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Official Publication
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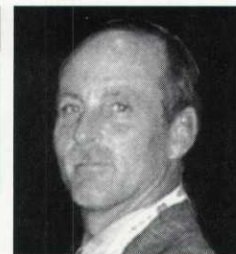
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

How We Can Deal With The Issues

By Robert Panuska



The importance of continuing education and networking has never been more critical to our jobs and the people that we work for than right now! We ALL need the support of each other to "deal" with the issues that seem to rear up each day. This may come in as questions or worse, accusations at a green committee or board meeting about the course conditions after a Minnesota winter or it may come in the form of a front page article in your local paper accusing "golf" of "killing" the environment and "wasting" natural resources. Perhaps even comments from members or patrons about your management of the course.

* * * *

Whatever the situation you find yourself, you have two choices: #1) Run and hide and pretend it didn't happen or #2) Call upon your vast experiences, your training and education and your "network" of peers to logically, professionally and calmly address the issue(s). Any of you who personally know me, know that I have a tendency to "get a bit excited" over these issues. I imagine that I am not alone and my hat is off to all the assistants and maintenance staff that "bear the brunt" of our overzealous reactions before we come back to reality and logically, professionally and calmly address the issue(s). Please take the time to read the three reprinted editorials in this issue from your peers in this association who responded very professionally to some very serious issues in their local papers. And, use them as templates for your own defense. Thank you gentlemen for representing this profession and association so well!

* * * *

On another note that is somewhat related, it seems that we are always "under the microscope" when it comes to our clientele comparing our course with another. I do need to preach to the choir on this because we all know the vast differences that exist between operations. I would like, however, to raise a challenge to each of you this year. It would seem to me that a reasonable comparison between courses might be the cost to maintain the greens on a course for a season per ,1000 square feet of green area. After all this would take into account the vast differences in construction types, fertility, disease management, cultural practices, irrigation practices and overall labor dedicated to the most important and expensive areas we maintain.

* * * *

It would take some time to break down the labor, equipment and irrigation costs but the end result would be the total cost to maintain YOUR greens at YOUR facility for a season. This number could be used to show our committees and ourselves what it takes to maintain what we have and what others spend in "comparison" so when we hear "why can't we have greens like....." We would have something of substance to evaluate our own situations. I personally do not know a superintendent out there that doesn't want to continue to improve their course and maybe this would help explain the difference? We'll see what we can come up with for a universal form that everyone could use to keep track of the costs; until then, why not keep track as best you can.

In closing this month, KUDOS to Jack MacKenzie, Hole Notes editor, and, Scott and Jeff Turtinen for their outstanding job on our publication. This new image publication is suitable to sit along side any golf industry rag I receive today!

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"Name the Caption Contest"

Beginning with the March issue of Hole Notes a "Name the Caption" contest has begun. Please e-mail jmackenzie426@msn.com with a caption for the above photo and/or send in your own "unique" photo for an upcoming issue of Hole Notes for the MGCSA's "Name the Caption" contest. John Monson wrote last month's winning caption for the photo below.

John Monson, Long Prairie Golf Club, spent the week at The Masters and thought a good caption for this photo would be: "After Philly Mick sank the putt on 18, confetti rained down, Hootie wasn't happy!"



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GOLF

The Most Environmentally Unfriendly Sport

By Don Gordon, Mankato Free Press

(Editor's Note: The following article appeared in the March 6, 2004, edition of the Mankato Free Press. Mankato Golf Club Superintendent and MGCSA past president Fred Taylor, CGCS, wrote a rebuttal to the views of the following article. You can find Taylor's rebuttal at the conclusion of the article on Page 7.)

Can you guess what is the world's most environmentally destructive sport? In the March/April issue of the journal Worldwatch, golf gets the infamous prize.

