

Briefs



GOLF COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOULDER, Colo. — The Business Research Division at the University of Colorado is compiling a "Bibliography of Golf Studies."

Its purpose is to provide a ready source of research references on the business aspects to golf.

It would identify golf information sources by describing studies available on the industry, operations, characteristics of golfers, economic impact of golf, financial performances of golf courses, and the future of the industry and associations.

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GOOD NEWS FOR PINE TREES

LONGWOOD, Fla. — Dr. Roger Webb believes the pine tree decline in Florida soon may be reversed. The tree pathologist spoke at the recent meeting of the Florida Turf Grass Association at Interlachen Country Club.

Dr. Webb's research indicates that the decline is due to a reduction in soil acidity resulting from the use of groundwater high in calcium and magnesium.

His program calls for direct injection of fungicides and micronutrients into the vascular system of the affected tree. The process is expensive, but has shown great promise, he said.

GROUNDS TRAINING AVAILABLE

A training manual, videotape and employee handbook comprise the new right-to-know training program that is now available from the Professional Grounds Management Society.

Occupational Safety and Health Association laws mandate that employers compile and maintain information concerning chemicals and hazardous materials in the workplace and to train employees accordingly.

PGMS's training program, available to members and non-members, can be bought in various packages costing from \$10 to \$295.

JOEL JACKSON AT DISNEY WORLD

Joel Jackson has accepted a position with Walt Disney World in Lake Buena Vista. Jackson will supervise the grow-in of the two new Disney courses.

Bobby Perez has been promoted to golf course superintendent at Isleworth Country Club in Windermere.

GOVERNOR'S LAND NABS HILTON

WILLIAMSBURG, Va. — John David Hilton has been named golf course superintendent for The Governor's Land at Two Rivers.

Hilton will oversee construction and opening of the 18-hole golf course designed by architect Tom Fazio.

Hilton previously was course superintendent at the Port America Golf & Country Club in Fort Washington, Md. He also was superintendent at Prestonwood Country Club in Cary, N.C.; Tuckahoe Creek Course at Country Club of Virginia in Richmond; Beau Rivage Golf Course and Cape Fear Country Club, both of Wilmington, N.C., and Cobb's Glenn Golf Course in Anderson, S.C.

Oil leak detector: From Napa to world

By Mark Leslie

Don Martinez imagined his homemade invention might see the light of day outside Silverado Country Club in Napa, Calif., where he was mechanic and assistant superintendent. But did he believe it would be standard equipment on machines from the United States to Europe?

Now, thanks to Bob Holland of B.H. Sales in Santa Rosa, Calif., Martinez' hydraulic oil-leak detection device is part of all new Toro Co. 3100 Series triplex mowers, and it is available to be adapted to mowers already in the field.

The result could save golf course crews from "disasters," superintendents say.

Frank Albino, superintendent at Lafayette Country Club in Jamesville, N.Y., said if the unit stops one leak it will pay for itself. He wishes he had had it on one of his triplex mowers last fall when a hose sprung a leak and, by the time the operator noticed it, 2,000 square feet of bentgrass was destroyed on one green.

"It can be a big disaster," said Albino, who resodded the green. "You put a green out of commission, have to repair it and get it back to the shape it was in. It can take a long time."

"I've seen entire fairways striped up and down with oil," he said. "What you would do in that case depends on what type of fairway you have. Some guys might resod. Others might go in with a total renovation."

"There are all types of products out to minimize the damage somewhat. But once that hot oil hits the grass there's not much you can do."

Sohan Singh, superintendent at Diablo Valley Country Club in San Ramon, Calif., said the same day he installed the Sentinel on a mower he became thankful. The mower

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'Oldie-but-goodie' owner rewarded with new Truckster

LAS VEGAS, Nev. — Ernest White of Wading River Golf Course in Norton, Mass., won the Cushman Oldest-Turf Truckster contest.

He received a new Cushman turf-truckster, \$500, an Olympus 330 Superzoom Camera and a return trip to Las Vegas at the recent International Golf Course Conference and Show.

White has cared lovingly for that prized vehicle since he first walked on the newly seeded Wading River course in 1966 as the green-grass superintendent. The truckster was among used machinery bought and dumped on the fourth green.

The truckster had been badly abused in the two years since it had come off the assembly line. White adjusted the timing, changed the oil and filters, replaced a couple of bushings and put in a new pressure plate for the clutch.

The result was a machine not fancy-looking but one that kept running, and running, and running.

Karan Laushway, Wading River manager and daughter of owner Jimmy, said: "It's a good thing Ernest loves to tinker. My dad won't buy anything new. All Ernest ever asks for is parts."



Jim Laushway sits in for Wading River GC colleague Ernest White, flanked by Cushman President Stuart Rafos, right, and Cushman Director of Marketing Dan Hedglin.

Japan or U.S., communications the key

By Peter Blais

Just as in the United States, communication is the biggest problem facing a superintendent working in Japan, according to an American-born superintendent plying his trade in the Far East.

Anytime a superintendent gives instruction to a staff member, even if the two speak the same language, those instructions can be interpreted differently than the superintendent intended, said John Baranski. Baranski is head superintendent at Horai Country Club in Tochigi-Ken, Japan, and spoke at February's GCSAA International Golf Course Conference and Show in Las Vegas.

The communication problem is compounded in Baranski's case since his assistant, who translates his instructions to the Japanese maintenance crew, only understands about 10 percent of what his boss says.

"To compensate for the language gap, I do more hands-on work myself," said Baranski. "I take a worker by the hand and show him what I want done. Most importantly, once I give instruction, I follow through to see that it is done correctly."

