

Thoughts on golf, water and the upcoming election

Covering the golf industry for a living provides a unique perspective on presidential politics. Take, for example, the election next month. We all know about the issues that George W. Bush and Al Gore keep hammering at – education, free drugs for the Medicare crowd, “saving” Social Security and so on. But where is the fire and brimstone about other, even bigger problems?

In a page one story this month, new associate editor Joel Joyner reports on an alarming development in Southern California. A water crisis is unfolding there that ultimately will threaten the ability of golf courses to irrigate their layouts. Somehow, the game will survive in California, and browned-out fairways probably aren't the stuff of a national debate.

But deeper in the story lies a related fact that deserves to be front and center in the election dialogue. It is this: California's population, already at some 33 million, is expected to jump by 15.4 million more people – in the next 20 years! If California follows the national trend, virtually all of that growth will stem from immigration.

Twenty years isn't very long to add nearly 50 percent more people to a state that already has big-time worries about its water supply (not to mention its traffic congestion). How much more dire will the water situation become when all these new arrivals start turning on the taps?

And while we're on the subject, what is the plan for the U.S. population? Sure, we could use more golfers, but do we want to keep booming indefinitely until we surpass India and China? If California grows to 48 million people in 2020, who's to say it won't hit 70 million in 2050, or 120 million in 2100? The implications could be rather profound.

Southern California courses, increasingly restricted to using effluent water, might find even that hard to come by in the future. The old idea of towing icebergs down from the Arctic won't seem so crazy anymore. And it's not as if California is the only place in the country where population growth and water supply are on a collision course. Florida comes quickly to mind.

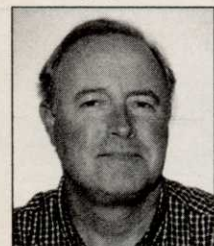
Why is it that Bush and Gore are silent on this issue? Water is an essential resource that's growing more precious every day. The country can survive without universal, government-supplied preschool – we've squeaked by without it for more than 200 years – but we can't thrive without a safe, reliable supply of water.

This should be a major topic in the presidential race, but don't expect to hear anything about it. It's easy to buy votes by throwing money at special interest groups, but when politicians face a problem as thorny as this one, they head for the tall grass.

Elsewhere in this issue, managing editor Andrew Overbeck picks up the same thread in China. There, 400 of the country's 688 cities are facing water shortages. The situation threatens to derail China's fledgling golf course development industry before it can gather steam.

“Whether the growing water crisis in China will lead to a slowdown in golf development remains to be seen,” Overbeck writes, “but it is certain to eventually limit the number of golf courses the country can sustain.”

The main reason for the shortage? China's population has more than doubled to 1.25 billion over the past 50 years. Are we heading down the same road?



Jay Finegan, editor

Improving the Internet and grub control all at once

Maybe Al Gore claims he invented it, but I have some ideas to improve the Internet. The best thing about the world wide web is access to lots of information, albeit unfiltered and unverified. I wish the process was live and interactive so I could ask questions. Of course, I want it to be available on-demand. Oh, and could I get an expert or two to filter and verify the information?

Is that too much to ask? Not for you, it isn't.

On November 13 at 7:00 PM EST, you can log on to our web site – www.golfcoursenews.com – and take part in a live, interactive webcast. This will be the first event of its kind for our business. Two experts will be at the ready to sift the information and present the distillation. You can ask questions live either by phone or online. If you can't log for the live event, you can see the presentations and question and answers up whenever you want for the next 90 days. You can even post questions for 90 days on a threaded discussion.

I expect lots of questions. When the Environmental Protection Agency required a labeling change on chlorpyrifos earlier this year, it eliminated one of the grub control measures most favored by superintendents.

Daniel A. Potter, Ph.D., University of Kentucky, and David Shetlar, Ph.D., Ohio State University, will provide an overview of the most recent developments in their fields during the first 30 minutes. A question-and-answer period will follow when the audience can have direct contact with the presenters. Both professors are leading researchers in grub control.

Content will include important industry developments – such as the increasing popularity of preventive grub control and the potential role of emerging chemistries.

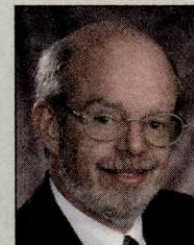
You will see a live, on-screen window of the speakers; a second window will show their visuals aids. By clicking to a third window, you can submit questions for the speakers before, during, and after the event.

An audio-only version of the live program can be accessed by calling a toll-free number (800-427-6791). Callers can submit questions to the speakers via the telephone connection as well.

I will moderate the webcast, along with Cindy Code, my counterpart at *Lawn & Landscape*, a magazine for lawn care professionals. MACH 2 turf insecticide is the third sponsor.

I envy you. Later this year I must sit through a weekend of seminars to renew my flight instructor certificate. A webcast would be so much more comfortable and efficient.

I think I'll write to Mr. Gore.



David Premo, Group Publisher

Joyner joins GCN staff

The *Golf Course News* team just grew up one. We're pleased to announce that Joel Joyner has come aboard as associate editor.

Joyner is a 1995 graduate of the University of Miami in Coral Gables, Fla., where he majored in photojournalism and English literature and minored in history. Returning to his native Maine in 1997, he taught history and English in public schools and later held a position in distribution at the largest hospital in the state.

“I enjoy working on a variety of individual projects, and I'm always eager to experience anything new and exciting,” he said. Having written a novel (about a 12-year-old boy's experiences in school), as well as a collection of poetry, writing is practically second nature for Joyner.

A golfer since age nine, he's finishing work on a four-part video series called *Golfing With Gene*. “It captures an annual golfing trip a few of us ‘Maine-iacs’ take to Myrtle Beach, S.C.,” he said. “The coastal city is often known as the golf capital of the world, and I just wanted to share what an awesome time we have there.”

Joyner will take responsibility for the maintenance beat, and will also contribute articles about golf course development.



Joel Joyner

We want to hear from you

Letters to the editor are an integral part of *GCN*, so let your voice be heard. Send all correspondence to:

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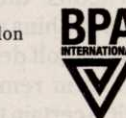
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