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Extra-Value Meals
Combination fertilizer products provide superintendents the opportunity to do two jobs for the price of one. But companies aren’t marketing them aggressively.
By Frank H. Andorka Jr.

Get Your Fill
Golf courses in need of soil to use in building tees, adding contours or capping fairways should look for free dirt for their programs.
By Mark Leslie

Real-Life Solutions
Strengthening Command and Control
A 22-year old irrigation system at Riviera CC made it difficult to water the golf course efficiently. An upgraded control system put the superintendent back in charge.
By Frank H. Andorka Jr.

Impeding Poa
Velvet and other bentgrass varieties can stop the irksome annual bluegrass from invading greens.
By Anthony Pioppi
cover story

These head superintendents dig ditches, mow greens, spray pesticides, whack weeds, grind reels — and love it.

About the cover
South Carolina photographer Rob Belknap caught up with Russel “Rusty” Tisdale and his pipe wrench last month at Cobb’s Glen CC in Anderson, S.C.

Mechanically Inclined
Check out Golfdom’s new column focusing on tips and ideas from the workbench.
By Curt Harler

The Islanders
The hassles are large for the small group of superintendents who tend turf on tiny territories surrounded by water. But they wouldn’t want to be anywhere else.
By Anthony Fioffi

News with a hook
14 Budget Cuts
19 A Week in the Life

TurfGrass Trends
This month, Golfdom’s practical research digest for turf managers discusses EPA restrictions on chlorothalonil — and more. Pages 47-62.
**Events**

**SEMINARS & CONFERENCES**

**MARCH**

- **17** Sierra Nevada GCSA Monthly Meeting
  - Sacramento, Calif.
  - [www.californiagcsa.org](http://www.californiagcsa.org)

- **17** USGA/Northern California Golf Association Meeting
  - Pleasanton, Calif.
  - [www.californiagcsa.org](http://www.californiagcsa.org)

- **17** Central Texas GCSA Monthly Meeting
  - Kerrville, Texas
  - [www.ctgcsa.org](http://www.ctgcsa.org)

- **17** Kansas GCSA Monthly Meeting
  - El Dorado, Kan.
  - [www.kgcsa.org](http://www.kgcsa.org)

- **18-20** Atlantic Golf Superintendents Association’s Atlantic Turfgrass Conference and Trade Show
  - Halifax, Canada
  - [www.atlanticgolfsupers.com](http://www.atlanticgolfsupers.com)

- **18-20** New England Regional Turf Conference & Trade Show
  - Providence, RI
  - [nhgcs.nhgolf.com](http://nhgcs.nhgolf.com)

- **20** Cactus and Pine GCSA Golf Industry Day at the Capital
  - Phoenix
  - [www.cactusandpine.com](http://www.cactusandpine.com)

- **20** University of Florida and Institute for Feed and Agricultural Sciences Field Day
  - Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.
  - [www.floridagcsa.com](http://www.floridagcsa.com)

- **20** Chicago District Golf Association and USGA Green Seminar
  - Chicago
  - [www.macgs.org](http://www.macgs.org)

- **24** Central California GCSA Monthly Meeting
  - Tulare, Calif.
  - [www.californiagcsa.org](http://www.californiagcsa.org)

- **25** Building with Trees Seminar
  - Omaha, Neb.
  - [www.arborday.org](http://www.arborday.org)

- **25-26** American Society of Agronomy Branch Meeting
  - Madison, Wis.
  - [www.agronomy.org](http://www.agronomy.org)

**APRIL**

- **8** GCSAA Seminar: Turfgrass Stress Management
  - Denver
  - [www.gcsaa.org](http://www.gcsaa.org)

- **8** Building with Trees Seminar
  - Greensboro, N.C.
  - [www.arborday.org](http://www.arborday.org)

- **8** Cactus and Pine GCSA Annual Meeting
  - Scottsdale, Ariz.
  - [www.cactusandpine.com](http://www.cactusandpine.com)

- **8** Rocky Mountain GCSA Seminar: Turfgrass Stress Management
  - Arvada, Colo.
  - [www.macgs.org](http://www.macgs.org)

- **15** Central California GCSA Monthly Meeting
  - Paso Robles, Calif.
  - [www.californiagcsa.org](http://www.californiagcsa.org)

- **23** GCSA of New England Monthly Meeting
  - Chatham, Mass.
  - [www.macgs.org](http://www.macgs.org)

**MAY**

- **2** GCSAA Seminar: Golf Course Drainage – Application and Design
  - Orlando
  - [www.gcsaa.org](http://www.gcsaa.org)

