

Off The Fringe

NEWS WITH A HOOK

Business briefs

BASF Will Not Sponsor PVP

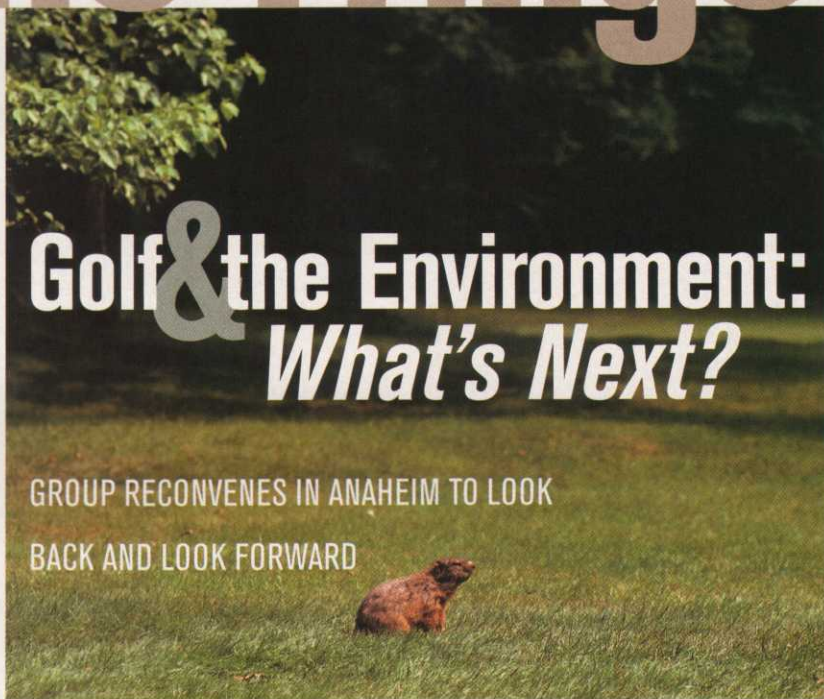
BASF will not sponsor the People vs. the Pros golf tournament this year. Toni Bucci, business manager for BASF Professional Turf & Ornamentals, said the company was proud to use the event to raise national awareness of superintendents' professionalism but will forego tournament sponsorship in 2007 to focus on supporting product innovation.

BASF has sponsored People vs. the Pros for the past three years, including two years as the title sponsor. "We still feel a lot of value in that investment," Bucci said.

In People vs. the Pros, 200 amateur golfers, divided into two age groups, compete in a three-day, 54-hole-handicapped stroke-play tournament. The low-net winner of the 18- to 49-year-old tournament and the low-net winner of the 50-and-over tournament play PGA pros for a chance at \$50,000 for charity. Last year Retief Goosen and Gary McCord were the pros. Several U.S. superintendents participated in the tournament courtesy of BASF, which also held a Superintendents' Cup Tournament as part of the event. The event took place at Pinehurst Resort two of the last three years. Bucci said BASF sponsored the event to elevate superintendents' images. She said she hopes BASF will "get in a similar venue" in 2008 with a similar message.

Greytok Flies Winged Foot

Eric Greytok is the new superintendent of Remington Ranch's three championship courses, leaving the high-profile Winged Foot Golf Club, where he hosted a U.S. Open and a U.S. Amateur Championship. Greytok spent six years as golf course superintendent at Winged Foot Golf Club. Prior to that, Greytok served as superintendent at Pebble Beach Golf Links.



By Joel Jackson, Contributing Editor

Twelve years ago, the Center for Resource Management organized the first Golf & the Environment (G&E) Initiative at Pebble Beach Resort. From the meeting, "The Environmental Principles for Golf Courses in the United States" was produced with input from more than 20 golf and environmental organizations. On Feb. 19 and 20, the Salt Lake City, Utah-based Center for Resource Management held a reunion in Anaheim, Calif., to review and discuss the progress that the G&E Initiative has made since "The Environmental Principles" was produced.

Over the years, additional G&E meetings have been held in Pinehurst, N.C., Orlando and Nebraska City, Neb. The group reconvened in Anaheim not only to assess progress

made, but to design a road map for what comes next. Reports from conference co-chairs Michael Hurdzan, owner/architect of Hurdzan/Fry Golf Course Design, and Phil Os-hida, a deputy director at the Environmental Protection Agency, kicked off a series of presentations, which also included talks by Ted Horton, executive director of the California Golf Course Owners Association; Todd Miller, executive director the of North Carolina Coastal Federation; Jim Snow, national director the United States Golf Association's Green Section; Brent Blackwelder, president of Friends of the Earth; and Greg Lyman, GCSAA's director of environmental programs.

Here are some of my observations from the two-day meeting's breakout sessions and general discussions:

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A Q&A With Mike Heacock

INDUSTRY VETERAN, WHO'S BASED IN TOKYO, REFLECTS ON WHAT HAS BEEN

Name: Mike Heacock

Title: Senior Vice President of Course Maintenance for Pacific Golf Management K.K. in Tokyo.

Age: Turned 39 for the 21st time this year

Number of years working in the golf industry: More than 30

Who has been the biggest influence on your career and why? The late Dr. Kent Kurtz, the longtime educator at the California Polytechnic State University; and Rich Eichner, golf course superintendent at Discovery Bay Country Club in Byron, Calif. They were wonderful mentors in the best sense of that word.

What was the defining moment in your professional or personal life? Realizing 23 years ago that I did not want to come in every morning to the same golf course and the same crew and the



same members for the rest of my working life.

What's the greatest invention the golf industry has seen?

The bulldozer.

If you could change something about the industry right now,

what would you change? The equipment the pros are using makes classic courses obsolete. Let us amateurs play with whatever, but regulate the clubs and balls for the pros.

If a movie were made about your life, what actor would play you? A medium-height old guy with a beer gut.

Last book read: Bill Bryson: "I'm a Stranger Here Myself."

Favorite movie: (tie) "Blazing Saddles" and "Patton"

Describe yourself in one word: Grateful

My hero is: Mickey Mantle

I hope to be remembered as: Someone who cared. ■

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■ The initial meetings in the 1990s raised awareness of the issues of concern to all parties.

■ Common ground was found and good programs were implemented.

■ Participation over time has flattened. The questions were asked: What can be done to stimulate more involvement? And what incentives are there for lower-budget facilities to get involved with G&E?

■ How does the industry communicate/market the message that golf courses can be community assets?

■ Groups like regulators, local governments, media and the general public need to hear the science behind golf. How do we best achieve this?

■ Data gathering is essential to benchmark current status and track progress. GCSAA's Environmental Profile Project will provide this information.

■ New research should be on new turf varieties that require lower inputs. Research into social marketing to understand golfer and public attitudes, and how to craft effective methods of educating them, is also needed.

■ The group's steering committee will process all the comments and attempt to identify and prioritize goals for adoption and action by the group.

What was most evident from the meeting in Anaheim is that the industry has come a long way, but it can't rest on its laurels. Much remains to be done to fully educate society about how golf and the environment can exist in harmony. ■

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