

THRU THE GREEN

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OUR OBJECTIVE: The collection, preservation, and dissemination of scientific and practical knowledge and to promote the efficient and economical maintenance of golf courses. Information contained in this publication may be used freely, in whole or in part, without special permission as long as the true context is maintained. We would appreciate a credit line.



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PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Commitment, dedication, professionalism. What exactly do these words mean? As Golf Course Superintendents we know that we won't survive in this profession long without total commitment. Always striving to produce the finest conditions possible. Keeping abreast of today's latest technologies, and at times acting as a peacemaker, politician, babysitter and Houdini.

Dedication: This goes hand in hand with commitment. I don't feel you can have one without the other and still perform to your true potential. How many weekend mornings have we gone to work knowing what a few more precious moments of sleep would feel like. Or while preparing to leave at night, we discover a break in our irrigation system only to stay several more hours to repair it. That's dedication.

Finally Professionalism. The word alone is self explanatory. It's always presenting yourself in an upstanding manner. It's developing a good repore with your fellow superintendents with the intent of exchanging ideas. It's not only becoming a member of an Association but taking the time to get involved both on a local and national level. And its nurturing the desire to increase our knowledge by attending meetings and seminars.

Over the next few months we have just that opportunity. In October we have our joint meeting with the Sierra Nevada Chapter at Bodega Harbour. In November we have our Golf Course Superintendents Institute in Santa Rosa, followed by the Regional GCSAA Seminar in Walnut Creek. What better way to exhibit the three qualities just mentioned than to take part.

In the end we have an individual who is well rounded, knowledgeable and of unquestionable character. In the end we have a Golf Course Superintendent.

Mike

NAUMANN'S NORCAL NEWS

Mike Phillips has left Auburn Valley CC in Auburn to become the Supt. at Almaden CC in San Jose. Mike is replacing Mike Basile who moved on to Santa Clara Golf and Tennis Club...Grant Thompson has left Corral de Tierra CC in Salinas to become the Supt. of La Rinconada CC in Los Gatos replacing Don Boyd who has moved on to pursue personal endeavors...Scott Jorgensen has accepted the Supt. position at The Valley Club of Montecito (Santa Barbara). He is vacating his position at Del Rio CC in Modesto... Bill Kissick is the new Supt. at Salinas G&CC. He is leaving Del Rio CC in Brawley to accept his new position.



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GOLF COURSE IRRIGATION SYSTEMS...WHY?

I'm sure everyone would agree that an irrigation system is an important part of any successful golf course in Northern California. Turf grass needs water to survive. Water provides the turf with a means for extracting necessary minerals from the soil and transporting them throughout the plant. Turf grass also uses water as a temperature control mechanism by allowing evaporation during periods of hot weather. If water isn't available in the soil for the turf to use, the turf will go into stress and eventually die. On the other hand, if there is consistently too much water available in the soil for the turf to use, other problems can occur such as disease, lack of necessary oxygen, and the growth of antagonistic and competitive plants. Unfortunately, we can't depend on Mother Nature to supply our golf courses with the proper amount of water we need, where we need it, and when we want it. This is the function of a well designed golf course irrigation system.

In order for any turf irrigation system to operate effectively it must be designed with two things in mind; uniformity and control. System uniformity involves applying an equal (or uniform) amount of water to the turf areas of the course based on the current water requirement of these areas. Uniformity is mainly dependent on what type of sprinklers are used in the system. Sprinklers are designed to apply a relatively uniform pattern of water within a specific radius and are generally designed to operate within a specific range of water pressure. Sprinklers allow water to flow through a nozzle (or group of nozzles) which are sized to allow a specific amount of water to

pass. This water flow is also dependent on the water pressure and is usually expressed in gallons per minute (GPM). The rate at which a sprinkler applies water to the turf over a specific area is called the "precipitation rate" of the sprinkler. Applied precipitation rates within groups of sprinklers is affected by sprinkler spacing, arc pattern, and water flow from sprinklers. Knowledge of precipitation rates are necessary to determine required running time for the sprinklers. Therefore, to achieve a high level of system uniformity the sprinklers need to be installed according to their operating characteristics regarding spacing or radius of throw, water pressure, and precipitation rate.

