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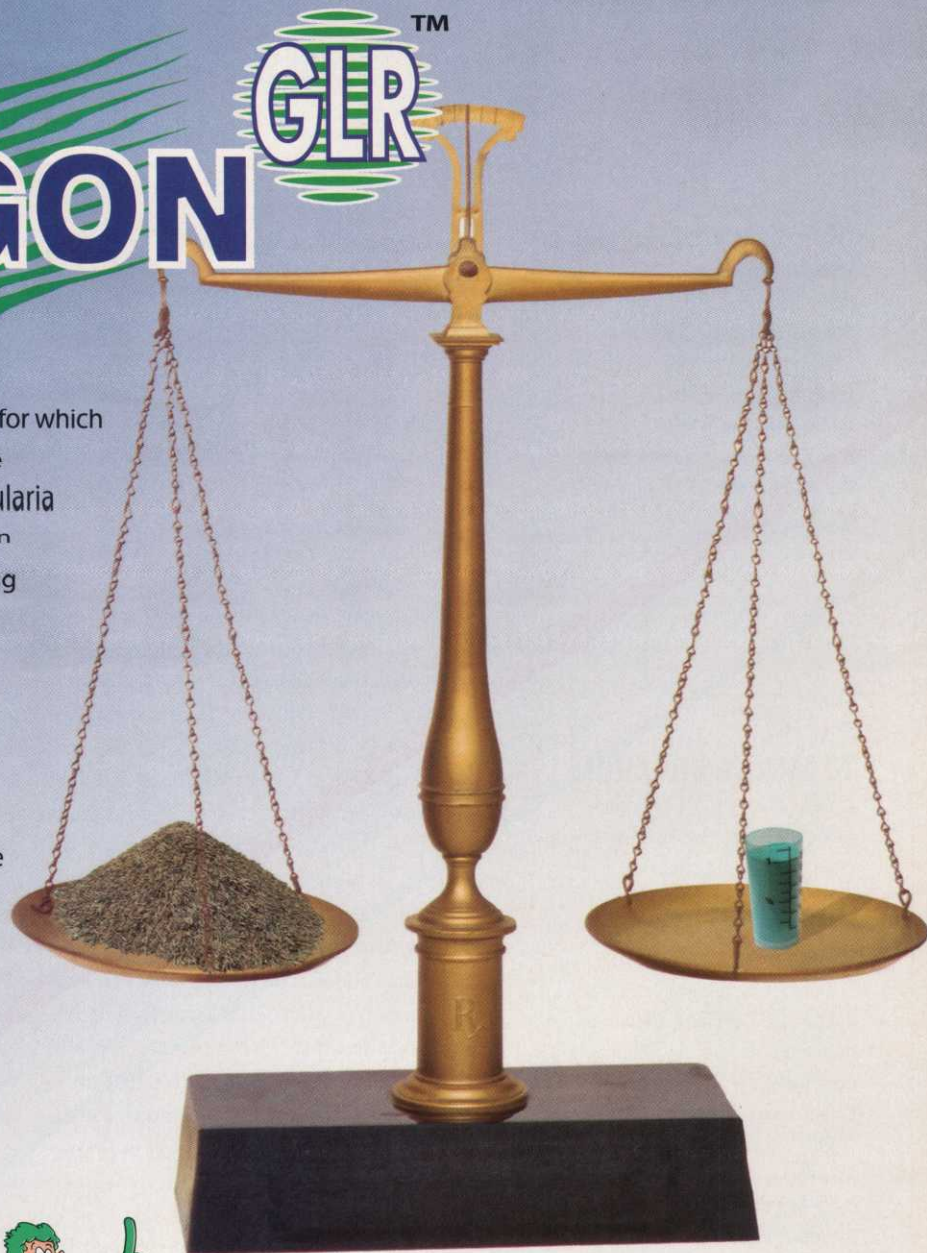
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Picking Up the Pieces



(Clockwise from top left) An abandoned car near the first tee at Joe Bartholomew Golf Club; the rusted gear shift of a mower after being under saltwater; a gutted house across the street from Bartholomew.



