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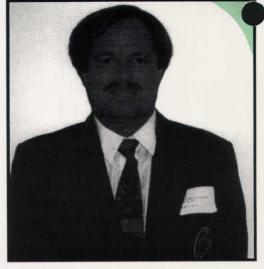
Published monthly by the Golf Course Superintendent's Association of Northern California

### From The President

new year is here. Many of us take a little time to reflect how the past year was or how it went. Was it a good year? Could the year have been better? I'm going to stay away from itemizing resolutions that we should make and simply state that a new year offers a fresh start and the opportunity to improve our way of life and our professional image.

Improving our image through increased public relations means has been discussed regularly at our monthly board meetings. One item of discussion involves our Association logo. There is a trend that is taking place Nationally regarding local superintendents' association logos. Many Affiliated Chapters of the GCSAA are using a version of the GCSAA logo that attaches the local chapter's name to the GCSAA logo. At this time our Board is split between whether or not to make a recommendation to our membership to change our logo to the GCSAA Affiliated Chapter logo. I'm using this month's message to support such a change.

I'm the first to recognize that we have a rich 65 year history. Our present logo serves us well and is part of that history. Twice this past year, splendid displays of our history were placed for us to observe. As I looked at the many photographs on display, I also noticed a picket of a green blazer with the Association logo carefully cut out and placed on a separate easel. The logo of the time was the national logo with "Northern California" embroidered underneath it. If we were to change to the GCSAA Affiliated Chapter logo it would not be the first time our chapter used such a logo. If we were to change to the GCSAA Affiliated Chapter,



**Blake Swint, President** 

our present logo would become part of that rich history.

Our affiliation with the GCSAA has provided us with many benefits. The GCSAA has continued to improve the image of golf course superintendents and the golf industry. TV commercial time is bought by the GCSAA during televised golf tournaments and golf course superintenderare promoted as key players in golf. It is during these commercials that the GCSAA logo is displayed for the golfing public to see. I have yet to see a commercial run with our present logo displayed for those we work for to see. For your consideration I urge you to think about whether we should make such a change.

Happy New Year, Blake

### **Office Notes**

By: Barbara Mikel

Happy New Year! 1998 promises to bring some really significant meetings. Beginning with the Etonics Seminar and the GCSAA Regional Seminar. I know February offers you the opportunity to get lots of education updates at the GCSAA Convention. Take advantage of those you are fortunate to have them available in so short a period of time.

Speaking of education, the University of Riverside has a Certificated Turfgrass Management program offered thru the Extension. If you know of someone who might benefit from this type of program, you can contact them at (909) 787-5804 or e-mail at sciences@ucx.ucr.edu. They have a quarterly course catalogue which you can order at (909) 787-3806.

On another education note, Michigan State University Libraries have the Turfgrass Information Center, Turfgrass Information File database on the Web. The Turfgrass Information Center homepage: http://www.lib.msu.edu/tgif has all the details. If you are "net wise" give it a try.

Well the 1998 membership renewals are winding down. By this time, if you have paid your dues and any other outstanding fee assessments, you should have received your membership card. If you haven't check with your accounting department then call the office and let me know. All unpaid members were mailed statements at the end of December. You have until the end of January to pay your dues and all other outstanding fees to renew. Come February 1, 1998 you will be removed from the active member list and must reapply for membership.

## **Quick Quote**

"Be aware that a halo only has to fall a few inches to become a noose"

- Dan McKinnon -

#### Did You Know?

While science and technology are striving to remove algae from ponds, some superintendents are accomplishing the task with a simple bale of barley straw. Two bales, per acre foot of water is the recommended rate. The bales should be wrapped in chicken wire and anchored with a cement block. Dr. Eric Nelson of Cornel University theorized that the method works because nitrogen in the water is tied up during decomposition. Since nitrogen in the water promotes algal blooms, they stop.

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## A Review of 1997

By Patrick J. Gross, Agronomist, USGA Green Section

ecember 1997. As we near the end of 1997, it is good to look back and review the successes we've had and the challenges that lie ahead. The following observations and comments are based on our travels in the Southwestern United States during the past year.

