THE GOLFDOM REPORT

Job satisfaction and salaries are up, but confidence is down

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What does 4 more years of Obama mean for golf?

Will you still be a superintendent when you reach retirement age?

Our state of the industry begins on page 24
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Pre-emergent herbicides for golf turf
Iron layering in two-tiered putting greens

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Welcome to the new Golfdom


All things that greatly please my eye. Add to that list the new Golfdom.

Look, no one has ever asked me to judge a fashion show (are fashion shows even judged?). I can’t tell you how many times my wife has stopped me before leaving the house to warn me that the two (or three or four) colors I’m wearing don’t go together. I know I’ve got no style.

That’s why I’m glad I have people like Pete Seltzer and Carrie Parkhill Wallace working with me, people who know how to make a magazine look good.

The new look of this magazine — from the bolder logo on the cover, to the improved look of The 19th Hole Q&A on the back page — is all their handiwork. And I want to congratulate them on doing one heck of a job.

As I mentioned last month, this is the first time Golfdom has had a redesign since the magazine relaunched in 1999. I know a lot of readers have been with us since then, so hopefully the new look is a welcomed change. As your host of this magazine, let me officially welcome you to the new-look Golfdom by pointing out some of the changes we’ve made.

Our front-of-the-book news section, now called Starter, features shorter stories and a more whimsical attitude. You’ll even find a golf joke, submitted by a reader, every month. Superintendent Joe Stribley gets us started off with a doozy. If you’ve got a good one, I’d ask you to email it to us for a future issue.

We welcome a new columnist to the magazine, Matt Neff, an assistant superintendent in Ohio who will be penning the appropriately named Assistant Living column. We want to support our assistant superintendent readers out there, and Matt’s column will help serve this purpose.

Among our new departments is My Second Office, where one of our readers gives us a tour of his office. Bob Rogers at Big Spring CC in Louisville, Ky., was gracious enough to be our first Second Office interview. Just like we’re looking for your good golf jokes, we’re also looking for readers who would like to let us into their offices — again, shoot us an email.

The Golfdom Gallery, unveiled a few issues ago, will be a more regular feature in the magazine. We like to show off the places we’ve visited each month, so be prepared to see us snapping photos at a cocktail hour near you. Or, as we did in this issue, even include a shot taken from inside a men’s room. (Hey, it’s not often we see Britney Spears in the men’s room.)

Perhaps the most startling change is our research section. Beginning with this issue you’ll see a clear effort to have the best research section in the industry. We feel that since we already have two of the most respected turf researchers in the nation as regular contributors — Clark Throssell, Ph.D., and Karl Danneberger, Ph.D. — we might as well swing for the fences. And that’s what we’ve done.

We’ve taken the risk of ditching the old comfortable title of Turfgrass Trends in favor of a new title. Our new research section is now called Super Science, and includes a combination of current news, in-depth research, commentary and questions and answers. Throssell holds the keys to that section, and I can’t think of anyone I’d rather have behind the wheel. Watch and see and tell me if it isn’t something bold, something to be proud of.

I like to joke around here in these pages, but I assure you we take this job of publishing a quality magazine very seriously. I welcome your feedback on our new look.

Email Jones at: sjones@northcoastmedia.net.
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Follow @GRGSteve for updates
Rees Jones has been selected by the American Society of Golf Course Architects as the 2013 Donald Ross Award recipient.

Jones, a past president of the ASGCA, is well known for his redesign of courses in preparation for major championships. He has applied his remodeling skills to seven U.S. Open venues, seven PGA Championship courses, four Ryder Cups, two Walker Cup sites, and a President’s Cup site.

“Rees’ influence in the golf industry is profound, and was most recently felt during the 2012 Ryder Cup at Medinah,” said President Bob Cupp, ASGCA Fellow. “His moniker ‘The Open Doctor,’ taken over from his father, Trent, has allowed him to be a spokesman for our profession to those outside the business of golf development for years. And he has handled the responsibility well, doing good work and speaking in public forums about the art and science of golf course architecture.”

BASF announced it will take its businesses within the U.S. non-crop markets and merge them into one. The primary businesses known as Professional Turf & Ornamentals (T&O) and Pest Control Solutions, and secondary businesses including Professional Vegetation Management and Market Business Development, will now collectively be known to the marketplace as the BASF Specialty Products Department (SPD). Each respective market will continue to be served, but BASF will do so as one business unit led by Jan Buberl, Director of Specialty Products.

“We reviewed the strategy, and two things came up: focus on the end-user, and focus on innovation,” Buberl told Golfdom. “What are superintendent’s biggest problems? How can we support water management better? Dollar spot control? Overall playability? We will be better suited to address all of these things.”

Eagle One Golf Products (Anaheim, Calif.) announced recently that they have acquired Fore-Par (Buena Park, Calif.) in June of 2012, Eagle One Golf was acquired by Canadian company Golf Supply Warehouse.

With the acquisition, Eagle One Golf now says that they are the “largest distributors of golf course and golf range equipment, supplies and accessories in the world.”

“Since business has yet been made if the name Fore-Par will be kept.

“It’s business as usual for a short time. Both companies have long, storied brands. I can tell you that we are ready to immediately service both sets of customers,” Rod Halsall, general manager of Eagle One Golf, told Golfdom.

“It would be foolhardy not to carefully consider the best way to integrate these two brands.”

Stop by the Golfdom booth at the Golf Industry Show next month for your chance to win an all-expenses paid trip to the 2013 Golfdom Summit, as well as a chance to catch up with the crew in person (hey, where was Geraci when we took this picture?) We will also be giving away free high-fives to anyone who wants one. Sorry, no hugs.
‘ello, Guv’nah

Georgia Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle was awarded the Environmental Leader of the Year award by the Georgia Golf Environmental Foundation for his efforts ensuring the industry’s efficient use of water resources in the state. “Lt. Gov. Cagle has been a strong ally as we strive to raise the environmental profile of the game and ensure that the state’s laws and regulations allow superintendents to be more flexible, creative and efficient in using and caring for our natural resources,” said Harold Franklin, GGEF chairman.

If your New Year’s resolutions have already fallen by the wayside, give yourself a mulligan. #golfdomwisdom

A father is tucking his little girl into bed, and she starts praying. “God bless Mommy, God bless Daddy, God bless Grandma and goodbye Grandpa.” The father thinks, ‘Hmm, that’s weird.’ Out of nowhere, the next day… Grandpa dies.

About six months later, the father’s tucking his little girl into bed again, when she starts praying. “God bless Mommy, God bless Daddy, goodbye Grandma.” He asks his little girl, ‘Why did you say goodbye Grandma?’ “I don’t know,” she says, “it just felt right.” The next day… Grandma dies.

It’s bedtime a month later when the little girl starts praying again. “God bless Mommy, goodbye Daddy.” The next day, the guy is distraught. All day, he’s waiting for something bad to happen to him. He gets so agitated he forgets to leave work on time. He ends up pacing his office all night before he finally goes home.

He walks into his house and his wife is furious. “Where have you been?” she shouts. “At work!” he shouts back. “You never work this late, I don’t understand!” she cries. “Hey, leave me be, you don’t know what kind of a day I’ve had!”

The wife glares back at him and says, “Oh, you think you’ve had a bad day? I was at my golf lesson today and my golf pro just fell over dead!”
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2012: The Outtakes

1 Wasted Management  At the 2012 Waste Management Phoenix Open at TPC Scottsdale, this fan — in the process of meeting Scottsdale’s finest — had the dumb idea to go for a swim while the final group was on the tee.

2 As the Worm turns  When we ran into Dennis Rodman at a Miami resort, we couldn’t help but be reminded of the last time we mowed a green and looked down to see a quarter-inch spot of soil smeared right into it.

3 Scrooged  At the 2012 AT&T at Pebble Beach, Bill Murray was in more of a Phil Connors mood than a Carl Spackler mood when Seth approached him for an interview. That’s OK, something must have been Lost in Translation.

4 Hit me baby  At a course in Colorado, maintenance employees are implored by none other than Hannah Montana and Britney Spears to wash their hands. Sure, their hands are clean, but their thoughts…?

5 Mildly interesting men  Seth was happy to learn that the World’s Most Interesting Man doesn’t always drink beer… but he always reads Golfdom. “Stay thirsty my friends.”

6 Cornhuskers vs. Jayhawks  Kansas University mascots Big Jay and Baby Jay crashed our August cover shoot (“Healing Power”) at Lawrence (Kan.) CC. It was all superintendent Bill Irving could do to keep his Nebraska Cornhusker dog Ozzie (named after Tom Osborne) from attacking.
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GOOD LUCK CHARMS The cartoons were something my wife gave me when I first got in the business. At the time I had nothing to hang in my office. Those two little cartoons I’ve had ever since my first job, probably 1974. I guess they’re kind of good luck, so I always keep them up.

HONORABLE MENTIONS Those are for finishing top 10 in our national tournament. I won the championship flight B of the GCSAA national tournament and I have finished top 10 four times.

WAVE ‘EM HIGH The white flag, we hosted the Kentucky State Amateur Championship here in 2007. The winner, Phil Hendrickson, signed the flag for me. The yellow flag is from Kenny Perry. Kenny was here for an outing and put on a little clinic and then played several of the holes and autographed a flag for me.

GONE FISHING I grew up on Lake Erie, so I started fishing when I was very young. It’s my release. A lot of people think that going to play golf is a great way, or a great fringe benefit of our job — which it is — but it’s like going to the office to relax. I love to boat and fish and we have a creek that runs through the club here, and a lake, and I like to go out late in the evenings or after work hours. I have actually stocked our lakes, which we built on the course, with fish I have caught. I have fun doing it.

WELCOME TO THE WOLFPACK I am an alumnus of NC State and I am a diehard Wolfpacker! Matter of fact the picture below that flag is the bell tower at N.C. State. There is a well-known artist in North Carolina, Gary Miller, who’s done a lot of North Carolina art like that and his son-in-law worked for me. He gave me this picture of the bell tower when I left.

“I am a diehard golfer, started when I was 4 years old, which is what got me into the business — I figured if I couldn’t play for a living, I wanted to be out here.”

BOB ROGERS, CGCS at Big Spring Country Club in Louisville, Ky., has a competitive nature. It could be from his time playing golf at North Carolina State, followed by 30 years of working in the area at golf courses, or it could be his multiple tournament accolades and appearances in three pro-ams.

Either way, one thing is certain, Rogers’ Second Office is just the backdrop needed to capture his successes and passions.

About our host

BOB ROGERS, CGCS at Big Spring Country Club in Louisville, Ky., has a competitive nature. It could be from his time playing golf at North Carolina State, followed by 30 years of working in the area at golf courses, or it could be his multiple tournament accolades and appearances in three pro-ams.