Carew also discovered hundreds of dead birds, killed when they were blown from their roosts by the storm's fierce winds.

For several months after the water had receded, the golf course was colored in one hue — brown.

"It was nothing but death — dead trees, dead grass, dead everything," Carew says. "And the smell would just knock you out of your socks."

During a return visit to the course recently, Carew admits it's difficult for him to come to the area. It's a ghost town; the only sound is the whipping wind. While the course isn't completely suffused in brown anymore, Carew points out that its patches of green are mostly comprised of weeds and *Poa annua*.

"These fairways were totally renovated," Carew says sullenly. "You can see where the trees were ripped out."

Carew points to the massive ruts in the fairways, caused by 18-wheel trucks that roamed the soggy course to pick up and carry away the fallen trees.

Carew walks to the first tee, which offers a strange site. At the bank of the dead 419 bermudagrass on the tee sits an abandoned and formerly submerged Ford Taurus, its wheels sunk in the ground. Carew says someone probably drove the car on the course to get to higher ground. It wasn't high enough, obviously.

Houses across the street from the course and throughout the neighborhood are abandoned. The flood waters, which had reached the peaks of their roofs, decimated them.

Many of the houses have been gutted, which means everything from ceilings, carpet and sheetrock have been removed from their interiors. The houses, with only concrete slabs

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The course was in the final stages of a \$1 million renovation when Katrina hit. A celebration was planned for the course's reopening in September, with an appearance by Mayor Ray Nagin.

A new irrigation system had been installed throughout the course two years earlier. It was destroyed after being under saltwater for so long — its wiring and conduits rusted and corroded.

The course's new clubhouse was wrecked by wind and water. The maintenance facility, which was only 2 years old, is located on higher ground and was under 15 feet of water for only three weeks but long enough to cause substantial damage. When the water waned, Carew saw mowers, weed eaters and other equipment caked with rust and oxide. He says the equipment looked like it was 100 years old.

The course lost about 90 percent of its trees, including some massive 80-year-old oaks. The remaining trees are dying, poisoned by the high salinity of the saltwater.

It seemed as if every other tree dotting the sides of the course's fairways had fallen. Their treetops met each other in the middle of the fairways.

TO MAKE A DONATION

If anyone would like to donate to New Orleans' last-standing city-owned golf course — Brechtel Memorial Park Municipal Golf Course — they can contact superintendent Peter Carew at pcarew@cityofno.com or 504-261-8728. Carew says he needs "everything." Monetary donations are also welcome. Checks can be made out to the "Parks and Parkway Department" (please indicate donation is for Brechtel Golf Course) and mailed to Peter Carew at 3700 Behrman Place Highway, New Orleans, La. 70114.

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Picking Up the Pieces

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and wooden beams under their roofs, are shells of what they were. Ugly piles of rubble, topped with waterlogged furniture and other damaged mementos, sit on tree lawns in front of the ravaged homes.

"It's house after house after house of devastation," Carew says. "It's mile after mile after mile."

It will cost about \$5 million to repair Bartholomew, not including the maintenance facility and clubhouse. MacDonald says the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will help pay for building damage at Bartholomew and Brechtel as well as repairs to the irrigation systems. But the agency won't pay to restore any turf damage.

"We can't let it die," Carew says of Bartholomew. "It would make me proud if we got it going again. The community deserves it."

But Carew understands why the course

is low on the city's priority list of rebuilding tasks. After all, tens of thousands of residents had their lives turned upside down.

"When you have miles and miles of the community with no power, golf courses are the last thing on their minds," he says.

Even if the course did reopen in the next year, Carew wonders if there would be anybody to play it.

"Are the people coming back?" he asks, scanning the desolate neighborhood.

