

Accessibility, affordability, sustainability



Michael Levans,
editor

We've been writing about it in these pages for years. The American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA) has been preaching it. Everybody in golf is talking about it. And now, finally, somebody is doing something about it.

Three cheers for The World Golf Foundation's The First Tee program.

If golf is going to continue to grow, it's going to need to need an influx of accessible, affordable, sustainable golf facilities. Through the help of The First Tee, consisting of funds donated by golf heavyweights like the PGA Tour and USGA, we just might get some.

If you haven't done so, turn back to the cover and read the story on The First Tee then turn to our Development section to read the related stories on Detroit's Belle Isle and Steve Champion's plans for his "family golf" development in Fort Worth, Texas.

This package of stories (see pages 58-59) might be the most important stuff we print this year. Everybody is jumping on board — ASGCA, GCSAA, LPGA among others — to offer funding or professional services not solely because it's good public relations, which it is, but because the industry can only benefit from an unselfish, combined effort. Everybody will win.

The industry has never seen an effort like this, and if the cards are played correctly over the next five years, it will never have to worry about concerted effort again. Developments of this nature will become commonplace, stories about Steve Champion's initiative in Fort Worth will become run-of-the-mill and the industry will have helped develop a new legion of devoted, highly-skilled golfers who learned every aspect of the game at age 6.

Tee times at the masterpieces will be booked solid in 2010 because tee times at Belle Isle were booked solid in 1998.

"Accessibility and affordability need to be the watch words for the next five years," said design guru Michael Hurdzan during an interview for the story.

Now, let's stick to this and see what happens.

Everybody is chatting about the possible Textron/Ransomes deal while word's out that John Deere's about to move into the golf car business. If you like spending time at the rumor mill, the upcoming show season promises to one of more satisfying in years.

I've had a few conversations with Peter Wilson, president and chief executive officer of Ransomes, and all we know at this point is that, as of December 22, the deal is in the hands of Ransomes stockholders (see story pg. 67).

For the record, the Ransomes and Jacobsen distributors we spoke with for the story are feeling good about the possibilities.

Ladies and gentlemen, golf's First Spokesman, Bill Clinton

Got a great idea for your New Year consideration: When Bill Clinton steps down as president, hire him as the spokesman for the golf industry. Hey, no sneers and jeers, please. Hear me out!

Here's a guy — better still, a golfer — who has maintained public support, even stayed out of jail, in the midst of all this chaos. So, just think what he could do working for an ethical, clean sport like golf.

I mean, our head of state has managed to keep his job despite Filegate, White Watergate, Travelgate, Troopergate and Indonesiagate as well as Jennifer Flowers and Paula Jones. He has survived Jocelyn Elders, Dick Morris, Web Hubbell, Craig Livingstone and Hazel O'Leary. For crying out loud, he has attained 60-percent approval rates despite Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia and name-your-blunder; despite terrorists, drug dealers and spies being guests at the White House; despite his promise of a middle-income tax cut followed by a retroactive tax increase.

Heck, he even stayed afloat after it was revealed he and Hilary claimed tax deductions for used underwear they had given away.

Who better, I ask, than the man who will be The World's Most Famous Golfer (outside Michael Jordan, that is) — the ultimate spin-doctor-cum-golfer — to represent golf?

Beyond their innate bent toward high ethics, never again would anyone in the industry need to be concerned about, say, some sort of environmental accident, charge of elitism or racism, or any other politically incorrectivism.

Speaking of gaining good standing within the community, how about those folks at Belgrade Lakes Golf Club (BLGC)!

When an association of Belgrade Lakes residents needed another \$25,000 to be able to buy a mountain property and prevent its development, BLGC dropped the money in the can. It was more than a gesture, said managing partner Kyle Evans.

"We've said all along that we want to be part of the community," he said. "Only in a small town like this do you see things like that happening and we wanted to be a part of it."

BLGC partner Harold Alford, a major sports benefactor in Maine, "really loves this area," Evans said. "The land will be left open for public use — snowmobile trails, cross-country trails and hiking."

Golf course architect Rick Jacobson had an interesting take on whether there are enough good golf course builders to handle the boom in development. Featured in this month's Q&A (see page 47), Jacobson said:

"There is a concern at our end with the proliferation of new development. I guess, our rallying cry to developers would be: Consumer Beware!

Not only from the construction standpoint, but the design standpoint. Half the world's 50 million golfers are here in the U.S. and they are all armchair architects. People in every related field to golf course architecture are hanging out a shingle saying they are architects.

We've seen some unbelievable designs that were ready to proceed that had trouble written all over them.



Mark Leslie,
managing editor

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GOLF COURSE NEWS

GUEST COMMENTARY

Canadian golf management gets environmentally proactive

By MARK A. SCENNA

BURLINGTON, Ontario, Canada — In today's world, perception drives our society's opinion. Consequently, due to the lack of environmental initiatives, the golf course management industry has faltered.

It is no surprise that the public does not often equate the golf industry as environmentally proactive. Public-opinion polls

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suggest finely manicured turf is the result of an abundant use of pesticides and nutrients, unnatural to their surroundings.

This public perception can and has driven some government policies and regulations, some of which have created unnecessary burdens on the industry. The industry's developing and adopting standard environmental operating practices can go a long way in demonstrating to governments that it knows how to manage itself relative to environmental preservation.

Additionally, it assists members who may not be aware of current practices and proce-

dures. Finally, if properly promoted, development of standard procedures can demonstrate the industry's commitment to environmental preservation to the public, steering government regulations in accordance with industry initiatives.

I am very pleased to report that the Canadian Golf Superintendents Association (CGSA) has recognized the benefits of developing a standardized set of environmental operation guidelines and has addressed them by creating an Environmental Management Resource Manual.

The primary objective is to create a directory of information

sources that helps CGSA members (particularly course superintendents and assistant superintendents) address environmental management issues. In particular, the manual is to be created to ensure day-to-day operations comply with municipal, provincial and federal legislation, as well as current industry standards.

Additionally, the manual is being created to demonstrate industrywide due-diligence efforts that protect and enhance the image of the golf course management industry.

Most importantly, the Environmental Management Resource

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