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FLUSH with FEATURES By William Olmstead

How an environmentally friendly restroom helped solve some toilet trouble at The Flying Horse Club.

Last season, Dan Hawkins ran into a problem that was particularly pertinent to his members.

"We needed an additional bathroom unit located in an area that did not have power or potable water," says the director of agronomy and facility operations at The Flying Horse Club, an 18-hole Tom Weiskopf design located on the north side of Colorado Springs, Colo.

This dilemma is all too common for superintendents looking for simple and affordable ways to improve their courses. To solve the problem, Hawkins turned to Clivus Multrum, a supplier of composting toilet systems.

In addition to the course and club athletic facilities, Flying Horse is part of a large planned community containing residential and commercial properties. It's also a certified member of the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary, an organization that provides education and certification programs to help courses protect the environment and preserve the heritage of the game.

At Clivus, Hawkins found the perfect solution: The composting M54 Trailhead.

"The composting component was attractive to us, and it fit well with our environmentally friendly approach to maintenance on the golf course and grounds" says Hawkins.

The M54 is specifically designed for locations that receive low-volume use, such as parks and golf courses, where it provides a superior alternative to portable toilets. The unit, which is typically installed in less than two days, uses foam-core panels for the floor and walls. The buried composting bin serves as the base of the structure, and solar panels are used to power the fans that keep the unit odorless and self-sustaining.

"We've had comments from members about how great it looks," says Hawkins. "Some say it's nicer than our other fully functioning flush bathrooms on the course."

The unit functions like a normal compost system, using microbes to break down the waste that collects in the basin belowground. The flushing kit uses compostable foam soap that carries the waste from the bowl to the basin using only a small amount of water.

"We hooked a small line from our ir-

rigation system to provide minimal water for the flushing process," says Hawkins. "Otherwise, it is very self-contained."

The M54 Trailhead is available in both single and double-stall models in a variety of finishes to suit superintendent and course preferences. It's also completely customizable.

"We did all of the work in-house. We were able to dress up the structure to match the existing style of the buildings on the property, so it blends well," says Hawkins. "We put in windows and a skylight to provide interior lighting since we have no power connecting to the unit."

The M54 also has the distinction of being the only composting restroom certified by the National Sanitation Foundation. The NSF takes into account the design and integrity of the unit and its components and evaluates the efficiency of the composting process under controlled testing in their laboratories.

"This unit allowed us to provide an attractive alternative for our membership that was cost effective," says Hawkins. **GCI**

William Olmstead is GCI's assistant editor.



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Terry Buchen, CGCS, MG, is president of Golf Agronomy International. He's a 41-year, life member of the GCSAA. He can be reached at 757-561-7777 or terrybuchen@earthlink.net.

Travels With Terry

Globetrotting consulting agronomist Terry Buchen visits many golf courses annually with his digital camera in hand. He shares helpful ideas relating to maintenance equipment from the golf course superintendents he visits – as well as a few ideas of his own – with timely photos and captions that explore the changing world of golf course management.

ADAPTED ACCELERATOR LINKAGE

This 2013 John Deere Gator TX 4x2 utility vehicle's accelerator pedal linkage can be bent upwards that allows it to operate at a faster speed. This was obviously a safety concern and operating the engine at higher RPM's could potentially cause damage to the engine. The accelerator linkage was removed and a ¼-inch diameter steel rod was welded from the top of the linkage to the bottom and then painted with glossy black enamel. This prevents anyone from bending the linkage whatsoever. The materials cost about \$2 per vehicle and it took about 30 minutes total labor time. Bill Brousseau is the director of golf course maintenance; Steve Judd, superintendent, of the Golf Village; Blair Kirby, superintendent, of the East Course; and John Lombardi is the equipment manager at The Club at Admirals Cove in Jupiter, Fla., a 45-hole venue.