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No shame in playing it forward

One trend in golf that I actually think might be working and getting a foothold is the “Play it Forward” program. The premise behind this program is the idea of making golf easier and more fun. Sure, golf is a difficult game and takes time to learn, but once a person gets smitten with the golf bug, it’s hard to get it out of their system. With this in mind, however, many golfers continue to make things difficult on themselves and take the pleasure out of the game by playing the wrong teeing grounds.

The request to build forward tees is coming from not only public facilities, but also resort courses and yes, even private golf courses.

Last year my partners and I started a golf course renovation and construction company (I know, insert joke here), and we often get asked to construct forward tees. In many cases, golf courses are designed for better players. The average golfer can’t truly enjoy himself or herself from 6,500 to 7,000 yards. So, why not make golf more fun by constructing tees that shorten the course to increase the pleasure of the round? Many golf courses that cannot afford to build actual forward tees just place tee markers out on the beginning of the fairway and market them as junior tees or “play it forward tees.” In some cases this simple recognition of shortening the golf course to increase the pleasure of the round works quite well.

As good as we are as superintendents, we can’t maintain a golf course to match the average player’s ability? As good as we are as superintendents, we can’t maintain a golf course to match the average player’s ability, particularly if they think in their minds they are better golfers than they really are. The truth is, with all the improvements to golf equipment, facilities, and the game itself, there are still plenty of golfers who can only dream of enjoying a round from the tips.

So as an industry, let’s continue to recognize this and encourage and promote the fact that golf would be a whole lot more enjoyable if golfers play the tee complexes that are more in line with their abilities. We also need to continue to educate golfers and change the mindset that “playing it forward” is not something to be ashamed of. Golfers need to understand that if they are going to spend time and money to play a round, they may as well enjoy themselves. Let’s face it, if you have more fun, you’ll want to come back and have some more fun. If you want to come back, rounds will go up, and if rounds go up, revenue will follow. To me, that sounds like a win-win-win for golfers, facilities and the industry overall.

The request to build forward tees for aging golfers, beginning golfers, junior golfers and golfers who just want to have more fun is coming from not only low-end public facilities; it’s also coming from resort golf courses, daily fee golf courses and yes, even private golf courses.

We’ve recently constructed forward tees at several high end private clubs with aging memberships who have come to realize that if they are going to spend four-and-a-half hours out on a golf course, they want to enjoy the experience and not come off the 18th green feeling like they’ve been beaten up.

The great thing about the “Play it Forward” concept is that it is generally easy to implement and relatively inexpensive. Many golf courses that cannot afford to build actual forward tees just place tee markers out on the beginning of the fairway and market them as junior tees or “play it forward tees.” In some cases this simple recognition of shortening the golf course to increase the pleasure of the round works quite well.

I’ve even heard that many of the well-known golf course architects (including Jack Nicklaus) have embraced the “Play it Forward” program. Like all of us, Jack is aging and doesn’t hit the ball as far as he used to. But more importantly, he understands that in order for the golf industry to continue to recover — and even grow — golf needs to be fun.

So, I encourage all of you to promote this concept at your clubs. Because it actually works.

Mark Woodward is president of Mark Woodward and Associates, principal of DalMarCo Golf, CEO of MasterStep Golf Group and a contributing editor for Golfdom.
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“By participating, a whole new world opened up for me. It can for you, too.”

JOEL JACKSON, Contributing Editor

Assistant need an assist

I accepted an invitation from Melanie Bonds, executive director of the Alabama GCSA, to be a speaker for a mid-November assistant superintendent boot camp event in Birmingham, Ala. I quickly discovered I had no “silver bullet” solutions for the group of 28 assistants who showed up. Since the only thing you can control are your own actions, a theme emerged for my talk — participation.

By participating and being involved, you meet people and your name is out there. The old saying “It’s who you know, not what you know” is only partially correct. Being visible and active creates a lot of “who” contacts, but you must back it up by staying on the cutting edge of knowledge. So, education is a key ingredient of success. However, don’t just pursue traditional “turf management” education. Here’s why:

In a conversation with Lyne Tumlinson, a career and teambuilding coach (also a speaker at the conference) she said that two-thirds of prospective employers these days indicated they assumed the interviewee knew turf management. They were focusing on leadership, communication and management skills that a potential department head (superintendent) brought to the table. Participating in local chapters is a great first step to getting to know the successful superintendents in the area and picking up ideas on how to improve yourself.

Many of us are not at ease being in the spotlight, but you can also get recognition by being a key supporting actor. Case in point was Mr. Lee Bailey, assistant superintendent from the Willow Point CC in Alexander City, Ala. I didn’t know Bailey’s status until the end of the first day of the conference. He had introduced each speaker that day and read a short bio on each one. What I learned later was that he was an assistant, and had volunteered to serve on the AGCSA board for several years, until last the AGCSA changed its bylaws to create an assistant superintendent to the Board position.

I asked Bailey about the current situation with assistants and what it takes for them to progress in the business. He said, “It starts with the superintendent. They need to be willing to provide opportunities for assistants to grow in their careers. They need to be mentors and support assistants’ attendance to chapter meetings and education and be involved in the planning and administration of the maintenance department.”

Bailey has been on a couple of interviews this past year, and he echoed Tumlinson’s comment that most of the interviewers were more concerned about his business and leadership skills and assumed he knew how to grow grass.

Bill Davidson, CGCS at the Country Club of Naples (Fla.) told me during an interview for another story that when he hires assistants he focuses on their personalities and communications and leadership skills.

“I can teach them how to grow grass on this course,” Davidson said.

I came to this profession from a non-turf background. I learned turf management and golf business from my bosses, turf seminars, and best of all, by networking with my peers at local and national conferences. By participating, a whole new world opened up for me. It can for you, too.

While meeting and conference opportunities might be limited right now, superintendents, assistants and chapters can work out some committee service, education or networking opportunities for assistants in formal or informal gatherings.

“Participation” was my mantra all day. But I confess, I opted out of the yoga class scheduled for the end of the day. The 12 hearty souls who stayed taunted me with “Participate! Participate!” as I skulked out of the room.

Joel Jackson, CGCS-Ret., is director of communications for the Florida GCSA.
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What you can control

If it’s true that when the going gets tough, the tough get going, then those of us in the golf course maintenance industry haven’t stopped going for the past several years. With the country’s economic woes having a dramatic effect on the golf industry, and the extreme weather conditions that have been seen in many parts of the country over the last few years, it has indeed been a difficult time to be in this business.

One of the often-mentioned consequences of the recession has been the loss of golf courses, and thus, job opportunities. As a result of these lost opportunities, many assistant golf course superintendents are struggling to take the next step in their careers.

We’ve all heard that we need to network, make our résumés stand out, create personal websites, etc. We should do some or all of these things, but we have no control over the end result of these efforts. It’s all great advice, but doing these things guarantees nothing except that we could end up spending a ton of time and money on networking opportunities, résumé services, and website design only to be in the exact same place three years from now, albeit with one fancy website that gets visited maybe a dozen times a year.

But there is one aspect of this career stalemate that we can control and even use to our advantage. We can use this additional time as assistant superintendents to become even better at what we do and ultimately become better superintendents when our time finally comes.

We have our routines down — as much as it’s possible to in this business. We know the course, the crew and our superintendent’s expectations. And, now that we’re no longer consumed with figuring out the basics, we have the opportunity to focus on the finer points of this profession.

We can concentrate more on the effects of agronomic programs and practices, management and budgeting skills, communication skills, and even learning more about how the other departments within the club function.

To take the next step, we are going to have to convince someone that we have most of the answers and know how to figure out the rest. This additional time provides us with an invaluable opportunity to become even better prepared for the day we become superintendents. I’ve heard it said before that moving up to a superintendent can be a bit nerve-racking at first. Further honing our skills and knowledge can reduce the stress associated with the transition and the learning curve that comes with a new job and, likely, a new course.

Equally as important as focusing on how to better equip ourselves for future success is remembering that we presently have a job to do. Like me, you may have found yourself occasionally wondering if the frequently unrelenting schedule that we all keep is worth it, given the lack of advancement opportunities. But we need to be keenly aware that our superintendents are still counting on us to get the job done every day and to set an example for the crew. A bad attitude from a supervisor can spread like wildfire, especially when the days get long and everyone is tired.

While we may not always be happy with the rate at which our careers are progressing, we are still doing the job we love. Every day we have the opportunity to learn more and every day we are presented the challenge of being better than the day before.

That keeps me fired up and, if you’re in a similar career situation, I hope it helps you, too.

Matt Neff is assistant superintendent at Wedgewood G&CC in Powell, Ohio, and Golfdom’s newest columnist.
Weed Identification and Treatment Guide

GRASSY WEEDS AND SEDGES (MONOCOTS)

NUTSEDGE, YELLOW
*Cyperus esculentus*

VIOLET, WILD
*Viola pratincola*

SPURGE, SPOTTED
*Euphorbia maculata*

NUTSEDGE, PURPLE
*Cyperus rotundus*

SILVERY THREAD MOSS
*Bryum argenteum*

BLUEGRASS, ANNUAL
*Poa annua*

CRABGRASS LARGE & SMOOTH
*Digitaria spp.*

DALLISGRASS
*Paspalum dilatatum*

GOOSEGRASS
*Eleusine indica*

DOLLARWEED
*Hydrocotyle spp.*

DOLLARWEED

BUTTONWEED, VIRGINIA
*Diodia virginiana*

CARPETWEED
*Mollugo verticillata*

CHICKWEED, COMMON
*Stellaria media*

NUTSEDGE, PURPLE

BLUEGRASS, ANNUAL

VIOLET, WILD

SPURGE, SPOTTED

BROADLEAF WEEDS (DICOTS)

WARM SEASON

BENTGRASS, CREEPING

BLUEGRASS, KENTUCKY

BLUEGRASS, ROUGH

FESCUE, FINE

FESCUE, TALL

RYEGRASS, PERENNIAL

BAHIAGRASS

BERMUDAGRASS & HYBRIDS

BUFFALOGRASS

CARPETGRASS

CENTIPEDegrass

KIHKUYUGRASS

SEASHORE PASPALUM

ST. AUGUSTINEGRASS

LEGEND

Once you’ve identified a weed species, use this key to determine which FMC turf solutions are labeled for control or suppression of that weed.

For more information on the full line of herbicides from FMC Professional Solutions, visit www.fmcprosolutions.com or contact your FMC Market Specialist or local FMC Distributor.
Good news, bad news. You still love your job, but you don’t expect things to get any easier. Your rounds were up last year, but your pay isn’t great. You’re optimistic about 2013, but at the same time, you’re worried about your future, especially retirement.

These are just some of the things we learned with our late-2012 survey of Golfdom readers. We received 659 responses to our 22-question survey. The results of that survey are in these pages, along with some opinions from your colleagues from around the country. We also included some historical results to compare how the mood of the industry may have changed over the last several years.

