Join us in February....

**USGA Green Section Reports:**
Recovering from Winterkill  
Feb. 3 at Noon, Central

Three USGA regional agronomists will share their strategies during this 90-minute session, launching the new USGA/GCSAA series.

**Lunch & Learn series:**
Using Groomers to Condition Your Turf  
Feb. 9 at Noon, Central

*presented live from the education conference in Orlando*

Milt Engelke, Ph.D. will share research results, including photos that compare field plot conditions.

**Live @ 5IVE series:**
Rescue 911 for Turfgrass Frostbite & Heat Exhaustion  
Feb. 22 at 5 p.m., Central

Jack Fry, Ph.D., gives you the details you need to know about these seasonal stresses. Our new time slot helps you end the day on a positive note.

Seating is limited! See the complete calendar at www.gcsaa.org or call 800-472-7878 to register by phone.
Children and Purple Martins

Not only do golf courses and purple martins go together, so do children and purple martins. Getting children and martins together on a golf course is a win-win situation.

A while back, Olde Florida Golf Club sponsored one of my purple martin apartments for the Laurel Oak Elementary School. For a couple of springs, the students helped me get the apartment ready for returning birds. During the outings I would present a short program on martins in the field. In early May I would lower the apartment for the students to see the eggs and young. We would then return to the classroom for a brief slide show. Both the teachers and students were extremely positive about these activities.

When teaching bird watching to fifth graders, I found purple martins to be good subjects for beginning birders to observe and practice binocular skills. Student powers of observation are heightened while determining the difference between males and female martins and between first-year and older breeding adults. Because martins are “in your face” birds they provide an outstanding opportunity to discuss many aspects of bird behavior and biology while at the colony location.

Once a golf course has three or four colonies going, it should be possible, for a period of six or so weeks, to have four or five students weekly lower the apartments and take egg and young data. In the classroom, students can present their data and follow and compare each colony for the study period. Mathematical skills can be practiced by determining means, modes and averages for each colony and the entire golf course. Also there would be an opportunity for students to relate field observations of martin behavior (and golf course stewardship) to the rest of the class.

School children can learn a lot about purple martins and environmental stewardship on golf course by helping to install and monitor colonies on golf courses. Photo by George McBath.
Don’t miss it. That’s the bottom line.

Golf Industry Show
GCSAA + NGCOA

ORLANDO Orange County
February 7–12 2005

For information, call 800.472.7878 or register now at golfindustryshow.com
Ring Around the Collars

By Brian Unruh, Ph.D.

Over the past several years, superintendents from Memphis to West Palm Beach have observed small, ring-like symptoms on their bermudagrass putting greens (Fig. 2). Symptoms typically begin to show up in the springtime, with small rings and/or patches of damaged turf. As the season progresses, the rings and patches slowly grow in size or disappear completely, or disappear and then reappear later in the season. At the onset of bermudagrass dormancy, the rings and patches become most pronounced and superintendents and golfers are forced to live with the unsightliness through the busy winter season. Because of the nature of the small rings, Dr. Mike Healy of Healy and Associates, Inc., has dubbed the phenomenon “Mini-Ring disease.”

Although ultradwarf bermudagrass varieties are the most common hosts of the unwanted rings, the 2004 season revealed that Tifdwarf and possibly Tifgreen are susceptible as well. Similarly, ring symptoms were thought to be found mainly on high sand content, low cation-exchange-capacity (CEC) putting greens. However, rings have been observed in various conditions.
sighted on native soil, push-up greens which have higher CECs and higher organic matter content. These conditions suggest that the soil’s water-holding and/or nutrient-holding capacity may somehow be involved in the development of this condition.

Larry Stowell, of PACE Turfgrass Research Institute in San Diego, has noted the hydrophobic nature of the mycelium growing over the surface of a sample of TifEagle from Mississippi. In non-damaged areas of the turf, water droplets are immediately absorbed into the thatch, but in damaged areas, the water droplet remains on the turf surface without being absorbed (Fig. 3). In some cases — but not all — superintendents observing the rings on their putting greens regularly use wetting agents.

