Audubon Int'l thinking big

BY ANDREW OVERBECK

HARTWELL, Ga. — On the heels of announcing its “Fifty in Five” initiative, Audubon International revealed yet another ambitious plan to expand its programs during its first-ever industry summit here at Cateechee Golf Club Feb. 12. The initiative, titled the Sustainable Communities Campaign, will build on the group’s environmental certification of golf courses.

The new plan will dramatically increase Audubon International’s profile and will require more participation from the golf industry if it is to be successful.

“We have become known as that golf environmental group,” said Audubon president Ron Dodson. “We want to think really big and promote the principles of sustainability.”

The goals of the sustainability-focused initiative will be to provide adequate supplies of clean water, to maintain and increase biological diversity and to create livable and equitable communities.

Audubon has divided the country into 18 level-one watersheds and will be launching programs in New York, North Carolina, Florida [Continued on page 9]

GCSAA: Bring on the buying team

Combined show to shorten chain between superintendent and ultimate decision-maker

By DEREK RICE

ATLANTA — Recognizing the importance of the buying team in purchasing decisions, the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) and the National Golf Course Owners Association (NGCOA) have joined forces to put on the first Golf Industry Show, scheduled for Feb. 11-13, 2005 in Orlando, Fla.

The merger comes at a critical time for the GCSAA show, which has seen a decline in overall attendance. This year, 18,164 people attended the show, approximately 2,500 less than last year in Orlando (20,613), 2,700 less than in Dallas (20,297) and 3,500 less than 2000 in New Orleans (21,686). The 1999 show in Orlando set the high-water mark at 22,623.

GCSAA CEO Steve Mona said one of the main drivers behind the merger, which the two organizations have talked about for three or four years, was the need to deliver more of those qualified buyers to the show floor, said

Continued on page 22

VGM Club signs Yamaha

By DEREK RICE

WATERLOO, Iowa — Golf buying alliance VGM Club has signed an agreement with Yamaha Golf Cart to give its members access to discounts on Yamaha cars. D. Jay Ellis, president of VGM Club, said the agreement came about mostly because of the efficiencies Yamaha has built into its new manufacturing facility in Newnan, Ga.

“We’re excited about our relationship with Yamaha and the warranty schedule they use on their golf cars. They’re doing some exciting things with their cars, and their plant is phenomenal,” Ellis said.

The agreement is non-exclusive. Ellis said, meaning VGM could conceivably

Continued on page 16
The ProPass from Ty-Crop has the lightest footprint and the most accurate spread pattern on the market. Plus customers can use it to spread a wide variety of materials at different depths and widths!
Texas course plays around shuttle debris

By ANDREW OVERBECK

NACOGDOCHES, Texas —

When space shuttle Columbia broke up during re-entry into the Earth's atmosphere during the early morning hours of Feb. 1, debris from the wreckage was spread over large parts of eastern Texas and western Louisiana. More than 1,200 debris sites have been documented in Nacogdoches County alone, including areas here on Woodland Hills Golf Course.

Superintendent Roger Owens said a course employee found an 18-inch by 18-inch piece of debris on the 17th fairway around 11:30 a.m. Numerous other small fragments have also been found on the property. Authorities finally removed the large fragment from the course Feb. 12 and took it to Barksdale Air Force Base in Bossier City, La.

"It was definitely shocking," said Owens. "The amazing part of it was that nobody got hurt. God was looking out for the people on the ground, that's all I can say." Owens said the presence of the fragment, which appears to be part of large panel, did not stop play.

"They came out and tagged it, marked its location with GPS, and took pictures of it," he said. "It was just off the fairway cut, 270 yards from the tee. Some quarantined it off and put flags around it to keep people from touching it or playing with it. We played and worked around it." NASA officials, National Guard troops and work crews continue to scour the area for pieces of debris, but are concentrating more on the western part of the county said Owens. He expects that searchers will eventually arrive to look through the heavily wooded course for debris.

"A square mile covers 648 acres, so searching takes a while. We have found a couple of little, bitty pieces," Owens added. "We are right in the middle of piney woods. It's bad enough looking for a golf ball in the pine trees, much less trying to find debris that is little, bitty and black."

This story originally appeared in the Feb. 4 issue of the Golf Course Newswire. To subscribe, send an e-mail to info@golfcoursenews.com.

An 18-inch by 18-inch piece of debris from space shuttle Columbia landed near the 17th fairway at Woodland Hills Golf Club in Nacogdoches, Texas.

NGCOA, NCA compile compensation report

CHARLESTON, S.C.—The National Golf Course Owners Association (NGCOA) and the National Club Alliance (NCA) have collaborated on a compensation and benefits report for 2003.

More than 1,400 facilities provided data for the report, which delivers aggregate results categorized by facility type, number of holes, tax status, annual gross revenue and geographic region. Regional data includes cost of living indexing to further qualify the results.

The survey covers compensation for employees such as general managers, head professionals, membership directors and superintendents. In addition to monetary compensation, the associations collected information on vacation days, health insurance type and premiums and retirement benefits. Fringe benefits, such as free golf or vehicle allowances, is also included in the report.

"This report is the most comprehensive study of its kind available in our industry, and we are pleased with the results," said Mike Hughes, NGCOA executive director.

The reports are available to NGCOA and NCA members for $125. Non-members may buy the report for $195.

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It's time to walk the walk

When it comes to environmental stewardship, where exactly do superintendents stand? I was reasonably confident that I knew the answer to that question, but recently I have become less certain. Here’s why:

• For all of Audubon International’s bluster, they have only certified two percent of the golf courses in the U.S. A scant 13 percent are members of their programs. I could have done the math myself if I suppose, but the numbers were still surprisingly low.

• In a Golf Course News Poll last month, we found that 75 percent of superintendents surveyed said environmental stewardship was “very important” to the future economic health of the game of golf. However, if that is the case, the how come only 39 superintendents showed up at Audubon’s environmental session at the GCSAA Conference and Show in Atlanta? In last month’s Point/Counterpoint, contributing editor Kevin Ross eloquently explained the disconnect between superintendents’ environmental goals and Audubon certification, and it makes sense. Perhaps the phrase “environmental stewardship” has become hackneyed. Maybe too much environmental mumbo jumbo has shoved down superintendents’ throats too fast. Or maybe a majority of courses are already using IPM and other environmentally responsible practices but just don’t see the value in completing the paperwork necessary to join Audubon or some other environmental program. After all, no one is forcing golf courses to give up chemicals or put up bird boxes – yet. But equally enlightening was the counterpoint made by Audubon’s Kevin Fletcher. Self-regulation, through a program such as Audubon, could prove valuable to the golf industry. By demonstrating that a large percentage of courses are adhering to a set of managed environmental standards, the industry could avoid the scrutiny of federal and state regulators.

Read the story on page one about Audubon’s new sustainable communities campaign. Not only does it offer a chance for the golf industry to be a leader in communities around the country, but it is also another opportunity to broadcast the message that golf courses are environmentally responsible and sustainable.

If you are still skeptical, scan down to the bottom of this page and read this month’s Point/Counterpoint. The debate over golf’s environmental impact (ill-conceived or not) is not going to go away any time soon.

It’s the buying team, stupid

Kudos to the GCSAA and the NGCO for recognizing what we at Golf Course News have known for several years – superintendents, as a rule, do not have blank checks to buy equipment and other products. It is this common business sense that led the two organizations to merge their shows in 2005 as the Golf Industry Show. The refrain? “Vendors want more qualified buyers on the show floor.” As well they should – they pay enough to be there. Some, like Club Car, attend five shows in the space of a month. Eliminating shipping and other related costs for one show will be, in the words of Club Car CEO Phil Trulies, “Priceless.”

The myth that superintendents hold all the purchasing power has permeated the industry for too long. It is only now, when economic circumstances aren’t what they used to be, that the idea of a “buying team,” which has long been our focus at Golf Course News, is starting to resonate. Of the more than 18,000 people who attended last month’s GCSAA show, roughly a third were qualified to make purchases on the show floor.

Even more disheartening is that this doesn’t seem to be a simple lip service from the associations. Michael Wallace, GCSAA past president, also recognizes the need to get his bosses involved. When he arrived late to the GCSAA’s media roundtable, he apologized, saying he had been on the show floor, kicking tires with his supervisor.