- **6-7** University of Arizona Field Day and Seminar
  - Tucson, Ariz.
  - [www.cactusandpine.com](http://www.cactusandpine.com)

- **6** Iowa GCSA Equipment Demo Day
  - Iowa City, Iowa
  - [www.iowaturfgrass.org](http://www.iowaturfgrass.org)

- **12-15** Second International Conference on Irrigation and Drainage
  - Phoenix
  - [www.uscid.org](http://www.uscid.org)

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Mona Is a Great Politician
I wanted to compliment Golfdom on "cracking the nut" with the article about Steve Mona — he would make a great politician ("Mona in the Middle," January). Mona's behavior is perilously close to the CEOs of corporate America. If you are unwilling to take responsibility during poor economic times, how can you possibly take any responsibility for what was done well during good economic times? The debate over how well GCSAA is functioning is not about the mission statement. It's about the philosophy on how to pursue it.

PDI may not be the reason for the money problems, but it is a huge expense to the association at a time when we find ourselves in the red and requiring dues increases. Mona, as with other business leaders, didn't want to believe that the economic boom would end. As a result, he didn't plan accordingly.

Shouldn't the growth that the association experienced during the '90s be attributed to the economy also? The money for too long has been flowing toward the association. In my opinion, the money should flow back to the local associations to strengthen and unify them. After all, they are the ones fighting the grassroots battles we face today.

There are no easy answers or solutions, but I think a full and detailed disclosure or audit of the association's finances to the general membership would be a good place to start.

Rick Slettery
Locust Hill CC
Rochester, N.Y.

Shack Attack
I want to ask Geoff Shackleford ("Bummer! Golf Now Viewed as Uncool," January) how many times he has been on a snowmobile? Has he ever been to Yellowstone in the winter? He wonders why golf is viewed as elitist. He should examine his own biases and do his homework.

Jack Handly
Sales Representative
Dow Agrosciences
Auburn, Calif.

I normally don't take the time to respond to articles I read, but Geoff Shackleford's recent ineffective stab at editorializing the state of golf today (January) prompted me to respond.

His remark regarding "lessons with the course's best sweater" just reconfirms my belief that golf course maintenance staffs have a negative perception of golf professionals, and thus will always build walls between the two.

Steve Ranney
Head Professional
Quail Hollow CC
Painesville, Ohio

Be Careful Out There
As I was reading your November 2002 issue, I noticed a serious safety violation in the photos on page 26. There are workers in deep trenches without side-wall supports. Photo 1 is particularly troubling. This is not good for worker safety, nor is the lack of attention to safety the message that I believe you would want to send to your readers.

Karl Guillard
Associate Professor of Agronomy
University of Connecticut
Storrs, Conn.

Back off the GCSAA
I've had limited exposure to Pat Jones' dealings with GCSAA, but it seems that he is always exposing the down side of things. His online column ("Digital Flagstick, Nov. 16, 2002") insinuates that the powers that be in the association have no regard for its employees. His statements also project the image of association leaders making the decisions without informing the public about how those decisions were made. I don't believe that's the case.

Do you think that these gentlemen and ladies aren't intelligent enough to realize the percentage of current staff that won't move? Do you think they're not intelligent enough to study the cost of living and the cost of doing business in other cities? Do you think that they aren't intelligent enough to realize what effect such a move will have on the association's programs and services they provide? Do you not think that a move would be to a location where there would be people fully capable of taking on the duties and responsibilities that its current staff handles?

Jones says, "I seriously doubt the relocation consultant's findings could possibly capture all the costs in terms of money, people and service a relocation will entail. You clearly have no faith in the abilities of such consultants. I think they have done enough work in their field that they have presented enough information and resources to provide GCSAA with reliable numbers."

Having recently attended the Chapter Delegates meeting, it seems to me they have considered all the necessary factors. Believe me, they have considered the effects it will have on the staff. But they are also intelligent enough to know that there are other factors to consider.

One of the primary purposes for the existence of the GCSAA is to promote and improve the stature of the superintendents, on the local level and in the entire golf world. I don't believe there is anything in the association's articles of incorporation or bylaws that says the association exists for the benefit of the staff and employees.

Brian Holland
Superintendent
Kentucky Dam Village
State Resort Park
Gilbertsville, Ky.

Editor's Note: To read Digital Flagstick twice a month, sign up Continued on page 8
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Eventually, they struggled just to remain alive, and now Goldman Sachs is about to dine on the body.

