"For winter overseeding on bermudagrass, the rye is almost too good," says John Foy, director of the USGA Green Section's Florida Region. "It doesn't die when you want it to. It's hanging on longer, into late spring and early summer, and that creates more transition problems [back to bermudagrass]."

Responding to this, scientists are breeding intermediate ryegrasses, which are hybrids between an annual and a perennial rye, especially as an overseeding turf. "They don't have the heat tolerance of the perennials, so they transition better in late spring and early summer," Foy says.

Intermediate ryegrass, Meyer says, is a concept that has merit, but it depends on ryegrass market prices, which are going down again.

"When perennial rye is high-priced, there's a spot in the market for intermediates," he adds. "When the rye price goes down, it puts price pressure on that type."

Meyer adds that some people have learned to manage ryes in the springtime

Continued on page 52
Eye on Rye

Continued from page 51 with plant growth regulators and herbicides, causing it to die.

"The problem is that in making a [hybrid], you lose brown patch resistance," he adds. "They look poor if you have a brown patch epidemic. So how much are superintendents gaining if they have to spray a fungicide to control brown patch?"

While overseeding fairways and roughs with ryegrass is a trend around the state, Foy says Poa trivialis is losing its dominance as the choice for overseeding greens in Florida. For the past 10 to 15 years, Poa triv alone or in combination with bentgrass has been standard. But there has been a trend on heavily used golf courses away from Poa triv to rye because of its durability, Foy says. "Poa triv is nice, but if you get 200 to 300 rounds per day, it doesn't stand up well," he explains. "In south Florida, bermudagrass doesn't go dormant, but it doesn't grow for two to four months in the wintertime, and the cart traffic beats it down. Every winter, I hear complaints that the fairways are too tight and they have lost definition between fairway and rough cuts."

The bottom line: Will the world of perennial ryegrass return to the idyllic?

Mark Leslie is a golf feature writer and president of Blais & Leslie Communications in Monmouth, Maine.

Hats Off to the Settlers — and Rutgers

When William Meyer travels to Europe, it's not to see the Arc de Triumph or Big Ben. His eyes are gazing downward, scrutinizing the grass below — mostly in sheep pastures.

"We're trying to go back to the origin of the species and find new ryegrasses," says Meyer, director of the turfgrass breeding program at Rutgers University. "All the eyes originally came here with settlers from Central and Eastern Europe, so they crossed it in their pastures."

Since Rutgers supplies many of the top-rated ryegrasses that make it to the American marketplace, Meyer feels a special responsibility to the rest of the turfgrass research community. In the 1995-98 ryegrass test run by the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program, nine out of the top 10 varieties were cooperative projects with Rutgers — and the Rutgers germplasm came from Europe.

Leaving Pure Seed Testing in Oregon to join the Rutgers staff in 1996, Meyer started working in Central and Eastern Europe, including Poland, East Germany, Bulgaria, Finland and Norway as well as England.

Today, his research is integrating the ryegrasses he brought back from Europe. More than 100 germplasms found on his trips are being tested in "a large program to intercross — most of it from old sheep pastures in Europe," Meyer says.

"We're looking for characteristics from Europe, where we think we have a more diverse genetic makeup, and trying to integrate them into the pool of material we have here," he adds. "It has worked well."

He notes the impressive results from Bulgarian ryes and vigor improvement from varieties that are 25 percent Polish and 75 percent Rutgers.

Unfortunately, none of this new/old European germplasm is in the current NTEP trials, and the next trial begins in 2004. So the varieties probably won't be available to superintendents until 2005 or 2006.

Mark Leslie
G-2 made my job easier."

Mike McBride
Golf Course Superintendent
Muirfield Village Golf Club

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Circle No. 127
A Lesson From Linksland

Let's allow the architects
to do what they should

By Mark Leslie

The story goes that when God spoke the world into existence and separated land from sea, He stretched out His hand upon the British Isles to create linksland — with golf in mind. Thousands of years later, man fulfilled his destiny in that fine game. But like Eve with the apple, he's about to mess things up again.

