**BUSMAN'S HOLIDAY**

A number of golfing superintendents tried their hands at the new Desert Pines Golf Club while visiting Las Vegas. The time was perfect: Desert Pines opened its Perry Dye-designed 18-hole course and state-of-the-art practice range in early February.

McLaughlin Group panelists clash over golf course benefits

By PETER BLAIS

LAS VEGAS — While generally agreeing golf courses and nature can co-exist, panelists from television's The McLaughlin Group and an Arizona real-estate developer disagreed on how environmentally friendly the golf industry has actually been.

"Fifty percent of the wetlands in the United States have been destroyed and golf courses have done some of that damage," McLaughlin panelist Eleanor Clift said during the Environmental Session at the recent GCSAA International Conference and Show. "Golf courses can help the environment, and there are appropriate ways to build them. With the water problems we're facing, that [building responsibly] is the only way you can do a course today."

Clift, who commended GCSAA's efforts to recognize superintendents who enhanced the environment, was generally under fire from fellow McLaughlin panelist Fred Barnes, developer Kim Richards of The Athens

Group and moderator Bruce Williams, the GCSAA's immediate past resident.

"Many environmentalists don't want any development, period," Barnes said.

Richards pointed out that 970 million acres of the United States are devoted to agriculture, an industry that uses far more water and pesticides per acre than the roughly 15,000 U.S. golf courses that cover a relatively small 1.5 million acres nationwide.

"The problem is one of perception," Richards said. "We've found that when we sit down with reasonable people at government agencies we can work out solutions. Unfortunately, it's the extremists who show up at the public meetings and receive the news coverage."

Richards pointed to Ventana Canyon in Tucson, Ariz., as an example of what can result from overzealous environmental wrangling. In response to environmental pressure, Richards said developers built a target course at Ventana. Unfortunately, golfers couldn't hit the small-ish fairways and frequently ventured into the desert, where they inadvertently killed cactus while retrieving their wayward shots.

"We ended up replanting grass in the desert areas," Richards said. "It was a noble effort that failed."

Barnes responded to the topic of over-regulation in the golf industry by noting the more conservative Congress of recent years has required new environmental laws pass a strict cost/benefit analysis. And yet, water and air regulations EPA is proposing are too expensive for most businesses to comply with and provide no major improvements to the environment.

"Unfortunately, if you're against the regulations, then you're characterized as being against their purpose," Richards lamented. "I'm very concerned about the environment we'll leave for my 10-year-old. But many laws were passed during the 1970s and 1980s that are simply too extreme."

"The development business is extremely over-regulated and these

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Suess comes out of the pack to win GCSAA Championship

LAS VEGAS — Michael Suess, golf course superintendent at King's Mountain (N.C.) Golf Course, drilled a 15-foot birdie putt on the final hole of regulation to win the championship flight of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) '97 Golf Championship.

Suess shot a 3-over par 75 at Sunrise Country Club to go along with his first-day, tournament-leading 5-over par 77 for a two-day total of 152. His final putt gave him a one-stroke victory over William Martin, CGCS at Victoria Club, Hemet, Calif. The top round of the 120-participant championship flight was recorded by Tim Scott, golf course superintendent at Stony Creek Golf Course, Addison, Ill., with a 71 in the final round at Sunrise.

The entire tournament field included 720 golfers in the members-only event played at six courses in the area: Pauite Resort-Nu Wav Kaiv and Tav ai Kaiv courses, Las Vegas Hilton Country Club, Badlands Golf Club, Sunrise Country Club and Wildhorse Golf Club.

Also conducted was a team competition, with the Scottish Trophy (low gross) going to the Carolinas "A" team of Suess, Mitch Clodfelter, Cowans Ford Country Club in Stanley, N.C.; William Lewis, Brierwood Country Club, Shallotte, N.C.; and Steven Campbell, Ironwood Golf Club, Greenville, N.C.

The Frank Lamphier Trophy (low net) was captured by California "7" team of David Fleming, CGCS, El Tamarindo Golf Club, El Cajon, Calif.; Ronald Nolf, CGCS, Vista Valley Country Club, Vista, Calif.; Michael Pifferini, La Riconada Country Club, Capitola, Calif.; and Blake Swint, Castlewood Country Club, Pleasanton, Calif.