While this move is laudable, what leaves a funny taste is the name. Calling it the Golf Industry Show leaves it open for all sorts of vendors (apparel, clubs, etc.). A more fitting name would be the Golf Course Industry Show. But, knowing how slowly change is affected in one large association, let alone two, the current name will have to do.

POINT

Golf contaminates environment

By Jay Feldman

Mark Twain’s quip “golf is a good walk spoiled” probably characterizes his own frustration with the difficulty of the game of golf. However, he could just as easily have been describing his concern with the golf course as a “spoiled” or contaminated environment.

Golf courses are one of the most chemically treated land areas in the United States, second only to fruit orchards. The attorney general of New York State in a report, “Toxic Fairways: Risking Groundwater Contamination From Pesticides on Long Island Golf Courses,” calculated that the average golf course applies pesticides at a rate of 18 pounds of pesticides per treated acre per year, about seven times the 2.7 pounds per treated acre per year applied in agriculture. A University of Iowa medical school study commissioned by the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) found that golf course superintendents suffer elevated rates of brain cancer and non-Hodgkins lymphoma, similar to farmers. In evaluating the 36 most commonly used lawn pesticides, using Environmental Protection Agency and government reviews, Beyond Pesticides finds that 14 cause cancer, 21 reproductive effects, 14 neurotoxic damage and nearly all are skin irritants and sensitizers.

One product label on an organophosphate pesticide reads that repeated exposure may make a person more susceptible to the effects of this and related chemicals. When EPA announced the phase-out of “residential” use of the highly neurotoxic, organophosphate, insecticide chlorpyrifos (Dursban) in June 2000, it retained numerous uses, including golf course maintenance. Despite extraordinarily high levels of concern associated with children’s exposure to chlorpyrifos use on turf and its...
Golf has negative environmental impact

Continued from previous page

Handling by workers, direct exposure to this pesticide will continue in and around golf courses.

Environmental impacts of the most commonly used turf pesticides include the fact that 14 have been found in groundwater, 15 in surface water, and 12 to bees. Some pesticides are known to contaminate community water systems or wells, others run off into streams and waterways. All drift off the target site, which means that they end up in neighbors' yards, schoolyards and community parks. Neither golfers nor the public at-large can take comfort in the fact that these pesticides are registered by the EPA because health and safety testing is incomplete, the law allows for hazardous ingredients to be treated as trade secrets and are not disclosed on the product label.

Because of these concerns, Be- yond Pesticides joined with other organizations and the golf industry to develop “Environmental Principles for Golf Courses in the United States.” The principles recite areas of agreement regarding golf course design, construction and maintenance. The document assumes regulatory compliance and encourages managers “to go beyond that which is required by law.” In that spirit, it is hoped that golf course managers will stop the continued use of chlorpyrifos. The document stresses the prevention of pest problems through the encouragement of “maintenance practices that promote the long-range health of the turf and support environmental objectives.” (including the introduction of natural pest enemies... soil certification techniques... reduced fertilization, limited play on sensitive turf areas, reduced watering, etc.)

The principles conclude that, “chemical control strategies should be utilized only when other strategies are inadequate.”

The document implicitly acknowledges that there are areas of disagreement, which continue despite the important areas of agreement. For instance, one of the leading forces behind the principles, the GCSAA, emphatically states in a fact sheet that pesticides post no risk to golfers and “little chance for exposure after a liquid product has been applied” and that “the turfgrass is dry or the product has been watered in.” In fact, numerous U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) reports find that the majority of pesticides, once fully tested and, if they undergo risk assessment reviews, allow for differing degrees of risk.

Mark Twain also said, “Fewer things are harder to put up with than a good example.” There are many turf managers who are leading by example and moving the industry away from chemical dependency and toward organic and non-chemical practices. The president of the Long Island (N.Y.) Organic Horticulture Association, Stephen Restmeyer, who advocates for integrated pest management, says that in almost every situation, adding compost or earthworm castings, colloidal minerals and soil inoculants will help build healthy soils. Poor soil pH, the release of beneficial microorganisms, bird nesting sites and biodiversity are key elements. Restmeyer concludes, “Simply put, healthy soil grows healthy plants, and healthy plants are less likely to get sick.”

Jay Feldman is executive director of Washington, D.C.-based Beyond Pesticides.

Proper maintenance requires pesticides

Continued from previous page

What about all of those “organic” products you see advertised and at trade shows – products such as microbial inoculants, compost tea, enzymes and humic substances and some of them work, some do not and scientifically valid real-world field trial data are lacking for most. We typically recommend between five and six pest products in addition to synthetic chemical products, depending on the site and the anticipated pests.

Overall, the environmental track record of golf course pesticides has been good, with just a few exceptions. Fungicides... and some bird kills resulting from use of organophosphate and carbamate insecticides was documented in the 1980s, but turf use of these products has been canceled or restricted, depending on the product.

More recently, a very favorable picture emerges. We did a meta-study (a study of studies) of surface-water and ground-water quality results from 36 golf courses in North America. We analyzed more than 16,000 water samples... We found water-quality impacts by turf chemicals to be minimal. The rate of individual pesticide data points that exceed the MINERALS guidelines for ground water and surface water was only 0.07 percent and 0.29 percent, respectively.

Thus, citizen activists who imply that golf courses should be treated as they are hazardous waste sites are misguided.

Several times, when testifying at public hearings, I have had to explain that golf course managers must grow a fairly decent home lawn with no pesticides in a particular area, but that experience cannot be extrapolated to a high-end golf course. Heavy traffic, short cutting heights and the need to have a good lie of the ball contribute to the need for insecticides, fungicides and herbicides on golf courses. This is supported by the following analysis.

There are very few pesticide-free golf courses in the U.S. There are more than 17,800 golf courses in the U.S. (National Golf Foundation, 2003). We estimate that less than 0.1 percent of these are truly pesticide-free golf courses. (Often, rumors that particular golf courses are pesticide free are not true.) We recently investigated every golf course that we suspected may be totally pesticide free and/or totally natural-organic based. We found three in the category, and another four that came very close to being pesticide free. With one possible exception, none of these courses had high quality and had greater than 30,000 rounds per year.

Basically, pesticide-free golf courses are not feasible now nor in the foreseeable future if one is planning for high traffic and high quality.

Thus, use of synthetic pesticides is necessary at most courses. It can be done wisely, and it can be done with minimal or no environmental impact.

Stuart Z. Cohen is president of Environmental & Turf Services Inc., located in Wheaton, Md.
MAINTENANCE

Drought could threaten Colorado courses in '03

By ANDREW OVERBECK

DENVER, Colo. — Much of Colorado and the Mountain West remains in the grips of an extreme drought that some scientists say is the worst in 350 years. Drought began hammering the area last summer, causing widespread water restrictions and has shown no sign of letting up this winter. While storms finally hit Denver in February, the area received no measurable precipitation in December and January.

Four City of Denver courses, which usually stay open through the winter, have closed due to the dry conditions. Other courses across the region that usually stay open have had to restrict golf cars to roughs and paths or ban them altogether. Courses on the Front Range that traditionally close because of snow cover stayed open longer than ever this year because winter weather did not arrive.

"JUST HOPING TO BE IN BUSINESS"

While the warmer and drier than normal winter is damaging now, many superintendents are increasingly concerned about the impending water shortages and restrictions that could severely impact the upcoming golf season.

Since many courses get water from irrigation canals that run out of the mountains, concern is justified. According to recent reports, snowpack is at about 75 percent of normal and would need to be 125 percent to 150 percent of normal in order to fully replenish the depleted reservoirs.

"One hundred percent of our water comes from irrigation ditches," said Lee Terry, superintendent at Pinehurst Country Club in Denver. "Right now it is running 20 to 30 percent of normal and last year it was dry by the fifth of June.

"I have enough water in my lakes to irrigate the golf course twice, but that's it. I have to wait until they turn the ditches back on or make a special arrangement to get them turned on early," he added. "We are just hoping to be in business at the end of the year."

Wellshire Golf Course is the only 18-hole course run by the City of Denver that is still open. "We have a well and a 15-acre lake that collects stormwater from streets and surrounding housing development," said superintendent Gregg Blew. "With our that I would be shut down just like all the other city courses. They had to close because they use potable water and were restricted to irrigating teas and greens."

