



All slopes were hydroseeded to establish plants that provide year-around color. Alyssum and nasturtium pictured.

The Challenge of Industry Hills

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IT IS A GREAT privilege for me to be on this first joint USGA Green Section and GCSAA program today. For the next few minutes, I would like to tell you not only about the Challenge of Industry Hills, but a challenge I believe we all face in the coming years. This audience is made up of diverse interests in the game — administrators, turfgrass managers, agronomists, manufacturers of equipment, professionals — indeed, the leadership of golf today. We are being challenged to do what is right and best for the game we all love.

Well, as many of you know, I have had the great good fortune of being a

member of the USGA Green Section Staff for 26 of the last 29 years. The 26 years were happy ones for me! I must warn you that I believe fervently in the work and the great good of the Green Section! It is a most unusual organization and no one has put it in better perspective than Herb Graffis when he wrote:

“There is no other organization in all of sports that has done more for the beauty, enjoyment and betterment of life in America than the USGA Green Section.”

That’s a real tribute!

Why, then, would anyone give up a nice, warm, secure, prestigious job with the USGA for one in the combat zone of turfgrass management? The fellow must be crazy! I assure you, it was not heroic! But there were challenges at Industry Hills. There was an unequalled opportunity to become involved in an extraordinary undertaking in golf.

On a more personal level, there was another challenge. You know, if all you do is *talk* about a subject for 26 years and never actually experience the results yourself, you awake in the middle of the night and secretly wonder, “Does this really work?” You begin to

doubt your own words. Are the preachings of 26 years really on the right track?

I can remember having similar doubts when, as a recently graduated navigator during World War II, I started out on my first overseas flight to Hawaii in a B-25. I knew Hawaii was out there somewhere, and I felt reasonably competent in navigation, but could I really pull this off? It was a challenge! Happy to say, Diamondhead came up on the horizon at about the right time. And, by the same token, the Green Section's recommendations really do work! There is a great deal of satisfaction in such events.

Another challenge presented by Industry Hills was a long-held belief that the public fee golfer has been cheated over the years, that he deserves something better than mediocre or worse turfgrass conditions found on so many municipal and fee courses today. I believe the future of golf lies in public links play, in municipally or corporation owned courses. Surely the private club will always be with us, but who will deny its declining role? For the future well-being of the game, the public play sector must be encouraged, increased and improved. Here is a great opportunity for all of us in golf to make a contribution. Too many public-fee/municipal type golf operations need help in course conditioning and turfgrass management. Indeed, I have found that most golfers (whether public fee or private) are far more concerned with the playing qualities found on their home courses than "what's going on in the PGA Tour, major tournaments, in golf magazines or on the sports pages."

OUR CHALLENGE is to provide good playing conditions for all golfers, and especially to improve them for the public fee player.

Right from the start, there has been a genuine desire to develop and operate a first-class public facility at Industry Hills. I am sure there is an expectation for profit and at least a desire to break even financially at the earliest possible date, but the philosophy to this point has been to do things right and what is best for the game and the golf courses. We want to be the best in the country, and I have been given support to reach that goal.

Several years ago, The City of Industry, which is located approximately 20 miles southeast of Los Angeles, anticipated filling a 640-acre dump site within the city and planned the development of Industry Hills — a recreation and conference center. About four years and 60 million municipal bond dollars later, the project opened as a public facility in May, 1979. Since then, 36 holes of golf have opened for play with over eight miles of cart paths, nine lakes, a fully automatic and computerized irrigation system, 160 bunkers and a 150-foot fountain, computer controlled. It also has a two-decked practice driving range.

The three-story conference center itself is one of the most modern and well-equipped facilities of its kind in the world. From a magnificent golf library (second only to the USGA Golf House Library), to four restaurants, meeting rooms, a grand ballroom capable of serving over 1,100 guests —

exceptional golf shop, locker rooms, helicopter pad — and now the construction of an 11-story, 330-room hotel — Industry Hills has a future.

There is also a swim and tennis club with 17 lighted courts, an Olympic-size pool and adjacent warm-up pool. Work is already underway on an equestrian center capable of handling over 200 horses on more than 11 miles of bridle trails. We will have a 100-acre park with walking trails and picnic facilities.

At St. Andrews Station, the funicular railroad delivers golf carts from both the Eisenhower and the Zaharias courses to a snack bar that will take you back to the era of steam transportation. Winston Churchill's railroad car also awaits at the station.

In spite of four methane gas wells on the property, the site offers unbelievable views.

In spite of the intensive effort, we have surely missed perfection. But, at least the opportunity to move constantly in the right direction for golf has presented itself and we are trying to take every advantage of it.

THERE HAVE BEEN many challenges at Industry Hills. The golf courses themselves were designed to be challenging and tough. Like them or not, no one can honestly say they lack interest and excitement! During construction, it was a constant challenge to keep abreast of the contractors and their maneuverings. It was a challenge to bring new grass into acceptable playing turf on 400 acres. It is a challenge to grow grass, trees and flowers on a dump site with methane gas wells in full production. It was, and still is, a challenge to develop an entirely new maintenance crew and to keep abreast of *their* maneuverings. It is a challenge to adjust to the life and tribulations of the golf course superintendent. To appreciate anew the toughest, most demanding and unpredictable job in all of golf.

Probably the greatest challenge of all is to provide a meeting place for this game. To develop a public facility which will meet Dr. Robert Forgan's definition of the game:

"Golf is a means of going into God's out-of-doors, getting close to nature, fresh air, exercise, a sweeping away of mental cobwebs, genuine recreation of tired tissues. Golf is a cure for care, an antidote for worry; it promotes not only physical health but moral force."

Typical rough on both courses.

