

# News

## CONVENTIONS

### GCSAA: sand greens draw biggest crowds

Just as at many regional turf conferences in the past few months, construction and topdressing of greens with sand created the most interest on the part of superintendents attending the 50th International Turfgrass Conference and Show in Atlanta last month. Walls of large meeting rooms were literally lined with standing conference attendees.

The staff of the sponsoring Golf Course Superintendents Association of America this year provided all the elements of a successful convention: the Georgia World Congress Center, more than 200 exhibitors and 6,500 registrants, and a program of educational sessions keyed by a strong motivational speech.

In an effort to respond to criticism of programs at previous years' conferences, GCSAA Director of Education Palmer Maples and his aides created a diversified program with greater participation by superintendents. There were turf management sessions divided into "north" and "south" groups, a morning of research reports, labor management topics, a morning for public course management, and the especially popular sand green

greens and has reduced application of fungicides because of his topdressing program. He said that "if your greens are healthy, there's no need to start sand topdressing," but that "it is a solution to many maintenance problems."

George Burgin of Atlanta Country Club in Marietta, Ga., started topdressing with sand to correct compaction problems and to reduce aeration from five times per year. He stopped using sand when he noticed while cutting cups that the root system on his greens extended only into the sand layer. Burgin told the audience, "Sand topdressing may be a good program under poor soil conditions, but don't do it unless it's necessary. Be very cautious."

Reduced *Poa annua* population was one benefit of sand topdressing discovered by Charles Nolan of Inglewood Golf and Country Club, Kenmore, Wash. Nolan's greens were constructed in 1918 of organic soils and were never tiled; they are now a 50/50 mixture of *Poa* and bent, and "you can't tell the bent from the *Poa* — they both stand up," Nolan said. He has adapted a topdresser so that a three-man crew can topdress all 20 greens in one morning.

How to live with rising water costs and drought was discussed by Jim Prusa of Pasatiempo Golf Club, Santa Cruz, Calif. Deciding where not to irrigate because of rationing, guarding against unscrupulous well drilling companies, and handling monthly water bills of \$12,000 for irrigation are just three of the reasons Prusa has been forced to make sacrifices at Pasatiempo.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Knapp, Burgin, and Nolan — two "aye's" and one "nay" for sand topdressing.

sessions.

After James Fitzroy, CGCS, superintendent at the Wollaston Recreational Facility in N. Quincy, Mass., filled the meeting room to overflowing relating his success with green construction using sand as the topmix, three other superintendents discussed their experiences with sand topdressing.

Ray Knapp of Tuckaway Country Club in Franklin, Wis., found regular light topdressing with sand provides a considerable amount of sand over a year's time and eliminates thatch problems. He has virtually stopped aeration of

To compensate for the cutback in water usage, Prusa has increased aeration, sand topdressing of greens, mowing heights, hand watering, efficiency of irrigation, use of native plants in the landscape, and use of drip irrigation. His biggest move was to arrange use of effluent water under a publicly funded project. Not only will the state and federal government pay most of the installation cost, but the club's water rate will be reduced by two thirds.

Paying \$42,000 per year for water is one big reason why Elmer Border, CGCS, El Caballero



ABOVE: Diesel power was in the forefront of GCSAA exhibits as several manufacturers introduced new tractors. BELOW: Recognizing superintendents' growing influence in golf car operations, virtually every major golf car company exhibited at GCSAA.



Country Club, Canoga Park, Calif., is concerned with making room for more golfers on his course. "We need more golfers for economic survival. We're being priced out of business," he said.

A superintendent since 1926, Border has helped his club initiate a number of new procedures to speed play and get more golfers through the course: playing fivesomes on weekends or whenever the course gets crowded, using 90 electric golf cars, installing permanent 150-yard markers, putting markers on the flagpoles to indicate pin position on the green, and asking golfers to putt continuously and to forget "honors" on teeing off.

Charles Tadge, CGCS, Mayfield Country Club, South Euclid, Ohio, was elected GCSAA president at the annual business meeting. Melvin Lucas, CGCS, Piping Rock Club, Long Island, N.Y., is the new vice president. Elected to 3-year directors' terms were Michael Bavier, CGCS, Inverness Golf Club, Palatine, Ill., and Edward Dembnicki, Arcadian Shores Golf Club, Myrtle Beach, S.C.

## SEED

### Salt-tolerant variety found on golf course

A new turf variety that thrives on soils with a pH as high as 8.5 was discovered on the fairways at Boulder Country Club in Colorado.

The variety — "Fults" *Puccinellia distans* — is intended initially for use along highways rights-of-way, but there are also plans to market it for golf course use.

Northrup King Co., Minneapolis, presently has production and marketing rights. The company is contemplating seeking Plant Variety Protection under federal law.

Fults was discovered by Stan Metsker, then superintendent at the Boulder golf course. He noticed patches of grass growing in salty areas of the fairways. Professor Jesse Fults of the Colorado State University Weed Research Lab identified the grass as *Puccinellia distans*. He was responsible for the initial collecting, purification, and