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Rocky Mountain GCSA to hold drought seminar

LITTLETON, Colo. — The Rocky Mountain GCSA will host a drought seminar during the USGA Green Section's regional conference here March 25 at Lakewood Country Club.

Superintendent Gregg Blew, immediate past president of the Rocky Mountain GCSA, is putting together the program that will feature numerous speakers and water experts. USGA regional agronomist Matt Nelson will start the session off by discussing proper cultural practices to use during drought conditions. Officials from the Denver Water Board will address ground water rights and surface water rights, and another speaker will cover conservation measures and future water restrictions.

For more information, contact Gregg Blew at 303-692-5633.

— Andrew Overbeck

Courses now have to compete for interns

By KEVIN J. ROSS

It wasn't long ago that the hiring process for turfgrass student interns was a relatively easy task. However, with more and more clubs developing internship programs, the demand for interns is at an all-time high. What was easy in the past now has turned into an all out recruitment war.

Today, many clubs are battling each other for the top interns in the country. Recruitment used to involve interns coming to the clubs. Now, more and more clubs are visiting colleges and universities to interview interns.

How has competition come about? When the economy was going gangbusters in the mid-'90s, hiring golf course workers was an arduous task. At that point many clubs, which previously hadn't had an internship program, started looking at students to take the place of workers they couldn't find. Even though the present economy hasn't slowed and there are more workers available, clubs recognized the benefits of turfgrass interns and have kept their programs intact.

This has lead to an amazing demand for students. The top turfgrass universities in the United States estimate that 400 to 500 internship announcements are received and posted by the schools each year.

With high demand, students have many more options available. Many have also realized that...
MAINTENANCE

Isaacs takes Spring Valley back to traditional look

By ANDREW OVERBECK

LEXINGTON, Ky. — In a day and age when superintendents change jobs on a more and more frequent basis, it is unusual to find someone who has worked at only one golf course in his entire career. Yet that is just what Richard Isaacs, superintendent here at Spring Valley Golf Club, has done.

"My dad Bige started as the superintendent here in 1958, and I started working for him when I was 13, raking traps in the summertime," said Isaacs. "I went to Eastern Kentucky for my turf management degree and I became his assistant. I took over his position in 1997 when he retired."

When Isaacs took over the course, which was designed by former golf pro and superintendent Clarence "Buck" Blankenship in 1949, it was beginning to show its age. The club has 365 members, but Isaacs said 

The bunkers, as a result, are squared off, as are all the tees and greens. The tees were laser graded and the greens surrounds were squared off in preparation for an eventual greens renovation.

"It has more of a British look," said Isaacs. "We have things off to carry that theme throughout." As part of the bunker work, Isaacs has installed Meyer zoysia grass on all the faces to help slow down maintenance costs because it is slower growing in the summer.

All car paths and landscaping beds were also upgraded to provide a more consistent look throughout the course.

The renovation process began one hole at a time in fall 2001, and Isaacs and Bohannan finished 10 holes before the start of the playing season. This fall they decided to close down nine holes entirely to keep from disrupting play. The renovation will be completed this spring.

The final phase of the renovation will be new USGA-spec greens to replace the current push-up greens, but Isaacs said that is still a ways off.

"This renovation sets us up for the final phase, which would be coring the old greens and putting in USGA-spec greens," said Isaacs.

"We didn't want to do work now and then turn around and have to redo it."

To show members what new greens would look and play like, Isaacs took out the club's swimming pool and put in a USGA-spec putting green with L-93 creeping bentgrass.

"This gets the members involved and shows them what the greens could be like. I don't think it puts any faster, but it looks better and it holds the ball well. The members like it."

According to Isaacs, the original bunkers had no drains in them and since so many were added and filled in over the years they had little strategic content.

When it came to how the new bunkers would look, the course decided on a Seth Raynor look.

"Foster told us to go over to The Camargo Club in Cincinnati to check out their Raynor bunkers and we basically fed off that style," said Isaacs. "Our owner has been in construction his whole life and he thinks that if it's not straight, it's not right. Raynor was a road builder before he got into building golf courses and he thought the same way. So those two matched up real well."

The course features squared-off bunkers reminiscent of Seth Raynor. The final phase of the renovation will be new USGA-spec greens to replace the current push-up greens, but Isaacs said that is still a ways off.

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Colo. supers search for drought solutions
Continued from page 6

Restrictions have been in place since July when Denver Water mandated a 30 percent reduction and subsequently restricted irrigation to greens and tees only on Sept. 1. The other city courses will remain closed until March 1 when the city will re-evaluate the drought situation. Blew is preparing for the worst.

"If we don't get a good snow," he said, "we will be starting with greens and tees only in the spring. It will take a lot of moisture to heal those cracks in the fairways. Some of them are so wide you can lose a ball in them.

SEARCHING FOR SOLUTIONS

Terry and other area superintendent have already formulated plans to deal with the continuing drought.

"Our problems started back in 2000 when we had to use water rights to pull water out of reservoirs that were miles away in order to irrigate the course in the summertime," said Terry. "We bought more water rights three years ago, got well drilling permits and put in a new irrigation system so that we can reduce consumption. We also eliminated ryegrass overseeding in favor of bluegrass because it is more drought-resistant. And we improved our cultural practices. That is about all we can do."

Terry said the course is in the process of drilling another well, and he expects to have more water available than he did last year as long as the state does not revoke the course's water rights.

Other courses are busily working to piece together more reliable and consistent sources of water.

Dan Hawkins, superintendent at The Ridge at Castle Pines in Littleton, is hopeful that the development's effluent system will be up and running by spring. The course, which will eventually be surrounded by 2,900 homes, was originally designed to use effluent.

"We have been on wells and city water," he said. "Water in this area is becoming a scarce resource. You need to have another means of water versus wells or canal water from the mountains. We are supposed to go on effluent in May because there are enough homes now where we can get good flow."

Dennis Lyon, who oversees the City of Aurora's seven courses, is drilling more wells, converting courses to effluent water and buying more water rights to ensure a steady irrigation source this season.

One of them is having a well drilled, another will be on reclaimed waste by May 1 and another is working on improving water rights. It is a tough situation but I think we will be in good shape this season."

One situation is so dire, however, that corralling the necessary water will require renovation work. Deer Creek Golf Club in Littleton was forced to close Dec. 16 because of it had insufficient water storage. The owners are considering a redesign of the four-year-old Scott Miller-designed layout to improve both irrigation efficiency and water storage capacity.

According to former Deer Creek superintendent Scott Phelps, the course got slammed earlier than most last year.

"We were irrigating greens and tees in May," he said. "By the middle of July we were completely dead, there was nothing left."

Phelps has since moved to Arrowhead Golf Club in Littleton, but is not any more optimistic about the upcoming season.

"All of us are going to be faced with same [drought] situation this summer," he said. "It is hard to say if any place in the state is better off than any other."

MAINTENANCE

"The drought in Aurora has been very bad. We have had three inches of snow this winter," he said. "Three of our courses, however, are on reclaimed waste water and we don't use potable water on any of them. The others are tied into the water storage system, so we are in a holding pattern on those.
John Deere extends PGA Tour deals

MOLINE, Ill. — Deere & Co. announced Feb. 10 that it reached an agreement with the PGA Tour to extend its title sponsorship of the John Deere Classic by an additional four years. It will now be involved with the tournament, which is held each year at TPC Deere Run in Silvis, Ill., through 2010.

Additionally, Deere has expanded its licensing agreement with the PGA Tour, extending its designation as the official golf course equipment supplier through 2014. The PGA Tour also added John Deere Credit as the official golf course equipment leasing company and John Deere Landscapes as the official landscape product supplier.

Since 1998, Deere's designation as official golf course equipment supplier of the PGA Tour has placed John Deere equipment on all Tour-owned TPC courses.

Audubon: ‘Golf industry can be a leader’

Continued from page 1
Alabama and Florida. The organization has set up the Earth Fund to help finance the new program and has partnered with North Carolina State University to extend the reach of the campaign.

The idea for the program stems from the organization's experiences in certifying Eufaula, Ala., as the first-ever Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Community. The superintendent at the city's course jump-started the program and got Audubon involved. The organization is now working with the city to create a master plan to take social and environmental issues into account when considering new development.

While Audubon is counting on the golf industry to support its new initiative, Dodson realizes that the organization is going to have to enroll more than two percent of the courses in the U.S. as Audubon Certified Sanctuaries. This is where the organization's plan to enroll 50 percent of U.S. courses in its environmental programs within the next five years comes into play.