System control is important because, if properly designed, it allows the superintendent to apply water to the turf root zone based on the needs of a specific turf area. A great deal of situations exist on a golf course where separation of control is important. Different types of turf may require different water applications. Many different types of soil conditions may be present within the limits of any golf course. Mowing height can effect transpiration rate and, therefore, the water needs of turf areas. Golf is a game that is played on irregular surfaces, and course topography will affect the rate at which the soil will accept water. Wind will affect the pattern uniformity of the sprinklers and adjustment of control may be necessary to offset this. Sunny turf areas will use water more quickly than shady areas due to higher evapo-transpiration rates of the turf for temperature control. Many golf course systems being designed today utilize current technology to control each

sprinkler head and to monitor the entire system for water and power usage, and maintenance concerns.

Our climate allows people to participate in this game year-round, but we only receive some natural irrigation assistance from rainfall for a few months out of the year (if we're lucky). Golfers in Northern California are pretty demanding; for some reason they're reluctant to play the game on dead grass. therefore, we install irrigation systems in our golf courses to keep everybody happy.

NEXT MONTH: SYSTEM UNIFORMITY VS. SYSTEM DEFORMITY



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THE GREEN PAGES

A Compendium of news and opinions about government, golf and the environment

Politicos propose market-based environmental incentives

Some politicians and environmental groups are calling for a new approach to solving environmental problems. "Market-based environmental incentives" would operate by making those companies that create environmental problems bear the total cost to society through higher product costs.

Costs for waste generation by companies and individuals would be geared to the amount they produce. In the same respect, if a company produced a chemical that contaminated groundwater supplies, that company or companies that manufactured that product would pay for the total cost of cleanup.

Keep a close eye on state legislators for market-based approaches that apply to golf course and development.

Who's wasting it?

Water Fact: Approximately 42 percent of household water is used for landscaping and landscapes are typically overwatered by 20 to 40 percent.

Curb chemophobia

The Natural Resources Defense Council has called for an 80 percent reduction in agricultural pesticide use.

The organization cited the recently completed EPA well water study as a source for proposing such drastic cuts.

Although the cuts are aimed at agricultural uses, superintendents should brace themselves for future demands by such organizations concerning turf and ornamental products as well.

Public information—and lots of it—is the only way to curb chemophobia.

Traces of herbicides found in rainwater

Traces of herbicides were found in rainwater samples from 23 states in a study recently completed by the U.S. Geological Survey.

The herbicides detected included atrazine, alachlor, metalachlor and a degradation product of atrazine. The main source of the herbicide pollution is believed to be agricultural pesticide use.

This is the first major study to confirm that pesticides can be transported through vaporization into the atmosphere.

Although turf applications are not believed to have contributed to the pesticides found in the rainwater samples, superintendents should be prepared to answer questions from concerned citizens and members.

More restricted pesticides likely

The Environmental Protection Agency has proposed new criteria for determining which additional chemicals should be classified as "restricted use" pesticides.

The additional criteria, which are designed to protect groundwater supplies, use data from persistence and mobility research and actual detection in groundwater.

These additional criteria are expected to move several turf pesticides now classified for general use to the restricted use list within three to five years.

Chemical firms face ad charges

Chemical companies as well as lawn-care providers are coming under fire for false or misleading advertising.

This scrutiny focuses on claims that products or services are "non-toxic" or "completely safe."

While FIFRA does not regulate lawn-care company advertising, it does prohibit advertisers of chemical products from making claims as part of a pesticide's distribution and sale that differ substantially from claims made on the label.

Superintendents should be knowledgeable and candid about the toxicity of golf course chemicals when talking to the media about the uses of those chemicals.

