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CIRCLE NO. 128

Golfdom

NOVEMBER 2001 • VOLUME 57 • NUMBER 11

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ABOUT THE COVER

We set out to create a cover about how to build a better irrigation system. But in the end, we settled on this captivating and majestic image to stand alone on our cover. Yes, the image, photographed by Mike Klemme, features irrigation. But when we asked graphic designer Dan Beedy to superimpose an American flag over the golf flag in the photo, the image took on a completely different meaning. So we let it be.
God bless America.

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◀ Pat Gradoville, superintendent at Palos Verdes GC in Los Alamitos, Calif., says effective irrigation is as much of an art as a science.

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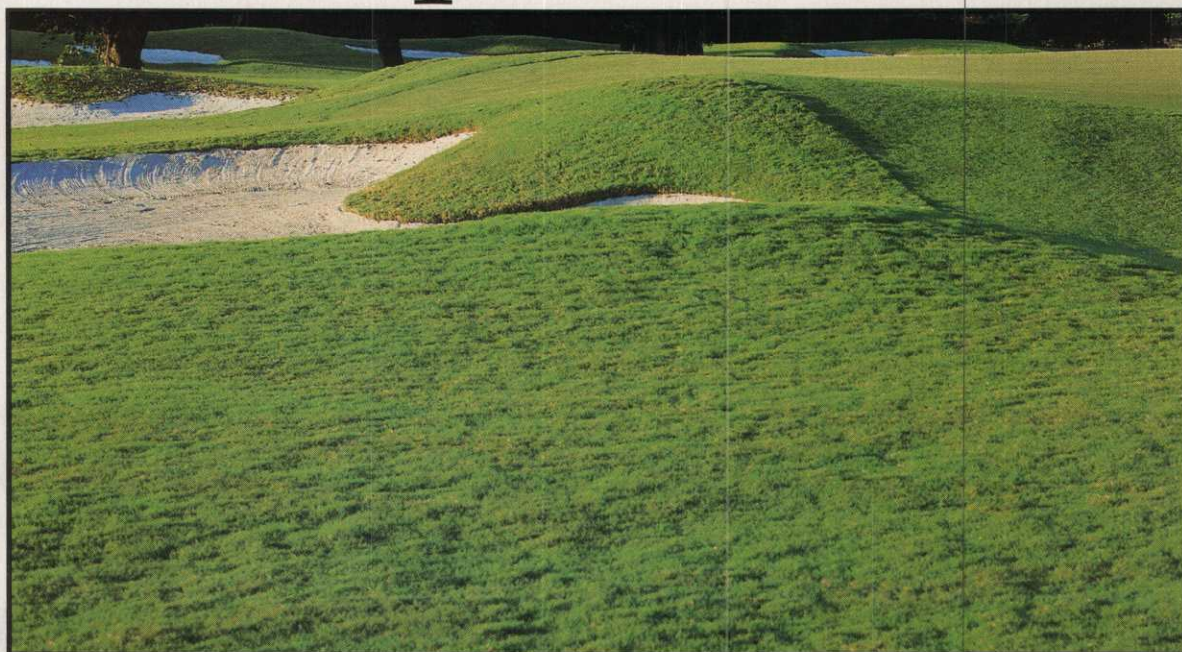
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Going Postal

■ WE'VE GOT MAIL

'Get a Grip' Author Has a Gripe

I read your article, "Gripping About Get A Grip" (September). Obviously, you have the right to say anything you like about a book, but I must say your writer did an unfair job in this case.

Many golfers relate every day to golf professionals, but seem to take superintendents for granted. The *Get a Grip* element of the GCSAA's 75th anniversary was designed to reach 4 million golfers to highlight the incredible work superintendents do every day for the game. I would have gladly explained this to your writer if he had taken the time to research his story.

I wrote this book in association with *Golf Digest* as a way to raise additional funding for disadvantaged children. Your writer did not mention that.

We have sold thousands of copies of the book in bookstores. This would indicate *someone* liked it. Your writer did not mention that.

We have sold thousands of copies to corporate executives who gave the books away as Christmas gifts to their best customers. Your writer did not mention that.

American Airlines thought enough of the book to order 1 million copies and give it away in its airplanes' seatback pockets as customer gifts. Your writer did not mention that.

The GCSAA asked us for all remaining copies of the book in our warehouse since it used up its entire supply and some courses wanted additional copies. Your writer did not mention that.

The book was endorsed in writing by: Arnold Palmer, Mark McCormack (chairman, IMG),

Jack Nicklaus, Dom Rossi (publisher, *Reader's Digest*), David Duval, Chi Chi Rodriguez, Vijay Singh, Peter Lund (former president, CBS), Ray Floyd, Mike Gunn (executive vice president, American Airlines), Steve Stricker, Dave Stockton, Jack Williams, (president, Royal Caribbean International) and Gary Player. Your writer did not mention that.

This book was reviewed and deemed acceptable by both Tommy Witt (president of the GCSAA) and Jack Connelly (president of the PGA of America) to include their message of support for GCSAA members. Your writer did not mention that.

The book was certainly acceptable enough for *Golf Digest* to put its name on the cover. Your writer did not mention that.