Superintendents have racked their brains trying to find common denominators but have found exceptions to most hypotheses. Observations that tend to recur are:

• Rings are worse in surface drainage areas (Fig. 1).
• Increased mowing height (collar) does not appear to relieve symptoms (Fig. 1).
• Subtle rings can be masked by increased nitrogen fertility.
• In the spring, the overseed is stimulated in the ring (Fig. 4).

Dr. Stowell states: “The cause of the condition remains a mystery at this point. Although several different fungi have been identified from turf samples (including Rhizoctonia, Curvularia, fairy ring and ectotrophic root-infecting fungi, spring dead spot), no one fungus stands out as the culprit. In some cases, the damaged areas are hydrophobic (water repellant), a condition that can develop due to the growth of a large number of bacteria and/or fungi.”

In extensive fungicide research and demonstration trials, the symptoms are not easily relieved via fungicide applications alone. Minimal to no control has been achieved from applications of major turf fungicides including the SI, QoI, benzimidazole, dicarboximide, and multi-site products. To date, the only treatments that appear to alleviate the symptoms are various combinations of nitrogen, peat, zeolite and the humus/manure-based products.

A team of turf scientists, plant pathologists, and industry leaders including Dr. Stowell; Dr. Phil Colbaugh, Texas A&M University; Dr. Phil Harmon, University of Florida; Dr. Healy; Dr. Henry Wetzel, Syngenta Crop Protection, Inc.; Mr. Steve Davis, Bayer Environmental Sciences; and the author are diligently working on this serious turf problem. When more information is learned, it will be made available.
California Dreamin’ in Southwest Florida

By Kyle D. Sweet, CGCS

(Editor’s note: Stories like the one Kyle Sweet is sharing here is but one more example of the talent, imagination, creativity and adaptability of golf course superintendents everywhere. By displaying a “can do” attitude, superintendents demonstrate their value to their clubs in many unexpected ways. They just don’t teach this stuff at turf school.)

Today’s golf course superintendent is a far cry from the role filled many years ago. The rising expectations for turfgrass management, environmental safety, and ongoing labor challenges are enough to keep anyone busy. Well, for the fun of it, let’s add golfer/member relations to that laundry list. Although this may be an area that many of us shy away from, I would like to highlight one great evening at The Sanctuary Golf Club that might just change your mind.

The golf season in Southwest Florida takes place from November to April. Early in the 2003/2004 golf season, a group of five members approached me about hosting a “California Dreamin’” party for more than 200 members at my maintenance facility. Their ideas were excellent and without hesitation I began to work with them on the party that took place Feb. 29, 2004.

Although our facility is only a few hundred feet from the best beaches on the Gulf Coast, we needed the beach at our front door. With 20 tons of fresh bunker sand delivered, we got it. All of the equipment was removed from the shop. If it wasn’t bolted down, it was removed. And we placed the sand throughout the entire equipment-storage area with a front-end loader. A dance floor was created with sand approximately 6 inches deep and, throughout many seating areas, the sand was installed at a 3-inch depth. A bunker rake was used to thoroughly smooth the surface and the result was amazing.

That was the easy part. Now, with the sand in place, the members and an interior decorating company sprang into action and decorated both

How to build a beach. Start with 20 tons of sand and an empty maintenance building.
the interior and exterior with palm trees, murals, ceiling coverings, food and beverage tents, bars, and seating for more than 200. Once the band set up, the preparation was complete, and the facility didn’t look or feel much like the “shop” we started with earlier in the day.

Fortunately, my family and I were invited to attend along with my two long-term assistants. We greeted many members attending the party, took photographs, and of course discussed questions or comments about the golf course. The Sanctuary food and beverage department supplied the finest food and drink for the evening and a wonderful time was had by the members and staff alike.

Now, several weeks later, our department is still hearing the compliments on our cooperative effort with our members and the use of our facility in creating a “California Dreamin’” party that everyone will remember.
2004 Photo Contest Results

Category 2 – Formal Landscape

Formal landscape beds add color and visual appeal to golf courses, but they also require maintenance. Congratulations to the winners:

First Place – “Old Hickory Main Entrance” by John Stach, Old Hickory G&CC, Ft. Myers

Second Place – “No. 16 Tee Azaleas in Bloom” by Tom Biggy, Bent Tree, Sarasota

Category 1 – Wildlife on the Course: includes any critter on the course that walks, flies, swims, slithers or crawls.
Category 2 – Formal Landscaping: includes annuals and ornamental shrubs and trees planted in formal beds on the course or club entrance.

