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I returned home from the GCSAA Conference and Show with further proof that my once adequate reporting skills have become road kill in the fast lane of the journalistic freeway. Once again, I came back not with well-organized notes and keen observations, but with pockets overflowing with jots and scribbles committed to the back of napkins, business cards and even the majority of my left forearm.

A good example: My “notes” from the interview I did with David Feherty conducted in a darkened parking lot following his uproarious speech:

Question: Wuddu lern fr benn hr tnigt?

Answer: “Hg! No ide bes bladd man u.”

However, with help from scientists here at Cleveland’s NASA Glenn Space Center using a turbocharged Cray Supercomputer that normally runs the Hubble Telescope, I was able to decipher this and other gibberish-laden notes.

The big letdown

Being a cynical media type, I salivate each year at the opportunity to take free potshots at the show site, the organization, the color of the carpet or whatever. The problem was that everyone loved everything: the city of San Diego, the convention center, the weather, the staff, the education, the golf tournament — no one was whining! What a letdown!

The clear consensus was that San Diego is a great — if somewhat expensive — location for the big show and that the association should go back there as often as possible. The idea of a permanent Orlando/New Orleans/San Diego rotation came up repeatedly. The only problem with this is that the sites have already been contracted for a bazillion years in advance. Thus, we are stuck with Anaheim (ugh) in 2007.

The only beefs we heard

Exhibitors (who are kind enough to pay through the nose to support the whole darn thing) had mixed feelings about the site. The San Diego center is nice, but it’s a union shop and the bigger exhibitors were nailed with sky-high labor costs.

One example: The shop steward who hovered around the *Golfdom* booth while we were setting up made it very clear that if we didn’t

Jots & Scribbles From San Diego

BY PAT JONES



THE PROBLEM
CAME FRIDAY AND
SATURDAY WHEN
MANY ATTENDEES
APPARENTLY OPTED
FOR OUTDOOR FUN

have it up and done in 45 minutes or less, he’d be to “help” at \$200 or so an hour. Thus, we broke several land-speed records to get it done, but many exhibitors didn’t have that luxury and were dinged with unbudgeted costs.

Beefs, part two

Most exhibitors ended the first day of the show (Thursday) saying, “Wow!” Traffic was excellent, and many suppliers said they had more customers than they could handle. The problem came Friday and Saturday when many attendees apparently opted for outdoor fun, a visit to the Buick Open at Torrey Pines or a trip to Sea World.

That’s the negative *yin* of the positive *yang* of having the show in an attractive locale like San Diego. Exhibitors make an enormous investment to be there and can get a little testy when buyers ditch them to go play golf. Don’t think this is a serious issue? Just take one look at the implosion of the formerly massive PGA Merchandise Show, and you’ll understand why suppliers take trade-show attendance seriously.