And even though we had the bias of this being our own survey, we were still thrilled to see that 45 percent of you chose Golfdom as the best magazine in the industry. The reason for our success? We have the best readers in the industry.

Read on to see how those readers feel about the current state of the industry.
STILL SUPER AT 60?

When pondering the long-term future of a career, most superintendents seem positive, despite the numbers.

BY SETH JONES

In the July 2012 issue of Golfdom we published perhaps our most controversial story of the year, “The 5.9%,” by former superintendent Jay Charnes. In that story, Charnes pondered why so few superintendents — only 5.9 percent, according to GCSAA statistics — are age 60 and over.

“Granted, people generally retire in their 60s. But statistically this looks like a good many superintendents disappear as they reach their golden years,” Charnes wrote in the article. “If they are not retired or playing golf at the Pearly Gates Golf Club, where are they?”

Despite the statistical data that showed otherwise, 52 percent of readers felt strongly that they would still be working superintendents at age 60.

“I have thought about it, and I think that story got a lot of people thinking about it, wondering if they need to start looking over their shoulder more once they hit 50,” says Bethpage State Park Golf Course superintendent Andy Wilson. “Would I like to be a superintendent at age 60? Yes. But maybe at a sleepier place... a 9-hole public, or an 18-hole public, where the demands aren’t so tough.”

Jackson Reiswig, superintendent at the Coral Creek Club in Placida, Fla., was doubtful about his chances of being a superintendent at age 60. He feels he’s destined to be in the landscaping industry by then.

“(Landscaping) seems to be where everyone falls off to,” Reiswig says. “Being a superintendent is pretty limited to branch off from, which is unfortunate, because our skills are vast.”

Reiswig, speaking frankly, feels that in 10 years, maybe he’ll be burned out.

“We are continually put under pressure to do more with less,” he says. “As this cycle continues, it puts a strain on the psyche. Ten years from now, I may not be so keen on dealing with the challenges. Plus, there’s always going to be that younger guy, wanting the challenge, willing to put in the ridiculous hours.”

Reiswig says that the changing of the guard is happening before his eyes.

“We don’t think about it because we don’t want to,” he says. “Go to a chapter meeting and you see the changing of the guard. In 20, 30 years, that’s us.”

Steve Sarro, superintendent at Pinehurst Country Club in Denver, was conflicted when he first considered if he still wanted to be a superintendent for another 20-plus years.

“If I’m still a superintendent at age 60, that will mean I’m still outside, I’m still doing the things I like,” Sarro says. “The guys I know who are still superintendents at that age, they do a good job and have a good program. So if I can make it that far... then yes, I do hope I’m still a superintendent at age 60.”

One thing he doesn’t want to do: become a consultant.

“I don’t know if I could be a consultant or sell turf equipment. Plus, who needs another consultant?” Sarro wonders. “If I’m not a superintendent, hopefully my butt is on a boat, sailing around the world.”

Wilson acknowledges that someday, someone younger will have his position at New York’s famed Bethpage Park. And he’s fine with that.

“Everyone who has come into this job, they have it in their bones. When you get to that age, you might want to get back to just cutting grass,” Wilson says. “At a place like Bethpage, I get bogged down with the administrative side of the job. I certainly want to be working at 60, but maybe let the young guns take over at a place like this. It would be ideal to be somewhere a little quieter, where I could ride my mower off into the sunset...”

“Or in our industry,” he laughs, “into the sunrise.”

Continued on page 26

DO YOU THINK YOU’LL STILL BE A SUPERINTENDENT AT AGE 60?

I plan to find a new career before then

There’s little chance I’ll still be a superintendent

I feel strongly that I’ll still be a working superintendent

There’s little chance I’ll still be a superintendent

Continued on page 26

WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST PERSONAL CONCERN?

Too much stress

Not enough pay

45%

24%

14%
FOUR MORE YEARS

With the re-election of Barack Obama, readers are concerned that these next four years will be tough ones for the economy of golf.

BY SETH JONES

“I look at these next four years about the same as I look at hitting a 230-yard 3-wood into high wind... it could turn out really good, but it probably isn’t going to,” laughs Anthony Williams, CGCS at the 36-hole Stone Mountain (Ga.) Golf Club.

Golfdom’s readers seem to agree with the magazine’s environmental editor. Half of those surveyed said they expected the next four years to be that 3-wood into the wind, while only 21 percent were feeling positive about the next four years.

“If we get good weather, we’ll see more rounds played, but until everyone feels more comfortable about the economy and their personal situation, the golfers won’t be as quick to get out here to play,” Williams laments. “Ask the man on the street who is paying more in taxes; if he was a once-a-week golfer, he is now a once-a-month golfer.”

Still, there are those who remain positive about these next four years. Conrad Broussard, CGCS at the 81-hole St. James Plantation in Southport, N.C., which is entirely Audubon Certified, feels there may be an opportunity for golf under the Obama administration.

“He seems to be investing in the green industry heavily, and I think golf is more and more being seen as a green business,” Broussard says. “Hopefully we can somehow use that to our advantage.”

Golf course architect Tom Marzolf appreciates the fact that Obama is well known as a player of the game.

“My own perception is, he doesn’t shy away from the game. He plays on vacation. I like the fact that he is not afraid to play the game and let it be a part of his life,” he says. “I saw a show on the killing of Osama bin Laden — Obama played 9 holes on the day he told the team to go after (bin Laden) because he needed time to think. It’s great that he utilizes the golf course as a place to make important decisions.”

Almost 30 percent of readers surveyed said it doesn’t make a difference who is in the White House. And you can bet most of that 30 percent expect these next four years to be tough ones. That’s what Rhett Evans, CEO of the GCSAA, is preparing for.

“I think the best way to sum it up is you’re still going to see the status quo,” Evans says. “With the democrats remaining in control, but the republicans in the House of Representatives, there will be a lot of debates, but they’re just going to kick the can down the road with no real decisions.”

Continued on page 28
IT’S OKAY TO BE A CONTROL FREAK.

As a superintendent, you are asked every day to do the impossible: Grow the greenest, strongest, fastest-playing turf under extreme conditions. Plus, uncontrollable variables like weather, temperature fluctuations, moisture and soil pH levels can make it difficult for turf to take in the nutrients it needs to thrive.

When your turf absolutely needs nutrients now and is unable to get them through the soil, Floratine Foliar™ allows you to deliver nutrients quickly and efficiently directly through the leaves, bypassing the root system to ensure your turf is receiving nutrients exactly when it needs them most. Floratine Foliar™ gives you the control to make the impossible possible.

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TURF SCHOoled

With economic impacts still lingering in the golf industry, superintendents are gently dissuading their kids from following their lead.

BY BETH GERACI

Scott Ramsay, CGCS at Yale Golf Course in New Haven, Conn., is with his son, making the long drive to the University of South Carolina, where his son is a senior.

“What would I say? Good luck,” says Ramsay. “My optimism of the industry is a bit strained, but still strong.”

If it were the 1990s, it would be a different story, says Ramsay, who’s worked in greenkeeping for 30 years. But it’s not the ‘90s. And though his son, 23, was Ramsay’s intern on the course last summer, his degree won’t be in turf.

“It’s going to be pretty tough in this business for the next four or five years,” Ramsay says. “That being said, it’s like every industry.”

As Ramsay’s telling his son “Good luck,” Rob Daniel, CGCS at Rivertowne Country Club in Mt. Pleasant, S.C., is telling his kids, “Go to law school.” “No,” he adds, “I would support my kids in whatever they wanted to do. But I think it’s going to be increasingly difficult to break into the industry, because it’s a shrinking industry.”

Daniel, 34, is father to a 4-year-old daughter and 5-year-old son. When it comes time for them to enter the workforce, Daniel will encourage them to pursue a field that offers a broader range of opportunities than golf course management does.

“As soon as they come out of college, it would be an extremely difficult road to get to the superintendent positions,” Daniel says. “There are exceptions to everything, but it’s just a difficult task. I wouldn’t want my kids to become stuck in an industry.”

Dave Davies, CGCS at TPC Stonebrae in Hayward, Calif., is right there with him.

“I have advised all four of my kids to try to experience a wider range of disciplines,” says Davies, whose degree is in business administration, not in turf. “If something lights a fire for you, pursue it. But I think a broad-based education is so much more important, because you learn so many more skills, so many different talents.”

There is “a glut” of trained individuals in the 25 to 40 age bracket searching for superintendent positions, Davies says, and that means there are a lot of people with specialized skills who are competing for a limited number of jobs.

“How would I feel if I spent four years focusing on one area and then had to take a job as a spray tech out of college when my focus is on being a superintendent? Not good,” he says.

But Chris Vincent, superintendent at The Reserve at Lake Keowee in Sunset, S.C., sees ample opportunity in this business, even down the road for his two young girls.

“If they wanted to follow in my footsteps, I would encourage them,” Vincent says. “The game of golf these days is continuing to advance, and I think women in the profession have an advantage, because... you tend to pay more attention to what they’re doing.”

With the business skills and product knowledge superintendents develop, Vincent asserts they definitely have job options in turf outside of greenkeeping, such as club general manager, sales and marketer.

Vincent will support his daughters in whatever they decide to do. “As long as my kids are loving what they do, that’s all I care about it,” he says. “And if they enjoy being a superintendent, even better.”

Continued on page 30
WE’RE GEARED UP TO MAKE A MAJOR ANNOUNCEMENT

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Hunter will soon unveil innovations that will make golf irrigation simpler and more efficient. Falling under the blue banner of Hunter Industries, you can count on reliable products backed up by the best technical support team in the business—no extra charge.

To get all the information on these new innovations, be sure to stop by booth 5138.
In the heart of the Information Age, some superintendents are using blogs, Twitter and smartphones to get the word out.

By Beth Geraci

John Davis is excited. Today, the director of agronomy at Secession Golf Club in Beaufort, S.C., is finally launching his course blog. “I’ve been wanting to do this for a year but it was hard to find the time,” he says.

Davis is one of 8.4 percent of superintendents who said they use blogs regularly to promote their clubs.

“I do love my blog,” says the superintendent at Tacoma (Wash.) Country and Golf Club. He started his blog in May 2011 to communicate with members and his green committee.

Since then, the blog has garnered 37,000 hits. And because “a picture speaks a thousand words,” Kachmarek ensures the blog is heavy on photos.

If course repairs need to be made, Kachmarek’s photos help him easily get projects approved by members and the green committee. “The visual image tells the whole story,” he says.

As for Davis, now that his own blog is up and running, he feels more empowered. “This is mine. I’m in the driver’s seat,” he says.

Secession is a national club, so its 700 members live all over the country. Given those logistics, Davis plans to use his blog to inform and establish a relationship with them.