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MOISTURE METER STAND

This Field Scout TDR-100 (about \$735) hand-held moisture meter “stand” was built in-house and saved the club about \$300 versus buying one welded together as one unit. The “stand” was built so the staff did not have to bend-over to take the moisture readings. The handle (and neck) was made using ½-inch square tubing and it was extended 2 inches on one side to account for the electrical plug coming out of the display unit. The display unit is mounted to the 2 inch x ½ inch metal flat stock with 2-inch wide industrial Velcro and the cord is attached with 4-inch black zip-ties on the neck. The probe unit slips into 1¼ inch x ½ inch thick flat metal stock block that is held in place with one ¼ inch x 1¼ inch bolt with locking nut. The metal pieces were all welded in place and then painted with Rust-Oleum black hammered paint. It took about two hours to design and built the first “stand” and another two hours to paint/drying time. The materials cost about \$20 for each one. Matt Wilson, superintendent, designed and built the first one and Steve Bell, mechanic, from the Hillcrest CC in Bartlesville, Okla., will build the rest. “Aluminum tubing and flat stock could also be used with bigger tubing so it would not increase the weight and it would not have to be painted is another option,” Wilson added. “The display and probe units can be easily removed from the ‘stand’ as-needed.” **GC**



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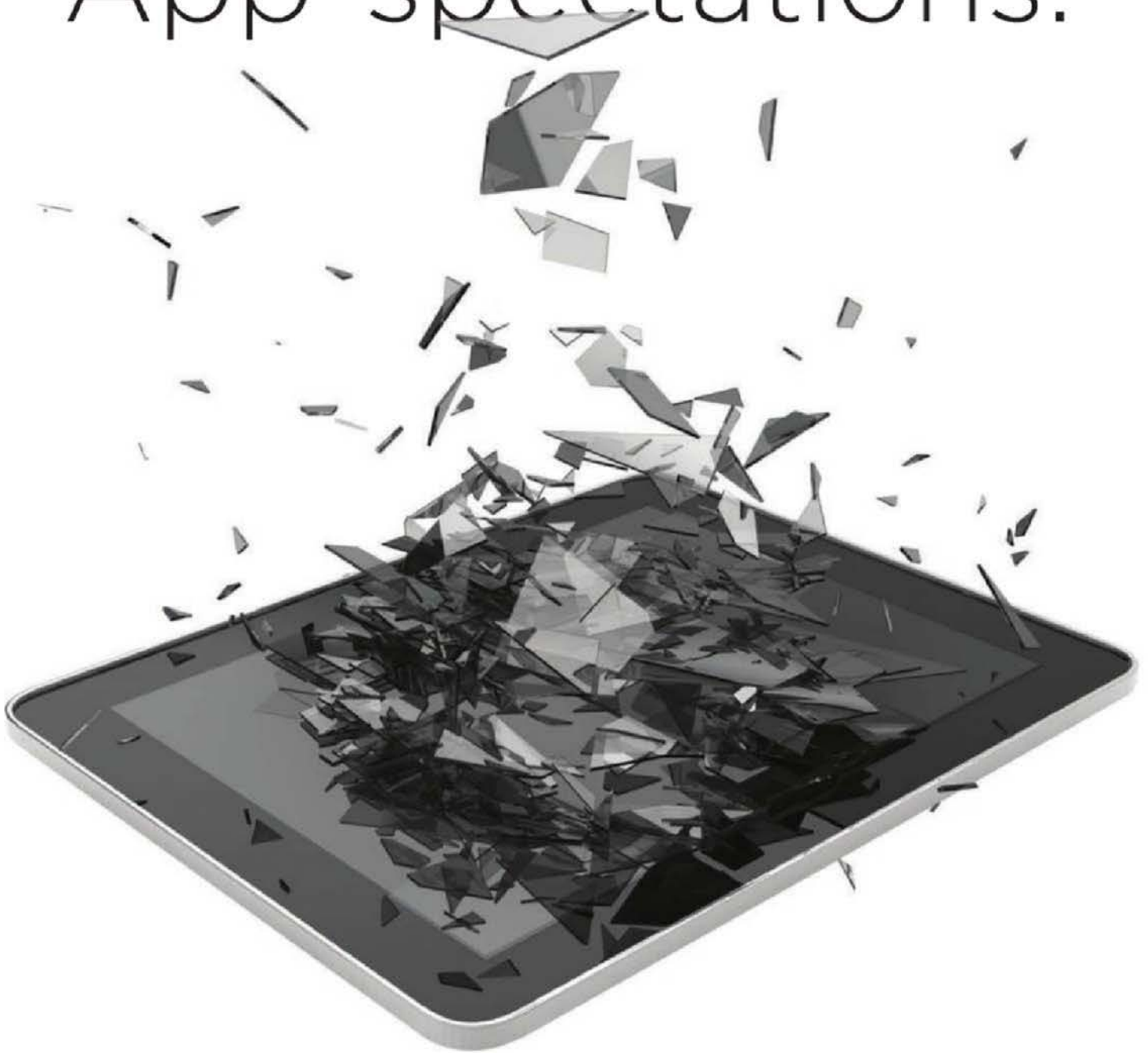