This year marks the 47th year of the GCSAA Golf Championship, presented in partnership with The Toro Company. Toro helps to staff the event, contributes tee prizes and hosts numerous social events for participants. The company will also make donations to The GCSAA Foundation in the name of individual flight and

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Spodnik wins Scotts Tradition

LAS VEGAS — The Scotts Company has named John J. Spodnik its recipient of the 1997 Scotts Tradition of Excellence Award.

The Scotts Tradition of Excellence Award recognizes outstanding achievements among golf course superintendents who are dedicated to advancing the science of course maintenance and making golf the best it can be. Spodnik was named recipient of the fourth annual peer-nominated award here at the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America's (GCSAA) 68th International Golf Course Conference and Show.

Spodnik retired in 1995 follow-

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Spreads More, Costs Less

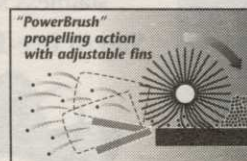
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Bell suggests settling for less-than-perfect course conditions

By MARK LESLIE

LAS VEGAS — Saying that “in a hot-house maybe you can get perfection,” U.S. Golf Association (USGA) President Judy Bell hailed “the charm” of golf courses and the superintendents who maintain them.

Speaking at a press conference at the International Golf Course Conference and Show here, Bell said the USGA and other organizations should educate golfers to see the beauty in the natural versus the unnaturally perfect.

*If we want perfect we c
an just stay at home and
putt on a rug.*

— Judy Bell
president, USGA

“If we want perfect,” she said, “we can just stay at home and putt on a rug.”

“I quite thought Shinnecock was perfect because it wasn’t quite perfect and around

the edges of the bunkers. That’s why it was so good... One of the charms of our game is, it isn’t like basketball or football, where the field is the same... Our playing field is different every time we play. Golf courses are natural, not contrived. They look like they belong — and that is an art, retaining the charm of the game.”

Bell paraphrased golfing great Byron Nelson, who said it is not the golf balls or equipment that has changed the game as much as the golf courses.

“That has been the variable,” she said.

Joining Bell at the podium, outgoing Golf Course Superintendents Association of America President Bruce Williams said: “We strive for a high level of perfection to achieve what people expect of us. If you don’t, the next person will...”

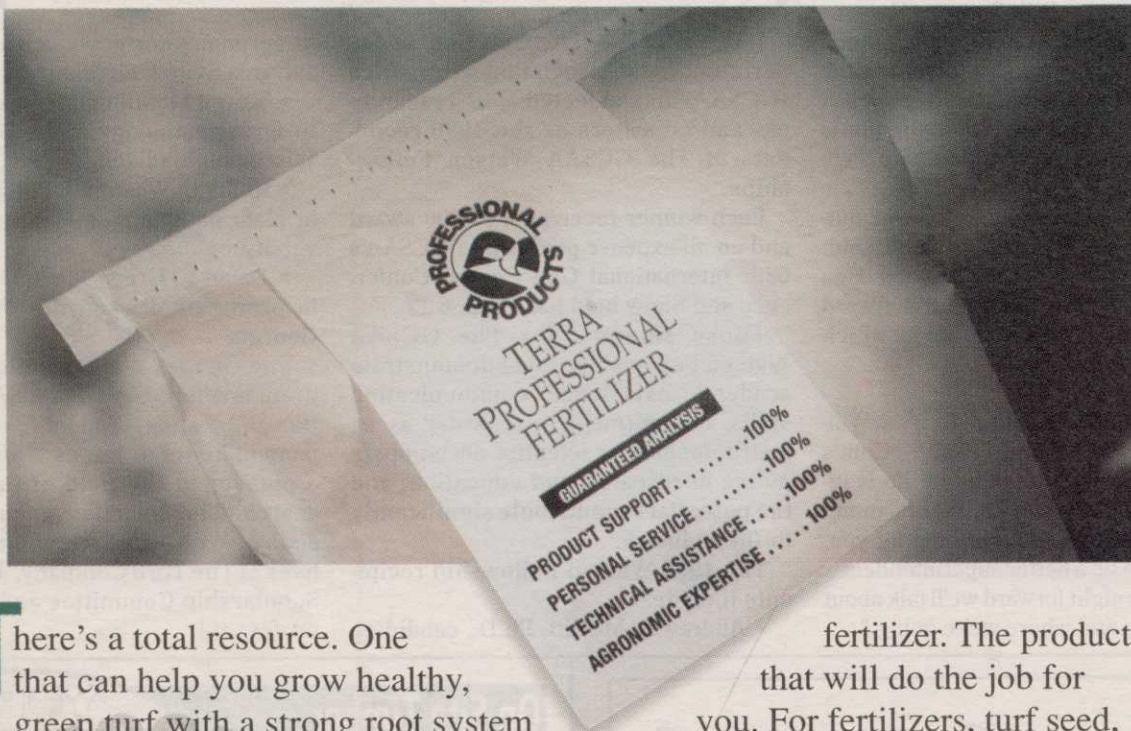
“I think we’ve peaked technologically. There will be more tools out there, but I don’t think we can take the mowing and care of turf any higher...”