Carew scavenged the damaged maintenance facility at Bartholomew for parts, even rummaging around the rubble for screws. He doesn't have a lot of equipment, and he welcomes any donations.

Sadly, a lot of equipment at Brechtel was stolen. Looting was widespread in New Orleans following the hurricane, and thieves didn't spare Brechtel's maintenance facility.

The metal door to the facility is mangled. You can see where the looters ripped

the door open with a crowbar. Carew says they stole three 72-inch deck fairway mowers in addition to a hand mower, a weed eater, an electric sprayer and hand tools. They drove the mowers out of the facility, stripped them and abandoned them.

Carew holds up a small pump sprayer. "It's the only thing I have left that they didn't steal," he says.

Carew is still irked by the looting, but he tries not to let his anger fester. Since the hurricane, Carew's emotions have run the gamut, from frustration to sadness to fury. Carew, however, strives to maintain optimism about his life, his city and his profession.

"We're just trying to hold it together," he says. "New Orleans people are hard people. They'll be back."

Thanks to Carew, they're already back at the golf course — a place where they know they can find tranquility, if only for a few hours. ■

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said Jim Moore, superintendent of the TPC of Louisiana.

"It's a blessing," said Walker Sory, superintendent of the Golf Club at Audubon Park. "They came at just the right time."

"I don't know what to say," said an elated Peter Carew, the superintendent of Brechtel Memorial Park Municipal Golf Course. "To come to such a little course . . . it just makes me choke up to think they're coming here to help us."

During the week, Carew had volunteers raking up branches and twigs under trees. Carew worried he was subjecting them to a menial task, but he stressed how important a job it was because the sticks were getting jammed in the course's gang mower and damaging its reels. "They're probably thinking they came all this way to rake sticks, but they don't realize how much help they're providing," Carew said.

Sory said his course had "much-needed bunker work" to be done that his

short-handed staff hadn't had time to do. The volunteers at the course manicured the ragged edges of the course's 62 bunkers. They seized the chore with hover mowers, weed eaters and blowers.

Sory, who has been at the course for almost five years, employed 15 people before the storm. Because of budget cuts, Sory can only afford to have seven workers on his staff, and they're not allowed to work overtime.

Audubon experienced mainly wind damage from Katrina. The course had some flooding but not from the terrible deluge caused by broken levees. "That water stopped about five blocks from here," Sory says.

Moore said the volunteers helped "springboard" the TPC's reopening, which will occur in late summer or early fall. The TPC experienced internal flooding and thousands of trees were damaged, Moore says. The course's bunkers were flooded and debris dominated the property.

Moore had the volunteers repairing



greenside bunkers that were submerged in water for nearly two weeks. The volunteers removed the old sand, repaired the drainage and added new sand.

The TPC is trying to staff up, but hiring has been a problem because so many people have left the area. Some businesses are getting back up and running. There's a demand for employees, but the employee pool is limited. So superintendents are competing with fast-food restaurants, with

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Helping Hands

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some offering \$10-an-hour wages and signing bonuses, to attract personnel.

"If you drive around the city, you'll see there's not a company that's not looking for help, whether it's Walmart or Home Depot," Moore said.

Yount said English Turn lost two of its full-time staff members, but it hasn't experienced any major labor problems because it employs several Hispanics through the government's H2-B visa program.

That said, English Turn was in a hurry to ready the course for the Zurich Classic of New Orleans, held April 27-30. Ironically, the tournament was moved from the TPC to English Turn because the TPC sustained more storm damage.

Joe McCleary, the certified superintendent of Saddle Rock Golf Course, was one of the volunteers at English Turn. The 40-year-old McCleary spent much time in the course's vast waste bunkers, where the volunteers spread new layers of sand.

McCleary, like several of the volunteers, took vacation time from his job to take the trip. He also left behind a busy family life. McCleary said he liked the idea of the trip from the beginning.

"I supported [Sarro] when he brought up the idea so I felt like I needed to support him by following through and coming out," he said.