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Same with multiple tees. It's a no-brainer that golfers should play from the starting point that best suits their ability. "Tee it forward" is a great idea. Too bad more people don't do it. Why are we building – and maintaining – five, six, or more sets of tees? Is a 10- or 15-yard difference really affecting the likelihood that someone will find the ideal yardage for his handicap index?

Here's a simple idea. Three teeing grounds, that's it. Rate and slope them, then let golfers play from where they want. Can't most people figure out that with three it's roughly beginner, intermediate, and advanced? And while we're at it, other than for competition, do we really need tee markers?

Next: the Rules. I know the Rules of Golf and have studied them, taken the tests, and acted as a Rules official at numerous tournaments. Keep that in mind

when I ask, "Who plays by the Rules of Golf every day?" Answer: About the same as the number of golfers who really know the Rules: Almost no one. I'm sorry, but strict adherence to the Rules doesn't matter unless someone is playing competitive golf.

Tee it up in front of the markers, ground a club in a hazard, putt with the flagstick in the hole. You say against the rules. I say, who cares? Not the guys I play with. As well as I know the rules, I don't want my friends, or yours, to adhere to them if it's going to slow us down, cause more problems than they solve, and keep us from having fun.

If we want to grow the game, we should stop being sticklers for the Rules. Or consider bifurcation.

Yes, the "B word." It's time to consider two sets of Rules, one for competitive golf and one for what the rest of us play to

have fun. The new president of the USGA, Tom O'Toole, said it can't be called golf if it uses alternative rules or equipment standards. That's fine, call it what you want, I'll keep playing.

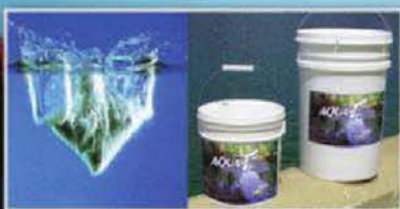
Other sports vary their rules based on ability level: Think about T-ball for little kids or junior swimmers who swim 25 meters before advancing to 100 meters. Enact a set of rules for beginners, and as people grow with the game, they can grow into the rules.

Two sets of rules – one for the best amateurs and professionals in tournament play, the other for everyone else in almost every other situation – won't ruin the game. Can you tell me we all try to play by the same rules now? Do Phil Mickelson and I play the same game? No. But we play the concept of the same game. And once we all accept that concept, we can help golf grow. GCI

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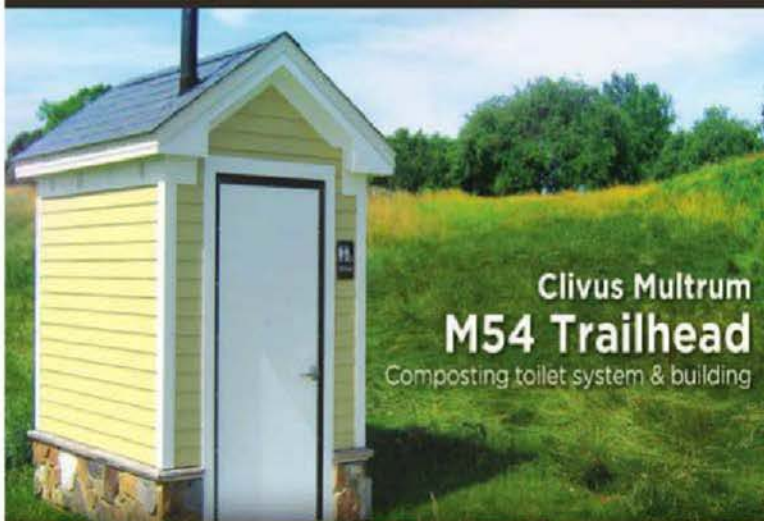
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Pat Jones is editorial director and publisher of *Golf Course Industry*. He can be reached at pjones@gie.net or 216-236-5854.

THE TROUBLE WITH FOMOs

Please allow me to introduce you to Greg Nathan of the National Golf Foundation and his “Mayor of Crazytown” blog.