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However, once the market overbuilt and the economy tanked, AGC was exposed to crushing business risk and suffered losses for three successive years after completing the best year in its history.

When the dust settles, look for AGC’s directors of maintenance to be running the golf course maintenance operations under Goldman. With some new financial support, they’ll quickly fix the problems Sharp harps on.

Mike Heacock, Agronomist and former American Golf Corp. employee

How Could You Forget Him?
I always look forward to reading this publication each month, but I was a little disappointed in December.

There is an article called “A Historic Design.” While this was a well-written article and was mostly about Gary Panks, I was curious why the superintendent was never mentioned. They do have one, and he does a great job. He has more to deal with in maintaining the “culturally sensitive” areas than the director of golf operations.

Maybe I am a little worked up over nothing, but I am from the area and a good friend of superintendent Todd Huslig. I respect him and what he does.

Clay Guck
Superintendent, Tierra Del Sol CC
Los Lunas, N.M.

Editor’s Note: Guck is absolutely right. We certainly should have mentioned Huslig in the article, and we apologize for the oversight.

Got something to say? We want to hear from you. You can e-mail your letters to Frank Andorka at fandorka@advanstar.com, fax to 440-891-2675 or send them via snail-mail to: 7500 Old Oak Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44130. Make sure to include your name and phone number for verification. Letters may be edited for length or relevance.
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I watched a terrific show on *The Learning Channel* the other night about urban legends. The program debunked several of these unverifiable but true-sounding stories that periodically bubble to the surface of the public’s consciousness. One in particular — the traveling businessman who succumbs to a beautiful woman’s charms only to awake the next morning missing a kidney — can be traced back hundreds of years. Fascinating stuff.

Golf’s urban legends are equally fascinating and just as hard to snuff out. The latest example of their persistence was in a hatchet job — er, article — on the online magazine, *Salon.com*.

If you’re not familiar with Salon, you should know that, politically, it flies farther to the left than a John Daly duck-hook. Think I’m exaggerating? The tide of the piece in question is “Poisoned Fairways.”

The article did a wonderful job of reviving several of golf-related urban legends repeatedly discredited by science, law and good journalism. For starters, it revives the now infamous 1982 “EPA study” of golf course pesticide use. This piece of wild extrapolation, actually done by the AARP, claimed golf courses used more active ingredient per acre than farming.

That’s a stunning statistic, until you scratch the surface of the methodology. The “science” behind the study involved surveying a couple of dozen Northeast U.S. courses about how much active ingredient they applied to putting surfaces annually. Then that number was taken and multiplied by the total acreage of the average golf course — 150 acres or so. The result was a ludicrously high number based on the idea that every course in America applied chemicals wall-to-wall as often as possible. Good science, huh?

Next up, predictably, was yet another appearance by the industry’s one-and-only ghost, Navy Lt. George Prior. Prior died “suspiciously” after playing a round of golf on a course that had been treated with a fungicide. His now famous habit of placing his golf ball in his mouth between holes was cited as the contamination method. The wrongful death suit was settled out of court, leaving an information gap that’s caused Prior to pop up like a poltergeist in a bad horror movie for two decades.

All you need to know about this case is that the real facts behind it drove John Stossel of ABC News to convert from leading antipesticide crusader to leading skeptic of unsupported activist claims.

The famed University of Iowa Mortality Study also reared its ugly head once again in the story with the suggestion that superintendents died from higher rates from pesticide-related cancers. The article omitted the fact that the study’s lead scientist said repeatedly that no cause-and-effect relationship could be inferred from the results.

Just to cap off this witch’s brew of bias and misinformation, *Salon* claims that the golf industry gets away with all of this skullduggery because it has a powerful federal lobby whose campaign contributions rank somewhere between the NRA and Big Tobacco.

Pardon me while I laugh uncontrollably for a few minutes. Powerful? The golf industry couldn’t lobby its way out of a wet paper bag. Influence federal legislation? The industry couldn’t get a parking ticket fixed. Contributions? The average Congressman finds more spare change under the cushions of his couch than the industry gives annually.

Nonetheless, another urban legend is born. Thanks to the Internet, the myth of an all-powerful golf lobby will soon have the same resilience as the tale of the wayward businessman who loses his kidney. Pretty soon we’ll be receiving e-mails about how President Bush has secretly conspired with Tiger Woods, Jack Nicklaus and Tim Finchem to turn all of Yosemite National Park into a giant driving range.

Hey, it must be true. I saw it somewhere on the Internet.

Pat Jones is the publisher/editorial director of Golfdom. He can be reached at 440-891-3126 or pjones@advantastar.com