Flood devastates Texas courses

By Peter Blais
Jack and Melissa Fletcher stood along the banks of the Brazos River Christmas Eve watching the rain-swollen waters rise at the rate of an inch per hour and drown their nine-hole course.

"It died a slow death," recalled Jack, who helps daughter Melissa manage Valley Lodge Golf Club in Simonton, Texas, 30 miles west of Houston. "It was a very helpless feeling."

Valley Lodge was one of many courses suffering major damage from the heavy rains that deluged eastern Texas in late December and January. The tests are final Long-term results are in for the national Kentucky bluegrass and ryegrass tests. 24-25

Stricter pesticide laws in the making

By Peter Blais
A growing number of communities are proposing laws restricting pesticides since last summer's U.S. Supreme Court ruling that federal law cannot stop local governments from regulating their use. The result could be thousands of unscientific, contradictory regulations making it harder for golf course superintendents and others in the turf industry to do their job, according to those supporting recent proposed legislation allowing federal law to preempt local ordinances.

"We are pushing for uniform pesticide laws imposed by federal and state governments based on good science, balanced by regulations of local governments," said Tom Tarnowski, president-elect of the National Golf Course Superintendents Association. "We don't want to see the turf industry have to deal with 50 different sets of laws while they're trying to do their jobs."