

We've Got Mail

LETTERS FROM THE FIELD

Not so happy with pay

I have to admit I was a little disappointed with your story on salaries. The story was great, but it didn't deal at all with salaries other than the head superintendent. And even then it seemed slanted toward those making upper-tier money. What about the assistants, mechanics, irrigation techs and spray techs?

Although I've only been in the industry for a couple of years, it didn't take long to see that salary structures at most clubs are extremely top heavy. Kudos to those guys for negotiating a good wage, but if more of that money filtered down to the crews, it wouldn't be so hard to find and retain competent crews. How about focusing on wages for crew members in a future story?

Steve Detzel, superintendent
Penn State University, Lancaster, Pa.

Editor's note: Golfdom plans coverage on "other" crew members' salaries in an upcoming issue.

Not so bullish on PETA

I take exception to Geoff Shackelford's article ("PETA Leader Speaks Out") in the February issue. First, I think Shackelford's overall attempt at trying to make PETA look rational is misguided and a hindrance to the golf course maintenance profession. Second, why didn't you simply print the "Techniques for Mitigating Human/Goose Conflicts in Urban and Suburban Environments?"

Something this important to the industry should certainly be shared, if it indeed works and is cost effective. Third, so far my attempts to verify some of the claims made by Stephanie Boyles have not been successful. However, I do know that statements such as, "a typical

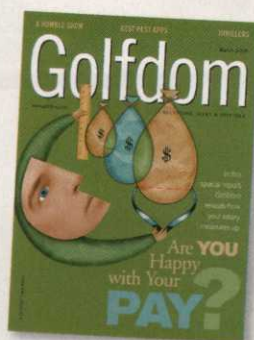
course uses astounding amounts of water — enough to supply a small town," and, "they can generate more pollution from fertilizers and insecticides than a working farm," are inflammatory and used simply for their shock value. They are only true if one realizes that there are towns with a population of five (saw one such town for sale awhile back) and if you consider a backyard garden a "working farm."

My course does not take water from "natural, self-sustaining riparian ecosystems." We use a relatively small amount of untreated well water for our greens and help our city dispose of its sewage water by using it on the rest of our course. I also question Ms. Boyles' honesty even when she is trying to be a "friend" of golf courses. I would make a small wager that she did not see javelinas and more than at least 17 other animals while playing golf in Scottsdale. Or maybe she did and we have discovered the reason for slow play!

She seems to me to be simply listing her qualifications as a wildlife biologist. I'm not sure wild pigs would be hanging around with coyotes. I enjoy Golfdom and you could have been a great service to the industry by publishing cost-effective, humane mitigation measures for Canada geese instead of trying to play nice with such a radical group as PETA.

Alan Andreasen, CGCS
Los Lagos GC, San Jose, Calif.

I must admit, I am now very confused. In the Stephanie Boyles interview, she states that golf courses "can generate more pollu-



tion from fertilizers and insecticides than a working farm." If that is truly the case, why would all the animals she later lists as

attracted to golf courses want to be there?

I am also wondering just how small is the "small town" she refers to when stating, "A typical (golf) course uses astounding amounts of water — enough to supply a small town." I don't think I could supply even a tiny, little town with the amount of water we use on my golf course, and the same goes for others I know in this industry. How many gallons qualify for the "astounding amounts" title?

How can Boyles say these things without stating even one small piece of research to support her claim? The research I've seen shows very little, if any "pollution" from fertilizer and insecticide use on turf in terms of runoff materials. Perhaps she needs to define the pollution she refers to so we can be sure we are talking about the same thing. Maybe she knows something we don't know — if so, then please support it with some hard evidence. Statements without supporting facts (otherwise known as an opinion) will not help her earn our trust. It is no small wonder superintendents she contacts are skeptical.

Ralph Kepple, CGCS
East Lake GC, Atlanta

Player demands

Thanks for the pertinent article regarding golfers' demands ("Time to Address Timeworn Topic") in the February issue. Besides sometimes being our own worst enemy, golfers, especially those that have recently taken up the game, under-

stand little of the history of the game. Too many golfers have chosen to ignore the essence of the game ... play it as it lies.

Whatever the conditions, length of grass, speed of greens or consistency of hazards, you play the course. It has to be a combined effort by the superintendent, pro and general manager to educate golfers to back off the idea of a meticulously manicured course. The game might be more fun for most and a lot less expensive.

Tom Johnson, superintendent
New Richmond (Wis.) GC

I remember playing the Dub's Dread Course at Cog Hill one summer shortly before the Western Open. The front nine was decent. It looked and played like the public course it is. The back nine was perfect. It had been prepared for TV exposure. It was almost like playing two different courses with regard to conditioning.

Education is the key, and perhaps a menu of choice is warranted, i.e., a description of conditions with a price tag for the different levels of quality. "If you want Augusta National conditions here is what it will cost each member annually." Daily-fee courses cannot assess membership but will need to explore other avenues involving player education.

Matt Landreau, President
Waterwood National Resort,
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