Nantz-iful

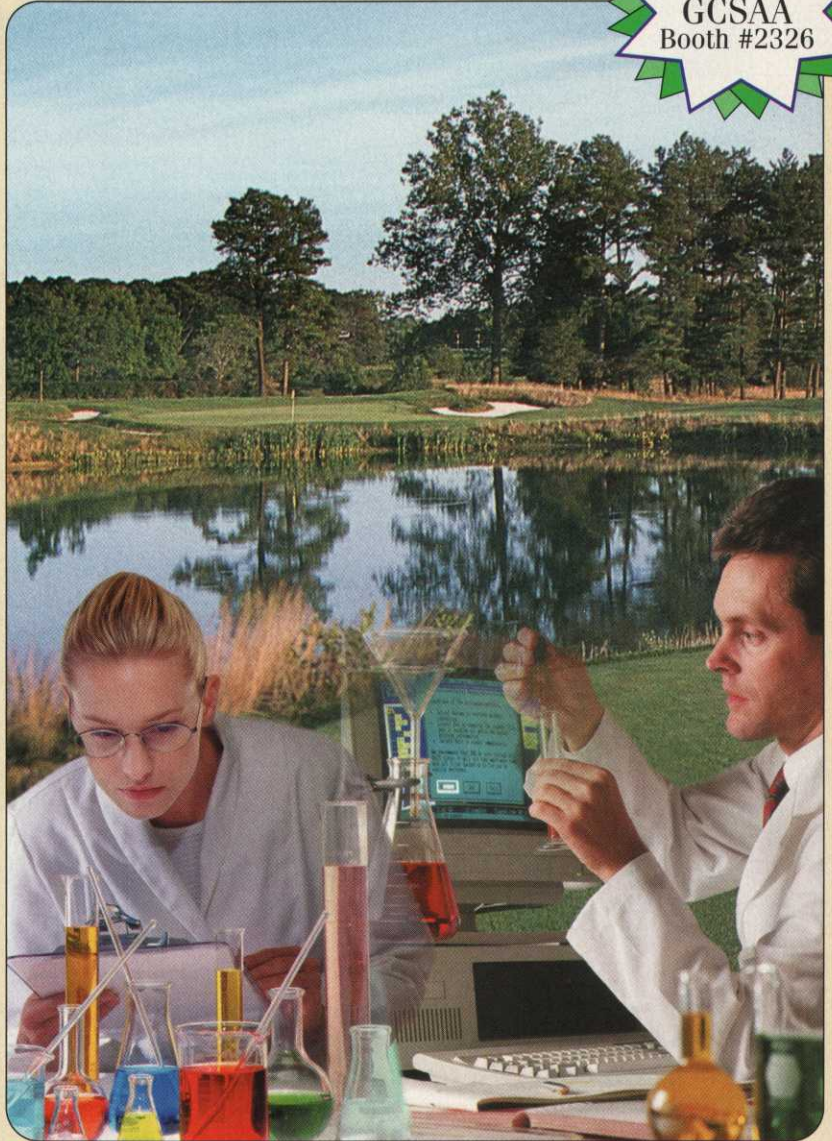
Just when we were convinced that he was yet another tanned, blazer-wearing talking head with good TV hair, Jim Nantz actually did something that no one in his position has ever done: Put his money where his mouth is. After decades of lip service by major golf media, Nantz not only promised to get more recognition for superintendents on CBS broadcasts during his opening session speech, he delivered immediately with a couple of segments about the GCSAA show and nice props for the Torrey Pines crew during coverage of the Buick Open. Thanks, Jim. As a token of our appreciation, your 2004 *Golfdom* hat is in the mail. Hope it doesn’t mess up your hair.

Pat Jones can be reached at 440-891-3126 or pjones@advanstar.com

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Beechtree Golf Club, Aberdeen, Maryland ~ Hole #2, Par 3



The saga continues for Mosholu Golf Course, the tiny nine-hole municipal track based in the gritty Bronx. About a year ago in *Golfdom*, I reported that Mosholu, which had been on the decline for several years, made a remarkable comeback under the auspices of New York's finest — from the golf industry, that is.

In 2001, the Metropolitan Golf Association Foundation and Metropolitan Section of the PGA took over Mosholu's operation when it became the first course in the New York area to become a member of the First Tee program, which was formed in 1997 to provide affordable golf to kids and others. The First Tee gave Mosholu, which opened in 1914, a new lease on life. Because of the program, scores of underprivileged kids from the Bronx now come to Mosholu to learn and play golf. And because Mosholu was named a First Tee facility, it received ample financial support from various groups and companies like the USGA Foundation, PGA Foundation, TourTurf, Nike Golf and others to spruce up the course and build a learning center to teach new players.

It was a wonderful story for golf, especially when you consider that Mosholu is hardly posh and is the definitive course for the Everyman. These days, since golf is continually perceived as a sport for the well-heeled, the game needs more stories like Mosholu. The humble course, with its bargain green fees, helps take the word "rich" out of the stereotype that labels golf a "rich person's game."

Unfortunately, in the midst of Mosholu's comeback, the golf course was thrown a wicked curve ball last summer by New York's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Mosholu was told that its 3,100-yard course will probably be the site for a new water-filtration plant. The good news is the plant, which will take eight to 10 years to build, will be located underground. The bad news is that Mosholu would lose its driving range, its clubhouse and basically operate a makeshift course while the plant is built. This will hurt the course's already delicate business.

Needless to say, Barry McLaughlin, Mosholu's executive director, is concerned about Mosholu's future. McLaughlin is hoping — but

Bronx Golf Course Deserves Good Fate

BY LARRY AYLWARD



THE HUMBLE
COURSE HELPS
TAKE THE WORD
"RICH" OUT OF
THE STEREOTYPE
THAT SAYS GOLF
IS A "RICH
PERSON'S GAME"

he knows how fickle political groups can be — that the DEP follows through on its promise to give money to Mosholu to help the course renovate even more than it already has in exchange for providing the site for the water-filtration plant.

