

Going Postal

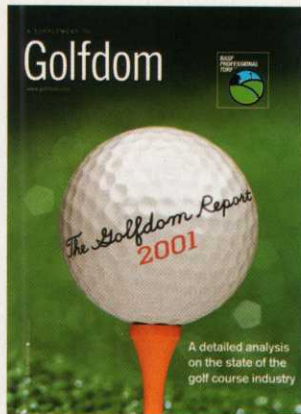
■ WE'VE GOT MAIL

Golfdom Report Packs Punch

I thought you touched the bases very well in The Golfdom Report (December). I know my club has felt the economic pinch, as we are operating in 2002 on 2001's budget. The employees received a 3 percent payroll increase, which for us is low. I guess we'll find out if I'm a good superintendent, working to do more with less.

Secondly, I also agree strongly with the need for affordable golf. Our industry is forgetting what made the golf boom of the 1990s so popular. Joe Homeowner, after he left work, loved to go out and play twilight rates at his local course and had a good time doing it. He would also play more on weekends to play his local course. Unfortunately, those affordable courses are now rare.

Something eventually will have to give, with either courses lowering prices (which I doubt) or more



and more golfers becoming disenchanting with high fees and playing less or not at all. When that happens, you will see courses disappear because they can't afford to pay the electric bill. We are going to lose a generation of golfers if the industry does not find a way to give them affordable golf.

The economy will eventually come out of this, as it always does. Nevertheless, golf may find itself in a hole that it can't crawl out of by becoming an elitist sport, played by only the rich with equip-

ment that only the rich can afford.

I would love to join the drive for more affordable golf. Signature courses look great and shine nicely in publications, but can the average golfer really afford them? Can they actually play them without getting clobbered by the course?

Give Joe Golfer a course with a \$35 weekday and \$42 weekend rate and make it playable.

You'll do just fine.

Charlie Fultz
Superintendent
CC of Culpeper
Culpeper, Va.

Dye'd-in-the-Wool Fan

I enjoyed Larry Aylward's December commentary on Pete Dye (Pin High, December). I spent a little time with Pete when I worked at the USGA Green Section from 1978 to 1984. He is all you say he is.

My first experience was to meet with him at the Country Club of Austin (before it had opened). We walked that course together. He asked my opinion on various things and gave his own to me.

We had lunch in the middle of this turf advisory visit. Then I invited him to speak on golf course design at two of the USGA regional conferences, which he did. He was very interesting and entertaining.

I'm only sorry I didn't tape the talks he gave.

Doug Hawes
Independent Turf Consultant
Plano, Texas

Joel's Too Modest

After reading Joel Jackson's editorial, "2001: A Good Time to Get Political" (Shades of Green, December), I quickly realized that Jackson left out one important component from the equation. He neglected to mention his efforts to

accomplish the positive things about which he wrote.

As the current past president of the Florida GCSA, I was part of the group that hired Jackson as the director of communications for the association. I can tell you firsthand: Jackson has been instrumental in our ability as superintendents to educate and influence the powers-that-be of our position on a number of critical items.

As a former superintendent, Jackson understands the issues we face. His passion and drive in his current role have allowed him to rally the troops to attend meetings, write letters and make phone calls, just as he urged others to do in his column. Equally important is the fact that when all else fails, Jackson dedicates his time to represent us as a group.

This is not meant to take away from the valiant efforts of the many superintendents who rose to the occasion and dedicated their time and energy to make a difference in our industry. Jackson would be the first to point out that it's the "end-user" that will make regulators and politicians take notice.

In addition to pointing out Jackson's modesty, I also wanted to remind other association leaders how valuable a person like Jackson can be to other local, state or regional associations.

Darren J. Davis
Superintendent
Olde Florida GC
Naples, Fla.

Feel like going postal? We want to hear from you. You can e-mail your letters to Frank Andorka at fandorka@advanstar.com, fax to 440-891-2675 or send them via snail-mail to: 7500 Old Oak Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44130. Make sure to include your name and phone number for verification. Letters may be edited for length or relevance.

Winning the Budget Battle

Thank you immensely for Dave Wilber's article (Dave's World, November). You really helped me hit it home to the board at my club.

Everyone is concerned because the clubhouse is \$150,000 over budget. Guess who they asked to save some money? Right — the grounds department.

Fortunately, I was astute enough that when the finance committee came to the greens committee meeting to see where we could "trim some fat" out of an already lean budget, I was prepared for them. I gave them a list of things we could do (or not do) to trim the budget down. After they agreed to the

steps I proposed, I handed them a sheet to sign, which stated that any inadequacies on the course resulted from their request to me that I trim my budget. They never signed the sheet.

In the midst of developing the budget for 2002, the chicken littles on the finance committee told us that we were going into an economic downturn and we needed to spend less money. I told them they needed to spend more money to retain our membership and attract new members as well.

Louis Bettencourt
Superintendent
Rolling Road GC
Baltimore