“The issue I’ve had here is, the pro shop is the first point of contact,” he says. “I’ve told members to contact me and they don’t, so now I want to develop that relationship.”

Davis also uses an iPad on the course and says it’s the best thing he’s ever bought in his life. He uses it mostly to do research on the course and keep track of his schedule.

“I love the convenience of it,” he says. “You’re carrying your personal computer around with you everywhere you go.”

Kachmarek takes photos with his iPhone and iPad, then uploads them to his blog on the spot. He also uses the devices to determine weather conditions and control his irrigation system remotely from any point on the course.

Having seen his cyberspace following grow exponentially, Kachmarek knows how to take advantage of electronic media. Each has its place, he says. For him, Facebook is for friends and family, and Twitter is for communicating with fellow superintendents.

“I don’t want to know that you just went to the bathroom,” he says. “I’ll tweet something that will stimulate conversation.”

Most surprising to Myers is how far and fast word spreads through social media. “If you post,” he says, “you’d be amazed how many people from all over the world see it and comment on it. That opened my eyes.”

Gary Myers, CGCS at The Sagamore Club in Noblesville, Ind., developed Sagamore’s blog when he arrived there three years ago, when course blogs were just a blip on the radar.

He’s one of just 7.8 percent of greenkeepers who said they use all forms of social media for work. He has linked his blog, Twitter and Facebook accounts, using them to inform his members of course projects, playing conditions and scheduled maintenance.

“We try to give them a heads up before they go out and play,” he says.

Joel Kachmarek describes himself as someone who is “big into blogging.”

I don’t use social media. 60%

Facebook 6%

I use it all. 18%

Blog 8%

Twitter 8%
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See ‘em in San Diego

The arrival of the 2013 Golf Industry Show also marks the arrival of new tools for superintendents.

COMPILED BY KEN MOUM // CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

It’s always a good thing when the GCSAA’s annual Golf Industry Show rolls through sunny San Diego. The weather’s great, the food is dynamite and the nightlife is fun.

Regardless of how great the city is, we’re there for business. So while you’re on the clock, keep an eye out for these items that could potentially have a major impact at your course this year.

And if you miss the 2013 GIS, don’t worry, we’ll do a more complete postmortem review of new products we saw in San Diego in our March issue.
Quali-Pro

Quali-Pro has added Enclave, a broad-spectrum fungicide, and Negate, a pre-emergent herbicide for use on bermudagrass and zoysiagrass, to its line of products.

Enclave is the industry’s first product with four modes of action. It controls a wide variety of fungal pathogens. With it, the company says, superintendents can control snow mold, brown patch, dollar spot and anthracnose simultaneously, on all areas of their course with just one product. Enclave provides synergistic control of dollar spot, anthracnose, patch disease and snow mold (both pink and grey).

Negate provides post-emergent control of Poa, ryegrass and broadleaf weeds, allowing bermudagrass and zoysia turf to remain consistently strong, healthy and clean. / GIS Booth: 2130

Trojan Battery Co.

Trojan Battery Co. has launched two new batteries that feature a new class of deep-cycle battery technology. The Traveler 8V provides more than 40 percent longer life, and the Ranger 160 delivers 35 percent more run time between charges than today’s current 8V golf batteries.

The Traveler 8V’s internal elements include the Internal Battery Protection System, featuring thicker grids, membrane-wrapped plates and Trojan’s exclusive T2 Technology with Maxguard T2 multi-rib separators. It also incorporates a moss guard that insulates and protects the top of the battery plates. It is compatible with the HydroLink single-point watering system that can fill a set of batteries in 30 seconds.

Trojan’s Ranger 160 uses more range than a typical golf car battery can manage. It is rated at 160 minutes when discharged at 56 amps and is the first U.S.-made long-range product manufactured to meet the increasing demands of golf carts and utility vehicles. / GIS Booth: 3521

Continued on page 34

MORE control.

Clover, thistle and over 250 other broadleaf weeds disappear with one application of Millennium™ Ultra2. With ‘meltdown’ and residual control, it keeps turf clean and pristine for weeks, and can be applied virtually any time for maximum flexibility. That’s how Nufarm brings you more control – and more confidence. Ask your distributor for Millennium Ultra2.

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www.nufarm.com/usto

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**The Toro Co.**
The Toro Co. is launching the new lightweight Reelmaster 3550-D, designed to deliver gentle, turf-friendly operation without the sacrifice in productivity customers may face when mowing fairways and other large areas with a triplex greens mower. The Reelmaster 3550-D also boasts exceptional ground-following capabilities to better handle undulations in fairways and on areas around greens. Three-wheel drive and smooth turf tires are standard, and the company says the traction unit is similar to the Groundsmaster 3500-D. The 3550-D is powered by a Kubota diesel engine and features an 82-inch cutting width. Toro says the Reelmaster 3550-D is 15 to 20 percent lighter than other fairway units on the market. / GIS Booth: 4838

**Jacobsen**
Jacobsen will show off its GK 500 series and PGM walking greens mowers that now come standard with 15-blade Classic XP reels to deliver a high quality of cut. The 15-blade reel provides a better frequency-of-clip compared to competitive mowers, the company says. The entire line of Jacobsen walking greens mowers — including the Eclipse2 series — now comes standard with 15-blade Classic XP reels.

In addition, the Eclipse 322 riding greens mower will be offered in 2013 with advanced lithium battery technology that allows it to cut 18 greens plus practice putting greens on one charge. The lithium batteries never need maintenance and will last 6-8 years, the company says. / GIS Booth: 2838

**Bayer Environmental Science**
Bayer is adding a new granular version of Specticle, it’s pre-emergent herbicide for use on warm-season turfgrass, landscape ornamentals and hardscapes. Specticle G controls grassy and broadleaf weeds including Poa annua, crabgrass, goosegrass and more than 60 broadleaf weeds as well as annual sedges and kyllingas. It features the same active ingredient — Indaziflam — as the two other forms of the product and is available in a 50-pound bag. / GIS Booth: 3438

**Rain Bird**
Rain Bird’s new Algae Control System (ACS) provides environmentally friendly control of algae on the surfaces of ponds and other water features that are at least two feet deep. Submerged just beneath the water’s surface, the ACS emits ultrasonic waves that inhibit the growth and spread of algae. Results can be seen in as few as three to four weeks. Because no chemicals are used, it’s safe for aquatic animals and plants.

The ACS comes in five different power levels. Selecting the appropriate model for each application depends on factors such as the surface area of the body of water; the nutrients present in the water; the body of water’s shape; and its location relative to the earth’s equator. It is available in either 24-volt AC or 24-volt DC solar power. / GIS Booth: 2728

**FMC Professional Solutions**
FMC Professional Solutions’ Talstar XTRA GC granular insecticide is approved for broadcast or mound applications on all turf varieties for control of ants (including imported fire ants), cutworms, webworms, armyworms, mole crickets and more. In temperate zone regions where forsythia is in full bloom, it will also control annual bluegrass weevil adults for three to four weeks.

Designed specifically for golf courses, Talstar XTRA GC has a greens-grade, sand-core granule that penetrates thatch to reach surface-feeding pests. It is said to be the only granular insecticide that combines the proven residual of Talstar with the speed of the active ingredient, zetacypermethrin. / GIS Booth: 1338
Bernhard and Co.

Bernhard and Co. isn’t introducing any new products this spring, but Chairman Stephen Bernhard says the company has taken a major step in its training and education efforts.

The New Iron Works factory, dedicated to education and training, has recently opened, and Bernhard said he is thrilled with the results. “We started our business way back in the early 1800s and it’s grown year on year, in the same group of ancient Victorian buildings in the town. We really had to expand the manufacturing space and update the facilities. The training and education side of our business is growing all the time, so we needed a dedicated area for that as well as a demonstration area for user and staff training.” / GIS Booth: 5230

Arysta LifeScience

Xonerate from Arysta Life Science is a new tool to battle Poa annua. It is available as a water-dispersible granule and offers selective removal of Poa annua in many cool- and warm-season turfgrasses, including creeping bentgrass and bermudagrass.

“Research shows that Poa dies quickly in warm weather, leaving areas of golf courses bare until permanent turf grows and fills in,” said Doug Houseworth, technical services manager, Arysta LifeScience. “Bentgrass provides conditions ideal for Poa annua growth, including high moisture, nitrogen, high-traffic areas and fungicide use. In turn, Xonerate eliminates the Poa with little to no disruption to the growth of bentgrass.”

Xonerate works as it is absorbed by plant leaves and roots, where it inhibits photosynthesis in sensitive plants. With Poa annua, the weed loses its green color and becomes brown. / GIS Booth: 1710

Continued on page 36
Ryan
Ryan has added Easy Steer Technology to its Lawnaire V walk-behind aerator, enabling the unit to turn easily without removing the tines from the ground.

“The difference is in the tine bank assembly,” said Ryan product manager Jay Baudhuin. “Each tine wheel assembly has a one-way clutch bearing. This design is responsive to the operator and enables easy turning capability while the tines are in the ground. This new tine design enables easy turning capability without costly hydraulic tine assemblies or dissimilar controlling mechanisms.”

Lawnaire V with easy steer technology utilizes 90 percent of the same components as the current Lawnaire V, minimizing the number of new service parts required for dealers to stock. / GIS Booth: 2111

Becker Underwood
Becker Underwood has introduced Vision Pro HD as the next generation of high definition turf colorant.

The company says it is ideal for green and tee spray programs and provides a complementary color to spray mix applications designed to promote overall plant health and protect against pests.

Joe Lara, product manager, said, “The refined ingredients create a higher definition of color on close-mowed turf. Equally important, it is suitable for use in all professional spray equipment. It is safe for all types of pump seals, and no seal changes are required.”

The formulation ensures no breakdown associated with UV light, no plant phytotoxicity, no clogged equipment and easy sprayer clean-up. / GIS Booth: 2852

Syngenta
Syngenta says its new Secure fungicide is the next generation in multi-site contact disease protection for turf that prevents infection before it begins. Designed to be the ideal rotation partner with Daconil Action fungicide, the multi-site mode of action in Secure helps deliver season-long protection against the toughest turf diseases. Now, systemic fungicides no longer replace superintendents’ contact applications, but rather complement them for inside-out protection.

The company has also introduced Briskway fungicide, a DMI-containing fungicide that combines a new active ingredient (difenoconazole) with the broad-spectrum fungicide azoxystrobin. Difenoconazole is proven to be a worry-free DMI, even when used in hot and humid conditions. It controls 22 of the most difficult summer turf diseases, such as dollar spot, leaf spot, brown patch, anthracnose and summer patch. / GIS Booth: 4339

Agrium Advanced Technologies
Agrium Advanced Technologies has two new Spread it & Forget it controlled-release fertilizers impregnated with either Barricade or Dimension. The fertilizers offer users a single-application fertilizer impregnated with their choice of two leading pre-emergent crabgrass herbicide brands.