Less disease/more insects - In general, fewer disease problems were observed on putting greens throughout the region. I think this is due to three factors - (1) good management, (2) the availability of new pest control products, and (3) relatively mild temperatures during the summer. While most areas had few problems, diseases were reported in unusual locations, for example crown anthracnose in Tahoe; foliar anthracnose in Park City, Utah; pythium in Salt Lake City, Utah' and summer patch in Denver. Cut worm and white grub activity appeared to be greater throughout the entire region this year compared to previous season. There is no apparent explanation for this occurrence maybe it was the mild summer weather? Fairway topdressing - Many courses began a fairway topdressing program this year in an effort to compensate for poor soil conditions and to improve surface firmness during the wet winter season. Sand topdressing on fairways has been used for many years on courses in the Pacific Northwest with great success. New equipment and contracting services made this program less disruptive and easier to accomplish. Please keep in mind that the program must be continued for approximately five to seven years to accumulate a four-inch layer of sand topdressing on the

surface and receive the full benefit of the sand applications.

Another bad year for overseeding transition - Several courses in Phoenix as well as Palm Springs and Las Vegas experienced poor transition from over seeded perennial ryegrass to bermudagrass. This is not unusual, and it seems that bad transition occurs five out of every seven years. What are some of the possible reasons? It seems that many of the new perennial ryegrasses are more persistent and tolerant of high temperatures. Mild weather during the spring and early summer may have favored the growth of perennial ryegrass. Since many of the resort courses not cater to a year-round clientele, superintendents are not allowed to implement aggressive maintenance strategies to encourage rapid transition. Superintendents may be doing it to themselves too, with ever increasing seeding rates on the fairways. For courses that overseed, it is important to remember that transition injury is inevitable - in most cases, you can't have your cake and eat it too.

Creeping bentgrass variety trials - A cooperative project is underway sponsored by GCSAA, NTEP and the USGA to construct sixteen greens across the United States according to USGA specifications and evaluate twenty different creeping bentgrass cultivars under actual golf course playing conditions. We are fortunate to have two of the sites in the Southwestern United States - Crystal Springs Golf Course, near San Francisco, and the SCGA Members Course in Rancho Murrieta, California. Both of the greens are constructed and planted,

and we are looking forward to good data from both of these projects in the near

New bermudagrasses for putting greens -

There are some excellent new bermudagrass cultivars for use on putting greens that have been performing well in the warmer portions of the region. Many courses with Tifgreen bermudagrass are considering changing the greens to Tifdwarf or one of the newer varieties, either Champion or Tifeagle (TW-72). All the new bermudagrasses exhibit finer texture, better uniformity, tolerance to low mowing, and provide faster ball roll.

Gypsum injection - It seems many courses have installed gypsum injection systems whether they need them or not. If gypsum applications are a necessary part of your maintenance routine to correct a sodium problem, then the gypsum injector is an excellent tool to apply the material. Conversely, if your water does not contain enough salt (ECw<0.1) then gypsum injection will improve water penetration into the soil. Before purchasing or installing a gypsum injector, it is important to have an independent laboratory analysis of your soil and irrigation water to see if the gypsum injector is appropriate for your situation Organic fertilizers - Many superintendents are using various brands of organic fertilizers for putting green maintenance. Organic fertilizers are a great source of nutrients when soil temperatures are warm enough to convert the nitrogen into the nitrate form that is available to plants. While some manufacturers claim that their organic Continued on Page 7