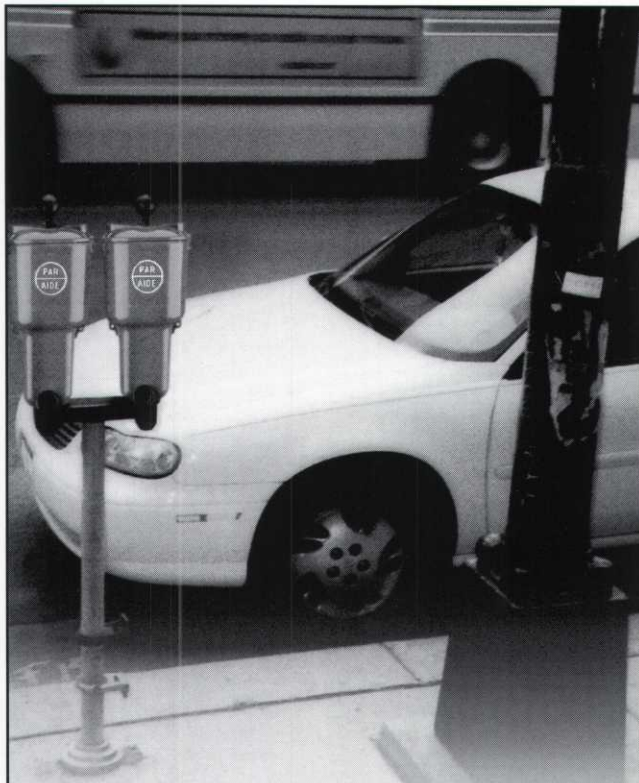
Here are some contrasting statistics from the journal which illustrate why golf is getting so much attention.

Water

It would take 2.5 billion gallons per



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day to support 4.7 million people at the United Nations daily minimum. An equal amount is needed daily to irrigate the world's courses. The amount of water used daily on one golf course in Thailand would be enough to supply a city of 60,000.

Pesticides

The average amount of pesticides used per acre by the world's farmers is 2.7 pounds. In contrast the average golf course uses 18 pounds per acre per year. I should point out that many golf courses use considerably less water and pesticides than the world averages. The progressive ones, including some locally, are reducing pesticide use by employing IPM (Integrated Pest Management).

In many areas, golf courses are saving water by using "gray" or recycled water. Perhaps the biggest environmental problem with golf is the impact it has had on home lawns. As a society, the standard for the lawn has become the golf course. For home lawns we now often plant elite grasses that were specifically designed for golf courses. These grasses are not overly disease resistant and they demand frequent water and nutrients.

I am convinced that future generations will find it hard to believe that our generation squandered the last drop of water from the Mt. Simon Aquifer to grow a grass that we can't even eat.

In an election year almost any criticism of President Bush will be dismissed by many as politically motivated, but when top scientists, many of whom served as past advisors to Republican presidents, speak out, it seems prudent to at least investigate the claims. The journal

(Continued on Page 7)

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Golf Courses –

(Continued from Page 5)

Science and The Detroit Free Press recently reported that 20 Nobel prize winners and scores of other top U.S. scientists are accusing the Bush administration of “suppressing, distorting or manipulating the work done by scientists at federal agencies.”

According to the reports, a Minnesota example of this suppression involved research findings by former USDA microbiologist, Michael Zahn. Zahn was studying antibiotic use on pig farms in Southwestern Minnesota, Northern Missouri and Iowa.

Quite by accident he found airborne bacteria were expelled from these farms and he speculated that heavy antibiotic use could produce resistant bacteria that could be inhaled by humans. Zahn thought his findings could have a potential impact on human health, but he claims the Bush administration stopped him from publishing the data 11 times.

Science reports that the Union of

Concerned Scientists has lambasted the White House for “ignoring or suppressing findings that don’t support the Administration’s views on everything from Iraqi weapons to climate change.” The Bush administration has fiercely denied the charges.

(Editor’s Note: Don Gordon is professor emeritus of botany at Minnesota State University. Send questions concerning horticulture or the environment with a stamped self-addressed envelope to him at 52974 Deerwood Trail, North Mankato, MN 56003 or e-mail to osokato@aol.com.)

Rebuttal By Fred Taylor, CGCS, Mankato Golf Club

After spending a lifetime on local golf courses, I am compelled to respond to Dr. Don Gordon's column of March 6. Although I have a deep respect for his knowledge of our environment and horticulture, the sensational headline denouncing golf as a major contributor to the

decline of our environment falls short of his genius. There is no doubt that golf courses use fertilizers, water and pesticides; however, the implication that golf courses are indiscriminately applying these products and squandering resources is an undeserving charge against the sport and the professionals who manage the world's golf courses.