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High court OKs local pesticide laws

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled unanimously that a local government may enact pesticide rules more stringent than federal requirements.

The June 21 decision overturned the Wisconsin Supreme Court's ruling that an ordinance adopted by the town of Casey, Wis., was illegal because it preempted the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act.

The 1985 ordinance requires a town permit to use pesticides on public lands or to perform aerial pesticide applications on private lands.

Forum examines wetlands classification

In an environmental forum sponsored by SAA, John Meagher, director of EPA's wetlands office; John Studt, chief of enforcement for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; and Rep. Jimmy Hayes (D-La.) discussed how wetlands should be classified.

Hayes, who has introduced a bill that would classify wetlands for protection according to their ecological value, said that the current policy violates the rights of landowners.

"The Fifth Amendment to the constitution states that the landowner has the right to determine what is allowable and that government intrusion is the exception rather than the rule," he said. "If the government does intrude then it is only done under circumstances in which (1) the landowner's rights are protected and (2) if land is taken, the landowner should receive compensation or mitigation."

His bill would strip the EPA of its veto power over wetland development and vest greater administrative responsibility in the Army Corps of Engineers.

Reducing the cost and red tape involved in small business pensions is the goal of a crop of new U.S. Senate bills and Department of Labor plan.

The simplification of pensions is targeted for businesses with fewer than 100 employees.

Currently, only eight percent of such businesses have pension plans. The proposed Simplified Employee Pension plans (SEPs) would be managed similarly to individual retirement accounts.

Only businesses with fewer than 25 employees are now able to take advantage of SEPs. There are several different proposals from both the Democrats and Republicans, as well as one from the Department of Labor.

The proposals vary on the maximum contribution per year and employee/employer shares of contributions.

Of course, any retirement plan must include all full-time employees of the business.

EPA: Groundwater protection is states' job

In a task force report and in a speech to a group of governors, the EPA has been saying that it is largely the responsibility of the states to protect groundwater from pesticide contamination. The Groundwater Task Force, which was formed in July 1989 to review the agency's groundwater protection program and develop policies, released its report in early May.

The report noted the importance of the state role in managing and protecting groundwater, and said that such management could require decisions on groundwater allocation, land use, and pesticide restrictions.

EPA is encouraging the states to develop "generic" management plans, according to Susan H. Wayland, deputy director of the EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs. Wayland addressed the National Governors Association's Conference on Comprehensive Groundwater Protection Programs in March.

Given the economic crises many states are experiencing, it is unclear how these plans will be financed, managed and enforced. Superintendents will need to keep abreast of changing regulations as states develop their own groundwater protection programs.

Above article seen in "The Florida Green", July August 1991 issue.



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A LIST IS A LIST, BUT TAKE NOTE ADDRESS PROBLEMS

Lists attract our attention. They enumerate our problems, pleasures and needs. They are a condensed index of things to do, we should have done, and could have done.

Lists are powerful documents. We respond to them quickly, whether it is a shopping list, a Christmas list, a work list, a sports list or a problem list. It must be the simple declarative style of a list that triggers a quick response. I responded quickly when I read the list of "Golf Course Superintendents' 10 Deadly Problems." Then I saw that they were "The Top 10 Sins of Golf Course Maintenance" as seen through the eyes of 12 USGA agronomists.

The list was the result of a survey requested by a group of golf course owners. Observations were tabulated and the results listed according to frequency in the survey. These problems not only were sinful. They were deadly; a fatal combination.

The list implied that superintendents might be responsible for these problems. Golf course maintenance is a career for superintendents; it is a matter of job security. Industry leaders who listened to the talk or who read the article may erroneously interpret the tone of the list.

Jim Connolly, USGA agronomist who presented these facts at the Maine Golf Turfgrass Conference and Show, stated that it was not his intention to fault the superintendent but to make the industry aware of the problems.

There is no denying these problems exist.

In presenting the list in this column, I changed the order to reflect my view of the importance of each problem. The comments following the category are my thoughts.