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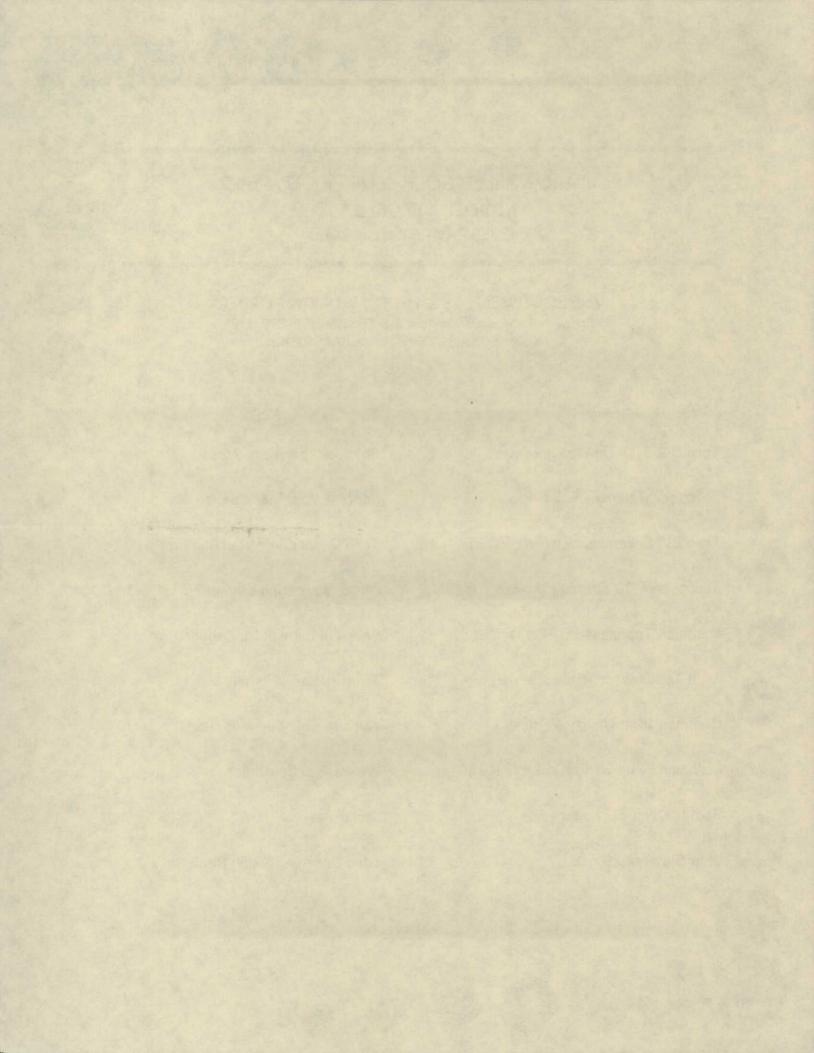
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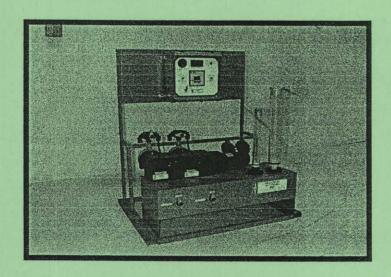
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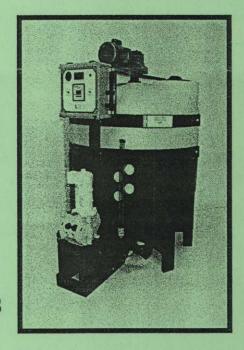
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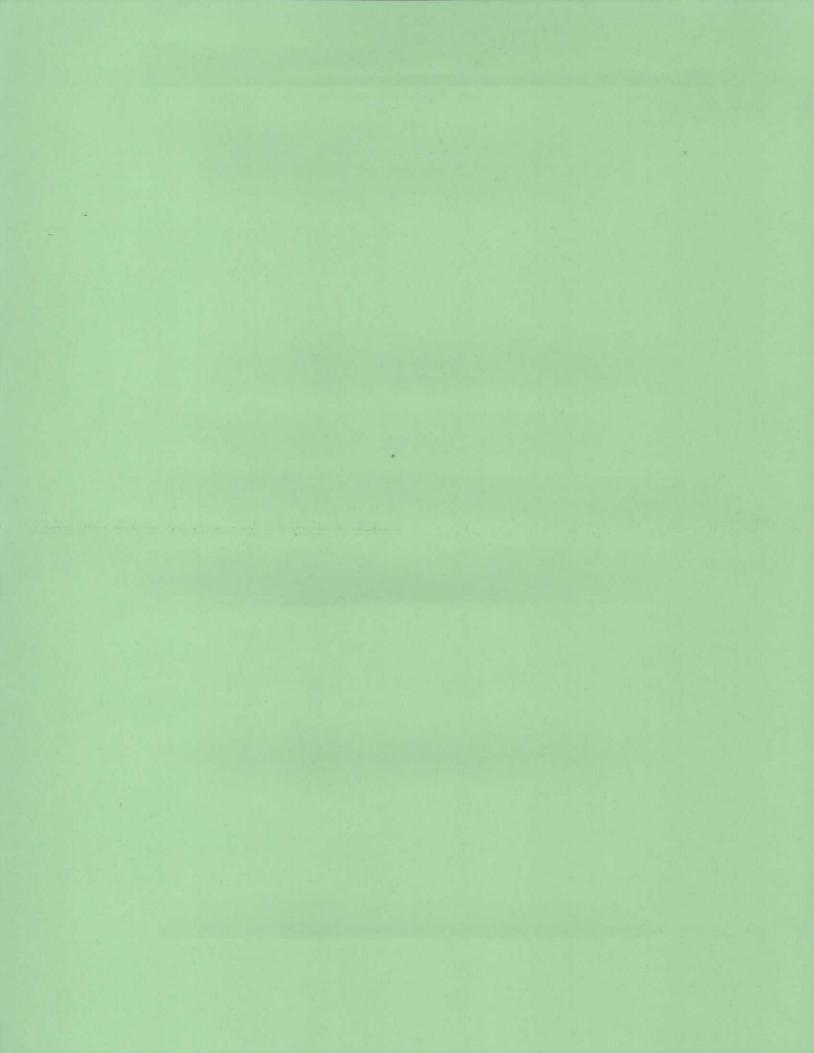
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# GCSAA Water Study Reflects **Positively On Golf Courses**

A GCSAA-funded water quality study confirmed the results of previous research that pesticide runoff and leaching to ground water from golf courses is minimal, and when detected, is at levels that are usually well below health advisory standards.

