A Way of Life
Paul Emling has transformed Arcadia Bluffs' image with a golf course maintenance program based on his genuine appreciation for the environment.
By Larry Aylward

Of Salmon and Superintendents
The issue of water and water rights in western Washington is as hot as any issue out there, and it's not going away anytime soon.
By Ron Furlong

Up With the EPA
How one superintendent embraced the agency's strict standards to strengthen his course's environmental image.
By Frank H. Andorka Jr.
Pat Blum, Colonial Acres Golf Course

Strings Attached
Joe Hills has found that fishing line is a great and ecological way to rid a golf course of geese.
By Anthony Pioppi

Biopesticides Bazaar
If you're looking for alternatives to vary your pest control options, here are some good places to start.
In the Rough
Golfers' expectations for improved turf have extended to the rough. Mower manufacturers are responding to superintendents' needs with better machines.
By Larry Aylward

Late Is Good, in this Case
Fall fertilization is vital to maintaining healthy turf year-round. Superintendents offer tips on how to do it correctly.
Compiled by Larry Aylward

TurfGrass Trends
This month, Golfdom's practical research digest for turf managers discusses biological control of turfgrass pests, among other topics. See pages 55-71.
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We've Got Mail

LETTERS FROM THE FIELD

ET and the IA

In the article, "Improvement Detected in Moisture Sensors" (August), the Irrigation Association (IA) is used as a statistical source for comments made by Mike Miller of Baseline that compare the water savings associated with evapotranspiration (ET) devices with those of soil moisture sensors. Unfortunately, the statistics quoted are incorrect.

The statements infer that soil moisture is better than ET [as a method of running irrigation controllers]. The IA however, has never published any statements about whether soil moisture or ET is better. The only statistic we have used is that Southern California trials using "smart controllers" [that use soil moisture sensors] have conserved up to 30 percent of the water.

The IA is currently working to see how both soil moisture and ET controllers do in scientific tests. This project is called Smart Water Application Technology (SWAT), and it's only arrived into the hardware test phase. We don't know how well these "smart" controllers perform today, but in a year the test results will be available. Could you please set the record straight?

Thomas Kimmel
Executive Director
The Irrigation Association
Falls Church, Va.

Farmers Know Best

I really did not know where Jim Black was going with the story (Public Opinion, July) but after reading further I had to laugh. He was 100 percent right.

I just got back from the GCSAA headquarters in Kansas, where I told them in a meeting we tend to forget where we have come from in our career field or as individuals.

My first superintendent's position was a nine-hole course in Durant, Okla, where three of the biggest amateur golf tournaments in the Mid-South Region were played. I made $5 per hour until they realized the 80-hour weeks cost them more than paying me a salary of $900 per month since I was the only crew member. The golf course was in-between the city graveyard and large fields with cows. Most of our 200 members were farmers so I received lots of best-intention advice from "experts." And you know something? Their advice worked.

It turned out, they had all the experience and knowledge, and I just had to apply it to a different crop.

Joseph Hubbard
Certified Superintendent
TA Turner Construction Services
Ashburn, Va.

Just Regulate the Balls

I'd like to comment on Geoff Shackelford's article on the USGA's set up of the U.S. Open (July). I agree with what he wrote, but I would like to take it a step further: I think par is in danger of becoming obsolete.

I have hosted an LPGA tournament for the past 10 years, and advancements in club and ball technology have lowered the winning scores for professional tournaments by six to seven strokes. To compensate, superintendents are unfairly being asked to erase those seven shots with the conditioning of the golf course.

It's a very thin line superintendents are being asked to walk between fair and unfair and brown grass or green grass when faced with protecting par and the integrity of their courses despite all the improvements that have been allowed to clubs and balls.

It seems like common sense that the answer lies with (regulating) the ball and letting manufacturers do whatever they want to the clubs. Controlling that one thing would be the simplest way to solve a multitude of problems.

If the USGA doesn't start pulling the reins in, it will have to face the fact that par will become a thing of the past, like feather balls and wooden shafts. By the way, it didn't seem to bother the people who run the British Open that their champion finished at 10-under par.

Rick Slatlery
Superintendent
Locust Hill Country Club
Pittsford, N.Y.

We want to hear from you. You can e-mail your letters to Larry Aylward at larryward@advanstar.com, fax to 440-891-2675 or send them via snail-mail to: 7500 Old Oak Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44130.
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Cheers & Jeers: Autumn Edition

BY PAT JONES

RISE CITED

STRONG CONCERNS ABOUT HOW A JOHN KERRY ADMINISTRATION MIGHT ATTEMPT TO OVERREGULATE PESTICIDE USE

took the unprecedented step of endorsing President Bush for re-election. RISE cited strong concerns about how a John Kerry administration might attempt to overregulate pesticide use.

