

Racist country club no site for toumey

Hooray for honest racists.

The PGA Golf Championship, one of golf's four major tournaments, is going to be played at the Shoal Creek Country Club next week in Birmingham, Ala. The club, founded in 1977, does not admit blacks, said founder Hall Thompson, because "that's just not done in Birmingham."

Not that this is really big news. About half of the golf tournaments on the PGA tour are played at exclusionary clubs. But no one has been as honest about the reason for all-white inclusion as Hall Thompson.

One "legitimate" reason for all-white memberships at the country clubs where golf tournaments are played is that it can cost up to \$50,000 just to join. Throw in \$3,000 for yearly dues and not many blacks — or many whites for that matter — can afford it.

Secondly, how many blacks want to join all-white clubs, especially ones with exclusionary histories?

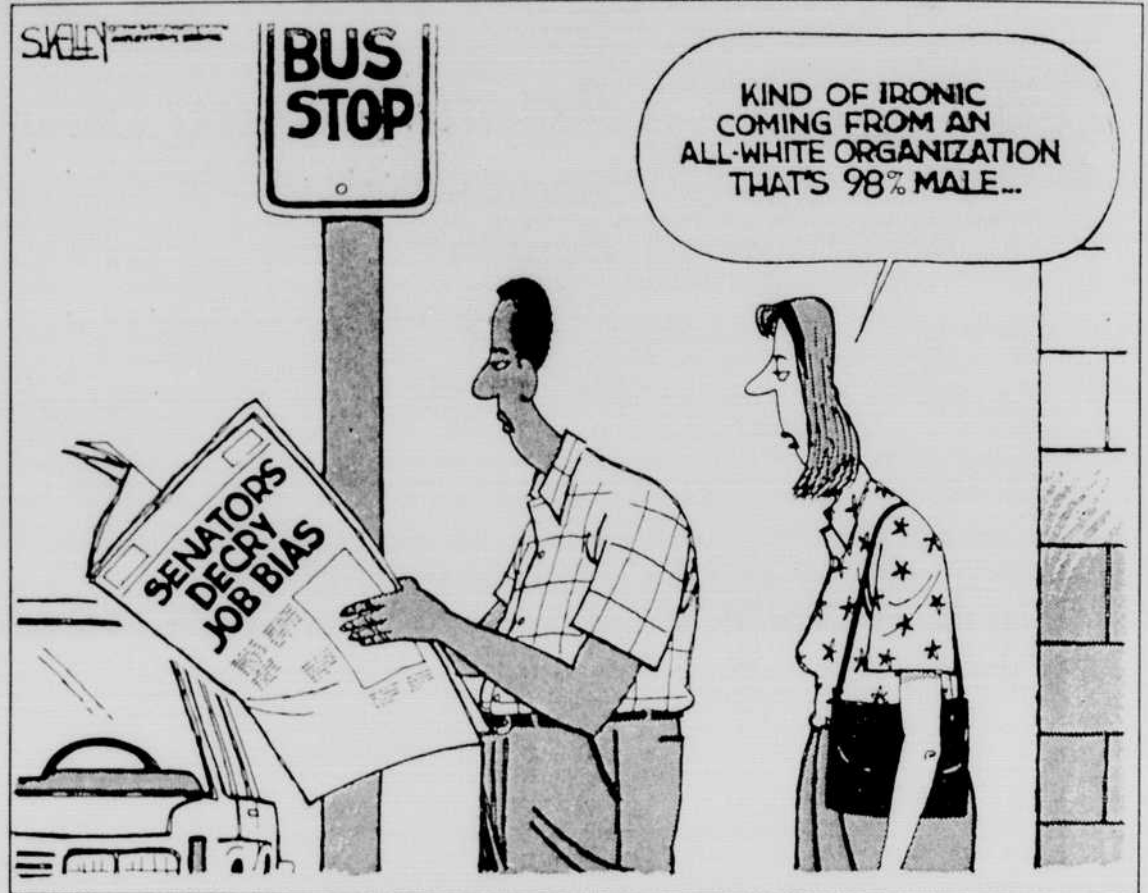
But Thompson, obviously a good ol' boy, should get credit for being honest. He should also be run out of town. When he was asked why his club has no blacks, he told it like it is.

Major television advertisers of the tournament, such as IBM, Toyota and Anheuser-Busch, have decided not to run their ads during the tournament. An unidentified PGA spokesman said pro golf was disappointed and concerned about the corporations' pull-outs because of the PGA's position against discrimination. This is a strange statement considering the most important PGA golf tournament in the world, the Master's, is played at an all-white club in Augusta, Ga.

Birmingham Mayor Richard Arrington, who is black, said his city has made racial progress in the last 20 years. He also said Shoal Creek Country Club has made a commitment that blacks will be considered for membership within six months. After 13 years, what's another 6 months? Enough time to forget about the problem.

