

**T**he anonymous mail keeps pouring in. This time, the package arrived in the form of a small audiocassette. Sources could not confirm, but the tape appears to be a recording of a 2001 Augusta National GC Green Committee meeting. Transcribed verbatim [with audio clarifications in brackets], the tape reveals the inner workings of America's most exclusive club committee.

*[Audible click of tape starting]*

"Thank you all for coming to our annual meeting of the Green Committee. For the record, committee members present include on my left, my good friend and counterpart from the great state of South Carolina, Mr. Hootie Johnson. On my right, also from South Carolina, my trusted colleague, Mr. Hootie Johnson. And myself, here at the end of the table, your comrade in ... uh, strike that, your club chairman, I'm Hootie Johnson. As usual, our staff will not be present. Nor will our current consulting golf architect, uh ... that would be ... *[inaudible, papers shuffling]*, ah yes, Mr. George ... excuse me, Mr. Tom Fazio.

"First matter for the committee is the Chairman's report. I've been going over the numbers, gentlemen. Brings back fond memories of my years in the banking industry. Now, in that line of work, we did not accept red numbers. Red means you are losing money. We only liked black numbers. That means you are making money. That means growth. Progress. Profit. Good stuff like that.

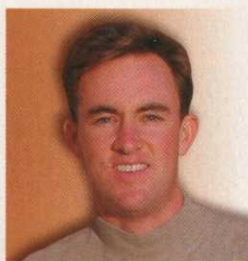
As I look over our scoring averages for the Masters tournament, I feel we need to do something about these holes where our Masters invitees are in those red numbers, which means they're averaging under par. We are obligated to our shareholders, err, patrons, to turn these red numbers into black ones. All in favor say, "Aye."

*[One "aye" audible.]*

"Furthermore, we must eliminate the very thing contributing to these red numbers. I've concluded we simply have too much of this fairway grass. The Masters and our patrons will be better for it should we trim 30 percent off our fairways, while increasing our trees, second-cut and sand traps by 30 percent. Any objections?

## Committee Meeting Is a Big Hoot(ie)

BY GEOFF SHACKELFORD



TAPE REVEALS  
INNER WORKINGS  
OF AMERICA'S  
MOST EXCLUSIVE  
GREEN COMMITTEE

*[Five seconds of silence.]*

"Good, 30 percent across the board both ways, and we'll review the numbers next year. I will inform Mr. Fazio of his working orders.

Now, what are we going to do with Mr. Jack Nicklaus and his opinions? He has been critical of our past efforts to get into the black. He has been talking to many of these so-called writers and has not been complimentary of our changes. Our patrons should not have to hear this. Recommendations?

*[Several seconds of silence, papers ruffling.]*

"Well, if no one else has anything, let me say, I think that as much as it pains us, we will offer Mr. Nicklaus a membership in our club. I also would propose playing golf this fall with two former champions after we've made the 30 percent across-the-board modifications. Any suggestions as to who might best, uh, convey the message to our patrons?

*[Several seconds of silence followed by coughing.]*

"If there are no objections, I propose Mr. Mark O'Meara and Mr. Tiger Woods. My experience tells me that Mr. O'Meara will do what we ask of him. Maybe he'll write a complimentary commentary in one of those golf magazines. Same goes with George, err, I mean Tom Fazio. We'll have him go on our good friend Arnold Palmer's television network and spread the gospel to the patrons.

*[Sound of notebook closing.]*

"Well, that was productive. I want to thank you all for your time and insights. I'm sure our patrons and our members are most grateful for this committee's efforts. I propose we adjourn this meeting. Thank you so much for coming Mr. Johnson, Mr. Johnson and especially to you, Chairman Johnson."

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*Geoff Shackelford doesn't know who's sending him this stuff in the mail — but he likes it. He can be reached at [geoffshackelford@aol.com](mailto:geoffshackelford@aol.com)*