More and more U.S. superintendents are being attracted abroad by the large salaries and challenges available overseas. Those

interested in working in the Far East, Europe or South America should contact a golf course architectural firm involved in those areas, Baranski advised.

"There are at least a half-dozen architectural firms doing business in Japan, for instance," he said. "Many times the Japanese won't even look at you unless you go that route."

Japanese golfers are somewhat different than their U.S. counterparts, Baranski said. First, Japanese golfers rarely live near where they play. That's because golf courses in the land-short nation tend to be built on acreage unsuitable for commercial or agricultural use. That leaves marginal, mountainous land far from metropolitan areas. The nearest member of Baranski's club lives 100 miles away.

Most courses are private. However, members play just 20 to 25 percent of the rounds. Guests provide the bulk of a club's business.

A hotel-like reception area is often located just inside the clubhouse door. Guests receive a numbered locker key and charge everything to that number.

"They pay at the end of the day," Baranski said. "That's a lot different than in the United States where you pay up front."

Pro shops are smaller than in the United States. They carry little more than balls and

beverages because golf courses don't believe they can compete with retail outlets for equipment sales, Baranski said.

Golfers generally walk and use caddies. Tee times are reserved three months in advance and golfers play regardless of weather.

"When you have to make a tee time that far in advance, the last thing you worry about is the weather," Baranski said. "We had a typhoon drop 12 inches of rain on the course and we never closed."

Golf is an all-day event in Japan. Golfers play nine holes, take 40 to 60 minutes for lunch, then finish their round.

"That allows them to send players off the front and back nines. If play behind them is slow, the first golfers off the tee can take an hour for lunch. If it's fast they get 40 minutes and the course can accommodate more players," the transplanted American said.

When they finish, golfers generally take a shower followed by a leisurely hot bath and a couple of beers before making the 2-1/2- to three-hour drive back home.

Many courses, particularly the older ones, have two greens per hole. One is planted in zoysia grass for summer play. The other is bentgrass for winter months. Instead of

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California mechanic's oil leak invention hits it big

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sprung three hose leaks that day but the Sentinal saved the day.

The detection device sounds an alarm that warns the operator after only three to five ounces of oil spill so he can shut down the machine immediately and get it off the green.

"With that kind of (hydraulic) pressure you can lose all the oil within two to three minutes," Singh said. "I've been very impressed with it. I just bought a mower six months ago and am going to put one (Sentinal) on it."

Singh explained that his crews oftentimes are mowing before day-break when it's difficult to see. "Even in daytime often you can't see a leak, especially if it's a minor one," he said.

Lee Scriber, assistant superintendent at Lafayette Country Club, said leaks can easily be mistaken for the mowers that are rippling or not cutting correctly.

Holland added that early-morning mowing is often done in fog and with dew on the grass.

"Once I saw a course lose 17

greens," he said.

Singh said: "In the 20 years I've been here we've probably had a dozen leaks on greens. A couple of times we had to sod quite a few places... Not only is it expensive, but the resodded greens are uneven."

"We've tried everything possible — taken charcoal, washed soap in, used foam, swept it... there's no way to get it out," he said.

Holland said crews have followed leaks by verticutting the green and then overseeding. "That's not costly

but its not eye-appealing either," he said.

Holland four years ago arranged with Martinez to market the invention. After making some modifications to the unit over the next three years, Holland struck a deal with Toro giving the company exclusive rights to The Greens Sentinal in the new product turf market. Holland retains rights to the "after market," those mowers already in the field.

Toro has 45 distributors in the United States, and officials will

talk with European distributors about the Sentinal in April, he said.

Martinez' invention uses a two-chamber tank, whose center chamber has a float in it that allows for the pitch and roll of greens. It indicates when the oil pump has an air leak on the suction side.

It bolts onto the hydraulic oil tank or fender and can be modified for use on machines other than Toro's.

Holland also expects to tap the market of fishing fleets, road sweepers and the like.

Schmidt

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green alone."

Schmidt said building Port Ludlow was the ultimate golf course construction job. During the final seeding, they prayed that the fairways and greens would not settle. That would mean destruction of tile and irrigation lines. In two years of moving material, he estimates two million yards of fill were used. Now, almost 20 years later, he says two greens and a fairway are settling.

He stayed at Ludlow as superintendent and director of golf and recreation. The job was expanded to director of golf for Village Resorts' operations in Washington, Utah, Arizona and California. He retains that title as well as that of operations manager at Sun Mountain. He travels to the other courses to oversee the pro shop budgets, sales and policies as well as landscaping and maintenance.

At Sun Mountain, he is responsible for job training, budgets, employee relations, and, he stresses, instilling Village Resorts' "core values": quality, respect and integrity.

"Management should treat employees as it expects the employees to treat the guests," he said.

He looked out from the closed lounge on a deck cantilevered over the valley. Below were hundreds of acres of valley floor, the pristine Methow River ribboning its way across them. Looking at the snow-covered vista, fairly certain that some of it would contain a golf course, Schmidt pondered what he envisioned.

"If," he grinned, "we build a course here, I want it to be a world-class operation — one where word of mouth will draw golfers from all over. Look at this place. It has scenery, serenity. No airplanes, no traffic noise. I want this course to look as though nature, not a construction company, built it. Golf in the Methow on a world-class course would be simply awesome!"

For a PGA pro, GCSAA superintendent, three times Turfgrass Association president and regional GCSAA board member, the challenge seems appropriate.

He's constrained from divulging any information, but in his eyes you could see him thinking, "Let's do it."

Bob Spiwak is a freelance writer based in Winthrop, Wash.



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