Researchers Stuart Cohen, Ph.D., Amelia Svricek, Tom Durborow and N. LaJan Barnes analyzed data from 36 golf courses, all in the United States with the exception of one on Prince Edward Island, Canada. The group analyzed water quality monitoring data for the pesticides, metabolites, solvents and nitrate/nitrogen used on courses. Summaries of data were also obtained from Guam and Japan, but were treated separately. The results were published in the November issue of GCSAA's monthly magazine Golf Course Management.

The study determined that just nine of 12, 101 analyses for pesticides in ground water samples were in excess of drinking water health advisory levels. Only eight of 2,731 analyses for pesticides in surface water samples exceeded their respective drinking water limits, and 25 exceeded guidelines for aquatic organisms. In the surface water samples, there were no readings of nitrate/nitrogen levels above the federal drinking water standard, while just 31 of 849 groundwater samples exceeded the standards. The results from Guam and Japan were similar.

GCSAA Director of Research Jeff Nus, Ph.D., said the study was the first attempt at a comprehensive examination of water quality on golf courses. Past research, with similar results, was limited to just one geographic region. Still, Nus said this most recent study was not meant to be national estimates for golf course impacts on water quality.

Based upon previous scientific research funded by the United States Golf Association, GCSAA had contended that properly managed golf courses do not pose a discernible health risk, and in many cases improve the quality of water," Nus said. "This latest study is important because the data analyzed from surface and ground water from golf courses support the results of the previous USGA-funded studies under carefully controlled laboratory condition."

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# **Seeing Is Believing**

By Bob Costa, CGCS

ne would be hard pressed to argue, that the one factor which has had more influence on the changing face of professional sports is television. The influx of television revenue in the last ten years has resulted in the pay out of multimillion dollar player contracts, which indirectly have led to new stadiums, luxury boxes, rising ticket prices, psl's, franchise movement, ownership changes and corporate involvement. Whether this has been good or bad for sports is a matter of opinion.

The sport of golf has not escaped TV's influence either. Skyrocketing television revenues have resulted in record purses and yearly money winners that now top the two million dollar mark. The increased public exposure has been a boon to the industry, Indirectly, every facet of the golf business has benefitted.

Surprisingly, one of the areas that has been most heavily influenced by televised golf is the golf course maintenance profession. How can this be you might ask? What relationship could television and golf course maintenance possibly share? The answer is quite simple, and can be summarized in two words, perception and expectations.

Let's face it. Nothing has a more powerful influence on an individual's attitude, perception and opinion than the visual media. Golfers are certainly no exception. What they see each weekend when they view professional golf ultimately forms their perception and expectations for course conditioning.

Just what exactly do they see each weekend? Most often they see a "perfect

golf course". A course that is lush and green, meticulously manicured, with lakes that are pristine and blue, lots of stripes, white sand, fast greens, beautiful and challenging in its design. What they don't see are; the year, or sometimes longer, required to prepare a course to those standards, the increased maintenance and capital budgets to support that level of conditioning, maintenance staffs that swell to 30 or more, and the use of specialized equipment for course preparation.

What they also don't see, after the dust has settled and the last of the TV trucks has pulled away, is that within several weeks those tournament courses that appeared so perfect over the weekend, begin to take on a more normal look. What they can't see are superintendents, maintenance workers and course officials who have seen more of their golf course than their families for the last several weeks.

That courses can be maintained at such a level of conditioning and playability is remarkable and a tribute to those superintendents and their staffs who make it happen week in and week out. We have many of those talented individuals right here in Northern California. As I stated previously, the TV exposure is good for the game, and the profession of golf course management has benefitted immensely. A closer look however, suggests that not all of this exposure has been beneficial. In part, the reason golf courses are so openly challenged by the environmental community is a result of what they see each week, when another image of a pristine golf course flashes across their TV screen. Only because of a diligent educational campaign have their negative attitudes and perceptions of golf courses begun to change.

