UK-US internships a boon for all involved

East Lake Golf Club in win-win situation

By Mark Leslie

ATLANTA — Scotland, Ireland and England gave America golf. Now more and more golf courses in America are returning the favor, accepting turfgrass students as interns for a year of on-the-job experience.

In the midst of preparing to host this year’s PGA Championship in November, East Lake Golf Club is one of the most enticing among the American hosts — much to superintendent Ralph Kepple’s delight.

“Interns are wonderful,” Kepple said. “They are here to learn. They are willing to do most anything — as long as they know they will do something else later that they will learn on. They’re motivated. In this industry right now that is difficult to find.”

“I’ve teaching these guys,” said A.J. Horr, East Lake’s assistant superintendent. “Interns, including Americans, are the meat of our crew. It’s a good trade-off. They are enthusiastic about learning. They ask questions and they challenge you about why you do different things. If I don’t have the answer I will look for it. It makes Continued on page 27

Checking the effect of Gradon rootcuttering on rooting on the practice green at East Lake Golf Club are, left to right, David Hickey, Kevin Bell, assistant superintendent A.J. Horr and Jim Crook.

Program head: Study abroad opens doors

By Mark Leslie

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Saying that turfgrass maintenance is “an international profession today, unlike any other,” Ohio State University’s (OSU) program coordinator for International Programs in Agriculture said his training internships are door-openers for American and foreign students alike.

Twice as many students are coming to work at U.S. golf courses as there are Americans traveling abroad under the agricultural internship program. But Program Coordinator Michael O’Keefe stressed: “We want to encourage more American students to go overseas and do this. There is an infrastructure. We obtain a legal permit for training that allows them to learn and enjoy the country [they are going to].”

Students from colleges other than OSU...

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Canada GSA’s president hails association’s help

By Peter Blais

OTTAWA, Ontario, Canada — Merlin Affleck, head superintendent at Stanhope Golf & Country Club on Prince Edward Island (PEI), was elected president of the Canadian Golf Superintendents Association (CGSA) during the group’s recent annual conference and trade show.

“I found out how professional golf superintendents were when I started this job [as head superintendent at Stanhope] 15 years ago and got involved with the association,” the new president said. “CGSA has helped me answer a lot of questions.”

Affleck has been at Stanhope since 1980, head superintendent since 1984 and a member of the CGSA since 1986. He is married with four children aged 10 to 23.

During a brief talk at the conference, Affleck discussed his own course and golf in Canada’s smallest province, known for its red clay, beautiful beaches, sand dunes and quiet lifestyle.

The 1994 opening of Tom McRae-designed Crowbush Cove, which hosted the 1998 Molson Skins Game, helped elevate the game of golf on PEI and raised the standards for the rest of the courses.

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SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE WIDE-RANGING
TIFTON, Ga. — A wide range of topics, from the future of methyl bromide to breeding mole cricket resistance in Bermudagrass, will be discussed at the 54th Annual South-eastern Turfgrass Conference which will be held at the Rural Development Center here, May 1 and 2.

The conference is sponsored by the University of Georgia Coastal Plan Experiment Station, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College in cooperation with the U.S. Golf Association Green Section, Georgia Turfgrass Foundation and University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service.

The schedule on May 1 includes a pesticide and equipment calibration workshop and panel discussions on disease, insect and weed control in turf. Talks May 2 range from the future of methyl bromide and fumigation strategies, to progress in genetic engineering in Bermudagrass; and the do's and don'ts of equipment leasing.

Information about registration is available by contacting the conference office at the Rural Development Center at 912-386-3416.

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Golf Course News

MAINTENANCE

Report activists
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• The Clean Water Act is already causing use restrictions around the Chesapeake Bay area and is being considered in the Pacific Northwest.

• Individual counties and cities are also coming under increased pressure from anti-pesticide activists. In response to activist concerns, San Francisco is phasing out the use of pesticides on all city- and county-owned facilities and is setting up a "community right-to-know" system that will allow the public to see any use of pesticides. "Once this hit the Internet," said Langley, "there were imitators all over the country trying to duplicate these efforts."

According to Langley, the end result of these efforts could lead to a "domino effect," restricting the use of pesticides across the board.

"Their [activists] goal is to eliminate pesticides altogether," he said. "They define Integrated Pest Management (IPM) in a way that eliminates pesticide use. It can only be used as a last resort, and then it requires universal prenotification."

This definition of IPM, Langley pointed out, not only runs counter to the federal government's version but also promotes activism against the user community. Further, with the advent of local control initiatives, activists are attempting to circumvent the states' control over pesticide use. The fact that anti-pesticide activists are also well-networked via the Internet makes the groups even more dangerous to the user community, said Langley.

"We need to be more aware," he said. "The vulnerable area is tracking. We can track legislation on the national level and on the state level... but when you get down to the local level we don't have anything that allows us to track it. By the time that we are even aware that something is happening on the local level, it is already happening. What we need is awareness on the part of the user community." Langley pointed out, not only runs counter to the federal government's version but also promotes activism against the user community. Further, with the advent of local control initiatives, activists are attempting to circumvent the states' control over pesticide use. The fact that anti-pesticide activists are also well-networked via the Internet makes the groups even more dangerous to the user community, said Langley.

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