Category 3 – Native Areas: includes beds of native plants including trees, shrubs and grasses used in naturalized areas to reduce turf inputs and aquatic vegetation plantings used to create habitat and protect water quality.
Category 4 – Scenic Hole: includes any view of a golf hole (panoramic or close up) that demonstrates the scenic beauty of a golf course.

Easy Rules

1. Color prints or slides. Prefer prints. Only one entry per category. Digital images: Digital image entries must be taken at a resolution setting of 300 dpi or higher and saved as jpeg or tiff (tif) format images. Images taken, saved and sent at lower resolutions will not qualify for the contest. If you’re not sure, send a print instead.

2. Photo must be taken on an FGCSA member’s course. Photo must be taken by an FGCSA member or a member of his staff.

3. Attach a label on the back of the print or slide which identifies the category, course and photographer. DO NOT WRITE DIRECTLY ON THE BACK OF THE PRINT. Each print shall be attached to an 8.5-inch x 11-inch sheet of paper using a loop of masking tape on the back of the print. Slides should be in plastic sleeves for easy access for viewing. Digital images must be accompanied by the same information in an email or document, or on a CD.

4. A caption identifying the category, course and photographer should be typed or printed on the sheet of paper below the mounted print.

5. Judging will be done by a panel of FGCSA members not participating in the contest.

6. Mail entries in a bend proof package marked PHOTOS DO NOT BEND to Joel Jackson, 6780 Tamarind Circle, Orlando, 32819. Entries postmarked after August 1, 2005 will be automatically entered in the 2006 Photo Contest.

2005 Photo Contest

Category 1 – Wildlife on the Course: includes any critter on the course that walks, flies, swims, slithers or crawls.
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The year 2004 produced some memorable moments in sports.

The biggest was the amazing run of the Boston Red Sox, who won eight straight games to win the World Series. And how appropriate that their final victory came on the evening of a lunar eclipse. Or that's what the astronomers told us happened. I believe that in actual fact the moon disappearing was the “Bambino” looking down from on high and with a big wink said “OK, I for give them after 86 years.” The Yaz couldn’t do it, Fred Lynne couldn’t do it, the grounder through Bill Buckner’s legs kept them from doing it, but finally the curse is over.

Snuffed out by gutsy pitching, long balls and Irish Luck. The Bosox are World Champs.

How about Vijay Singh? Ten tournaments, and almost $11 million. That’s one dollar for every practice ball he hit in the last twelve months. Then there’s the Tiger who slipped from number 1 to number 3.

Mild distractions like a new 155-foot, $57 million yacht, a Caribbean wedding which attracted a Who’s Who from across the globe, and the Swedish beauty herself. I'm glad to see him squeezing something beside a Golf Pride grip. About time he stopped to smell the roses, the sweet fruit of his labor, to become a complete person and not just a golf machine.

And then there’s his Orlando neighbor, Annika Sorenstam. Ten wins worldwide and over $2.5 million and already a member of the Hall of Fame, I don’t know how she keeps herself mentally for the most mentally challenging game in the world. Maybe, if they have her at the Skins game again next year, they will let her hit from the tees about 40 yards up from the guys. Having her hit from the same tees as the men is like going bear hunting with a stick.

Philly Mick ended his own curse with a Masters win. Now he is not the best player in the world without a Major victory. And how about Phil’s final round in the Grand Slam of Golf: just missing a nine-footer on the 18th for 58? He joins the 59 club. He did this after taking two weeks off before the event and announced after his triumph that he was going to take the next three weeks off. Must be nice! Wouldn’t you love to take a few weeks off after successfully overseeding your greens or completing a renovation project? Gee, them Tour pros got it tough.