Hesitating, Williams added, “Then, again, we probably said the same thing 20 or 30 years ago. But right now we’re mowing in the one-thousandths of an inch.”

Bell predicted that 10 to 15 years from now superintendents’ staffs will be much better educated and trained.

She added: “I’d like to see superintendents have more identity [with the public], what they do and how unusual their job is. It’s like throwing darts, in a way, because you don’t know what the weather, etc. holds. And they have to do their job with limited resources. Using all this technology ... is translating that and retaining the simplistic side of the game.”

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Working with you.



Suess wins

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team winners.

Other tournament winners included:

Championship B

Gross: William Hanna, Royal Brunei Golf and Country Club, Jerudong Park, Brunei
Net: Scott Young, Palos Verdes Golf Club, Palos Verdes Estates, Calif.

First Flight

Gross: Kevin Downing, CGCS, Stuart, Fla., Willoughby Golf Club, Inc.
Net: Ross O’Fee, CGCS, Country Club of Salt Lake City, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Second Flight

Gross: D. Scott Wagner, Leisure World of Maryland, Silver Spring, Md.
Net: Donald LaPierre, Elks Country Club, Muncie, Ind.

Third Flight

Gross: Randy Hisey, City of Albuquerque, Albuquerque, N.M.
Net: Ken Flisek, The Club at Nevillewood, Nevillewood, Pa.

Fourth Flight

Gross: Tim Cann, CGCS, Harbor Ridge Yacht and Country Club, Palm City, Fla.
Net: Gregg Stanley, CGCS, Hudson National Golf Club, Croton-on-Hudson, N.Y.

Fifth Flight

Gross: Brian Chalifoux, Fort Wayne Country Club, Wilmington, Del.
Net: Bob Land, Oconee Country Club, Seneca, S.C.

Sixth Flight

Gross: S. Daniel Pierson, CGCS, Wilmington Country Club, Wilmington, Del.
Net: Tim Hatfield, Willow Ponde Golf Club, Rantoul, Ill.

Seventh Flight

Gross: John Rodriguez, Chaparral Country Club, Palm Desert, Calif.
Net: Alan Jarvis, Belvedere Plantation Country Club, Hampstead, N.C.

Eighth Flight

Gross: Mark Esoda, CGCS, Atlanta Country Club, Marietta, Ga.
Net: Trevor Oxtoby, Colony Club Gutenhof, Himberg, Vienna, Austria

Senior I Flight

Gross: James Fulwider, CGCS, Century Country Club, Purchase, N.Y.
Net: Elmer Stone, Longview Country Club, Georgetown, Ky.

Senior II Flight

Gross: Ted Martinez, Odessa Country Club, Odessa, Texas
Net: Edward Mena, Shadow Ridge Golf Club, Vista, Calif.

Super Senior Flight

Gross: E.P. Bengfort, CGCS, Denison Golf and Country Club, Denison, Iowa
Net: Paul Voykin, Briarwood Country Club, Deerfield, Ill.

Affiliates Flight

Gross: Jesse Vance Reins III, CGCS, Southern Agri Insecticides, Wilkesboro, N.C.
Net: Milton Taylor, Island Park Golf Course, Salt Lake City, Utah