Referring to Worldwatch, Gordon says the average course uses 18 pounds of pesticides per acre annually. This may or may not be factual, but the average golf course is using fewer pesticides than in the past. Newer chemistries have reduced use rates while improving efficacy. Where an older product may have needed one half of a pound per thousand square feet, some of the newer rates are typically from one-half to one-quarter ounces. In addition, university testing has shown synergism with some older fungicides that have reduced their rates by as much as 50%. Biological control products are also being used by superintendents to complement their chemical and cultural programs, further

(Continued on Page 10)



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INSIGHT

One Superintendent's Perspective – Marlow Hansen

Course and Statistics

Forest Hills Golf Club, located three miles east of Forest Lake, was established in 1960. The architects were several local businessmen at a local tavern and plans were sketched on Hamm's beer napkins which are still around. It is an 18-hole private club with 350 members. Built on only 120 acres it plays 6,514 yards from the back tees with small "push up" greens with a bentgrass/poa mix throughout the greens, tees and fairways.

Biography

I spent seven years on the grounds crew at Forest Hills, a year on the grounds crew in Florida and 18 years as Superintendent at Forest Hills. Without any formal vocational background I've made an effort to enroll in any turf-related seminars available.

Why And/or How Did You Enter the Turf Management Industry?

Growing up living very near the course and playing it with my father by day and running around it by night, at a very young age I knew what I wanted to do...manage a golf course.

Who Was Your Professional Mentor and Why?

Being a young 25-year-old inexperienced Superintendent/manager I was fortunate to have an older gentleman named Bill Peitz working as our mechanic. Bill had worked in the turf industry as Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent and/or mechanic for many years. Not only did Bill teach me a lot, but more importantly (I realized later) that he let me learn from my mistakes...meaning he wouldn't always tell me how something should be done...but let me learn on my own and then offer his insight.

What Has Been the Highest Point in Your Career?

Emotionally I get a high each and every time I drive around the golf course at the end of the day when it's really looking its best! And when I meet a past employee or his parents and with a handshake they thank me for the years they worked for me were the best and funniest time of their

lives.

What Has Been Your Lowest Point?

I guess that would be the drought summer of 1988. With only a quick coupler irrigation system it was pretty ugly out there and wasn't much you could do about it.

Are Your Greatest Challenges Political, Agronomic or Managerial?

Explain. Definitely political, it's an endless challenge to deal with personalities of a revolving Green Committee and BOD.

What is the Most Difficult Disease To Manage on Your Course And How Do You?

We have poorly draining soils both peat and clay so Pythium on our fairways is our biggest concern. Preventive has been the key, using a variety of products depending on the pressure, (Heritage, Nutri-Grow, Alliette) Do a lot of scouting and spot spraying, keep fertility and soil moisture to a minimum.

"Tia is a Red Setter. She is 8 years old now and has come to work with me every day since she was a puppy. We rarely see a goose on the course, she leaves the ducks alone, the members love her, and it was their idea to put her on the payroll at \$600 year."

Is It Hard to Find Good Help In Your Area of the State?

Fortunately it is not. We have reduced the number of high school age employees and have turned to the more reliable "retirees" and turf students.

Do You Have a Dog on Your Crew?

Absolutely! Tia is a Red Setter. She is eight years old now and has come to work with me every day since she was a puppy. We rarely see a goose on the course, she leaves the ducks alone, the members love her and it was their idea to put her on the payroll at \$600 year.



Marlow Hansen and Tia

Where Will Our Industry Be in Ten Years?

Things have advanced so greatly since the 80s, it's hard to imagine what another 10 years will bring...maybe a chemical product that you apply once or twice a year and it controls everything! I just hope that the cost of technology of chemicals, equipment and high maintenance does not price out the little guy from playing golf.

Where Would You Like To Be in Ten Years?

I'd like to be living in a small house on a beautiful lake in northern Minnesota, maybe in the golf industry...maybe not. I am thinking by then it will be time for a change!

What is Your Perspective Of Our State Association and What Would You Change?

I feel our association does a very fine job of supporting its members, educationally and with the latest technology.

Name Your Foursome, Who Would You Play With and Why?

Tiger Woods and his girlfriend, myself and my girlfriend.

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Taylor's Rebuttal—

(Continued from Page 7)

reducing the need for chemical pesticides.