"The golf course industry can play a pivotal leadership role as a catalyst for a whole new way of thinking about sustainable community development. We need the golf industry's participation," said Dodson.

During the industry summit at Catechee, Dodson and director of programs Kevin Fletcher asked for help in identifying things that would help grow golf's participation.

Feedback ranged from simple fixes to more broad-scale efforts. Attendees suggested that Audubon work more with general managers and owners to drum up support for the program. Another suggested getting golfers to care about the environment would be the key to driving the program forward. Another asked, why not try and get a PGA Tour event on an Audubon-certified course? Others said the multiple levels of Audubon certification needed to be clarified and simplified.

Audubon's Fletcher said the group is working on increasing financial incentives for courses to join the program. "We are working with an insurance company to give discounts and with companies like, say, Toro to give a two percent discount to Audubon courses," he said.

Mike Young, who designed Catechee, said Audubon offers more than environmental or financial benefits. "I see value beyond the environment," he said. "I see more benefits politically.

As a new developer, Audubon" takes you a long way with planning commissions."

As the summit wrapped up, it was clear to everyone that more work needed to be done, but that the discussion had been a good starting point.

"We have a long way to go," said Dodson, "but we have also come a long way."
BRIEFS

QUALITY GRASSING BREAKS GROUND ON RENOVATION
LITHIA, Fla. — Quality Grassing & Services Inc., winner of the 2002 Golf Course News Large Builder of the Year Award, has begun work on a $1.6 million renovation at Point Mallard Golf Course in Decatur, Ala. The renovation began last month and includes rebuilding all 18 greens and completing extensive tee, irrigation, drainage and carpath renovations. Architect John LaFoy is overseeing the work.

HEARN/ALBANESE HIRE MARKETING FIRM
BLOOMFIELD HILLS, Mich. — Raymond Hearn/Paul Albanese Golf Course Designs Inc. has hired Golf Marketing Services to handle its marketing and public relations efforts. Hearn/Albanean hired Golf Marketing Services to handle promotion of several high-profile projects the firm has coming online in the next few years. Among the firm’s current projects are Egg Island Golf & Yacht Club in North Eleuthera, Bahamas, and Mill Creek Golf Club in Rochester, New York.

CUPP-DESIGNED OLD ORANGE UNDERWAY
FORT MEYERS, Fla. — Initial development has begun on Old Orange, an 18-hole Bob Cupp-designed golf course at Verandah, the Bonita Bay Group’s master-planned community here. The course is scheduled to open later this year. Work began in mid-December and has involved digging lakes, beginning drainage work and moving dirt. Bonita Bay expects to begin grassing the course in March or April.

LUMMI DEVELOPMENT CHANGING NAME
ATLANTA — Lummi Development Inc. will change its name to Signature Horizons Group Inc. in mid-March. Signature Horizons acquired a controlling interest in Lummi in October. The company is also moving toward a closing of its acquisition of Sea Trail Plantation and Golf Links in Sunset Beach, N.C.

NEWPORT BEACH, Calif. — Work is underway here at Pelican Hill Golf Club to renovate all 125 bunkers and protect Tom Fazio’s original design. Director of agronomy Steve Thomas is overseeing the renovation, which began in late January. “Over the last 12 years the bunkers have lost the ‘Fazio look,’” said Thomas. “We wanted to maintain the character of the original design and get back the fat bunker lip. “We will make some architectural changes by expanding some bunkers and making others smaller,” he added. “We will also improve drainage and put in a higher-quality sand.” The Irvine Co., which owns and manages the 36-hole club, decided to shut the South Course down entirely and shift play to the North Course while renovation work took place. When the South Course re-opens in March, work will commence on the North Course. “That is one of the benefits to being 36 holes,” said Thomas. “The Irvine Co. decided it was a good time of year to go ahead and close a course, because it is typically our rainy season when play is lower.” The company brought in two builders, Jessup, Md.-based McDonald & Sons and La Quinta, Calif.-based Peerless Golf Inc.

Raynor’s Mountain Lake reborn
Architect Brian Silva restored bunkers and greens to Seth Raynor’s squared-off design of 1916.

LAKE WALES, Fla. — Grow-in is completed and play has resumed on Mountain Lake Golf Course, where architect Brian Silva restored the course to its original 1916 Seth Raynor design. Over the years, many of the greens and bunkers, which had been softened into more rounded or amorphous shapes, said Dorothy Blackwell, director of member relations for Mountain Lake. “Our members voted last year to restore the course to its original design,” she said. “That is one of the benefits to being 36 holes,” said Thomas. “The Irvine Co. decided it was a good time of year to go ahead and close a course, because it is typically our rainy season when play is lower.” The company brought in two builders, Jessup, Md.-based McDonald & Sons and La Quinta, Calif.-based Peerless Golf Inc.

Developers learn from Dark Horse experience
AUBURN, Calif. — Last year, the latest entry into the crowded Northern California golf market, Dark Horse Golf Club, opened for play, culminating a 13-year struggle to bring a quality public golf venue to the Sierra foothill region. The developers, Ed Fralick and his son Chad, are heartened to see the tee sheets begin to fill up with players after spending so much time, energy and money wading through permitting meetings, EIRs and mitigations to bring the 7,218-yard Keith Foster-designed layout on line. The rambling track flows over 420 acres of land that are defined by dramatic elevation changes, a series of natural wetlands and thick stands of mature oak trees.

Openings decline for second consecutive year
JUPITER, Fla. — For the second consecutive year, golf course openings in the United States slowed, according to the National Golf Foundation’s (NGF) Golf Facilities in the U.S. Report. The NGF said the report may signal that construction is coming back in line with demand. In 2002, approximately 240 golf courses, measured as 18-hole equivalents, opened. This number is down 13 percent over 2001 and down 36 percent from 2000, which was the 15-year peak. However, there is some good news to be gleaned from the report. The NGF predicts development will stabilize in 2003, based on the number of courses already under construction that are expected to open this year. The drop-off in construction

Continued on page 12
Pelican Hills GC retains 'Fazio look'

Continued from previous page

To protect the investment in sand, all the bunkers will be partially lined with Sandtrapper. “We put it on the faces and we will run it down to the drain lines,” said Thomas. “The new sand is supposed to be better at holding on the faces, but with better drainage and the Sandtrapper, I think we will have good luck keeping sand on our faces.”

Each contractor is tackling nine holes a piece, while Thomas and his crew are busily following behind collecting the old bunker sand to reuse as topdressing material.

“We wanted to maintain the character of the original design and get back the fat bunker lip.”

—Steve Thomas

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“We wanted to maintain the character of the original design and get back the fat bunker lip.”

—Steve Thomas

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Development slide

Continued from previous page

Development over the last five years can be attributed to a slowdown in development of public courses, particularly high-end daily-fee courses. Development of private clubs has remained steady, averaging about 59 per year. However, the NGF said private courses as a percent of supply are expected to continue to gradually decline from 30 percent to 25 percent due to more public courses being built and conversions of private clubs to daily fee.

“The downturn had to come sooner or later,” said Jim Kass, NGF research director. “Simple economies dictate that with demand increasing only about 1.5 percent a year, development could not continue at historic levels. And while some golf course operators are hurting, there are still markets where it's appropriate to build.”

NGF research shows that from 1986 to 1990, demand outpaced supply, but from 1991 to the present, the opposite occurred. The ratio of golfers to courses today is returning to 1986 levels, about 1,900 golfers per 18-hole equivalent.

The decline in new construction should be good news to many operators who have seen downward pressure on their revenue per round in the face of increased competition, the NGF said. While that pressure is not expected to decrease in the near future, the NGF expects the combination of grow-the-game efforts and a slowdown in new supply to eventually relieve that pressure.

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Dark Horse experience
Continued from page 10

challenges that caught them by surprise.
"I have been through the process for
getting permits for housing sites, but I was
not prepared for the variety of approvals
and difficulties that came about in build-
ing a golf course. When I received the
initial approval for the master plan in
1989, it just started a 10-year journey
through every state and federal agency
imaginable. To get through the entitlement
process we had to deal with 161 mitiga-

tions that sent us through everything from
the Army Corps of Engineers to Fish and
Game to the state historical society," Ed
Fralick said.