Author Will Durant once told posterity: "One of the lessons of history is that nothing is often a good thing to do and always a clever thing to say." Risking the latter part of that statement to emphasize the former, I plunge on because some things are worth the clanger — like golf.

You see, history and golf are inextricably woven together — at least for the last 400 years — yet today we are allowing the game we love to devolve. We are ignoring the axiom, "Nothing is often a good thing to do."

Do we are forgetting our roots by demanding lush-green, turf-only, no-weeds-allowed, wall-to-wall watered courses with hold-the-ball greens that are glass fast? And will these demands kill the game? Probably not. But we will lose sight of its origins, its intentions and the way it was meant to be played.

"A good walk spoiled"? Poppycock! Better, a good hike enhanced. Let's allow the course architects to do what they want.

I traveled Northern Ireland and Ireland with 70 of them this spring and wondered: Did they get it? After a week of playing the island's best linksland tracks, would architects return home with the aura of Ireland coursing through their veins and into their designs? But they told me the question is not if they get it, but does the American golfer get it?

Americans, they agree, are spoiled. "And [that] has major ramifications for our game and to future development of courses," says California-based architect Damien Pascuzzo. "As they continue to demand perfect conditions, the cost of developing golf will increase, its affordability will decrease, and we will lose players. We clearly have to build simpler courses."

"If you hit the ball 30 feet off center, everybody thinks you're supposed to have a good lie and a good shot," says Georgia-based architect Bob Cupp. "That's not what it's all about. We can simplify our lives a lot if everybody could experience [Ireland]."

I have a challenge for golfer and architect alike:
- To the architect: Hey, you think it's the best for golf? Then don't be bullied. Do it!
- To the golfer: Suck it up and play the ball where it lies!

Imagine you're a bricklayer and the boss tells you to mix the mortar without water. Or you're a landscape artist and someone steals your blue paint. What do you do?

Similarly, American golfers have stripped designers of a major tool of their craft: freedom. Freedom to be fun and quirky. Freedom to place bunkers in other than orderly places. Freedom to create green complexes and undulations that roll off into the bunkers or low swales.

We golfers have stifled designers' creativity and deadened their work. Therefore, we've lost for ourselves the opportunity to play golf in America as it's played on the links courses of the British Isles.

All of this, of course, would meet heaviest resistance from superintendents — the very ones it should help the most — because they would fear for their jobs. Nightmares ring in their minds with crowds wailing: "He has wildflowers on his fairways. Off with his head!"

A majority of superintendents would agree to would work in the sparse, links-like environments of their U.K. counterparts — if the courses down the street would do the same. If only someone prominent would make the model.

Nevertheless, here is my warning: History connects the dead to the living and the yet to be born. Forget that history in golf, and you lose its essence.

Mark Leslie is a golf feature writer and president of Blais & Leslie Communications in Monmouth, Maine.
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Call me crazy, but I think the golf industry may not be as helpful as it could be to people who would like to join it. I’ve spoken with several candidates looking for information on careers in golf, and each of them expressed frustration about not knowing where to look and whom to contact. Some folks, I’m sure, gave up their searches in frustration.

This phenomenon puzzles me, especially in light of the tight labor market we currently face. I am reminded of the words of a mentor I once had who told me that one of the key indicators of a successful, long-term business is its ability to attract and retain qualified, committed people. The golf industry is no exception to this adage, but its diffuse structure creates challenges to marketing all it has to offer.

Since the golf industry is comprised of independent courses, facilities and businesses, it’s difficult to construct a marketing campaign to meet the needs of all its components. Therefore, the industry usually uses a word-of-mouth networking effort to fill a specific position. Once it’s filled, there’s no ongoing recruiting effort to promote the course until the next position opens. That’s a bad long-term strategy.

