

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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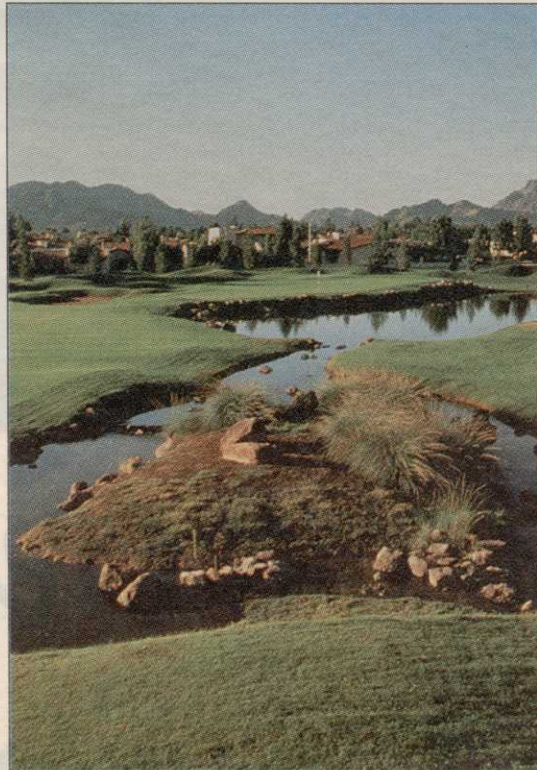
By PETER BLAIS

A proposed bill designed to stop employers from misclassifying independent contractors could affect golf course workers.

"There are a couple East Coast clubs that could be forced to make million-dollar settlements depending how this works out," said Elizabeth Kirby-Hart, vice president of legal and government relations for the National Club Association.

Caddies, golf and tennis pros are the most likely to be affected, although any change could also impact grounds crews and course construction workers, according to representatives from those areas.

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B.A. IN RESORT MANAGEMENT?

Stonecreek Golf Club in Scottsdale, Ariz., is one of several courses operated by Phoenix-based Resort Management of America, which specializes in the management of collegiate courses, including Karsten GC at Arizona State and University Ridge at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. For story, see page 55.

Mitigation banking develops eco-niche

By MARK LESLIE

The battle cry "No net loss" has led to major strides in reclaiming the nation's lost wetlands, and to a new era of "mitigation banking."

While a federal inter-agency task force drafts formal mitigation bank criteria, state and local governments as well as some entrepreneurs and at least one environmental group are forging ahead in this pioneering arena.

In today's world of construction, a developer must follow a set sequence of actions when wetlands exist on their property. The preferred course of action is avoiding wetlands altogether. Minimization fol-

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The colorful 12th tee on the Bay Course at Kapalua Plantation, on island of Maui. Kapalua's three courses—the Bay, Plantation and Village layouts—are only on aspect of the resort's comprehensive environmental approach.

Kapalua pioneers resort-wide Audubon Sanctuary program

By MARK LESLIE

MAUI, Hawaii — New York Audubon Society and Kapalua Resort officials are collaborating on a new program that would be an environmental equivalent to Mobil's 5-star designation for hotels.

"We're looking to create a model of international significance for destination resorts ... as well as establish Kapalua as a launching pad for The Audubon Heritage Program," said Ron Dodson, New York Audubon president. "To ultimately reach our environmental goals, we must demonstrate that the environment and economy are interconnected—that good business decisions and good environmental decisions are permanently linked, both locally and globally."

New York Audubon has been expanding its pres-

Continued on page 70



Bruce Florine

NGF offers membership discounting

By HAL PHILLIPS

JUPITER, Fla. — By entering an agreement with Thor Guard, whereby National Golf Foundation (NGF) members will receive a 10-percent discount on the Miami-based firm's lightning prediction system, the NGF has ushered in a new era of relations with its membership.

"I don't know if it's a departure, to be honest," said Bruce Florine, the NGF's vice president of marketing. "I don't necessarily think it's an endorsement as much as a member privilege. If any firm came to us and offered our members a discount, we'd jump at the chance."