Like McCleary, Michael Osley had to place a busy life on hold to take the trip. Osley, the certified superintendent of Aurora Hills Golf Club in Aurora, Colo., said he had a million reasons not to go, but he's glad he went.

"It was the right thing to do," Osley said. "I took some vacation time, and I can't think of a better way to spend it than to come down here and help my peers."

With that, Osley grabbed a trimmer and got back to work on an overgrown bunker edge at Audubon Park. Osley, dressed in jeans, a white T-shirt and a sweat-stained blue hat with the Titleist logo, headed a crew of seven volunteers who manicured the bunkers.

The volunteers also included several



(Clockwise from top left) Steve Sarro organized the trip; the volunteers never dogged it; Syngenta's Bart Fox (left) and Tim Klein cooked dinner; the volunteers' mode of transportation told the story of their venture.

turf students, from Colorado State University and the University of Wyoming, who were on spring break.

Jared Stanek, a senior in the University of Wyoming's turf program, said he was thankful he could help. "It's about putting the community back together, and golf is a part of the community here," he added. "This is where we can best supply our talents."

Before leaving on the trip, Sarro said he expected people who see golf only as a luxury to question the mission while contending there are people and places in New Orleans that need help more than golf courses. While Sarro doesn't deny that, he also stressed that golf courses are more than just a luxury for the rich — they are a haven for all walks of life, places where people go to enjoy themselves and forget their troubles. Besides that, Sarro and his crew were helping their comrades.

"I'm sure there are people that need dental care down there, but I'm not a dentist," Sarro says. "This is what I know how to do."

The Golf Course Superintendents

Association of America (GCSAA) and Syngenta Professional Products each donated \$10,000 to the cause. Ewing Irrigation and The Rocky Mountain Golf Course Superintendents Association also kicked in several thousand dollars.

Joe DiPaola, the golf market manager for Syngenta, said he made the donation because he was inspired by the volunteers' effort. "It's something we could do, should do and we did," he said.

Bart Fox and Tim Klein, technical sales representatives for Syngenta, cooked dinner for the volunteers during the week. Every day Fox and Klein lugged a massive outdoor cooker to a different course where the volunteers were working.

Pat Ardoin, a salesman for Ewing, supplied each volunteer with a survival pack, which included sunscreen, a water bottle and a jacket. Ardoin, a former superintendent, calls on many golf courses in the Gulf Coast area affected by the hurricane. "This is something we wanted to be part of," he said.

During the trip, Sarro said he hopes the mission transforms into something bigger. He would like to see the industry implement an annual National Golf Maintenance Week to assist courses damaged by natural disasters. Volunteers could travel to hard-hit areas to lend a hand.

"We've planted the seed," Sarro said. ■

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THE Drive FOR

Plenty of minorities are interested in golf, but they'll need a few more bucks

A television news crew plants a minority golfer at a golf course, intent on gauging the reaction of the facility's management, staff and players. Will the undercover experiment pass without incident? Will the African-American player feel at home? How about the person of Asian or Hispanic descent?

A somewhat similar scenario actually unfolded recently at a NASCAR track. An NBC news magazine sent a group of Muslim-looking men to a race to document anti-Muslim sentiment. By all reports, no one bothered the men.

Whether we've progressed to the point where prejudice increasingly is becoming a non-story is debatable. Certainly golf — long considered the “white man's sport” — has a nasty reputation to shed. But with revenue stagnant or lacking at courses across the country, the golf industry is having to cater to the very minorities it once shunned.

“If you ask me, it's low-hanging fruit in the golf business if people want to market toward minorities,” says Sean Hoolehan, the certified superintendent at Wildhorse Resort and Casino in Pendleton, Ore. “We're behind the curve as far as introducing minorities to the game because they didn't have access in the past. And as they are getting access, it's a growing segment.”