Effectively marketing industry career opportunities means learning how to use economies of scale. It also means that even though there may not be a current opening in your organization, it is worthwhile to participate in activities that provide valuable insight and information to people who are considering careers in the industry. Here are some examples of things you can do to make this happen:

Local chapters are constantly looking for new ways to add value to their membership. Organizations such as this can pool their resources to sponsor job fairs or career days for prospective employees. Well-designed information sessions can be conducted about the industry, including the benefits and satisfaction one receives from these opportunities. Most importantly, however, is the opportunity for face-to-face dialogue between people in the business and those folks who would like to be in it. Experience has shown that these conversations are invaluable recruiting tools.

Internships are also a good method to open doors to new employees. If you elect to start an intern program, make it worthwhile and a win-win situation for everyone. Don’t stick the students with your worst crew and forget about them. Be creative, and assign the interns some type of project that requires a full measure of their creative and critical thinking skills. There are some sharp people out there who may come up with new ways of doing things that you wouldn’t have considered without their help.

Web sites are another way to make it easy for prospective employees to contact you. If your facility doesn’t have a site, you should make a strong pitch to get one. Keep the site fresh with regular updates, and make sure your Internet address is part of all your facility’s literature. Ensure that the site has a section which describes employment opportunities.

Establish links with local colleges, industry-oriented schools and industry associations. Students on campus usually have direct access to the Internet, which means they are only a few clicks away from communicating directly with you.

The name of the game is ongoing marketing, effectively using economies of scale and accessibility. People who want to work in the industry don’t want to spend inordinate time searching for you. If that’s the hurdle they have to overcome, rest assured they will take their skills to other companies in allied industries that have figured out ways to remove these obstacles and will welcome them with open arms.

Dave St. John is a principal in GreenSearch, an Atlanta-based management search and human resource consulting firm. He may be reached at info@greensearch.com.
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01 10 Daily Fee/Public
02 20 Semi-Private
03 30 Private
04 40 Resort
05 50 City/State/Municipal
06 55 Other Golf Courses (please specify)
07 60 Golf Course Architect
08 70 Golf Course Developer
09 90 Golf Course Builder
10 105 University/College
11 100 Others Allied to the Field (please specify)

2. Which of the following best describes your title? (fill in ONE only)
12 10 Golf Course Superintendent
13 15 Assistant Superintendent
14 20 Owner or Management Company Executive
15 30 General Manager
16 35 Director of Golf
17 70 Green Chairman
18 45 Club President
19 75 Builder/Developer
20 55 Architect/Engineer
21 60 Research Professional
22 65 Other Titled Personnel (please specify)

3. What is your facility's annual maintenance budget?
23 A More than $2 Million
24 B $1,000,001-$2 Million
25 C $750,001-$1 Million
26 D $500,001-$750,000
27 E $300,001-$500,000
28 F $150,001-$300,000
29 G Less than $150,000

4. If you work for a golf course, how many holes are on your course?
30 A 9
31 B 18
32 C 27
33 D 36+
34 E Other (please specify)

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<th>Name</th>
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ADDRESS*  
CITY  
STATE  
ZIP  
E-MAIL ADDRESS

4. If you work for a golf course, how many holes are on your course?

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<td>52</td>
<td>C</td>
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<td>Golf Course Builder</td>
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<tr>
<td>University/College</td>
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<td>Others Allied to the Field (please specify)</td>
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2. Which of the following best describes your title? (fill in ONE only)

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<td>Owner or Management Company Executive</td>
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<td>General Manager</td>
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<td>Director of Golf</td>
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<td>Club President</td>
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<tr>
<td>Builder/Developer</td>
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<td>Architect/Engineer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Professional</td>
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<td>Other Titled Personnel (please specify)</td>
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3. What is your facility's annual maintenance budget?

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<tr>
<td>$500,001-$1 Million</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less than $150,000</td>
<td>D</td>
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