Following is the list of ten important problems facing golf course superintendents. The number in parentheses indicates the original ranking.

1. Labor (9). Size alone puts this problem at the top. Labor comprises the largest percentage of golf course budgets. The human element demands attention. Low wages, few benefits, seasonal employment, poor working conditions, lack of training and scarcity of qualified people contribute to this problem.

Labor needs a strong planning effort equal to or greater than other maintenance programs.

2. Communications and Public Relations (1). To resolve this important issue, communications should begin at the top and set the pace throughout the golf course organization. A positive attitude must be developed in the organization to make it effective. The forms of communication should be kept simple. The quality of writing, speaking and listening must be emphasized.

Public relations can be easy: be courteous to everyone; golfers, staff administrators and sales reps. Community activities are a means of establishing a solid public relations image.

3. Green Speeds (3). An important concern because of its impact on overwatering, pesticide use, equipment and labor. Fast greens and low-cut fairways perpetuate the problems of maintaining the grass in a constant state of stress. Pressure is exerted from all sides in this question of keeping fast greens. As superintendents, we are not entirely blameless.


4. Overwatering (2). A significant problem that a superintendent may be forced into to preserve the "green" look. The stress of present maintenance standards are a contributing factor to this problem.

Automatic systems left unmonitored overwater; manual systems left in inexperienced hands overwater.

5. Pesticide Use (4). Pesticide misuse is the problem.

Superintendents today are taking a judicious look at their use of pesticides. Using diagnostic tools to identify pests, employing longer application intervals, and carefully selecting the correct pesticide are means superintendents are using to eliminate any misuse of pesticides.

Superintendents understand the complexities of pesticide use and the financial



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and environmental cost associated with any misuse.

6. Continuity of Club Officials (5). An important issue that is unmanageable. The constant changing of club officials creates a climate of uncertainty in the superintendent's mind. Lack of short and long-term goals impede the progress of the golf course maintenance program. At times, new club officials have conflicting management priorities, causing disruptive shifts in maintenance strategies.

"Nobody asked, but..." Five year terms for club officials would anchor a sound maintenance program.

7. Equipment (10). It isn't a compliment to our industry to hear that we have to scrounge for workable equipment. When maintenance goals are established, buy the equipment to support those goals.

Too often we "put the cart before the horse" or, in our case, "play ability before the equipment."

8. Pesticide Storage and Maintenance Buildings (6). A serious problem for the superintendent burdened with inadequate structures to store pesticides and equipment that fail to meet minimum standards.

Pesticide storage and disposal are regulated fiercely at all levels of government. But these new structures are costly to build and maintain, forcing golf courses to delay construction.

9. Amount of Play(8). Secretly, most superintendents would like to have the course all to themselves, with no play. But we know we must share this beautiful creation with the golfers if we are to continue working. But give

us adequate time to insure the golf course is properly maintained.

When cultural practices are missed or delayed, quality is diminished. Blocking sections of time each week or month during the season is critical to survival of the golf course.

10. Tree Management (7). I don't see this as a top ten problem. Cutting down trees is an environmental issue in most jurisdictions.

As in any listing, nominees left off deserve recognition. The problems that didn't make the top ten include: Superintendents unable to read soil tests (it takes a degree in agronomy), poor record keeping (can assistants type), inappropriately-timed maintenance (did you aerify before a member-guest), and taking advice from the wrong people (think about it).

My perspective has changed since I read the article in "Golf Course News."

A LOOK AHEAD

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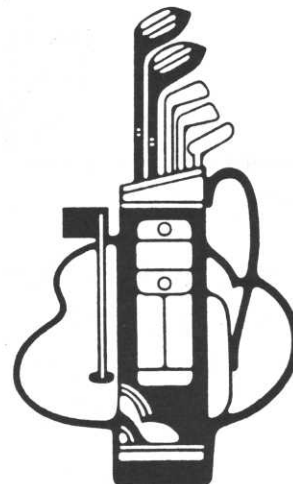
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