According to a 2003 survey conducted by the National Golf Foundation (NGF), there are as many as 14 million minorities who are “at least a little interested” in playing golf. However, only 5.5 million minorities actually played at least a round of golf or visited a golf practice facility in the previous year. If the industry is to once



BY THOMAS SKERNIVITZ, MANAGING EDITOR

Diversity

(and buddies) to play with if they're going to boost the industry

again thrive, it will need to attract some of those 8.5 million minorities who are finding some reason to stay away from the golf course.

"If people don't play golf, I won't have a job," says Rafael Barajas, the certified superintendent at Hacienda Golf Club in La Habra Heights, Calif. "I firmly feel that if we don't tap into the minorities, golf is going to have a problem down the road. There's a great opportunity to grow the game."

Barajas, more than most, realizes the difficulties that confront minorities on the golf course. He arrived in California via Colima, Mexico, at age 14, able to speak only four words of English. Yet he broke through all barriers to become a superintendent at 20 and earn certification at the unusually early age of 27.

"There were plenty of obstacles. I was very young and had a lack of education. And to top that off, being Hispanic, I knew going into some interviews that I had no chance,"

Barajas says. "However, I didn't focus on that. I was glad to get the interviews to hone my interview skills. That was not going to let me down."

While climbing the superintendent ranks, Barajas became a 5-

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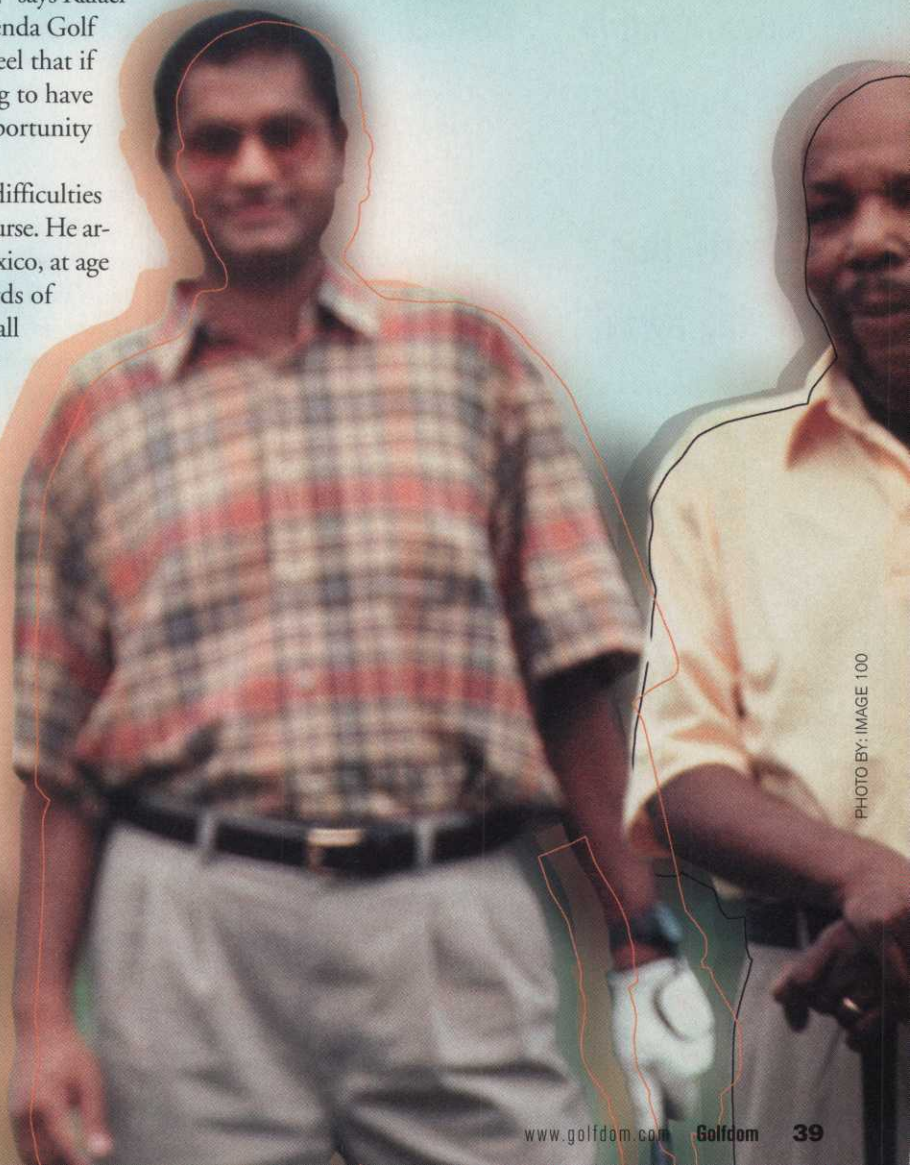