During the years of mitigation Fralick's
firm, Dark Horse LLC, was also challenged
by changes to the initial master plan by the
county planning agencies. The investment
group envisioned a traditional real estate-
driven golf development that had approval
for 1,400 home sites. But after the years of
working through mitigations the county
agencies decided to cut back on the size of
the project and allowed for the develop-
ment of only 275 home sites.

This reduction forced Dark Horse to
change plans midstream. This major re-
duction changed the economics of the
entire concept.

"We now had 1,000 acres of prime land,
and with just 275 home sites we knew the
project could not support a golf club on its
own. We made the decision to separate the
golf course from the housing development
so each entity could stand on its own. We
now wanted to make the golf course the
best possible and do it in-house to keep the
costs controlled as best as possible," Chad
Fralick said. "After all the years of going
through approval meetings, litigations, and
hearings when we finally got to start actu-
ally building the golf course in March of
2001, it was a relief to get back to what we
did know, namely construction."

The Fralicks had done extensive research
into the course construction business by
talking to others in the industry and looking
at many projects. After interviewing 30 de-
sign firms they decided upon Keith Foster
to create their course. Dark Horse became
Foster's first design on his own in California

and he approached the project passionately.
"We let Keith pick where he wanted to
put the golf course first and then worked
out where to put the home sites, which is
a rarity in most projects. We were also
fortunate in having such a hands-on ap-
proach from Foster, who would come to
the site for a few days every three weeks.
His numerous visits were vital in creating
a good drainage plan and the distinctive
hand made bunkers," Chad Fralick said.

In fact, Foster found that the project had
changed so much after the original plans
were drawn that he completely revamped
the design on site. Foster had the time to
put into the project and on each visit
would produce working sketches for the
construction crews to work from.

Having continuous input from the de-
signer and the use of O&J Construction
for the earthwork helped the developers to
control costs. In fact, they managed to
build Dark Horse Golf Club for $5.5 mil-

lion, considerably less than the average
course construction. But it still took two
years to build Dark Horse due to a county
restriction that prohibited mass excava-
tion work from November through April.

The par-72 course features six sets of
tees for all levels of ability and will also
include an extensive practice area of three
practice holes, practice bunkers and grass
tees on the range. The course features
ryegrass tees and fairways and A4 bentgrass
greens.

"Since we opened in October we have
had very steady play and we have been
courageous that during the winter months
our surveys show that 50 percent of our
play is now repeat players," said director of
golf Russell Sylte.

Ed Fralick said his experience in creat-
ing Dark Horse Golf Club has given him
pause when considering doing another
such project.

"I can't say that I won't do something
like this again, but I do know that I could
be a valuable consultant for anyone that
wanted to build a golf course today. Right
now I am just happy that those who have
come to play Dark Horse Golf Club have
been appreciative and responsive to what
we have created," he said.

Dave Fair, Superintendent, Northview Golf and Country Club–Surrey B.C.

1-2-3 gives uniform color and helps our sand based greens for isolated dry spots. It allows for more uniform
watering, so we don't over water. With less water going down, you have a healthier plant. The root density is
unbelievable. We can pull five inch roots during the summer by using 1-2-3. It drives those roots down in
conjunction with water management. StandUp helps with the recovery from my ball marks, and also helps green speed. It's great for winter play. I spray it all winter if I can because it keeps the plant harder.

I used endoROOTS granular on my putting green. I thought it really helped establishment.

The developments gave Keith Foster a lot of latitude in designing Dark Horse.
GCSAA backpedals on relocation

By ANDREW OVERBECK

ATLANTA — Sensing that its members wanted more information before proceeding with the relocation process, the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America removed a vote on the articles of incorporation from its annual meeting’s agenda.

The decision not to ask for an amendment to the articles of incorporation means the board of directors must win approval from its membership on the relocation of its headquarters.

“We realized that we didn’t have all the facts out there,” said new GCSAA president Jon D. Maddern. “This is the primary reason why the articles vote was pulled. There will be a vote [on relocation] and you [members] will have the information that you need to make a proper vote.”

The association has also slowed the relocation process because it has not received any “fantastic deals” from the top three cities that it has focused on (Jacksonville, Fla., Orlando, Fla., and Phoenix). City officials in Lawrence, Kan., are reportedly putting together a package to keep the GCSAA at its current headquarters.

The possible relocation of its headquarters was discussed at a two-and-a-half-hour-and-a-half long meeting during the show in Atlanta. While the session was originally billed as a “town hall meeting” open to all members, GCSAA officials decided to limit the meeting to voting members only, due to time and space constraints.

During the meeting, the GCSAA board explained why the association is studying relocation and where they are in the decision making process.

“We had gotten an offer or two on the building from a local person in Lawrence that was interested in buying our building,” said past president Tommy Witt. “It’s incumbent upon the board of directors from time to time to research and explore whether the best place for us to have our headquarters located is … [we] can most advantageously serve our members.”

According to Maddern, the primary reason behind the move was to improve the GCSAA’s ability to interact with other golf organizations.

“The leadership of GCSAA believes today that to maximize the visibility of the association in the golf community, to continue to broaden the scope of membership services, and to continue to solidify its leadership role in golf requires a re-examination of the benefits to the membership of moving GCSAA to a high-traffic, golf-intensive region,” he said.

Many voting members felt statements like this underscored the perception that the GCSAA had already made up its mind to move.

“It kind of sounds to me like you’re saying ‘We believe we should move, now we’re going to let you say yes or no,’” said Roger Hoffman, superintendent at Desert Winds Golf Course in Twenty Nine Palms, Calif.

Both Stephen Cadenelli and Gerald Faubel, who were presidents of the GCSAA during the time of the construction of the Lawrence headquarters, questioned why the association needed to move.

“I don’t see us as a golf organization,” said Cadenelli, superintendent at Cape Cod National Golf Club in Harwich, Mass. “We are a golf course management organization. I think there’s a very significant difference there.

“And a foundation of what we do is educate golf course managers and superintendents,” he continued. “And I’m in no way understanding how location is going to enhance the ability to do that or the value in which we ultimately develop and help our members in this association.”

Faubel, superintendent at Saginaw Country Club in Saginaw, Mich., agreed.

“The PGA, golf professionals, we do a lot of things,” he said. “But I think it’s better for us to be located in Lawrence because it’s central to our office and our headquarters.”

“With the competition we’re in, we don’t think there’s a difference there.”

By DEREK RICE

ATLANTA — Quality Grassing & Services Inc. took home its second Golf Course News Best Builder of the Year Award.

Company president Howard Barnes accepted the award on behalf of his staff. Looking forward, Barnes said it should be just as busy for Quality Grassing as 2002 was.

“A lot of the work we did last year is really bringing us benefits this year,” he said. “We get a lot of word-of-mouth.”

Barnes said his company isn’t willing to rest on its accomplishments. Winning the award this year will only strengthen the perception that Quality Grassing has driven to repeat in 2003.

“It would be good to win it two years in a row, wouldn’t it?” he said.

One of the projects Quality Grassing has worked on is a 5.5 million renovation of Pointe Mandarin Golf Course in Decatur, Ala. The company broke ground on the project in February.

Golf Course Poll

Should the GCSAA relocate its headquarters?

More should be done before GCSAA... Continued on next page
Ross selects best of new GCSAA products

By KEVIN J. ROSS, CGCS

In the days leading up to the big show in Atlanta, there was a decided nervousness among members, distributors and the GCSAA anticipating the attendance and success of the show. While the numbers were down slightly, most considered the show a success. Conference-debut equipment was plentiful in spite of the tough economic times.

The following are my top five awards for new equipment:

• The Toro ProCore 648 walk-behind aeration receives my Most Innovative Design award. Although it will not be available until the 2004 season, it generated large crowds and very high interest. Its features include wheels set under the unit, 48-inch-wide coring width and hydrostatic drive. Because the wheels are set under the machine, Toro said it will not run over plugs, allowing for easier cleanup. While this is a good benefit, Toro may be missing the best benefit of all. With the wheels underneath the machine, the unit does not run over any area that was previously aerated. Therefore, it will not make the wheel marks (indentations) to the green surface as in the past.