But that's not enough. Stories about racism belong in the news pages, not just the sports pages. Roseanne Barr screeches the national anthem at a baseball game and it's front-page news. But racism in golf is relegated to the sports pages. This is totally absurd. Who is going to sing the national anthem at the PGA tournament? It won't be Harry Belafonte or Michael Jackson.

Subtle racism exists in all sports. But at least the problems are getting attention in team sports such as baseball and football. Golf has escaped the racism question so far. But thanks to an honest racist, it can't hide its exclusionary tactics anymore.



Ethics: public has right to know

Senator C.T. "Cub" Houck, R-Salem, has been under investigation by the state Government Ethics Commission for a while now. The commission has found probable cause that Houck may have used his office for personal gain.

Now Houck's lawyer, John DiLorenzo, has made a proposal to the Senate Committee on Government Operations to restrict the release of information until the investigation is complete.

The Committee has sent a survey to members of the media seeking information about how often and under what conditions they talk with ethics commission members and staff. The surveys should go straight into the recycling bin.

It's nobody's business who the media talks to. Houck and his lawyer raise more suspicion by trying to prohibit the release of information from the commission. One state senator said the Ethics Commission invites criticism if it's perceived they are making statements to the press before their investigation is complete. The same senator also said the possible harm that could be wreaked on public officials outweighs the

public's right to know.

Wrong. The public's right to know comes first when the situation involves elected representatives or tax dollars. Information should be released as it is received. If the situation is serious enough, it would be a travesty to continue paying elected officials if they have engaged in unlawful or unethical activity.

Houck does not say whether or not he should be privy to information that the public is not. It benefits everyone involved to learn about situations as they arise. The press plays an important part in keeping government officials honest because of the availability of information.

Houck has denied the charges against him. If he is not guilty, what is he afraid of? Why didn't his lawyer make this proposal before Houck came under investigation?

Houck should back off. If the system's not broken, don't try to fix it.

If someone is suspected of violating ethics, the public has a right to know. Just because someone is arrested does not make them guilty. But the public has that right to know. They always have. They always will.

Forum

Emerald editorial on Research Park not in students' interest

By Howard Bonnett

Last fall, the *Emerald* published an editorial titled, "Let Groundbreaking on Park Begin Soon." I have waited for some kind of editorial retrenchment from the final paragraph all year, since it read: "Because the location is ideal, and because the Riverfront Research Park's designers have satisfied the area's ecology and recreational use concerns."

Commentary

Of course, we all know the only ground which has been broken in the meantime has been part of the search to find how many toxic compounds lurk beneath the surface. No one knows where they are now.

That they were buried there by University employees has

been known by University officials for several years. How many PCBs and other carcinogens might be present from EWEB's use of University property on the riverfront to store transformers? What was buried in the Silva Orchard in the illegal borrow pit and landfill operated by the University in this sensitive area within the boundaries of the Willamette Greenway. Does this situation sound like the Riverfront Research Park's designers have satisfied the area's ecology?

The preponderance of public testimony regarding the research park supported retention and reclamation of the land between the railroad and the river for recreational uses. These uses were proposed by the University of Oregon before a couple of people decided a research park was a better idea.

As a first stage in development of recreational facilities, the best soccer field in the area was built at a cost of \$600,000, paid with student funds, not University funds. The *Emerald* asserts that "the soccer field" would remain. That assertion is greatly misleading, since the plan calls for it to be moved, narrowed, and shortened in order to provide for a broad street between the field and the tracks, a bicycle trail between the field and the top of the river bank, and buildings on either side. This field was to be only the first of four playing fields to be built at this site. Where will satisfactory alternative sites for playing fields be found? Who will pay for them? Why is the *Emerald* not representing student interests and financial investments? How will the \$600,000 (1986 dollars) invest-

ment of the students in their recreation be replaced? What assurances are there that additional student funds will not be squandered? What did the University bury in the Silva Orchard pit?

Most insulting of all was the paragraph in the *Emerald* editorial stating that park opponents had been unwilling to compromise. In fact, opponents of the Riverfront Research Park have consistently been excluded from the decision-making process. No opponent has been appointed to the Design Review Committee or the Riverfront Commission.

At public hearings on plan alternatives, most testimony from the public opposed development north of the railroad tracks, requiring expensive underpasses. Perhaps a suitable compromise would be to limit

development to south of the tracks and plan for recreational uses of the riverbank by the University community. Isn't it strange that the largest concentration of persons in Eugene work and attend classes at the University and yet they have the least access to recreational enjoyment of the river.

Frankly, I'm fearful of the University's role in the Riverfront Research Park in view of their past record of stewardship of their riverfront property. There has been dumping of toxic wastes, illegal topsoil removal and dumping in Silva Orchard, and intentional concealment of information. Maybe we should let sleeping toxins lie and make sure we don't dump more toxins along the river under the guise of a research park.

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