“Working with premium technologies like Barricade and Dimension ensures the high quality you’ve come to expect from Spread it & Forget it,” said Ben Cicora, product marketing manager. The resulting new products allow turf professionals to fertilize once up to every six months while getting quality pre-emergent crabgrass control. / GIS Booth: 2828
When golf course executives take time off, what do they do? Some take a busman’s holiday and play golf at different courses. They may do it to see what the competition is doing, or just to break away from their own stomping ground for a while.

Others, however, prefer to wile away the hours another way — by fly fishing on the river.

"I’ve been fly fishing since I was about 14 or 15 years old," says Trevor Burlingame, superintendent at Chautauqua Golf Club, Chautauqua, N.Y. "My mom and dad gave me a fly rod for my birthday, and I just started doing it."

As a teen, Burlingame headed to a local golf course and trolled for pan fish and bass in the streams. Today, he prefers to fish for trout, once catching a 31-inch steelhead on a Lake Erie tributary.

Fly fishing is reeling in more and more superintendents, who are drawn by its adventure and solitude. By Tim Killeen

River life
Burlingame is not alone in his love for the pastime. Fly fishing stories are being told at chapter events across the country. Some of these luckier fishermen, such as Joe Stribley, superintendent at Yellowstone Country Club, Billings, Mont., revel in the midst of some of the country’s most renowned trout streams.

"I told my wife about 12 years ago that I’d like to give fly fishing a try," Stribley recalls. "The next thing I knew, she presented me with a complete outfit. Now what do I do, I thought."

Stribley is able to go trout fishing on eve-

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nings and weekends, spending most of his fishing time close to home. The Bighorn River is among his favorite spots, even in the winter. That’s not to say he won’t travel. His eldest son, Hayden, has worked as a guide in Alaska and now does his trout fishing in Chile. Stribley joins him there from time to time.

“Fly fishing can be very much like a short game in golf, requiring finesse and accuracy,” Stribley says. “It’s quite a challenge, and once the fish is caught, being able to release it back to the water gives a real sense of accomplishment.”

When Burlingame casts his flies and releases his catches these days, it’s far from Stribley’s turf, often in Pennsylvania or on the Great Lakes tributaries. “It takes my mind off my job,” he says. “There’s a lot of solitude out there. It’s just you and the trees and the stream. It forces you to be at peace for a while.”

Going out alone has its advantages, but for Stribley, fishing with good friends can make a trip more fun. Stribley never really had a bad experience fly fishing, even considering a horseback trip in which he rode out with an ear impaled with a trout fly. The doctor looked at it and said it was no big deal, he sees a lot of that. Most importantly, to any fly fisher that is, he was able to salvage the fly, a nice size 10 “Jack Cabe.” No harm done.

Ken Mangum, CGCS, Director of Golf Courses and Grounds at the Atlanta Athletic Club, had a boss about 7 years ago who insisted he join him on a trip to a private fly fishing club. That was enough to get Mangum started. “Fly fishing is one of my favorite things to talk about,” he says.

Now Mangum manages to take a few days for a trip each year and fly fish with friends, many of whom are in the golf industry as well. His buddies Gary Grigg, Darren Davis, Lon Fleming and Eric Shoemaker all feel the same way about it.

**Good vibes**

Mangum says he’s lucky to be close to some productive water, such as the Chattahoochee River, only about 5 minutes from his office. “I’ve taken some very nice fish out of there,” he says.

Mangum observes that many people in the golf business fly fish. A number of tour pros even fly fish on the course ponds when they get a chance.

Mangum’s favorite places are the Big Horn...
River in Montana, Henry’s Fork in Idaho and the Green River in Wyoming. It was in Idaho that he caught a 19-inch rainbow trout on a grasshopper fly. Still on his bucket list are British Columbia, Patagonia and Colorado.

Cal Roth, senior vice president of agronomy for the PGA Tour, says he would speak to anyone about fly fishing at any time.

Roth began fly fishing when he was 14 years old, fishing for bass and bluegill on farm ponds in rural Illinois. After a move to Colorado, he began fishing for trout, and when he moved to Florida in 1989, he bought a flats boat and fished the backwater of the Intracoastal Waterway with his son, Blaise.

Those trips were among his most special, Roth says. Now he fishes the backwater from a kayak and enjoys the solitude it brings.

When Roth looks back on his fly fishing days, there’s really nothing that stands out all that much. But after a pause, he says, “Then again, there was this 15-pound bonefish that took over an hour to land.”

When asked if he had any bad experiences while fly fishing, he answers a quick and definite “No, not one.”

Roth says he has been lucky enough to have fished on many streams and rivers — and he’s enjoyed them all. But there is one that stands out as his favorite — the Conejos River in southern Colorado.

Roth eventually joined the Rocky Mountain Angling Club, and now, after 20 years of fishing there, Roth views it as his home away from home.

Eric Draper, parks and rec superintendent for the city of Osawatomie (Kansas), started fly fishing when he was a freshman in high school. “We took a trip to Colorado and I saw a fly fisherman in the stream. I told my father I wanted to do it,” he recalls.

When Draper got home, he learned one of his friends owned a fly rod. That friend taught him how to fly fish on a three-day trip to a Missouri state park.

Draper has fished often in Missouri waters since then, snapping up brown and rainbow trout before releasing them — including a five-pounder.

In the end, Draper says, “there’s no more thrilling experience than catching a fish on the fly. Once you catch your first one, you’ll never want to put your fly rod down.”

Tim Killeen, a freelance writer in Aurora, Ohio, is the author of “The Executive’s Guide to Fly Fishing” and is a golf course ranger at Windmill Lakes Golf Club in Ravenna, Ohio.

Senior editor Beth Geraci contributed to this story.

and the stream. It forces you to be at peace for a while.”

— TREVOR BURLINGAME, superintendent, Chautauqua Golf Club
As the son of Clarence Wolfrom, a longstanding superintendent and Michigan Golf Hall of Famer, Bruce Wolfrom was introduced to the intricacies of course design at an early age. "When I was a little boy, I’d go with my father when he was asked to come and lay out a new course or consult on problems courses were having," Wolfrom says. "I was always intrigued with the prospect of taming nature."

Clarence, Bruce's father, was the superintendent of Maple Lane Golf Course, a public course located in Sterling Heights, Mich., for 53 years. Along the way he helped found the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation, and he also helped many turf professionals get their start in the industry. Bruce and his older brother Clem were two of those who were helped by Clarence's influence, as they followed in their father's footsteps. Bruce accepted a position as the superintendent of Treetops, based in Gaylord, Mich., while Clem was hired as superintendent of the private Detroit Golf Club.

"We had both worked at Donald Ross-designed courses in the past and had gone through the process of bringing the original intent of the design back to the courses we were at," he says. "It led to an understanding of the 'why' behind good design."

With their passion for course maintenance instilled as children, Bruce and Clem often dis-
cussed the possibility of designing their very own course, utilizing the methods they had learned from some of the world’s most respected designers. They were interested in many locations, but as they began to search for land, they realized just how challenging it is to find property suited for a golf course.

“We had to have land that was naturally laid out for the game of golf, which would cut our construction costs. It also had to have the right soil and elevation,” says Wolfrom. “We’d seen hundreds of sites, but they were too low-lying, or their soil would be heavy clay, causing drainage problems.”

But, one 400-acre property immediately caught their attention. Located in Hubbard Lake, Mich., a resort area they had frequented as children, the land featured majestic white pine and oak trees, as well as high terrain and light sandy loam soil, allowing Bruce and Clem to operate a course primarily designed by nature.

“‘I’ve always believed that nature is the best designer of the landscape,’ he says. ‘It’s obvious that the contours of this land weren’t made with bulldozers, but by Mother Nature.”

**Grand opening**


From the back tees, the course measures 6,752 yards. Although White Pine is not remarkably long or narrow, its bunker placement and small, undulating greens offer even the most experienced golfers an examination of their skills.

Featuring five sets of tees, the par-72 layout was designed to tailor to golfers of all experience levels.

“We’re proud of the number of new golfers who have been introduced to golf at White Pine,” says Wolfrom. “After 20 years, we’re starting to see some of the kids who learned the game here, come back to their roots, so to speak, and bring their friends.”

White Pine’s greens stimp at 10 all season long. To provide further relief to inexperienced golfers, the course is particularly unusual for its lack of water hazards.

“Part of our design aesthetic was to eliminate water hazards. Besides the intimidation factor that water can add to casual golfers, there was a maintenance philosophy behind that decision,” Wolfrom says.

Most courses with natural ponds or streams are generally located in valleys or other types of low-lying terrains, which are more difficult to drain. By excluding water hazards, White Pine does not require any drain pipes. In fact, with its high terrain and natural drainage system, the course’s turf is protected from disease and damage caused by torrential downpour and flooding.

“In 20 years, the course has only been closed once due to a two-hour-long storm that left behind four inches of rain. While other local courses were closed for a few days, White Pine was open again in a few hours.”

**Less pressure**

Although White Pine’s lack of water hazards is uncommon, its focus on environmental friendliness is groundbreaking. White Pine utilizes a low-pressure irrigation system, thereby minimizing water and energy, a novel irrigation method.
As courses became longer, irrigation designers increased the pressure that water was subjected to in order to irrigate their courses,” says Wolfrom. “To move more water farther at higher pressure, you need bigger pumps. And, of course, the bigger the pump, the more electricity.”

After observing other courses’ irrigation methods, Wolfrom has theorized that, with larger, high-pressure irrigation systems, water is often sprayed too far. As a result, most of the water is either wind-swept or evaporated rather than actually irrigating the turf.

“We believed we could accomplish better saturation with less energy by using more sprinkler heads at lower pressure. It’s the single best decision we made in the beginning that minimized our impact on the environment.”

Since 1992, White Pine’s electric bill has consistently been 50 percent lower than other courses of similar length and elevation. The system has also saved millions of gallons of water.

National environmental associations and organizations have taken notice. Back in 2000, White Pine received recognition as a regional winner of the GCSAA’s Environmental Stewardship Award. Later that year, Audubon International named the course one of the top 100 environmentally friendly courses in the U.S.

“From the selection of the land, to its one-of-a-kind low-pressure irrigation system, White Pine’s design and maintenance continues to have a minimal impact on the environment,” Wolfrom says.

**Golf and nature**

As general manager, Wolfrom’s current staff consists of only four maintenance professionals, who help him sustain White Pine’s irrigation system and turf on...
a daily basis. With a staff that is smaller than usual, Wolfrom has trained his team members to multitask, minimize errors and conserve resources.

“When you think about environmental friendliness, efficiency has a lot to do with it. By guiding my staff and initiating training programs, unnecessary errors have been eliminated and fuel costs have been reduced by 30 percent in the past year,” he says.