• The Best New Electric Concept award goes to Jacobsen’s two new electric E-Walk greensmowers. These units will be available for the upcoming season. One has a stationary cutting head, while the other has a floating cutting head. Although Jacobsen’s E-Plex has been around for a while, this is their first production of an electric walk greensmower. Each year there is more interest in electric equipment, and with this year’s high fuel costs and increasing noise ordinances, the marketplace may be ripe to embrace this type of unit.

• The Pelzmeter takes the Adios Stimpmeter award. Dave Pelz, a former NASA scientist and a guru of golf instruction, has developed a new unit, and method for analyzing green speed. The unit corrects past problems associated with the stimpmeter. It eliminates dimple design, ball jumping and height differential, which were all inherent problems with the stimpmeter. Whether golfers’ members will ask in the future, “What are they Pelzing today?” will remain to be seen. Onething is for sure, this unit was not something developed overnight, and just may be rocket science.

• The Most Practical Solution award easily goes to the Dakota Greenwave. This is a portable, high-precision unit made for spot treating with chemicals can also be used for regular hand watering. It comes with an eight-gallon reservoir for chemicals, a proportioner range of 0.2 percent (500:1) to 2.5 percent (40:1), and a flow rate of 0.25gpm minimum to 30gpm maximum. On the surface this unit has great potential, from wetting agents to moss material drenching. It comes as a stand-alone unit that is adjustable to fit in a utility vehicle or as a trailer mount. As critical as water and chemical use are, this could become a money saver with its accuracy for spot treatment.

• The Most Improved Design award goes to White Metal for their cup idea. The two-half cup features a bottom made of zine, plated with copper, then with chrome for long life. The top piece, which twists into the bottom section, is made of high-impact ABS plastic and is estimated to last three to five months. The idea behind the product is the bottom offers life of two to five years and the preferred sound of the ball hitting metal when dropping into the cup. The top piece is replaceable at a minor cost ($25.50). So, instead of repainting and sometimes purchasing new cups, you just purchase the top piece. This saves money in purchasing costs and also labor costs of sanding and painting. This is a vastly improved idea over the basic cup liners presently on the market.

GCSAA shows wrap-up

Ross: Five more products to watch

In addition to my top five, there are several other products that deserve a mention.

• The Sand Storm, produced by Zscreen, is a portable trailer unit made for sitting (cleaning) sand in bunkers, and runs off a 12-volt battery.

• Rain Bird’s Wireless Eagle Rotor (Gcn, Feb. 2002), which uses no control wires, could be the high tech wave of the future.

• Harco’s new Swivel Loc lateral connection system and quick coupling stabilizers generated much irrigation-fitting buzz.

• Toro’s new redesigned Greensmaster cutting unit uses sealed reel roller bearing with no more zerk fittings, and very high manufacturing tolerances.

• Last, but not least, Jacobsen’s entry to the fairway verticutting/dethatching market with its 3-reel floatation unit, which is sorely needed.

— Kevin J. Ross
NGF touts new tools, customer loyalty awards

By DEREK RICE

ORLANDO, Fla. — Seeking to help golf courses better understand both their current and potential customers, the National Golf Foundation (NGF) introduced its InfoNet service and handed out three Customer Loyalty and Satisfaction Program (CLASP) Awards at the PGA Merchandise Show held here.

The CLASP program is a method of evaluating facilities based solely on responses from their customers. By viewing the results, courses can tell what areas of their operations need improvement, which should, by extension, lead to more rounds played.

The NGF presented the new awards to facilities in three categories — premium daily-fee, a daily-fee and a municipal facility — based on consumer responses to NGF surveys.

The winner in the premium daily-fee category was Silverstone Golf Club in Las Vegas, which is operated by ChampionsGate, Fla.-based Meadowbrook Golf. The daily-fee winner was Lago Vista Golf Club in Lago Vista, Texas. The municipal winner was Painted Dunes Desert Golf Course in El Paso, Texas.

“As an organization, we really embrace the CLASP program and could not be happier with the award,” said Cindi Feingold, public relations director for Meadowbrook Golf.

“We are really proud of our properties and their efforts.”

More than 400 facilities participated in the CLASP program, which has generated more than 58,000 surveys in the system. The NGF’s InfoNet allows facilities to confidentially share and compare key financial and operational data with other local, regional and national operators. NGF members can access the compiled information free, while non-NGF members may receive a free monthly report or unlimited access for $149 a year.

Keyonix finds success with Ratcliffe Golf

By HARRIS M. PLOTKIN

GREENVILLE, S.C. — Keyonix LLC recently celebrated the six-month anniversary of its first multi-course installation.

Ratcliffe Golf Services in Charlotte, N.C., implemented Keyonix’s Smart Key System of accountability for golf car use last summer. The technology is similar to that which has been used in the hotel industry for years. The Smart Key enables course owners and managers to regulate and account for all car use and revenue.

The Smart Key works with a golf car’s ignition system to allow the car to be used only by people who have paid to use it. The Smart Key also allows for a time limit, which prevents players from playing extra or unauthorized rounds.

Del Ratcliffe, president of Ratcliffe Golf Services, said the cost of the Smart Key system pales in comparison with revenue lost on unauthorized rounds.

“Keyonix has provided us with a reasonably priced accountability system that gives unprecedented control over our golf car operations,” Ratcliffe said. “This is the first system I have seen that firmly places the control of the fleet in the hands of the course manager.”

Bobby LoVine, national sales manager for Keyonix, said the success of the Ratcliffe installation should lead to more multi-course installations in the future.

“We have always thought that our system was tailor made for the multi-course operator,” LoVine said. “This system enables owners and operators to focus more on their business, rather than worrying about missing revenues.”

— Derek Rice

Owners lose two personnel cases

By JOE DEVANNEY and DIANNE SUMMERS DEVANNEY

In two cases that demonstrate the importance of good pre-hire screening and education, the Tenth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled against golf course owners. While the issues in each case were different, the rulings should serve as lessons to other course managers about the proper conduct of hiring and training.

In the first case, Teresita J. Dumais was employed by the Paradise Hills Golf Course in Albuquerque, N.M. Eventually, American Golf Corp. (AGC) assumed ownership of the course and subsequently required all course employees, including Dumais, to execute new employment applications. The employees were required to sign two separate documents. The first, titled, “We Can Work It Out,” was an agreement that required them to litigate certain claims, including harassment, discrimination and wrongful discharge, through a binding and final arbitration process instead of

Continued on page 17
Hiring decisions
Continued from page 15
"Selection, selection, selection. Employee selection is so crucial that nothing else - not leadership, not team building, not training, not pay incentives, not total quality management - can overcome poor hiring decisions..." The aim of selection (to find the best person for the job) may not have changed. But today's consequences of making a bad hire can be severe.

Key factors to help identify whether candidates will be successful at a job include: the ability or aptitude to do the work; attitude and motivation to utilize their talents to do the work; experience the job requires; education and training for the job; and most importantly, compatibility with the organization.

RESUMES AND EMPLOYMENT APPLICATIONS
The first thing many employers receive when a job is advertised is a resume or employment application. Resumes are time-consuming to filter through, but they can be effective first screens for candidates. Resumes should be compared against specific selection criteria to see if the candidate has the necessary education, training and experience. It is important to keep in mind, however, that 50 percent of resumes contain fabrications or exaggerations of pay, position and responsibilities.

TESTS
The most important step in developing a hiring process is to do the least expensive, most accurate step first. Most people think this is the interview, but very rarely do they take into account how much time and money is spent interviewing up to three people.

Results of a study done by Michigan State University's School of Business revealed that tests were rated four times more accurate than interviews. In designing your hiring process, you must look at the various tests that are available to you, select those which will measure the qualities you want the applicant to have, so you can compare them to your criteria and make an accurate hiring decision.

Tests are legal and they have been for many years. There are some exceptions. For example, in Rhode Island you cannot use an honesty test as the sole reason for rejecting an applicant; there must be other considerations. In Massachusetts, you cannot use an honesty test at all, but in the remainder of the states you can.

REFERENCES AND BACKGROUND CHECKS
Many background checks can be conducted. However, the primary purpose of a background check is to reduce your potential liability for negligent hiring lawsuits. It is important to note that background checks will not tell you if an applicant is honest. Too often, companies have relied on credit checks to do this because of their insurance companies' wishes.

All you can tell from a credit check is that somebody has been paying their bills, but you can't tell if they stole the money to do it.