Due to the nature of the wear and divot-taking on golf turf, increased fertility is needed for recovery. Strides have been made in slow release nitrogen technology, which can reduce leaching and volatilization of these products. Additionally, an increasing number of superintendents are turning to foliar feeding of turf stands. This procedure involves ultra-low application rates of nutrients that are taken up by the plant leaves. This practice also reduces the risk of nutrient run-off, in addition to reducing the overall amount of fertilizer applied. Turf breeders are constantly trying to create cultivars that resist pests, and use nutrients efficiently, while also providing an acceptable playing surface.

Irrigation of golf turf is one of the most expensive and technological demanding practices on the golf course. A state-of-the-art sprinkler system installed on an 18-hole course can cost upwards of \$1 million. Interestingly, the reason that these systems are so complex and costly is for the efficiency of water application, not for increased output. It is true that most courses use potable water for irrigation. The use of effluent water is an alternative, but the poor quality of the water can lead to many plant-health and soil problems. Superintendents have learned that the judicious use of water leads to fewer fungal problems, and a firmer, faster playing surface.

Dr. Gordon does point out some of the challenges of today's golf course superintendent. He adds that many homeowners try to have their lawns look like a golf course. In the golf industry, there is a parallel analogy colloquially known as The Augusta Syndrome. That is to say that all golf courses are compared to the pristine conditions of Augusta National, where nary a weed is to be seen, not a blade of grass is out of place. It is the perfect picture of golf. As golfers look for these immaculate conditions on their own courses, superintendents are caught between budgetary and environmental considerations, and providing what is perceived as necessary for the enjoyment of the game.

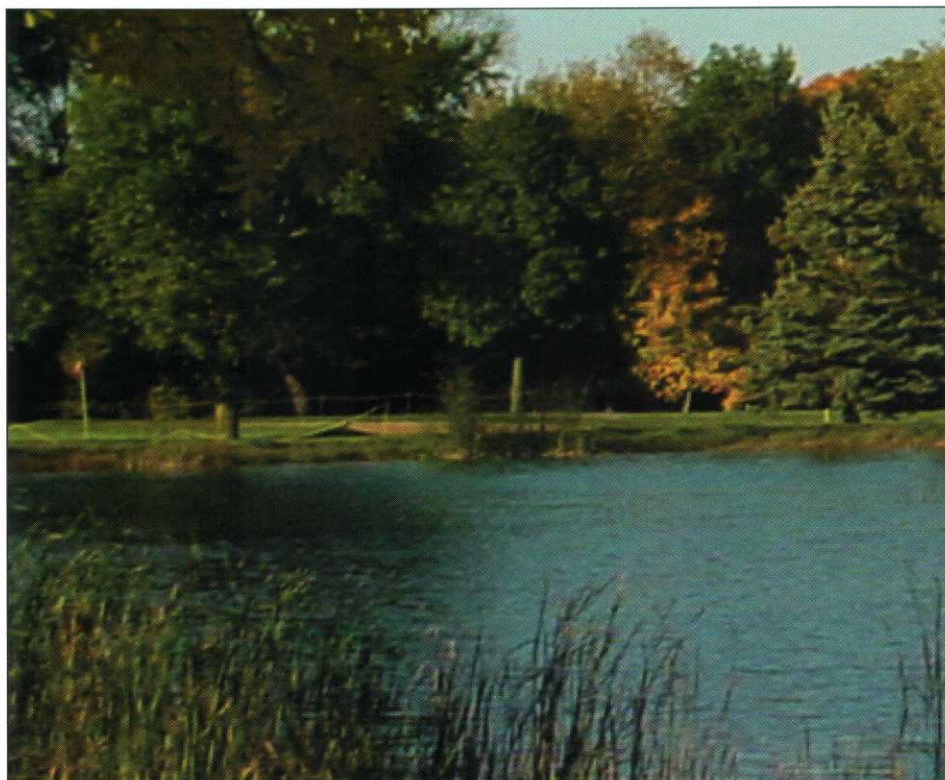
There is a place for golf courses in the modern environment. Courses that are properly designed, constructed and maintained can add beauty, create oxygen, stabilize soil, provide wildlife habitat, and add to the quality of life for the patrons



Mankato Golf Club embraces the beauty of nature.

who enjoy the game. With the proper education and experience, golf course superintendents can effectively manage this delicate balance between environmental

stewardship and the demands of championship course conditioning, but only if the expectations of both golfer and environmentalist are reasonable and attainable.



Another view of an environmentally secure area at Mankato Golf Club.