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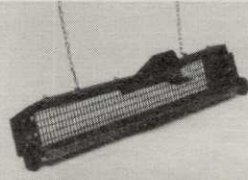
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NGF/Thor Guard

Continued from page 1

"If there's a way we can provide our membership more value, we'll do it. If that's a departure from the way NGF has conducted its business in the past, then it is a departure."

It could be argued that NGF has always provided discounts to members on NGF-derived market reports. In addition, the foundation has for several years offered members life insurance coverage through FAI Insurance, Inc. of Florham Park, N.J.

However, never has the NGF arranged for member companies to provide discounts for member facilities.

Under this new program the NGF — a non-profit organization charged with fostering the overall growth and vitality of golf — will also establish itself as a clearinghouse for lightning-related information and literature for its 4,000 member golf facilities.

Virtually all segments of the golf industry are represented among the NGF's 6,000 members: manufacturers, distributors, retailers; course facilities, designers, and builders; trade media and most of the game's national associations.

While only one manufacturer of lightning prediction systems, Thor Guard, is counted among the NGF membership, Florine maintained the NGF is not endorsing Thor Guard or its product line.

"It's an affinity program," he explained. "Let's say MCI was the official telecommunications company of the NGF. They would provide a discount to our members and we would promote MCI through our efforts, like providing them our list of members and allowing MCI to call on them."

"In fact, we're having conversations with various telecommunications companies," said Joseph Beditz, president and chief executive officer of NGF. "If we can create some mutually beneficial scenario between members and an outside company, then it's win-win. And our members have told us that's what they want."

"Like most trade associations, we face real challenges about finding and retaining members. We need to be sure that we aren't lost in the wash; that we're there with value that facilities and companies can receive for their [NGF] membership."

Florine is familiar with the applications of licensing and affinity, having come to the NGF from the PGA of America, which has member discount programs with Mastercard and Oldsmobile, among others.

"You can do it with rental cars, phone services or lightning predictors," Florine said. "One of the most popular methods recently has been credit cards — getting their logos on a credit card. Waiving the initial fee. Affinity programs are a way by which associations provide added value to their members."

"What you're going to see is quite a few more of these relationships. In our effort to provide more membership value, we will be structuring more partnerships."

Florine said the Thor Guard program is a sign of things to come at NGF. Other firms are "informally" discussing similar discount programs with the NGF, he said.

Beditz noted that the NGF has a dual role with regard to the industry and its members.

"It's important to delineate that we are not just a foundation but an association, as well," he said. "We are a 501c6, basically a trade association. But we're also a 501c3, which is a foundation."

"Certainly, our members are important to us. They provide us the majority of our revenue base. We couldn't do many of the things for the entire game of golf without the support of those members."

"What we're interested in, essentially, is making sure we have solid member-

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Inside Info

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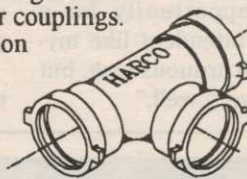
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NGF/Thor Guard

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ship benefits. And we think aggressive pricing for our facility members is a good thing. Not unlike what the NGCOA [National Golf Course Owners Association] is doing for its members."

Indeed, the NGCOA has aggressively sought membership discounts through a national account system, recently renamed the Smart Buy Program. So far, NGCOA members receive discounts on Yamaha golf cars, seed product from Pickseed, credit card services through Nabanco, long distance service from AT&T, legal resources through Dallas-based Page & Addison P.C., printed materials — mainly scorecards — through Massachusetts-based On In Two Publications, and insurance through CNA.

Added Florine: "We'd love to have a dozen, member-benefit programs similar to the Thor Guard arrangement because not everyone might be able to take advantage or afford a lightning prediction system. It's good business and added value to a charter member [Thor Guard]. It's a benefit they are providing to fellow NGF members.

"If a lightning prediction firm came to me tomorrow and wanted to do what Thor Guard is doing, I couldn't be happier. That's what we want to do for our members. If we are able to effectively save one of our members at the facility level \$600 for leasing the Thor Guard system, they have basically earned back their membership dues, and then some."