich.; Randall L. Staton, CGCS, The Hawthorns Golf & Country Club, Fishers, Ind.; Tim Johnson, Glen Oaks Country Club, West Des Moines, Iowa; James A. Johnson, CGCS, Rail Golf Club, Springfield, Ill.; Paul Ellwood, Club Terravita Golf Course, Scottsdale, Ariz.; Ross J. O'Fee, The Springs Club, Rancho Mirage, Calif.; Thomas E. McDonald, Gold Canyon Resort, Apache Junction, Ariz.; and Paul Seenna, Burlington Golf & Country Club, Burlington, Ontario.

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