Through their commitment to ecology and conservation, Wolfrom and his staff have developed a cost-effective course, which saves thousands of dollars each year. In doing so, golfers are able to enjoy White Pine’s natural settings — and fair prices.

“Our customer base demands value for their dollar, so being environmentally conscious is best for our budget and our golfers,” he says. “When folks golf here and see deer grazing along the fairways or discover a newborn fawn in the rough, they understand that White Pine National is a great place for golf and for nature.”

Michigan-based freelance writer Chris Lewis specializes in reporting on golf in the U.S. This is his first story for Golfdom.
It was as head greenkeeper of the Old Course in St. Andrews, Scotland that Old Tom Morris was called on to modify the design. His work was so admired that it led to a career in golf course architecture.

Donald Ross was born in Dornoch, Scotland, and worked for Old Tom Morris. He made his mark as a head greenkeeper, head golf professional and an accomplished player before establishing himself as an architect in the early 1900s at Boston's Oakley Country Club.

Now, though, there are few practitioners of course design who came to the architecture world from golf course maintenance. Three who did say understanding the needs and expectations of a golf course superintendent is good and bad. Yes, it helps them understand the wants of those who take care of turf, but ease of maintenance cannot be the overriding factor when laying out or renovating a course.

Bill Coore was a superintendent in Texas before moving to architecture; Brian Silva earned two agronomic degrees, taught turf at two schools and was a USGA Green Section agronomist before he became an architect; and Kris Spence was a head superintendent at a number of courses, one of which he redesigned, before he decided to switch professions.
Common ground

Even though all three of them started in the grass-growing sector of golf, each had an affinity for design and Classic Era architecture.

Coore and Crenshaw, through their own designs, are significant in architecture’s retro movement, which saw the re-implementation of strategy. Silva embraced the same ideals and established a name for himself with his own heralded work. He renovated and restored, to much acclaim, a number of marquee layouts designed by Seth Raynor and Ross. Spence, who has made a career of returning Classic Era layouts back to their original form, thrust himself into the architecture discussion with his restoration of Greensboro Country Club’s Donald Ross 18.

Valuable experience

Coore’s experience working as a superintendent helped him grasp the dynamics of course maintenance.

Spence, for his part, strives to create a situation where three distinct groups have equal input on design decisions.

“They needed a superintendent, and quite frankly, I think they couldn’t find anyone else to take the job.” — Bill Coore

“I’ve always felt the golf course architect, the golf course superintendent and the members need to have a good balance,” he said.

He cites as an example one layout he renovated in which the green surfaces had shrunk significantly. Old aerial photographs showed that in the early days the green top was spilling over the side of the fill pad. Members wanted the green to be as it once was, but the superintendent desired a ring of rough, then collar, around green.

Spence had to find a compromise. He explained to the membership that because of modern equipment and mowing heights, the putting surface would need a collar around it. Then he showed the superintendent how his course restoration approach would actually eliminate the intent of the original architect.

Ultimately, Spence convinced them all that an 18-inch collar was the solution. “Because I was a superintendent, they will accept my reasoning,” he said.

Coore’s road to course design

Coore’s circuitous route to architecture began, in a way, in ancient Greece. In 1968 he graduated from Wake Forest University with a degree in Classical Greek. His goal was to obtain a master’s degree and become a professor. At the time, his only connection to golf was that of an avid player. But all that changed when Coore saw Pete Dye’s Oak Hollow Golf Course while it was under construction.

Coore badgered Dye for a job until he was hired as a laborer on the construction team. Afterward, Coore continued working for Pete Dye and his brother Roy. It was on Roy’s layout, Waterwood National in Texas, that Coore learned the business of turf maintenance.

“They needed a superintendent, and quite frankly, I think they couldn’t find anyone else to take the job,” he laughed.

Coore was encouraged to take the job by people who worked for the Dye company. So he took it. And he learned the trade in two-week increments from a soil consultant. “I went to the school of Dick Psolla,” Coore recounted.

Psolla has been a consultant for Brookside Laboratories since 1960. “I had a work ethic but no technical knowledge,” Coore said. But after six years at Waterwood, he was given the chance to design his first course, Rockport Country Club.

During the two years of construction, he remained as Waterwood superintendent, then went out on his own for a few years before teaming with Crenshaw. Their first two courses, Barton Creek Resort and Spa in Texas and Kapalua Resort in Hawaii, opened in 1991.
A chance encounter
Silva’s path was more traditional.
When growing up in Massachusetts, Silva’s father, a heavy equipment operator, took on some golf course shaping work for a local contractor. For the next 15 years, the majority of his business involved working with architects such as Geoffrey Cornish, George Fazio and Phil Wogan.

“I wanted to run equipment and build golf courses. I went to work with my father, and he gave me a wheelbarrow with a rake in it,” Silva said. “That cured my desire to build golf courses.”

While on one of his father’s jobs a few years later, Silva met Cornish and asked him for advice on becoming an architect. Cornish told him to get turf and landscape architecture degrees and work summers on golf course maintenance crews.

“In all honesty, I wasn’t 100 percent sure if I wanted to be a golf course superintendent or go into design,” Silva said.

He earned a two-year degree in turf from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture and then a bachelor’s degree in environmental design from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. For two years afterward, he pursued a master’s degree in plant and soil science while teaching undergraduate courses.

From there it was a three-year stint teaching at Florida’s Lake City Community College, then it was back to New England, where Silva became the first USGA Green Section agronomist assigned to the region.

It was during a site visit that he bumped into Cornish. “I think it’s time you get into design,” Cornish told him.

Silva did, joining Cornish and his partner, Bill Robinson, who was in the process of relocating to the West Coast. In 2000, Silva formed his own company.

Spence’s early inspiration
It was in the mid-1970s at Kennett Country Club in Missouri that Spence learned about architecture and agronomy; the owner also happened to be the superintendent and tinkering designer. By the time he reached high school, Spence was sketching green complexes.

“He’s passed on but he never knew how much he inspired me. It really got me interested, just talking to him about what he was doing,” Spence said of the owner. “Along the way, at about 15, I realized I wanted to stay close to the game.”

Spence earned a degree at Gateway College and took a job at Atlanta Athletic Club, where much renovation work was done in-house. His first head job was at Forest Oaks Country Club, where he undertook in-house renovations. In the late 1980s, he joined Jack Nicklaus’s team for the construction of the Governor’s Club, where Jim Lipe was the lead designer.

Spence’s final stop on the agronomic side came in 1990, when he took over the head job at the 36-hole Greensboro Country Club.

Using original survey maps and old aerial photographs, Spence proposed a master plan to restore the golf course, and the membership let him implement it. He followed with the heralded redesign of the Ross-designed Grove Park Inn layout.

By the end of 1999, Spence decided to make the move to design.

“It’s really the key to my success in so many ways,” Spence said of his time as a superintendent.

On condition
But as Silva pointed out, wonderful turf does not mean a wonderful golf course.

“You can have a very strategic, sound, interesting golf course with lousy turf,” he said. Then again, on the other hand, you can have fantastic turf and poor design. “It’s a golf course that has no strategic interest,” Silva said.

Coore noted that the right conditions for a golf course are not always green and lush. “Proper turf conditions,” he added “are not always what we see on television.”

Silva, Coore and Spence agree that a golf course that is simple to maintain will inevitably be boring.

“I try to make it so the superintendent can get to the fairways, the tee tops and green tops relatively easy,” Silva said. “It’s a golf course. There has to be a few areas that are hard to get at. It’s the nature of the beast.”

Pioppi is a freelance writer and the author of “To the Nines.”
NEW YEAR, NEW YOU

In 2013, superintendents are making resolutions — and sticking to ‘em.

BY BETH GERACI

Making New Year’s resolutions is easy. Keeping them? Not so much. As with every other year, in 2013 only the strong will survive. Here are a few superintendents who show a lot of potential, whether they’re foregoing bacon or lightening their workload.

Brian Boyer

POSITION: Superintendent / Cinnabar Hills Golf Club, San Jose, Calif.
RESOLUTION: Nix bacon strips and donuts
CHANCE OF SUCCEEDING: Hole in one

Brian Boyer won’t be hitting Krispy Kreme anytime soon. At least, that’s the plan. He’s swearing off donuts in 2013 and even contemplating giving up alcohol Monday through Thursday. He’s also giving up bacon strips, although Bacon Bits are still fair game. (We’re not sure why.)

“They’re things I like, and it’s just a test,” he says. “I’m not Catholic, so this is like my Lent.”

Boyer’s “Lent” lasts a lot longer than the typical month, apparently. Last year, he gave up counter snacks; he hasn’t had a lollipop at the dry cleaners since. He hasn’t eaten fast food since he gave it up for New Year’s four years ago, and after he quit smoking for 2010 he never took another drag.

Boyer strives to give up things he really likes, things that will help him become stronger for it. “I tend to think I’m weak minded, low in mental fortitude, you could say. So I test myself,” he says.

Given his stellar track record, Boyer plans to make New Year’s resolutions for the rest of his life. His advice for those who struggle to keep them: Set reasonable goals.

If the guys on the maintenance crew want to do Boyer a favor, they won’t bring donuts to work. “If I have a donut in front of my face, I’m sure it’ll be a little difficult,” Boyer says.

Continued on page 48
When you’re on the brink of turning 40, you get to thinking about making some serious changes in your life. And Gary Myers, who turns 40 in March, is peering over the edge. While he still has time to plan his celebration, the time is now for sticking to his New Year’s resolution.

“I just resolved to eat better and drink more water,” says Myers. That means no more fast food and enforcing a self-imposed soda ban. “I love soft drinks. That’s probably my nemesis,” says Myers. “I tried to eliminate as many as I could and just drink water.”

Myers still allows himself one soda in the morning. Everything in moderation, he says. He’s also working out a half hour a day and training with his wife for a half marathon in May.

“If you’re going to do it, now’s the time to do it,” he says. “It’s much easier if you have a goal. Otherwise, it’s much too easy to say, ‘Um, not today.’”

Jeff Holliday, CGCS
RESOLUTION: Get healthy, manage time better, be a better delegator
CHANGE OF SUCCEEDING: Hole in one
When Jeff Holliday makes a resolution, one just isn’t enough. Every year, he makes two of them — one personal, one professional.

“When Jeff Holliday makes a resolution, one just isn’t enough. Every year, he makes two of them — one personal, one professional.

This year, Holliday’s on a quest to delegate more to his assistants and get them more involved. “I tend to take on too much myself, because you know, no one can do it better than me,” he jokes.

In his personal life, Holliday has been known to dabble in vices. But one by one, they’re dropping off. Last year, he gave up chew. He hasn’t spit in a cup since — and he won’t. “I want to be around for my kids so I can watch them grow up,” he says.