Additionally, due to the perception and expectations for course maintenance televised golf creates in the minds of golfers, golf course operators find themselves forced to continually find ways to increase the level of conditioning and maintenance. By and large golfers expect perfection and in many cases demand it. Those increased expectations aren't without consequence. Public facilities are being constructed and maintained to standards, that were in the past, reserved for private or resort courses. Green fee's have escalated to help offset construction and maintenance costs. Maintenance budgets are steadily on the rise as superintendents attempt to keep pace with the new standards for acceptable maintenance. Golf course architecture has reached new levels, with a trend towards more elaborate design, including extensive bunkering, water features and mounds, all of which require more intense management. Expectations for greens conditioning, and turf quality in fairways and roughs border on unrealistic, yet superintendents are asked to deliver these conditions year around.

Fortunately, as a result of technological advancements, improved products and services and better educated and skilled superintendents most golf maintenance operations have been able to keep pace with golfers expectations for playing quality. The reality is, however, that the face of the American game, has and will continue to change, moving further and further from its Scottish roots where brown is acceptable and you simply play it as it lies.

If you need a point of reference as to where course maintenance has come, an episode of Shell's Wonderful World of Golf usually works for me.





# Boardroom Briefs

- Barbara Mikel Reports that member response to the salary survey has been almost 100%. The results will be tabulated after the first of the year and published shortly thereafter.
- GCSANC President, Blake Swint introduced for consideration the adoption of the GCSAA affiliate logo to replace the current GCSANC logo. Support by the board was divided. After a brief discussion, a decision was reached to survey the membership and introduce the topic at the general meeting in January. Based upon membership feedback, the logo change may be placed on the April Ballot.
- George Steffes, the CGCSA lobbyist has been designated as a Special Advisor to the Board. In this capacity Mr. Steffes will receive all GCSANC mailings, including the monthly board packets.
- ♦ Bob Costa, CGCS supplied the board with a contract proposal from Greg Crawford, a Media Relations Consultant. Costa, who has been a strong proponent of hiring a Media Director noted that our current budget does not include funds for public relations. "In essence we have done nothing to promote superintendents in Northern California," Costa told the board. The board continues to support the idea in concept and asked the budget committee to determine if funds can be made available to support such a program.
- Blake Swint noted that the Annual Meeting is scheduled for Castlewood Country Club on April 6, 1998
- Bob Costa, CGCS, reported that arrangements for the Etonic/ GCSAA sponsored seminar on January 15th have been finalized. The four hour seminar entitled, "Growing Your People Skills," will be held from 12:00 noon to 4:00 p.m. at Silvercreek Valley Country Club. "The cost of the seminar is very reasonable. At \$30.00 it's quite a value," Costa told board members.
- The scholarship committee will begin screening applicants on December 19th, Chairman Wayne Lindelof, CGCS, reported. The committee includes, Tony Steers, Jeff Jones and Mike Ravel.

- ◆ Dr. Ali Harivandi provided the board with a research summary. Amongst the projects Dr. Harivandi is currently involved in are: a bentgrass varietal study at Crystal Springs Golf Course, and a hard fescue sod establishment study. Pending research activities include, a fine fescue trial, a perennial ryegrass trial and a perennial ryegrass/crabgrass competitiveness study.
- ♦ The budget committee, comprised of Dave Davies, CGCS, Gary Carls, CGCS, Bob Costa, CGCS and Barbara Mikel reported that after meeting for 2.5 hours, they had made significant progress on the 1998 fiscal budget. A second meeting was scheduled prior to the Christmas Party in early December.
- ♦ Plans continue to restructure the advertising program in the newsletter. Barbara Mikel and Bob Costa, CGCS, are currently working on a plan to increase advertising revenues in the hopes of making the newsletter more profitable. "The newsletter has operated at a significant loss for the last several years," cited Costa. "Our goal at some point would be to break even."
- State Representative Dave Davies, CGCS, requested that the board consider making a contribution to CGCSA sponsored poa annua research project being initiated in Southern California. The board approved an annual \$1,000 contribution for three years.

#### A Review of 1997 (Cont'd)

fertilizers increase microbial activity, turf scientists are still unclear about what an ideal microbial population is in the soil, and exactly what benefit this may have for the turf. While organic fertilizers are typically more expensive, they are generally a safe, non-burning source of nutrients for the turf. Just be sure you know why and when you are using these products and incorporate them as part of a well-rounded fertility program that is verified by annual soil testing.

Those are just some of the thoughts and observations from around the Southwest in 1997. Mike and I wish all of you a very Merry Christmas and best wishes for a successful and productive 1998!

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