Introducing the new John Deere B Series Walk-Behind Mowers. There are no shortcuts to being the best. That's why we spared no small detail with our new 18-, 22-, and 26-inch walk-behind greensmowers. From our new adjustable handlebar height adjustment down to our terribly efficient grass catcher, our new B Series walks are without peers in their category. A larger muffler, along with a smaller pitched chain and new chain adjusters, puts a damper on sound levels. New bedknife-to-reel knobs allow for easy adjusting. And a new oil drain funnel makes changing oil quick and neat. We did all of this and more to ensure one thing: to give you and your operators a cut pattern that is straight and superior. For a demo, please call your local John Deere Golf & Turf Distributor. Or dial toll-free 1-800-537-8233.
Hole of the

No. 18
Marbella Club Golf Resort
Marbella, Spain
Who Wants to Golf When There's a View Like This?

Sometimes, the golfers would rather look around them than in front of them when on the tees to hit their balls. That's what Marbella Club Golf Resort in Marbella, Spain, does to you. The course's beauty – its several 100-year-old olive trees, steep slopes and a waterfall – is breathtaking. The view from the 18th hole (pictured here) is of another continent – Africa – and one of the great natural wonders of the world – The Rock of Gibraltar. The course, which opened in 1999, was designed by Dave Thomas, architect of The Belfry in England. It was designed for the player with a high handicap in mind.

Marbella's head greenkeeper, Alberto Bustamante, says golfing is secondary for most people who play. "They just want to watch the view," he says.

The course is well-known for its A-4 greens, and Bustamante and his crew provide the surfaces with plenty of attention and care. They verticut and topdress the greens regularly. As a result, they're free of Poa annua and as smooth as the view is beautiful at Marbella.

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WHEN YOU'RE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MOST IMPORTANT ASSET ON YOUR COURSE, YOU NEED THE ONE COMPANY THAT CAN HANDLE ALL OF YOUR NEEDS.

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ONE SOURCE™

CIRCLE NO. 120
What do you do when the headline in the newspaper says, "Golf’s Toxic Fairways" or "Turfgrass is a Waste of Water" or "Overseeding Golf Courses is a Luxury We Can’t Afford" or "Treated Water Should be Put on Restrictions"?

These are all real headlines I’ve seen. I’m not making them up to scare readers. Heck, I couldn’t have made these up. The important question is how do you react to them when you see them.

Do you go “ho-hum” and turn to the funnies? Does your stomach knot up as you feel the cross hairs of the negative media bearing down on you and your livelihood? Do you complain about the misinformation and slanted reporting to your peers over beers after work?

We live in stressful times, with attacks from environmentalists on our industry coming at us full-throttle. I have one sure-fire therapy to relieve you of this stress — write a letter to the editor and carbon copy the reporter who wrote the offensive article. A newspaper generally puts an e-mail address of the reporter at the end of the article and lists its letters to the editor address in the editorial section.

There are two cardinal rules for these letter responses. The first rule is to be brief and to the point. The paper may or may not have a word-count limit published. The second rule is to be professional. You may want to vent and call the paper absolutely stupid, but it likely won’t print it. Then the real tragedy is that you won’t be able to get the facts presented to refute the misinformation in the original article.

Part of the therapeutic value of writing that letter to the editor is that you are not preaching to the choir. You are educating the media and the general public. You get to tell your side of the story and bring pertinent facts to light. The silent majority tends to be moderate in its actions, but it is the vocal minority that gets the action done in rule-making sessions.

Your letter may not get printed, but it may get filed under the topic in question, so the next time the media go off on a witch hunt, it will be inclined to do more research based on your input. As much as it loves to use negative, attention-grabbing headlines, the media also has a vested interest in getting it right. When letters with documented facts keep coming in to challenge stories, the media’s credibility and jobs are at stake.

Do not remain a member of the silent majority and let another piece of misinformation go unchallenged. Silence allows the public perception of golf courses as toxic wastelands to fester. If you write a letter, the media will be given an opportunity to learn both sides of the issue and be better equipped to make decisions about coverage — and perhaps inform readers in the process.

Will your one letter change the opinion of the activists? No. Will your factual letter provide some balance to the issue? Absolutely. You can remain a member of the silent majority and be considered sheep to be led, or you can speak up calmly with facts on your side and give the rest of the flock a choice.

In recent dealings with the media and government officials, I have learned that they are generally grossly misinformed about turfgrass and golf. We have made headway with some reporters and regulators. For every one who now sees the big picture, there are 10 who only know the anti-environment pabulum they have been fed by years of unchallenged articles.

The pen can be as mighty as the sword, but you have to be willing to unsheathe it once in awhile and strike a blow for your own stress relief. It’s up to you to give the silent majority a goose every now and then.

Joel Jackson, CGCS, retired from Disney’s golf division in 1997 and is director of communications for the Florida GCSA.
My philosophy is that nobody is going to jump in a hole unless you jump in one first,” says Russel “Rusty” Tisdale, superintendent of Cobb’s Glen CC.

These head superintendents dig ditches, mow greens, spray pesticides, whack weeds, grind reels – and love it.
The dirty, crusty and worn gloves hang like a couple of trophy fish on the wall in John Monson's pint-sized office. They've seen better days. That's because they've seen thousands of days.

A handwritten note by Monson hangs on the wall below the retired and decrepit gloves. “Guess they are worn out,” it says. “New in 1957. Have seen many ski tow ropes and golf course dirt. RIP. 1/03/02. J.M.”

