

# MAINTENANCE



## BRIEFS

### THE VENICE G&CC TAKES HOME CONSERVATION AWARD

SARASOTA, Fla. — The Sarasota County Conservation Committee in partnership with Sarasota County Environmental Services has selected The Venice Golf and Country Club as a recipient of its 2003 Resource Conservation Award. The annual award recognizes those who take a leadership role in promoting conservation of the county's natural resources. The Conservation Committee is a coalition of representatives from local businesses, civic organizations and government. The Venice Golf and Country Club is the first golf course to be recognized by the committee.

### MGA NAMES MCMANAMIN

NORTON, Mass. — The Massachusetts Golf Association (MGA) has named Tom McManamin superintendent of its newly opened Norton Golf Facility. McManamin comes to the course from Worcester Country Club where he was first assistant superintendent. McManamin earned a certificate in turfgrass management from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst in 2002.

### THOMPSON GOES TO GREATE BAY

SOMERS POINT, N.J. — Grete Bay Golf Club has named Kenneth B. Thompson superintendent. Thompson spent the last 15 years as superintendent of Stone Harbor Golf Club in Swanton and brings 20 years of industry experience to Grete Bay. Prior to Stone Harbor, Thompson was the second assistant superintendent at Merion Golf Club in Ardmore, Pa.

### WHITE JOINS MOUNT SNOW

MOUNT SNOW, Vt. — The Mount Snow Golf Club has named Bryan White its new golf course superintendent. White comes to Mount Snow from Santa Fe, N.M., where he was a superintendent at The Club at Las Campanas, a private 36-hole facility. Prior to Las Campanas, White worked at various golf clubs in Colorado, Pennsylvania and Maryland.

## Winterkill research yields new clues

By KEVIN J. ROSS, CGCS and ANDREW OVERBECK

One of the most difficult times of year for Snowbelt superintendents is the moment of truth each spring when they find out how well their winterkill prevention activities worked. Prior to and during winter, superintendents face numerous choices concerning ice and snow removal, free water removal and the use of covers. However, winterkill remains an enigma, because what worked one year does not necessarily work in another year.

Research on winterkill has been going on for decades and a miracle cure is yet to be found. But researchers are focusing in on several aspects of winterkill causes to try and pinpoint the exact reasons why damage occurs.

In general, winter damage is defined as any injury that occurs during the wintertime period. Winter damage can be inflicted by: winter turfgrass fungi (snow molds and cool season pythiums), crown hydration, ice damage (suf-

focation), direct low temperature kill and desiccation. Of these, only true winter diseases and desiccation are understood, while ice cover damage and crown hydration are still not totally understood.

### DOES ICE COVER KILL?

For years ice damage has been associated with a gas build-up that occurs just under the ice surface. Under prolonged ice cover, oxygen is depleted from the plant that is still under very low levels of respiration and microbe activity. This results in an accumulation of toxic gases that may result in death of the plant. Superintendents generally follow the rule that *Poa annua* can survive under ice cover for up to 60 days, while bentgrass can survive up to 90 days. This rule, however, is being revisited.

"There is a popular theory that if the ice remains on turf for too long that you end up with dead

cause of suffocation. That is why you see devastating ice damage only once or twice a decade. If suffocation caused damage, people would get it every year because there are parts of the



Significant winterkill damage impacted courses from Minnesota to Maine this year.

turf," said Dr. George Hamilton, assistant professor of turfgrass science at Penn State University. "Why it happens has not been shown or even if it happens be-

country that get extended ice coverage all the time."

While not all of his *Poa annua* data was available at press time,

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## Hofstetter: Overtime top budget buster

By ANDREW OVERBECK

LAKELAND, Fla. — Former Meadowbrook Golf/International Golf Maintenance executive Greg Hofstetter has formed a consulting venture to give golf course owners maintenance support without taking over complete control of their operations.

Hofstetter, who was vice president of golf operations for Meadowbrook/IGM for seven years, believes that his new firm, Agronomic Systems, fills a growing need in the golf business.

"Owners, whether they are private, municipal or daily-fee, have a difficult time giving up control to a golf course management company to outsource maintenance when they are not seeing a guaranteed return," said Hofstetter. "Even though IGM assures them they get



Greg Hofstetter

more control, which is true, it is difficult for owners to see that and feel that. That is the biggest single selling challenge. I saw an opportunity to help courses without making them feel like they were losing control."