His blog name tells you a bit about Greg. He’s NGF’s guy in the market. Speaks a lot at events, gets out in the field and meets a lot of golf business leaders. Typical schmoozer... and good at it. But, he’s also a bit of a rarity among association folks because he seems hell-bent on speaking his mind. I’m not saying association people aren’t honest... I’m just saying most are practiced diplomats who are masters at suggesting things without taking a position. Greg apparently has no such qualms. I like it.

Greg recently wrote a blog post that nails a serious problem: the sharp drop in players in the 18-34 demographics. You know... the people who are supposed to be keeping your place going a decade from now.

“You may have heard or read that the next generation of golfers... has been ‘voting’ definitively against the traditional game with their feet, as they say. They’re just not showing up at golf courses the way they used to. Golf participation among this age group has declined 30% during the past twenty years. Since the 18-34 age segment historically has the highest participation rate and is also the age range when most people take up the game for the first time, this decline has profound implications for golf’s future.”

Are your alarm bells ringing? Why are we losing this core customer group?

“The referendum on recreational golf (not to be confused with interest in pro golf) among younger people is so negative because we continue, as an industry, to expect/force them to put aside their regular lifestyle for 4-5 hours. Aren’t businesses and industries supposed to

evolve and innovate to better serve their customers’ needs/wants? If we do not change (and fast!), the game and business of golf will absolutely guarantee its own ‘right-sizing’ in the not-so-distant future.”

Yikes! And then he poses a critical question that forces us to consider our slavish devotion to “tradition” versus the compelling need to evolve:

“What makes golf so special that we can maintain the arrogant position that it’s the customers who need to alter their behavior in order for us to allow them to consume our product!?”

Ouch. The truth hurts, doesn’t it? Here, Nathan says, is the problem:

“Golf is simply not relevant for the perpetually engaged, never-out-of-touch ‘Millennials’ of whom I write. The concept called ‘FOMO’ (Fear Of Missing Out) is a huge driver of their behavior. After all, they sleep with their phones! Hey, wait a second... I sleep with my phone and I’m 44! Think of the golf course as FOMO-central – the place where they are virtually guaranteed to be missing out on everything in their life! Doesn’t that sound awesome? I can hear the echoes of a generation of 28-year-olds now: ‘Golf? Are you kidding me? No chance.’ We might as well be fertilizing the fairways with kryptonite, folks!”

And here’s where Greg gets really crazy; he actually suggests a solution:

“My crystal ball says that the most critical way that golf must innovate is by encouraging and facilitating, not simply allowing (yes, there’s a BIG difference), entertainment in the golf car. The new line item in the capital improvement budget at most golf courses (should) be video monitors and connectivity in all of their (golf cars). If you need to make your course a 150-acre Wi-Fi zone, then so be it. If every car in your fleet needs to be a mobile Internet hot spot, then get on it. Full broadcast media in every

buggy... absolutely. Bluetooth-enabled speakers in the back of every car... check!”

Okay, I’m not sure I agree 100 percent with the Mayor of Crazytown on that, but he makes an excellent point. We accommodate people with disabilities. We accommodate kids and ladies. Why not accommodate the wired customer? I’m 51 years old and I must confess that I’ve live-streamed the Masters broadcast onto my iPad in my cart during the middle of a round at a nice club. It seemed wrong to do it. Why should I feel guilty for doing something normal while I’m playing golf?

“If the next generation of players were going to be attracted to the golf product that course owners and operators have been serving up... they’d already be playing. They’re not. Even if it was free, I’m not sure they’d be teeing it up. I think traditional golf is the most perfect game ever created... but our customer prospects under 35 absolutely do not agree. Unless you run one of those 25% of facilities (and I think that’s generous) that can do good business offering only the traditional game... it’s wake up time!”

The Mayor is absolutely right. Instead of bemoaning the problem, offer a solution. Success in today’s crowded, weird market is often dependent on finding the right niche and exploiting it ruthlessly. Why not cater to the iGeneration?

I’ll let Mr. Nathan have the final word:

“Make your course a FOMO-free zone and help start the golf revolution that might just be the secret to keeping our game and business strong.”

(Greg Nathan’s blog can be found at <http://ngfdashboard.clubnewsmaker.org/Newsletter/1rf655upc2m118g6mneb41>.) GCI