"I'm happy to think that we'll have something as good as anything being built today — if everything comes true," McLaughlin says.

McLaughlin understands why the plant has to be built. It's a huge project for the city and its citizens, and it makes perfect sense to build the plant on the golf course because of its proximity to a main water tunnel, not to mention the fact that Mosholu is located on municipal land.

"Hopefully, the disruption with the water plant will be just a hiccup, and eventually we'll have something really special here," McLaughlin says.

Hopefully, indeed. But McLaughlin shouldn't settle for less. He and his staff, including superintendent Erik Feldman, have worked hard to revamp the course, which was unsightly with overgrown tree branches and crabgrass-infested greens and fairways before they arrived. They deserve the best fate.

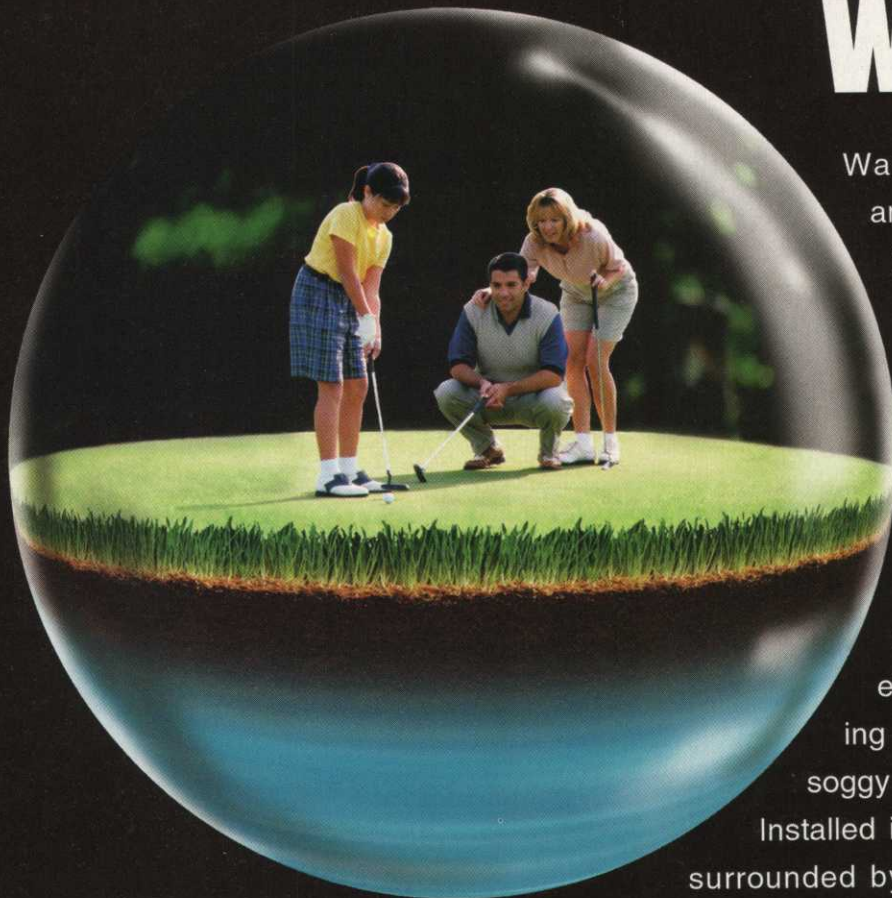
There's no doubt the water-filtration plant is important to the city's operation. It's more important than a golf course.

But it's also important the DEP follow through on its commitment to upgrade Mosholu, which is also more than just a golf course. For years, Mosholu has been a mainstay in the Bronx. It's a destination of sport and entertainment for the melting pot of people who live in the bustling borough. It's a jewel in the community.

Mosholu should not become a victim of circumstance.

Editor Larry Aylward can be reached at 440-891-2770 or larryward@advanstar.com.