Jeers to the GCSAA leadership for doing a poor job of communicating the rationale behind bringing the Club Managers Association of America into the ever-expanding Golf Industry Show. (For more on this, log onto our Web site and check out the Sept. 2 edition of Golfdom Insider.)

Normally, GCSAA goes to great lengths to make sure that all key parties — especially leading members and big exhibitors — have completely bought into a major change like this. However, I heard from people, including past association presidents and marketing gurus from large companies, who said this came completely out of the blue.

I won't debate the merits of the decision here (other than to say it was inevitable for money reasons), but the GCSAA dropped the ball on the announcement. After the “Oops, we changed our minds about relocating the headquarters” debacle, the folks in Lawrence should have done more to pave the way for this one.

Cheers and a fond farewell to one member of the Golfdom family who is moving on to bigger things. Frank Andorka, our managing editor, was named editorial director of one of our sister publications, Pest Control magazine.

Frank was a key factor in the growth and success of our publication over the past few years, but our loss is the bug-killing industry’s gain. Please join me in wishing him the best.

Publisher Pat Jones can be reached at 440-891-3126 or pjones@advanstar.com
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It's only autumn, but Paul Jett is already hearing the question, “Can it happen here?” The certified superintendent of Pinehurst No.2, site of the 2005 U.S. Open, answers the inquiry straightforwardly. “It will not happen here,” he says.

The “it” we’re talking about, of course, is the unfortunate matter — or debacle, as some have called it — that occurred at Shinnecock Hills Golf Club in June during this year’s U.S. Open. The course’s extreme setup the last two days of the tournament caused enough wrangling among golfers, golf historians and golf fans that the USGA should re-examine its philosophy behind staging the tournament.

All of this, however, puts Jett in a precarious position when people, especially the media, ask him what he thinks about what happened at Shinnecock. Jett must think twice about his answers. He can’t bash the USGA like superintendents less close to the matter can.

So on a recent late-summer day, Jett was understandably on guard when answering some of my questions as he whipped his tattered utility vehicle around the famed Donald Ross design. The well-tanned Jett, with his slicked-backed hair and dark wraparound sunglasses, was also cool and composed when asking questions. (Memo to the GCSAA: Get Jett to speak at one of your seminars on “Dealing with the Media.”)

“Let me put it this way,” Jett said, elaborating on whether what happened at Shinnecock could happen at Pinehurst. “We’re going to have a golf course on Sunday afternoon [the last day of the Open] that a resort guest will be able to play on Tuesday morning [after the Open] and be satisfied with the experience.”

When asked if he thought the USGA needs to re-evaluate its set-up strategy, Jett’s answer could be perceived as riding the fence. But if one reads between the lines, his answer could also be perceived as a challenge for everyone to get on board when crucial decisions are made during the tournament. Apparently, that didn’t happen at Shinnecock.

“There are a lot of people involved in the setup — USGA people, the superintendent and others,” Jett said. “Everybody has to come to some sort of agreement of what it’s going to be.”

A lot of superintendents might be shaking in their golf shoes to host next year’s U.S. Open, especially after what happened at Shinnecock this year. But keep in mind that Jett has been there before. Pinehurst hosted the U.S. Open in 1999, and Jett has an idea of what to expect.

“We’ve already gone through one U.S. Open where the scoring conditions couldn’t have been any better,” Jett insists. “So why would we want to change a lot of things? I’ve had no conversations with Tom Meeks (USGA’s senior director of rules and competitions) or Tim Moraghan (USGA’s director of championship agronomy) to indicate that we’re going to do things a far cry different than we did in ’99.”

While it’s understandable that Jett didn’t want to touch the what-did-you-think-of-what-happened-at-Shinnecock questions with a 10-foot bunker rake, he did offer some neutral insights regarding the matter. Jett was at Shinnecock early in the week of the tournament but left before the event transformed from a championship golf tournament into the Daytona 500. But Jett says he understands how the course could have dried up and begun playing as fast as a NASCAR track.

“Shinnecock sits right on the ocean and has probably even a more sandy soil than we have,” he said. “You could hold the water off here until next June and the course wouldn’t be that hard.”

Jett also said he wasn’t surprised that so many golfers slammed Shinnecock for its playability. “They’re the ones that had...