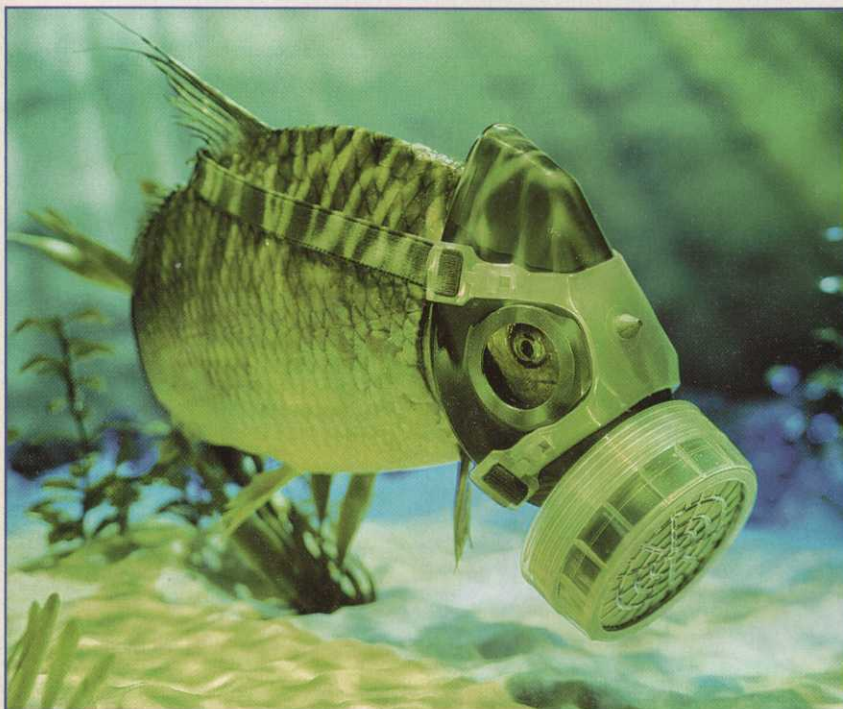
Clearly, your writer missed the

point of this book. It is "goofy," but it was designed to be so.

I accept the fact that your writer did not like the book. I also accept that some superintendents might not like the book, either. But I resent the writing of an article that only provides one side of the story.

John M. Capozzi
President
JMC Publishing Services
Fairfield, Conn.

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.



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All of us, in our own way, are feeling a sense of apprehension that we probably haven't experienced in our lifetimes. We worry about our jobs and our 401(k)s. We worry about our children, nieces, nephews and other loved ones. We worry about getting on planes. To put it simply, we worry about uncertainty.

Uncertainty is the only constant in our lives now — and for the foreseeable future — as we try to define the meaning of a post-Sept. 11 world. But, as Sir Isaac Newton wrote, the unknowable is defined only by the knowable. It may seem trivial to consider our business life in a time of war, but here's what I think we *know*:

- Golf has survived and prospered immeasurably in the United States through two world wars, the Depression, a dozen recessions and cultural fads too numerous to count.

- This is clearly not a great time for high-end facilities that depend on air travel or corporate outings, but the “getaway” market always bounces back.

- Conversely, the core of the golf market — local clubs and daily fees — may actually benefit during a time when the nation wants to stay close to home.

- The world may have changed, but the expectations of golfers have not.

That last observation is not mine — it's the surprising consensus of the many superintendents, owners and others with whom I've spoken or corresponded.

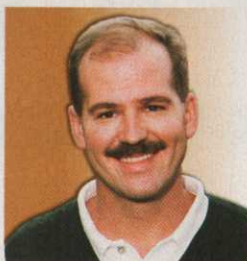
When asked how their operations will change because of the double whammy of a slow economy and terrorist attacks, not one said they plan to take a step backward in terms of conditioning or quality of management. In fact, few folks I've talked with believe they'll spend less or do much differently next year. As one superintendent put it, “War or no war, our players aren't going to accept anything less than we've provided in the past.”

The fact is that the grass will grow, people will come out to play and golf will go on. The question is: How can you make sure that they come out to play at your place?

So what can you do to maintain rounds, revenue and reputation in a time when choosy players have more options than ever before? Our en-

Seeking a New Sense of Normal

BY PAT JONES



THE WORLD MAY
HAVE CHANGED, BUT
THE EXPECTATIONS
OF GOLFERS HAVE
NOT

tire editorial staff is looking at that question now, and their findings will be at the heart of our December “Golfdom Report” issue.

In the meantime, here are a few great ideas gleaned from a timely article on the Carolinas GCSA Web site (www.cgcsa.org):

- Concentrate on the areas that really count. Reduce time and money spent maintaining areas out of play.

- Consider reducing part-time employee labor costs or arranging job-share opportunities.

- Challenge the need for non-essential projects or consider doing them in-house.

- Communicate frankly with ownership about what impacts cost reductions might have on quality.

- In colder months, anticipate frost delays and schedule “late starts” to reduce unnecessary labor costs.

The bottom line is that facilities affected by a slow economy will have to think outside the box, be creative and find new ways to provide value for the golfer's dollar.

That's my take on the professional level. Here's what I think on a personal level.

As a nation, a lot of us seem to be asking, “When do we get back to normal?” When I hear this, I'm reminded of something Steve Mona said repeatedly after he became CEO of the GCSAA and instituted sweeping changes in the organization. Frenzied staff members would ask, “When do we get back to normal?” Steve eventually started to say that we wouldn't ever get back to the “old” normal, we'd just try to find “a new sense of normal.”

That's where I believe we are today — searching for a new sense of normal. I sure hope we like it when we find it.

Pat Jones is the publisher/editorial director of Golfdom. He can be reached at 440-891-3126 or pjones@advanstar.com.