The gloves are a testament to Monson's hard work as the superintendent at Long Prairie CC, a semiprivate course in the small town of Long Prairie, Minn. If the gloves could talk, they would tell you Monson is more blue-collar than white-collar when it comes to the business of tending turf. You'll find him in a ditch wielding a beat-up shovel more often than sitting at his desk grasping a shiny ballpoint pen.

“I can still shovel as much dirt as the kids,” the 61-year-old says proudly. “Sometimes I think I'm younger than I am.”

Monson is part of a segment of superintendents that prefers to get down and dirty when it comes to golf course maintenance. They like to dig ditches to locate irrigation leaks. They like to mow fairways and roughs. They like to fire up weed eaters and whack the tall grass. They like to spray pesticides. They like to grind reels. Hence, these superintendents don't wear Haggar slacks, Nike golf shirts and $80 FootJoys to work (not that there's anything wrong with that).

Of course, these rugged superintendents must like to get down and dirty because their job descriptions call for them to do so. Their courses don't sport big maintenance budgets, and their crews don't feature a slew of workers. But make no mistake: They are the type who feel it's their duty to work side by side with their crew members in two feet of muck.

While some superintendents shoot for the stars in terms of money and glory (not that there's anything wrong with that), many of the down-and-dirty types don't care how much Continued on page 38
I can still shovel as much dirt as the kids. Sometimes I think I'm younger than I am."

John Monson
SUPERINTENDENT
OF LONG PRAIRIE CC

Continued from page 37
they make and if their courses ever appear on any "best of" lists. But that's not to say they don't care how their courses look. They are just as passionate about good agronomy at their modest tracks as superintendents are at the big-name courses.

It's hard to say how many down-and-dirty superintendents are scattered throughout the country. But it's safe to say they're well represented in every region and definitely not a dying breed.

"We don't do surveys to see if you're a coat-and-tie superintendent or a dirt-under-the-fingernails superintendent," says Jeff Bollig, director of communications for the GCSAA. "But we know there are all types of superintendents."

Love the mud
On this cool and cloudy afternoon, Monson is dressed in faded and dirty blue jeans, a long-sleeved shirt decorated with silhouettes of Payne Stewart swinging a golf club and black shoes with more mileage on them than a college kid's 1982 Chevy. Monson, who has worked at the course since 1968 and has been its superintendent since 1977, is 61 going on 35. He's neither tall nor broad-shouldered, but he's as tough as a pair of steeled-toed boots.

"You have spray technicians and irrigation technicians at the bigger courses," Monson says. "But at places [like Long Prairie], you're the jack of all trades and master of none. That's what I like about it. I couldn't just go around and not do anything physical."

Dave Spotts, superintendent of Eagle Crossing GC in Carlisle, Pa., knows where Monson is coming from. He's the spray tech, irrigation tech and certified ditch digger at the public course. Getting grubby is part of his day.

"I'm kind of like Pig Pen," says Spotts, who wears a blue Dickies uniform to work. "Even if I'm not going out to dig a ditch, I still come back dirty."

The 48-year-old admits that certain body parts hurt more than they used to, but he won't let the aches and pain change his hands-on approach. "What am I going to do, sit in a rocking chair?" he says sarcastically.

If his name is on the course, Spotts says
It's the clear choice. Tired of pond products that leave your water as green as your turf? Then it's time you switched to Radiance. Its unique delivery system disperses quickly from a single application point and keeps it in active suspension throughout the water, where it seeks out and destroys offending algae for up to a month. While deadly to algae, Radiance is fish-friendly and safe for the aquatic environment.

See fish, not algae.
Down & Dirty

Continued from page 38
it's his duty to be in the midst of its daily maintenance. "I have to be out there on top of it."

Leading by example
If there's a big ditch to be dug, Monson won't instruct his crew to do it. It's likely he'll say, "Let's dig it together."

"I don't expect any of my employees to do something I wouldn't do myself," Monson says. "If the job is too dirty or too hard for me to do, I don't expect them to do it. I lead by example."

A superintendent is going to earn credibility and respect if he works shoulder to shoulder in the mud with a guy making seven bucks an hour.

"My philosophy is that nobody is going to jump in a hole unless you jump in one first," says Russel "Rusty" Tisdale, superintendent of Cobb's Glen CC, a semi-private course in Anderson, S.C. "Leading by example is the easiest way to get people to do what you need to get done."

Joe Ondo, certified superintendent of Winter Pines GC in Winter Park, Fla., estimates that about 40 percent of superintendents are of the dirt-under-the-fingernails variety, like himself. Ondo has been at Winter Pines since 1979, and says he's been getting down and dirty since Day One.

"The guys who have worked for me appreciate that I'm not afraid to be right beside them," Ondo says. "If I have to get in there and hold a pipe wrench, I will."

Ted Cox, superintendent of Running Fox GC in Chillicothe, Ohio, says he doesn't view himself above performing any difficult task.

"If a crew member comes in from a tough job, I'll tell him to take a break and let me take over for awhile," Cox says. "He'll appreciate that."

Cox's philosophy is simple: If you lead by example, your crew will work harder for you.

While it's good to work close with the crew, Tisdale and others are careful not to get too chummy with workers. "Sometimes I might get too close, and someone might try to take advantage of me," Tisdale says.

For example, a worker might start showing up late because he feels he can get away with it since he and his boss are buds. But that thinking won't fly with Tisdale.

"[A worker] might think that I won't fire him because I'm his buddy," Tisdale says. "But I will."

"It's good to be one of the guys, but you have to watch it," Ondo adds. "Sometimes you have to crack down."

Nothin' fancy
Monson's 10-foot-by-10-foot office has no heat. But it does have a desk, which is more