Tests, background checks and reference checks must all be put into their proper contexts. They, along with the interview, are tools to give you information. While none of those tools alone will provide you with all of the information you need, collectively they provide you with a piece of the candidate selection puzzle that will help you make a more accurate and informed hiring decision.

Harris M. (Hank) Plotkin is the founder of The Plotkin Group, a management consulting and training firm located in Carlsbad, Calif.

VGM Club, Yamaha
Continued from page 1
sign other car manufacturers. Yamaha joins a stable of close to 160 vendors who have signed on with VGM, spanning golf course operations from the clubhouse and dining room to the maintenance facility. The company has experienced a great deal of growth in recent months, Ellis said.

"In just the last six months, we've gone to another level. Our membership has grown to over 3,000, and we have 150 to 160 manufacturers," he said.

Ellis said VGM has recently added services such as agronomics consulting and financing for its members. In addition, the company could add several other maintenance-related manufacturers to its stable in the near future.
Personnel rulings
Continued from page 15

second document, "The New Co-Worker Authorization and Acknowledgment Form," employees also agreed they would be bound by provisions of AGC's employment handbook. This was where AGC made its mistake since, although the handbook contained a reference to the binding arbitration process, it also included two conflicting passages.

In one part of the handbook, AGC stated it "reserves the right to at any time change, delete, modify or add to any of the provisions contained in this handbook at its sole discretion," with the exception of an employee's employment-at-will status. Dumais left AGC and subsequently filed discrimination charges with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, as well as a discrimination complaint in the New Mexico U.S. District Court. AGC responded by filing a motion to compel arbitration, citing the provisions in the paperwork Dumais had signed. The District Court, however, refused to grant AGC's motion and the company appealed to the Tenth Circuit.

In affirming the lower court's ruling, the Tenth Circuit applied a law of contracts under which any ambiguities in documents are construed against the party that drafted the documents. This is a key principal of law found in most (perhaps all) states. In the opinion, the Tenth Circuit wrote, "The alleged agreement between AGC and appellee to arbitrate their employment dispute is illusory" because it allowed one party the right to alter the arbitration agreement's existence or its scope.

This case suggests that golf course managers and their attorneys should carefully review all employment policies and documents to make sure there are no conflicting provisions. If there are, any conflict will be interpreted against the side that drafted the agreement. A binding arbitration agreement, such as was the subject of this lawsuit, can save employer's money, but courts will enforce such agreements only when they have been properly drafted.

In the second case, Arcenio Garcia, a 61-year-old Hispanic, was employed at the Pueblo Country Club in Pueblo, Colo., as a grounds maintenance supervisor. For more than four decades, Garcia had worked at the club in a number of different jobs. In 1998, as part of an extensive upgrade of the club, management sought a person to fill a new position, golf course superintendent. This new position, which required the employee to have knowledge of modern turf management, paid 40 percent more than what Garcia was earning. Garcia did not apply for the new position and the club offered him a reduced position as repair/maintenance manager.

After the club hired a 41-year-old white man to work as the superintendent, Garcia filed a lawsuit in the Colorado U.S. District Court, claiming both age and race discrimination. The Court entered summary judgment in favor of the club, holding that it created a new position and that Garcia could not claim discrimination since he had not applied for this new position.

Garcia appealed and the Tenth Circuit reversed the District Court, sending the case back for a jury trial. The appellate court ruled that a jury had to determine whether Garcia's position had been eliminated and whether the club had simply created the new position as a way to discriminate against Garcia.

The legal moral of this second case is that golf course managers should carefully document whenever new positions are created and which old positions are eliminated. It is important to draft clear job descriptions that spell out the exact differences and responsibilities between old and new jobs. In addition, existing employees should be warned that their position is going to be eliminated and provided a specific opportunity to apply for the new position. By so doing, management may prevent a potential discrimination lawsuit from developing.
Bayer’s Revolver takes aim at ryegrass and Poa

By Andrew Overbeck

ATLANTA — Bayer Environmental Science’s Chipco Professional Products division unveiled Revolver, a herbicide formulated specifically for use on warm-season turf, here at the GCSAA Conference and Show. It is the first of many new products that are expected to emerge from the newly combined Bayer and Aventis CropScience.

Work on the product began in 1998 under Agreo, and received approval from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Feb. 6.

Revolver is a post-emergent sulfonylurea herbicide that is squarely aimed at Griffin LLC’s TranXit, which contains similar chemistry and came on the market last year. Its primary use will be in aiding the transition between ryegrass and bermudagrass on courses that overseeded. It can also be used to combat Poa annua.

The product will be labeled for use on bermuda (except for ultradwarf) and zoysia turfgrasses and can be used on the entire course, including greens. It will not be labeled for use on St. Augustine or paspalum varieties. Bayer is currently conducting studies to determine whether the product can eventually be safely applied on ultradwarf bermudagrasses such as Mini-Verde, MS-Supreme and Champion.

"Revolver removes cool-season grass from warm-season grass," said Don Myers, product development manager for Bayer ES. "It will aid in the transition from overseeding, get rid of the clumpy ryegrass that has gotten into roughs and it is useful for the removal of Poa annua. This will truly be a Southern herbicide.

Proper application timing is critical to the effectiveness of the new herbicide. "Revolver is a very flexible product," said Myers. "But it must be applied in warmer weather for maximum effect. It

IQLink gives courses full control over golf cars

By Derek Rice

AUSTIN, Texas — UpLink Corp. and Club Car Inc. have teamed to introduce IQLink, an enhanced global positioning system (GPS)-based technology that integrates Club Car’s IQ System golf car with UpLink’s wireless communication system.

The result of this collaboration is a system that not only tracks where golf cars are on the course, but can also control speed and restrict usage on out-of-play areas.

Once the system has been installed and configured for the specific course, said Barry Rumac, vice president of marketing for UpLink, course owners, managers and superintendents can easily set parameters for where golfers can and cannot take golf cars.

"If you want to observe path-only rules for the day, it’s easy to set that up," Rumac said. "They can do it from the computer in the clubhouse or the maintenance facility, or even through the Internet if need be, using the Windows-based wizard."

IQLink uses GPS to monitor and control golf cars.

If a golfer enters an area that has been designated as sensitive, such as a green or recently sodded or scarred area of the fairway, the system can be configured to alert the golfer both visually and audibly and slow or stop the car. The GPS display mounted in the car warns players to return to designated golf car areas immediately. A similar warning can be sent to the pro shop or to on-course marshals.

Another feature allows the course manager to program specific maximum speeds in certain potentially dangerous areas, such as steep embankments or sharp turns on cart paths. Upon entering such an area, 

Briggs & Stratton creates Commercial Power Group

By Andrew Overbeck

ATLANTA — Taking a marketing end run around traditional original equipment manufacturers (OEM), Briggs & Stratton introduced its new Commercial Power Group to superintendents here at the GCSAA Conference and Show Feb. 13.

According to Doug Page, director of commercial marketing for the Commercial Power Group, the move is intended to both expand its product line and increase the end-user push for its engines in OEM products.

"End users are important because they will not only buy products and use Briggs and Stratton services for their existing engines, but they also tell OEM what engines they think should be in products," he said.

As part of its new strategy the commercial power group rolled out several products in Atlanta.

• Recognizing the growing importance of electrically driven accessories on utility vehicles, commercial mowers and other power equipment, the group introduced a 20/30 AMP Alternator option for its twin-cylinder Vanguard engines. It produces 20 amps of power at 1200 RPM.

Continued on next page
Revolver herbicide aids in transition

Continued from previous page

can be applied in the fall four weeks before overseeding and in other seasons on non-overseeded bermudagrass to control Poa. And when it warms up in spring it can be used to kill ryegrass and allow for the control Poa. And when it warms up in spring it can be used to kill ryegrass and allow for the development for Revolver and other herbicides like Sencor and MSMA. Test results in 1 to 2 days!

EcoGuard biofungicide controls dollar spot

Continued from previous page

had the best results when used in concert with traditional fungicides in either a tank mix format or by alternating applications. Under low to moderate disease pressure, both said EcoGuard offered more than 90 percent control. Novozymes recommends rotating to a standard chemical fungicide under high disease pressure. "I have not had much success with biocontrols in the past," said Dr. Clarke. "But this allows [users] to reduce reliance on synthetic fungicides and still get control."