In 2013, he’s on a quest to get even healthier. That means dropping 20 pounds and giving up wheat beer, his favorite. “You’ve always got to challenge yourself,” he says. “If you don’t, it’s always status quo. Life’s too short to just sit and let it go by.”

Holliday has lost seven pounds since he gave up beer. For the record, he hasn’t swilled one since the Golfdom Summit in November. Not that we’re a bad influence or anything.
A multi-year New Mexico State University study determined how N fertilization impacts the amount of water certain grasses need to have acceptable quality — specifically Kentucky bluegrass, tall fescue, buffalograss and bermudagrass. Higher N required less water to maintain the same level of quality, but N source had only moderate influence. Contact Ryan Goss, Ph.D., assistant professor of turfgrass science at ryangoss@nmsu.edu for more information.

“\"I THOUGHT THIS WAS A RARE, UNIQUE PROBLEM WHEN I FIRST WITNESSED IT IN HAWAII. BUT NOW I’VE SEEN THIS IRON LAYER IN TEXAS, MISSOURI, VIRGINIA, PENNSYLVANIA, WEST VIRGINIA, CALIFORNIA...\"”

Glen R. Obear on iron layering in two-tiered putting greens (see full story on page 55)
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Little has changed in pre-emergent herbicides (PREs) for use on cool-season turfgrasses over the last 20 years. The primary products for golf turf are still dithiopyr (Dimension, Dithiopyr), prodiamine (Barricade and others) and pendimethalin (Pendulum, PRE-M and others). Oxadiazon (Ronstar, Oxadiazon) is often used specifically for goosegrass control, while bensulide (Betasan, Bensumec) is still a standard for annual bluegrass control in greens-height creeping bentgrass.

Though formulations are always improving, some relatively recent changes include introduction of post-patent PREs as well as some pre-packaged mixes of active ingredients. Though the availability of PREs and application technology has changed very little in the last 20 years, effective and efficient use of PREs is still critical for golf courses across the country.

CRABGRASS CONTROL
Most PREs are targeted for crabgrass, and the weather the last three summers has certainly tested efficacy of PREs for crabgrass control. Preemergent herbicides are most effective on dense, competitive turf stands that limit crabgrass. Tough summers not only thin cool-season turf, but warm soils and increased sunlight penetration into thin turf increases microbial and UV degradation of PREs.

Furthermore, staff and golfers can easily see the difference between 100 percent and 90 percent crabgrass control, so there is little room for marginal control. By their nature, PREs provide variable crabgrass control from year to year and among locations. The product and rate that worked really well last year may perform poorly this year, or vice versa. Or the product and rate that worked really well for the course down the street did not perform well for you.

The bottom line is that the PREs available today are all very effective, but efficacy can be affected by a multitude of factors, many of which we cannot predict or understand. Following are a few suggestions to maximize PRE efficacy on crabgrass and goosegrass.

Application timing: Many studies, including ours at Purdue University and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL), show that timing of PRE application can be in late fall (October-November in the north central states) or very early spring (February-March in the north central states) and still achieve season-long crabgrass control comparable to the traditional timing of mid-spring.

The benefit of late fall or very early spring applications is, they can be made well before spring’s mad dash of cleanup, constant mowing, and course opening. Though the data show...
it works, the traditional application timing of mid-spring still usually trends higher for crabgrass control than very early spring or late fall application. Therefore, higher PRE rates must be used for late fall and very early spring to maximize control.

**Sequential applications:** After working with PREs for 25 years, I am convinced that it is best to maximize crabgrass and goosegrass control with sequential applications. Depending on your location, two applications at one-half plus one-half the high use rate will usually suffice and will almost always improve crabgrass and goosegrass control over a single application at the high use rate. The second application is usually made 4-6 weeks after the first expected crabgrass germination, but the first application can be made at the traditional timing, late fall or very early spring.

Up until the last few years, we recommended using the same active ingredient for the initial and sequential applications. However, our recent research shows that when using one-half the high use rate for the initial and sequential application, it does not matter which active ingredient is used for the initial or sequential applications (Figure 1; we tested only dithiopyr, pendimethalin and prodiamine). This increases flexibility in product selection, allows use of remaining product from previous years/applications and could increase post-emergent herbicide (POST) control of breakthrough crabgrass if dithiopyr is used for the sequential application(s).

**Watering-in:** Though the label on all PREs (especially the sprayable formulations) clearly state that they should be watered-in within 24 to 48 hours after application, this recommendation is often ignored.

However, watering-in PREs immediately after application with 0.1 to 0.2 inches of water resulted in up to 50 percent improved crabgrass control in one of our studies on fairway-height Kentucky bluegrass in 2011 (Figure 2). Watering-in the PREs moves the active ingredient to the soil, where it can be effective and reduces loss through volatilization and UV degradation.

**USE IN NEW SEEDINGS**

Hot, dry summers like 2012’s, followed by a dry fall, mandate either dormant seeding this winter or seeding next spring. Weed control in dormant or spring seedings is critical to limit crabgrass pressure in spring and summer. Most PREs cannot be used prior to seeding, and their use is delayed following seeding to limit damage to seedlings.

Dithiopyr has the most flexible label and can be applied after the second mowing of the seedlings. Tenacity (mesotrione) is especially useful over new seedlings of many cool-season turfgrass species (other than creeping bentgrass) because it provides excellent PRE control of crabgrass, annual bluegrass and many broadleaf weeds when applied immediately prior to seeding on bare soils.

However, Tenacity is not an effective PRE on turfed soils. Our research indicates aggressive use of herbicides after seeding may cause some short-term injury to the desired turf but is more than compensated in decreased weed pressure over the long term.

**ANNUAL BLUEGRASS CONTROL**

POST and growth regulators for annual bluegrass control have improved with new strategies and products, but annual bluegrass is best controlled with a multi-pronged approach. This is at least partly due to variability in annual bluegrass biotypes, where one biotype may be susceptible to a specific

![FIGURE 2](image-url)

Effect of watering-in vs. not watering-in the pre-emergent herbicide on crabgrass control in low-mowed Kentucky bluegrass. Applications were watered-in immediately with 0.25 inches of water or left un-irrigated for three days. Watering-in pre-emergent herbicides will help improve control and consistency in control of crabgrass.
herbicide or growth regulator while the neighboring biotype is unaffected. As a winter annual, most annual bluegrass seed will germinate in fall. Thus, PREs applied for annual bluegrass control should be applied in late summer.

Previous research at Cornell University and our current research on creeping bentgrass, Kentucky bluegrass and/or perennial ryegrass fairways clearly show that including a late summer application of a PRE in combination with a program of POST herbicides improves annual bluegrass control over the POST program alone. If the PRE is not included, the tremendous bank of annual bluegrass seed in the soil will germinate all fall and quickly reoccupy any of the openings left by annual bluegrass controlled by the POST applications.

Using multiple modes of action in an annual bluegrass control program also can minimize the chances of developing a population resistant to a single mode of action approach.

During summers like 2011 or 2012, turf stands of desired turf and/or annual bluegrass thin and die. The immediate response is to interseed the desired turf, but annual bluegrass germinates at the same time and starts to out-compete the desired turf again (Figure 3).

Options for using PREs in overseeding are limited to applications after the seedlings have matured. Initial research results at UNL investigating the use of PREs applied prior to seeding to control the annual bluegrass between the overseeder slits and preliminary results are surprisingly positive. Our other research, partly funded by the USGA, is evaluating POSTs applied shortly after emergence of the desired turf to help minimize annual bluegrass. Simply overseeding into thin turf without aggressive annual bluegrass control will continue the cycle of annual bluegrass infesting the stand.

**YELLOW NUTSEDGE CONTROL**

Yellow nutseed has long been controlled with POST applications, but PRE control has been documented from both Echelon (prodiamine plus sulfentrazone) and Tenacity. Applications of Echelon to established turf need to be at the typical PRE application timing for crabgrass of mid-spring and are most effective with sequential applications.

Tenacity can control yellow nutseed PRE in a new seeding on bare soils. Though neither of these products provide 100 percent control of yellow nutsedge every time, their typical 70 to 90 percent control is far better than we ever expected from previous PRE applications.

Though few major changes have occurred in pre-emergent herbicides over the last 20 years, researchers continue to advance our understanding of these products, resulting in improved weed control and expanded uses in golf turf.

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“Determining what some of the information we find on the Web means is challenging because of the sheer volume of it all.”

KARL DANNEBERGER, PH.D., Contributing Editor

Navigating the information overload

With the arrival of the New Year, we always think about things we can change. Here at Golfdom that change is evident with the new look of the magazine. And on a personal note, my profile picture has been updated, which hopefully reflects increasing wisdom and not so much my age.

Golfdom’s change not only in the magazine but also in other functions reflects a more fundamental change that has occurred during the last 20 years on how we gather and analyze information. The free flow of information, primarily electronic information, has changed how we gather and evaluate it.

The electronic changes have been beneficial. For example, blog postings by superintendents and others provide insight into practices and issues we do not find in classical text books.

The posting of photographs across all social media outlets show us golf courses and how they are managed, both locally and globally. Even in 100 years we would not be able to observe on our own all that others have provided to us visually online.

Personally, I do not know how many times I have asked superintendents for permission to use their photographs in class. A lot. With this exponential rise in information — some would call it an overload — it’s hard to determine what is reliable, what is junk and how best to use it all. Two pictures, presumably taken during Hurricane Sandy, have been making their way into social media circles. One of a shark swimming through New York City; the other of soldiers guarding the tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery.

The shark picture (below) was Photoshopped, and the cemetery picture was taken during a different storm. The source of the information is still important and needs to be recognized. Even though we often use Google, the TGIP database supported by the USGA and Michigan State University is the most reliable source of turfgrass information.

Determining what some of the information we find on the Web means is challenging because of the sheer volume of it all. Newsweek stopped publishing its weekly hard copy in October, due in a large part to Web dominance. Prior to the Electronic Age, we looked forward to receiving Newsweek and Time every week, when the stories weren’t regurgitated tirelessly. In the Electronic Age, you can find an opinion on any topic every millisecond.

The difficulty in evaluating the information is not the collection but the comprehension, analysis and synthesis of what we have gathered. In other words, we do not apply enough rigor to our information.

Benjamin Bloom, a psychologist at the University of Chicago, laid out the basic framework for learning and the importance of comprehension, analysis, synthesis and application. As his theories apply to golf course management, the gathering of information is the basic step.

For example, determining the diseases on your putting green is considered gathering basic information. A higher level of knowledge could be attained, however, through gathering information from a broad range of sources — then using it to develop a disease management program.

As you begin to gather information that will help you manage your turf in 2013, take the time to really think about the information you have. Use it to devise a sound plan. Then figure out how to implement it.