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The Big Picture

THE NUMBERS THAT SHAPE YOUR BUSINESS



The BIG Show is a GO

Next year, the GCSAA and the National Golf Course Owners Association will merge their trade shows. We asked superintendents their thoughts on the matter in an online poll.

| | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| It was a great idea. | 55% |
| It was an OK idea. | 24% |
| I hate the idea. | 12% |
| It doesn't matter to me. | 9% |

Golfdom (BASED ON 143 RESPONSES)

IMAGE LIBRARY

Odds on Augusta

Tiger Woods is 2 to 1 to win the 2004 Masters, set for April 8-11 at Augusta National Golf Club, according to the Las Vegas Hilton SuperBook. Here are the top 10 favorites:

| | |
|----------------|---------|
| Tiger Woods | 2 to 1 |
| Ernie Els | 10 to 1 |
| Mike Weir | 10 to 1 |
| Vijay Singh | 12 to 1 |
| David Toms | 12 to 1 |
| Jim Furyk | 15 to 1 |
| Phil Mickelson | 15 to 1 |
| Davis Love III | 18 to 1 |
| Sergio Garcia | 18 to 1 |



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Golf Rounds Played

The percentages below represent the difference in number of rounds played in the month of November 2003 compared to the number of rounds played November 2002.

| REGION | NOVEMBER | Y.T.D. |
|--|----------|--------|
| New England ME, VT, NH, MA, RI, CT | 26.4% | -6.8% |
| Middle Atlantic NY, PA, NJ | 18.6% | -9.4% |
| East North Central MI, OH, IN, IL, WI | 34.4% | -1.2% |
| West North Central ND, MN, SD, NE, KS, IA, MO | -8.7% | 1.7% |
| South Atlantic WV, DE, MD, VA, NC, SC, GA | 11% | -3.2% |
| Florida | 4.3% | 2.1% |
| East South Central KY, TN, AL, MS | 13.9% | .9% |
| West South Central OK, AR, LA | 2.7% | -1.8% |
| Texas | 0% | -2.4% |
| Mountain MT, ID, WY, NV, UT, CO, AZ, NM | -12.3% | -2.4% |
| Pacific WA, OR, AK, HI | -5.6% | -2% |
| California | -2.9% | -3.2% |
| TOTAL UNITED STATES | 5.6% | -2.7% |

GOLF DATATECH

Do They Get It?

What percentage of avid golfers at your facility understand that golf courses used for major tournaments are slowly brought to "tournament conditions" and that those conditions are not sustainable for more than a few days?



GCSAA

MIKE KLEMM

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Off The Fringe

NEWS WITH A HOOK

Business briefs

Audubon campaign gets a boost

Audubon International's ambitious "Fifty in Five" campaign — to have 50 percent of all golf courses in the United States enrolled and active in one of its environmental programs by 2007 — got a boost from two pesticide manufacturers, Syngenta Professional Products and Bayer Environmental Science. Superintendents can now use their Syngenta GreenPartners rewards points or their Bayer Environmental Science Accolades points to purchase one-year memberships or renewals in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses.

"Making membership in our program an option will go a long way to support our efforts to promote environmental stewardship throughout the entire golf industry," says Kevin Fletcher, director of programs and administration for Audubon International. "It's this type of industrywide support and leadership from both Syngenta and Bayer that we need, and will continue to ask for to help make good environmental performance the norm in the golf industry."

For more information about these respective programs or to apply your reward points towards Audubon International program membership or donation, visit the Syngenta Green Partner Web site or the Bayer Environmental Science Accolades Web site.

ProLink, ParView merge

ProLink and ParView, players in the global position satellite golf course management industry with more than 500 combined course installations, merged in January. The new entity, ProLink/ParView LLC, announced its management team, featuring the appointments of William Fugazy Jr. (chairman of the board of directors),

Briefs continue on page 24

Growing Up

NGCOA TURNS 25, BUT "WE'RE STILL IN OUR INFANCY," EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DECLARES

By Larry Aylward, Editor

The National Golf Course Owners Association (NGCOA) turns 25 years old this year. But in the eyes of Mike Hughes, the association's executive director, the NGCOA is still a babe.

"We're still in our infancy," Hughes told members of the association during a speech at the NGCOA's annual Conference & Trade Show in Tampa in January.

Under the watch of Hughes, who has been with the NGCOA for 14 years, membership has grown from about 250 members in 1990 to more than 6,000 members now. But there are still plenty of seats for new members, Hughes says.

"The progress over the next 10 years is going to be as substantial as the last 10 years," Hughes predicted. "In my view, we can't even see the midpoint of the association. We're really just getting started."

Progress, of course, goes hand in hand with the economy. During the speech, Hughes acknowledged that it's been a difficult past three years in the golf industry. Rounds have been



DAN BEEDY

down because of economics and the weather, and owners' wallets have been left thin.