PHOTO BY: IMAGE 100



“I don’t think the staring is as much as it used to be. Slowly, that’s fading away.”

RAFAEL BARAJAS,
CERTIFIED SUPERINTENDENT,
HACIENDA GOLF CLUB

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handicap. Again, he made the accomplishment look easier than it was. At first, like many minorities, he couldn’t afford his own clubs. If a set of loaners wasn’t available, he trekked to the lost-and-found to mix and match sets. Once bitten by the golf bug, he had a difficult time finding other Hispanics to play alongside him. And without strength in numbers, visiting a golf course became all the more intimidating.

“I remember going to public golf courses and I wouldn’t want to go into the clubhouses. I didn’t feel welcome,” Barajas says. “People would just look at you, like, ‘What are you doing here?’ It wasn’t very inviting at all. It wasn’t friendly.”

That was in the 1980s and early ’90s. Since then, rare is the day when Barajas goes to a course — he’s played in the last 10 superintendent national championships — and feels like a second-class citizen; even, to his surprise, at a tournament in Mobile, Ala. “I don’t think the staring is as much as it used to be,” Barajas says. “Slowly, that’s fading away.”

But has it dissipated to the point where Asian-, Hispanic- and African-Americans can feel comfortable playing golf? More importantly, can they even afford the desire?

Not surprisingly, 70.8 percent of the core

golfers in the United States — those who play at least eight times a year — boast an annual household income of more than \$50,000, including 32.1 percent who earn more than \$100,000, according to a 2005 study by the NGF. While golf may be shedding its “white man’s” tag, disposing of its “rich man’s” label might be another story.

“I know if I had to pay, I couldn’t play the amount I even play,” Jerry Moore says.

Instead, Moore, the general manager at Alfred Tup Holmes Golf Course in Atlanta, gets to play free of charge whenever he finds the time. Meanwhile, his clients, about 60 percent of whom, like him, are black, have to balance their need to pay the mortgage with their desire to play the only course in Georgia named after an African-American.

“Cost of the game itself is prohibitive,” Moore says. “If I have \$40 in my pocket, do I eat, put gas in my car or go enjoy myself and the heck with the rest?”

And while golf expenses aren’t discriminatory, the economic status of African-Americans is disparate. The median household income for blacks is about 56 percent of that of whites, according to a recent report by the National Urban League. The unemployment rate for African-Americans is 10 percent, compared with 4.4 percent for Caucasians.

“No doubt the equipment and the sport are expensive,” Barajas says. “If you’re making \$8 an hour and you have a family of four and your house payment or rent payment is \$1,000, it doesn’t take a genius to figure out you aren’t going to have enough money to buy clubs or balls or pay for the green fees, even if they’re \$45, \$50 at the muni course. That’s a big hurdle that needs to be overcome.”

Nonetheless, a rich African-American is just as likely as a rich Caucasian to splurge on golf, according to the 2003 NGF survey. Participation rates among incomes more than \$100,000 are between 20 percent and 30 percent for both whites and minorities.

“I hear that all the time — that if we want to grow golf in the minority population, we have to make golf courses affordable,” Hoolehan says. “I don’t think that’s the case anymore. Affluence isn’t limited to white people any-

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