Karl Danneberger, Ph.D., Golfdom’s science editor and a professor from The Ohio State University, can be reached at danneberger.1@osu.edu.
When was the last time you sampled the full profile of your sand-based putting greens? Many people rarely, if ever, sample the profile all the way down to the pea gravel layer. It's inconvenient, out of sight, and therefore out of mind. However, USGA-funded research from the University of Wisconsin-Madison suggests we might be missing the full picture when we fail to sample to the depth of the pea gravel.

Iron-oxide layering has been observed at the sand-gravel interface of two-tiered putting greens of many golf courses across the United States. This layer, which only forms in greens with a pea gravel layer, is detrimental to water infiltration and leads to anaerobic soil conditions and decline of turfgrass quality.

FIRST OBSERVATIONS
In the summer of 2008, I had the opportunity to work as an intern at a golf course on the Big Island of Hawaii. During this experience, the superintendent of the course exposed me to a very interesting and troubling soil layering problem.

We first noticed thinning turf on the putting greens, especially in low areas where water collected. We found black layer in the top 6 inches of the profile (Fig. 1), but this didn’t make much sense. The course was only five years old, core aerification was done twice each year, and greens were topdressed weekly. We decided to dig deeper, thinking that maybe something was blocking water infiltration deeper in the profile.

At the sand/gravel interface of the first putting green we sampled, there was a thin layer of what looked like oxidized iron (i.e., rust) that was cementing sand and pea gravel together (Fig. 2). This cemented layer was almost impenetrable to water, which created anaerobic conditions in the root zone. As we continued investigating, we found this layer in every green we sampled, and anaerobic soil conditions were most prevalent in the low areas of the greens.

That summer, we experimented with physical removal of the layer. We used a sod cutter to cut two passes on the lowest edge of the green, where water was collecting. We dug down...
to the pea gravel layer, removed the oxidized iron layer with a shovel and replaced the root zone with fresh sand. In the short-term, we were successful in improving water infiltration in these low areas. However, our fix was only temporary; the factors that caused the layer to form in the first place were still active, and the layer will likely form in these areas again over time.

One day, we were sampling and thinking about how the layer might be forming. We had many questions: “Where is this iron coming from? What factors are causing the iron to oxidize and precipitate at the sand-gravel interface? How do we remove this layer once it has already formed? How can we prevent it from forming in the future?” Finally, the superintendent suggested: “Go to graduate school, study this for your master’s degree.” That is exactly what I did.

UNIVERSITY RESEARCH

A few years later, I started graduate school at UW-Madison. The superintendent from Hawaii sent me some samples of this layer, and I confirmed that it was oxidized iron through physical and chemical analyses. I thought it was a rare, unique problem when I first witnessed it in Hawaii. But now that I've studied it more and more, I have seen this iron layer in Texas, Missouri, Virginia, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, California, North Carolina and even Vietnam. The layer seems to occur all over the United States and doesn’t seem to be restricted to any specific climate zones.

For my master’s research, I am trying to find out exactly what causes this layer to form, how to prevent it and what to do if you already have it. The iron could be coming from fertilizer; high rates of iron fertilizer have become popular for Poa annua management programs, and many superintendents apply iron to improve turfgrass color. The iron could also be coming from irrigation water; many golf courses use groundwater that contains dissolved iron, and the amount of iron added through typical irrigation operations is comparable to typical iron fertility rates. Finally, iron could be coming from the dissolution of minerals in the sand used for root zone construction. Most likely, all of these sources

When we take soil samples, we usually pull several plugs from the top 3-6 inches of the profile. From this, we get a wealth of information.

FIGURE 2
Iron layer at sand/gravel interface (12-inch depth) of Hawaii putting green. The layer reduced water infiltration, resulting in anaerobic soil conditions and thin turf density at the surface.

FIGURE 3
Iron layer in a Wisconsin putting green. The oxygenated pea gravel layer causes reduced iron in the root zone to oxidize at the textural interface. The darker black color is older, strongly oxidized iron; the light orange color is recent, weakly oxidized iron.

Continued from page 55
contribute to the formation of the iron layer to some degree.

Soluble iron moves downward through the profile until it reaches the pea gravel layer, where the water is perched. When reduced iron is exposed to this oxygen-rich pea gravel layer over an extended period of time, the iron oxidizes and precipitates along the interface (Fig. 3). Over time, this iron layer becomes more cemented and water infiltration is severely reduced.

Currently I’m collecting soil samples from a number of courses with the iron layer across the U.S. I am also collecting irrigation water samples and fertility records to see if these factors have a relationship with iron layer formation.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FULL-PROFILE SAMPLING

When we take soil samples, we usually pull several plugs from the top 3 to 6 inches of the profile. From this, we get a wealth of information that can guide the application of fertilizer and soil amendments. We typically focus on the upper portion of the profile because this is where we find roots, thatch and potential organic layers. While this type of soil sampling can be useful, it may not be enough for two-tiered putting greens. When we only sample the top half of the profile, we are only getting half of the picture.

The lower half of the profile can have as many interesting features as the top 3 to 6 inches, and these features can drastically impact the performance of the putting green. If we hadn’t sampled the full profile in Hawaii, we never would have found the iron layer. Our conclusion would have been to increase aerification and topdressing frequency, and we would have been unaware of what was really causing the problem.

Why don’t we sample the bottom half of the profile? Probably because it is inconvenient. Many t-probes aren’t long enough to reach the pea gravel layer, and those that are long enough tend to be difficult to push down to that depth. The soil profile samplers that give you a cross-sectional view (Mascaro, Turf Tec, etc.) can offer a better view of the profile than the t-probe, but even these don’t usually sample the full profile down to the pea gravel layer.

Dr. Norm Hummel offers a simple, effective and inexpensive method for collecting full-profile soil samples using PVC pipe (http://www.turfdoctor.com). With a handheld oscillating saw ($40–$100), the PVC pipe can easily be cut open for viewing of the full-profile (Fig. 4).

SEEKING SAMPLES

Are you experiencing this layering on your golf course? Know somebody else who is? We are currently looking for more samples, and we would be thrilled to include your site in our study. Please contact me at obear@wisc.edu for more information.

Glen Obear is a master’s degree candidate at the University of Wisconsin-Madison studying with Doug Soldat, Ph.D. Obear can be reached at obear@wisc.edu.
Temporary winter covers for bermudagrass greens

Mike Goatley, Ph.D., is a professor of turfgrass science at Virginia Tech University and devotes part of his research effort to developing management programs for ultradwarf bermudagrass greens in the transition zone, including winter covers for bermudagrass turf. Mike can be reached at goatley@vt.edu.

What is the temperature threshold that triggers temporary covering of bermudagrass greens?

A turf-friendly, conservative approach is to cover bermudagrass greens when the weather forecast predicts lows of 25 degrees F or lower for two or more consecutive nights, along with a prediction of daily high temperatures of 50 degrees F or less during the same time period.

The key to deciding whether or not to cover is soil temperature. In early winter, when soil temperatures are still well above freezing, covering is often not necessary unless extreme cold temperatures are in the forecast. The covers should remain in place as long as the daily low temperature is 25 degrees F or lower and the daily high temperature is less than 50 degrees F.

All 18 greens do not have to be covered. Some superintendents only cover greens in shade, those that face north or are weak for some other reason. Experience will help determine which greens need to be covered and under what conditions.

What have been the results of covering bermudagrass greens using the threshold described above?

The conservative approach has worked well for superintendents. To my knowledge, there has not been a massive loss of ultradwarf bermudagrass greens under covers. Ultradwarf bermudagrass should not be planted in the transition zone or in the upper portion of the warm-season turfgrass zone unless it can be covered during cold periods in winter.

“Soil temperature is the key to deciding whether or not to cover.”

MIKE GOATLEY, PH.D.

That said, there has not been a large loss of bermudagrass turf due to winterkill in the South in many years. If we experience a period of extremely cold weather, winterkill on covered greens is still possible. Keep in mind that winterkill is a complex physiological process that encompasses more than just cold temperatures. Shade, aspect, traffic and other things also influence winterkill.

What type of covers do you recommend?

Most covers are effective for temporary covering, so select covers that are easy to install and easy to remove. The easier the covers are to install and remove, the more likely they will be used.

Superintendents report that covers with handles stitched into the covers make covering greens go faster. Also, labeling each cover with the number of the green it covers and marking the covers with the proper orientation makes the covering process go faster. Securing the covers to hold against the wind is the biggest challenge. Fellow superintendents are a good resource for advice on this.

How long does it take to cover and uncover greens?

Mike consulted longtime superintendent friend Jim Kwasiński, CGCS, of Tupelo Country Club for this information. Kwasiński reports that at TCC it takes six people (three on each side of the cover) approximately two to two-and-a-half hours to cover or uncover 18 greens. If the wind is blowing, the process always takes a little longer.

Clark Throssell, Ph.D., loves to talk turf. Contact him at clarkthrossell@bresnan.net.
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We just got done with 18. What are you drinking? If I’ve had a really good round, or a really bad round, I’ll probably have a Chivas on the rocks. Anything in between, a fresh brewed iced tea.

What’s something you like about January? High school and Big 10 basketball has kicked off. I’m a Buckeyes fan, I went to Ohio State.

They’ve got a big game coming up against my Jayhawks. Want to make it more interesting?

How about a Golfdom golf shirt against a Westfield shirt? We only lost to Duke, and it was a good game... yeah, I’ll do a golf shirt.

How did you get the job title of “Natural Resource Leader?” After my stint as GM (three years), I had the opportunity to come back to the golf course. At the same time, the company (Westfield Group Insurance) was going through changes in job title nomenclature. I developed the title of Natural Resource Leader, because I wanted to leave room for growth for both myself and my assistants. Long story short, I oversee the operations of a 36-hole facility and love every minute of it.

Have you taken a look at any of your old high school yearbooks lately? There’s a photo — which I will not allow you to publish — of me playing basketball and we had the tube socks and the shortest shorts in the world. My kids make fun of me for that one.

You’re running for the GCSAA board. Why? My favorite president is JFK. I was born on the day he was assassinated. He had the famous quote, “Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country.” Insert “GCSAA” for “country,” that’s sort of my M.O. for running. I’m very passionate for our profession.

What was the best day of your life? Which one? The day I got married. The days my kids were all born. When I got the call from John Spodnik and he said he wanted me to be the assistant on the South course. To move back home was great, and my wife worked for Westfield at the time, so it gave her the opportunity to move into the home office.

Anything else I need to know? You’ll need to know my shirt size; I’m a large.

“WHEN I WAS A GM, MY BOSS TAUGHT ME A VALUABLE LESSON MY FIRST YEAR. HE SAID, ‘IF YOU WANT TO MANAGE ME, JUST KNOW THAT I DON’T LIKE SURPRISES.’ EXPECTATIONS ARE PRETTY HIGH. COMMUNICATION IS KEY.”
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