It wasn't just a glut of golf courses that contributed to the downturn, Hughes said. It was also the fact that corporate spending had fallen to substantial lows. There were fewer corporate outings, and there were fewer corporate players because many of them had lost their jobs. The ones that remained were working longer hours and didn't want to be seen playing golf during such dire economic times.

But Hughes, not known as one to spin, predicts that more money will flow this year. "I'm absolutely certain that 2004 will be a better year," he affirms.

Continued on page 24

Going Gaga Over Golf

LEBANONTURF SALESMAN EXPERIENCES CHINA'S LATEST CRAZE

By John Farrell

"**Y**ou wanna go to China?"

That's what my sales manager, Tim Layman, asked me last September. I answered, "Sure."

Tim told me that LebanonTurf needed its most expendable employee to go to China to give a talk to about 100 general managers at the Chinese Golf Course General Managers Association Conference.

I figured it was a great opportunity to visit a part of the world not many people get to see. I left Philadelphia, flew to Chicago and boarded a flight to Hong Kong — 19.5 hours and 8,000 miles from my home in New Jersey.

After a couple of days in Hong Kong, accompanied by my host, Rob Glucksmen of Witgang Far East Ltd., we took a 45-minute commuter train to the border checkpoint at Lo Wai. We crossed over into mainland China.

The Chinese love golf. With a population of 1 billion people, there's quite a scramble by Western companies for a piece of the pie. China has become the land of opportunity to companies struggling with a golf market on the decline at home.

The conference, which is the Chinese equivalent of the GCSAA show, is held at different golf resorts in China each year. This year's conference was held at the Sand River Golf Club in Shenzhen, China. Shenzhen was the first Special Economic Zone in China. It was created out of farmland and mangrove swamps. From a population of less than 20,000 in the 1970s, it has grown into a thriving metropolis of 2.5 million, home to China's highest-grossing industries. It's no wonder that golf has become such an important leisure activity for wealthy Chinese.

The event is put on by general managers who represent the roughly



COURTESY OF JOHN FARRELL

John Farrell (third from left) says golf in China focuses on providing excellent customer service.

180 courses throughout China. Most of the general managers bring along their superintendents.

General managers are the decision makers when it comes to club operations and agronomics in China. This is changing slowly and surely with influence from the West. Superintendents are becoming much more important to club operations. Chinese course operators are beginning to see the correlation between good turf and profits.

My boss told me I would speak to a group of about 100 general managers. The group was actually somewhere between 350 and 400. He also neglected to tell me that nine television stations and 17 magazines were covering the conference.

The seminars at the conference were similar to the ones here in the United States, where general managers and superintendents talk about management practices at their clubs. Someone from Phillips Lighting did a talk on lighting a golf course for night play (many of the resort courses throughout China have nine-hole, fully illuminated courses). My talk was on basic agronomics and nitrogen sources. This may be basic material for American superintendents, but not for many of the Chi-

nese turf professionals in the audience. Most courses throughout China either use all-mineral farm-grade fertilizers or the most primitive of fertilizers, manure.

Golf in China is a unique experience. The philosophy under which courses are run is based on service. As a guest of one of these resort courses in China, your every need is attended to. The clubhouse at Sand River was as ornate as any you will find anywhere in the world. Jobs at clubs like Sand River are highly sought after by locals, and they work hard to keep them.

Each player in the foursome has his own caddie who handles every detail of his or her round. To tell you the truth, it's a little disconcerting at times. Things you always do on your own, like marking your ball on the putting green, are attended to by the caddies.

Sand River Golf Club is wall-to-wall seashore paspalum. You won't find too many native areas at golf courses in China. Every inch of turf that could be mowed was mowed. Native plants and grasses were actually removed from Sand River and replaced by ornamental plants and grasses that did not fit. I was told course architect Gary Player was not happy with that. But I was also told that this was common practice at golf courses because the Chinese like the "Augusta National look."

The courses I visited were in remarkably good condition considering some of the maintenance practices used. The Chinese are eager to learn how we do things and are gradually changing the way their courses are maintained. The introduction of golf to China has created many opportunities for turf students or assistant superintendents from the United States. The Chinese respect our knowledge and are starting to hire American turf professionals.

My trip was a wonderful experience. It's great to see golf grow in a country like China where it was once thought of as a useless activity for rich Westerners.

John Farrell is a territory manager for LebanonTurf.