Through the synthesis of powerful anti-fungal compounds, EcoGuard provides contact control of dollar spot and helps inhibit future fungal growth that leads to disease. According to Jeff Howard, product manager for Novozymes Biologicals, when integrated with conventional turf management practices, superintendents will see a significant and often dramatic improvement in the health and vitality of their turf.

Syngenta close with two

ATLANTA — Syngenta will be busy this year with two new products currently going through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s review process. The chemical-maker is still working on gaining approval for its thiamethoxam insecticide Meridian, however it does not expect registration in 2003. Meridian offers lower use rates, broad-spectrum control on multiple grub species and increased late season activity.

Syngenta’s Monument herbicide, however, is closer to registration. Monument’s active ingredient is trifloxysulfuron and it will offer activity similar to Griffin LLC’s TamXit herbicide and Bayer Environmental Sciences’ new Revolver herbicide. Monument has been formulated for post-emergence weed control in bermudagrass and zosia grass turf. It will provide control of major weeds including purple and yellow nutsedge, kyllinga, oxalis and Poa annua. It will also suppress growth of bahiagrass, dallisgrass, torpedograss and crabgrass.

Syngenta expects EPA registration on Monument as soon as the third quarter of 2003 and anticipates a full rollout in 2004. According to Dr. Joe DiPaola, golf market manager for Syngenta Professional Products, the firm will have one to three new products a year.

IQLink keeps golf cars on course

Continued from previous page

the golf car will slow to whatever maximum speed the course manager has designated through the system.

“You can keep your pedal to the floor, but you won’t be able to go any faster than the club wants you to go,” said David Mullinix, vice president of engineering for UpLink.

The system was also designed to eliminate the possibility of unauthorized use of golf cars, either during the day or at night by using pass codes to start the cars. “Without a passcode, you can’t drive them,” Mullinix said. “So when you come home at night, you set the system to ‘off and the cars are idle until you turn it back on in the morning.”

The two companies unveiled IQLink at the PGA Show in Orlando, Fla., in January. At that show, representatives from both UpLink and Club Car staffed an obstacle course for which certain parameters had been established.

“This is the first truly collaborative effort between UpLink and Club Car, and we hope it will be the first of many,” said Barry Ruman, vice president of marketing for UpLink.

IQLink is designed to be inte-
Roundup Ready bentgrass forges ahead

Continued from page 1

seem to phase officials from Scotts and Monsanto.

“Gene escape in male-sterile varieties is still possible because you still have fertility, gene flow, sterility in half the system. It doesn’t make it an ounce safer,” he said. “If [pollen contamination] was the case, then you would have to assume that every variety of Penn A4 and Pennrific that has been produced is not worth anything. If people are still selling certified seed, I don’t see how you can your cake and eat it.”

When it comes to certain weeds becoming resistant to Roundup, Monsanto officials said the problem was limited, especially as it relates to use on golf courses.

“What you have seen is a pocket of isolated resistance to one or two difficult-to-control, agricultural weeds,” said Monsanto spokesman Brian Hurley. “The herbicide landscape is quite different. The weeds on courses are not as difficult to control and the practice of weed control is different. Golf courses kill weeds when they are young and easier to control.”

According to Harriman, the lawsuit filed by ICI is also unlikely to cause any problems.

“The merit of their lawsuit is that bentgrass is a noxious weed,” he said. “But it is not a noxious weed, it provides plenty of benefits and it is not on any weed labels for corn or soybeans or any other row crop.”

Going forward, Harriman said Scotts and Monsanto will resubmit their application for approval to APHIS this spring. Rose and Monsanto will resubmit their application for approval to APHIS this spring. Rose and the lawsuit filed by ICI is also unlikely to cause any problems.

Although Harriman not only doesn’t see an advantage to male-sterile varieties, he also showed the possibility of gene escape due to pollen drift is nearly impossible.

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**Golf Industry Show**

**continued from page 1**

GCSAA past president Michael Wallace. "We have a duty and an obligation if we're going to put on a show like this to deliver buyers to that arena," Wallace said. "We take that very seriously. We see this as one way of doing that because we see buyers and superintendents coming together and working toward that common goal."

At the press conference to discuss the merger, some in attendance expressed concern that this show would blur the lines between the two associations, but the NGCOA's Walt Lankau, who owns Stow Acres Country Club in Stow, Mass., dismissed those concerns.

"I have two people here, my superintendents and head of construction, and there's plenty of room for all three of us. I really enjoyed being with them. I haven't had the chance to do that in the past," Lankau said.

"They know what they want and I know what I want, so I don't think that's going to be an issue at all. When we have our combined conference, we're going to have separate educational stuff, but I'm hoping there will be some cross-pollination there as well. It's a huge win-win for everybody," Wallace agreed and praised the potential combination will show.

"Realistically, the ability to bring owners to a show and be able to take them around the floor and be able to explain to them or show them what different options are open to them as far as equipment purchases, it's huge," Wallace said. "It enables them to come to a place where they can see what options are available to them. I think it allows the superintendents to gain some credibility and it allows the owner to see that the super has done due diligence.

Because very few superintendents have free reign with a checkbook, Wallace said, the Golf Industry Show will enable owners to make more qualified purchases more quickly. "Now you've shortened the chain in that decision-making process and hopefully the decisions will be made quicker and the industry will have the ability to interact directly with the ultimate decision-makers," he said. "As superintendents, yes, we make a lot of decisions on what piece of equipment we're going to recommend ... but when it comes down to the ultimate decision-maker, it's usually going to be the owner."

—Michael Wallace

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**GOLF COURSE NEWS**

**REAL ESTATE**

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### NATIONAL GOLF ROUNDS PLAYED*

**REGION** | **DECEMBER** | **Y.T.D.**
--- | --- | ---
NEW ENGLAND (ME, NH, VT, MA, RI, CT) | -38.7% | -1.7%
MIDWEST (IL, IN, OH, MI, WI, MN, IA) | -69.5% | -4.3%
EAST NORTH CENTRAL (MI, OH, IL, IN, ND, SD) | -79.5% | -5.7%
WEST NORTH CENTRAL (MN, IA, MO, KS, NE, SD) | 21.9% | -7.2%
SOUTH ATLANTIC (GA, FL, SC, NC, VA, WV) | -21.5% | -2.2%
EAST SOUTH CENTRAL (AL, MS, LA, AR) | -17.8% | -4.8%
WEST SOUTH CENTRAL (NM, OK, TX, OK) | -2.1% | -1.8%
MOUNTAIN (UT, CO, WY, SD, NV) | 6.1% | -1.0%
PACIFIC (WA, OR, CA, AK, HI) | 5.7% | 1.9%

*The percentages above represent the difference in number of rounds played in the month of December 2001 from the number of rounds played in the month of December 2000.

Source: Golf Datatech

### Golf Course News STOCK REPORT (2/19)

**Company (Symbol)** | **Price** | **Change(%)** | **52-wk range**
--- | --- | --- | ---
Aventis (AVE) | 47.20 | -16.3 | 44.05 - 74.21
BASF (BF) | 37.04 | -5.2 | 31.84 - 46.85
Bayer AG (BAY) | 17.74 | -19.5 | 15.95 - 36.00
Central Garden and Pet (CENT) | 23.43 | 12.6 | 8.93 - 23.53
Deere & Co. (DE) | 43.08 | -4.3 | 37.50 - 51.60
Dow Chemical Co. (DOW) | 28.50 | -7.5 | 24.10 - 34.73
Golf Trust of America (GTA) | 2.60 | 49.4 | 0.88 - 6.59
Ingersoll-Rand (IR) | 38.50 | -11.4 | 29.69 - 54.40
Lesco Inc. (LSCO) | 12.72 | -7.8 | 6.66 - 14.60
Monsanto Co. (MON) | 16.61 | -12.6 | 13.20 - 33.99
Syngenta AG (SYT) | 11.18 | -12.3 | 9.80 - 13.20
Tektronix Inc. (TXT) | 38.10 | -13.9 | 32.20 - 53.60
Toll Brothers (TOL) | 20.25 | -5.5 | 17.76 - 31.80
Toro Co. (TTC) | 68.60 | 5.1 | 46.30 - 69.19

### Renovation numbers

The National Golf Foundation's monthly Golf Project Report numbers do not include courses classified as reconstructions or renovations. As of present, 43 renovated/reconstructed courses are under construction and 1 renovated/reconstructed course has opened.

### Information Center

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