Agronomic Systems provides golf course evaluations that show courses where and how they could save money. So far, Hofstetter has done evaluations for 23 courses including Valdosta (Ga.) Country Club, Widow's Walk Golf Club

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### HoleView teams with Audubon

INNSBROOK, Mo. — HoleView has teamed up with Audubon International to produce environmental yardage books that educate golfers on the benefits of the Audubon certification process.

HoleView recently created a yardage book for Innsbrook Resort Golf Course here, which has been certified as an Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary course. The book brings environmental accomplishments to the attention of golfers.

"Golfers support for environmental quality is key to a course's success in protecting water, wildlife and other natural resources," said Audubon International president Ron Dodson. "The HoleView yardage book invites golfers to take a closer look at how Innsbrook Resort is protecting and enhancing its environment through Audubon certification."

## SUPERideas

### Early brush gets the worm

We use a carpet dragmat on our greens three times a week prior to mowing. Initially, we were simply trying to knock down the dew and nutrients, plus stand up our turf for an improved cut. We brush five consecutive days after our biweekly vertical mowing during our active growing season, and this is when we stumbled on an awesome integrated pest management tool. We found that we were absolutely destroying cutworms and armyworms by brushing them while they were up feeding in the dark. This has also helped our budget, because now we mechanically control the worms enough to reach an



James Lettau drags the 17th green at Magnolia Plantation to remove both dew and worms.

acceptable threshold without using insecticides.

Now if we could just find something for these mole crickets...

— Brad Stuart, superintendent, Magnolia Plantation Golf Club, Lake Mary, Fla.

Got a SUPERidea? Email yours to [aoverbeck@golfcoursenews.com](mailto:aoverbeck@golfcoursenews.com)



## GCSAA posts financial information online

By ANDREW OVERBECK

LAWRENCE, Kan. — In a move to become more transparent, the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America's (GCSAA) board of directors has decided to post its pertinent financial documents as part of the "About GCSAA"

section of its Web site.

The IRS Form 990 for the GCSAA and the Environmental Institute for Golf for the period from June 2001 to July 2002 are available in addition to salary ranges for staff and specific salaries for executive positions.

According to GCSAA commu-

nications director Jeff Bollig, the information posted on the Web site has always been available through the association's service center in paper form, but board members decided that the financial details should be made more easily accessible.

"There has been a lot of talk of

financials over the years and the board wanted to put as much as possible on the Web," he said. "As much as our members like to think that we are not open, we are terribly open."

In addition to salary information, the association posted IRS forms that reveal the



GCSAA lost more than \$1 million over the period including investment losses that totaled almost \$1 million. The Environmental Institute for Golf posted a loss of

\$590,931 including investment losses of \$581,002.

For more information, visit [www.gcsaa.org](http://www.gcsaa.org).

## Agronomic Systems

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in Scituate, Mass., and Newnan (Ga.) Country Club.

"I show them where they can save money or reallocate funds," Hofstetter said. "Many courses are reallocating saved money back into the course and improving the facility. So they are not taking money away from superintendents."

According to Hofstetter, the single largest culprit blowing maintenance budgets is overtime.

"A lot of clubs are running excessive amounts of overtime," he said. "I walk in and see courses running 25 to 30 hours of overtime a week in non-peak months. In that situation, it is cheaper to hire an additional worker."

Hofstetter said inventory control is another area where money can be saved.

"A majority of the time, instead of using one product to solve a problem you see the kitchen sink being thrown at a problem. I identify the fact that one product can fill a need, not seven products," he said.

Other areas that are covered in the evaluation are organization, shop cleanliness, detail around the facility and time and efficiency studies.

In addition to the evaluations, Hofstetter brings the power of national accounts to his clients.

"We have national account status behind us that can produce significant cost savings," he said. "The national account groups I work with have known me for a number of years and see the amount of business that I generate when I recommend products, purchases or materials."

Once he has finished an evaluation, courses can choose to bring Hofstetter back in quarterly, monthly or not at all. He currently visits four clubs monthly and 12 courses quarterly to provide follow-up services.

Looking ahead, Hofstetter said he would like to team with smaller management companies.

"Companies with four to five courses don't have the income to hire a full-time agronomist, but they could utilize Agronomic Systems to provide a higher level of maintenance to their customer." ■



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