How about those 2 and 9 (at this point) Dolphins? Who would have thunk it. At least their horrible season saw the departure of Dave Wrongstadt. The team needs a complete overhaul: new offensive line, new receivers, new quarterback, new running back (<ITAL>machts nichts</ITAL> on No. 34), a new front office and let’s get Jerry Glanville out of retirement to coach. Miami needs a House of Pain and you gotta love a guy who always left two tickets at will call for Elvis.

I think the Gators made a big mistake...
AFTERWORDS

Handling Those Milestones

Many of these events are life defining, and the wrinkles and gray hairs earned here are more about character and responsibility than achievements earned by the mere passage of time.

Passed milestones can be like running a marathon. Sometimes you hit the wall and other times you slip into that elusive “zone” and things go smoothly. No matter where you are in the race; things can change on a dime and there are no guarantees. Well there is one; I guarantee only you can screw up a good thing for no apparent reason. It could be personal. It could be business. It could be political. It doesn’t really matter in the end. You may or may not get justice for some bonehead decision. Life is not always fair; it just goes on. And so must you.

I ride the roller coaster with all of you. I tickle me to hear of a superintendent celebrating his 10th, 20th, 30th year at a club. It saddens me to hear about folks with the same tenures being let go, and w e never seem to know exactly why. But we have lingered long enough at the termination milestone. Too many have passed it, but thankfully most have survived and found out there is life after being fired, so you’ve got that going for you.

At age 40 you can start your second childhood. When you turn 50, AARP sends you an invitation to join and start getting those automatic senior citizen discounts. One of my friends says he has signed up, and he has to live to 84 before contemporaries who wait till they are eligible for full retirement catch up to him; for my age group that’s almost age 66. That’s one of those milestones I’m trying to figure out how to handle intelligently.

Meanwhile, I’m happy doing what I do and I hope you are too. If not, then you really should be looking inward to find out what you would like to do and start moving in that direction. It makes no sense to wander aimlessly down the road of life with your shoulder to the grindstone and miss out on all the wondrous sights along the way.

The good and bad milestones on your life’s journey will come automatically with or without your help. They say you only go ’round once in life, but if you do it right, once is enough. I’ll drink to that.

While many of you were throwing down overseed to end a rough, hurricane-infested summer and sow hope for a better fall, and while sports teams were setting new all-time lows for sportsmanship in basketball and football, I was quietly becoming eligible for early Social Security at the ripe old age of 62. On the up side I may soon be able to shoot my age in golf, at least I’ll keep trying and I hope you will too.

All of us pass many milestones on the road of life, and let’s be truthful, some of them can be stumbling blocks and obstacles that make us lose sight of the big picture. But most of our milestones are ceremonial, like attaining a certain age that bestows privileges like a having a driver’s license, the right to vote, consuming a cold beer legally and alas finally drawing Social Security.

Other milestones might include graduating from college, getting married, having and raising kids, surviving a serious accident or health problem and being successful in your work.

In our sometimes-volatile business, superintendents find themselves holding pink slips on Friday or upon return from vacation or a conference trip and wondering, “What the heck happened?” The course never looked sharper, the crew is happy, the members seemed to be happy, the budget is in line with projections — what is the problem? The problem is that people in charge are only human and they can screw up a good thing for no apparent reason. It could be personal. It could be business. It could be political. It doesn’t really matter in the end. You may or may not get justice for some bonehead decision. Life is not always fair; it just goes on. And so must you.

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Late breaking news...

Just when Floridians are putting their lives and property back together from four hurricanes, along comes the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunamis that have killed more than 120,000 people (as of Dec. 31). The total devastation to the homes and infrastructure and overwhelming loss of life are almost incomprehensible.

The disruption and destruction to Floridian’s lives and property is no less real, but the magnitude of the Asian Rim disaster must have us counting our blessings in retrospect. People still need help and support here at home, and so do the devastated citizens in the Far East.

The forces of nature have a way of reminding us how fragile mankind can be in the world around us. Against the backdrop of this awful natural catastrophe and its far reaching consequences, the killings and loss of life for political reasons in the midst and elsewhere only proves how arrogant and shallow some humans can be.

Let us resolve to live better lives in the coming year and give thanks for our blessings every day.

- Joel Jackson, CGCS

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