

# Golf Course News expands editorial staff

This column will be the last for awhile so that Editor Hal Phillips can have an opportunity to offer his thoughts on the industry to you each month.

Hal joined our editorial department recently. You have become familiar with Managing Editor Mark Leslie and Associate Editor Peter Blais, and they will continue to inform you with news of the industry.

The continued growth of *Golf Course News* has required our adding to the editorial staff. A good advertising client responded to this news with, "You can't add to your

staff. This is the '90s." With all the cutbacks, we're quite fortunate to be in a position to add staff. The beneficiary will be our

readers as we will strive to report more news and go that extra mile to get accurate information on industry trends.

Hal's baptism by fire was spending



Charles von Brecht  
publisher

the weekend in New Orleans at the recent GCSAA show. He had an opportunity to hear the positive comments from readers and advertising clients, further assuring him that he made the right decision.

Hal's background includes writing and editing for various daily newspapers. His golf background includes collegiate golf, with a year on the University of London team, which played a few rounds on world-famous British and Scottish courses. He will be a valuable asset to the growing *Golf Course News* team.

I recently had the opportunity to

walk the totally reconstructed Stouffer Vinor Resort course (formerly Sunset Country Club) with architect Ron Garl. Although not yet planted, the course has the potential to be among the top resort courses in Florida. Opening day is planned in August.

Again, I want to thank all our readers who have read and responded to this column over the past three years. I may, from time to time, get in my nickel's worth. In the meantime, enjoy reading *Golf Course News* and look for Hal Phillips' column here next month.

## EDITOR'S COMMENTARY

# Believe it or not, one is often more than enough

*"I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something. And because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do the something that I can do."*

— Edward Everett Hale

By Mark Leslie

There are several billion humans on Earth and people tend to look at the numbers in their country, their state, or even their town and feel that whatever they do is without effect. Useless. A waste of time and effort. Forget even trying!

Don't be deceived. It just isn't so. There are countless instances where one vote made an extraordinary difference — even turned the tide of history.

In 1645 one vote gave Oliver Cromwell control of England.

In 1649 one vote caused Charles I of England to be executed.

In 1776 one vote gave America the English language instead of German.

In 1836 one vote elected Marcus Morton governor of Massachusetts.

In 1845 one vote brought Texas into the Union.

In 1868 one vote saved President

Andrew Johnson from impeachment.

In 1875 one vote changed France from a monarchy to a republic.

In 1876 one vote gave Rutherford B. Hayes the presidency.

In 1923 one vote gave Adolf Hitler control of the Nazi Party.

In 1941 one vote saved the Selective Service System just 12 weeks before Pearl Harbor.

Behind each of those "one votes" was one person. What if that person had decided to stay home on the day of decision because "what's-one-lously-vote-anyhow?"

Besides votes, what about actions? What if Leonardo da Vinci had decided at a young age that his presence in the world was insignificant? In the world of art who can measure the significance of a de Vinci, a Michelangelo, a Disney? In the world of the military who can measure the importance of a Lee, a



Mark Leslie  
managing editor

Grant MacArthur, an Eisenhower? And what about the world of golf?

Just looking back on the very recent past proves that researchers, teachers, course architects, even media types have made a lasting difference in the golf industry.

After hearing that Eliot Roberts is retiring from The Lawn Institute, it occurred to me how important that one person can be. Roberts led major university agronomy programs in the country before taking over The Lawn Institute 10 years ago to pull together research and development that is being done worldwide. What if he had decided that was too big a chore?

Other examples? Check the recently "retired" ranks Roberts is joining. From universities there are Joseph Troll from the University of Massachusetts, Richard Skogley of the University of Rhode Island, Joe Duich and Don Waddington from Penn State, Henry Indyk from Rutgers, Bob Kneebone from the University of Arizona, Roy Goss from Washington State University, Ken Payne from Michigan State University, Arden Baltensberger

and Glen Burton from New Mexico State.

Then, there is Jack Murray, who has helped in major advances in sod production and sports turf research during his former days at the USDA in Beltsville, Md., and today continues his research. And in the business world, Jim Watson at Toro and Dr. Bob Miller of ChemLawn.

Sherwood Moore, Jim Brandt and other recently retired superintendents have had a profound impact on golf.

Where would the golf industry be without these people — individually or collectively?

So, I say to the younger generation: Do not count yourself short. Do not undersell the contributions you can make to the industry, or society in general.

You are the only biological mother or father your children will ever have. You are a deacon of that church, a contributor to that charity, a member of the staff of that organization.

Ours is a history of ones. And we are in a small enough industry that apathy could absolutely kill it.

## GUEST COMMENTARY

# Add one more acronym to list — for the gophers

By Bob Spiwak

Amidst the alphabet soup of golf organizations, societies, tours, writers and governing bodies, there is one of whose existence you are probably unaware. It's the American society of golf course gophers. a.s.g.c.g. If you are wondering about the lower case, the gophers feel it distinguishes them from humans and their arrogance.

We were able to obtain an exclusive interview with Media Rep gopher at the society's headquarters in a deep hole under a box elder tree at the Cold Sore Country Club in Cut Bank, Montana. (Headquarters were once at Far Hills, N.J., but the Garden State atmosphere drove the society to cleaner air.) Mr. Gopher allowed us to break the story because at our own

golf course we live in peaceful co-existence with the furry creatures; our philosophy being that anyone stupid

enough to pay good money to aggravate him or herself playing golf deserves an occasional mound or hole on the putting surface.

According to greg, gophers were once, as were the greenskeepers, rather independent agents, each keeping to his own turf and out of touch with his counterparts elsewhere. With the advent of GCSAA, the gophers decided that they, also,



Bob Spiwak

needed to share information.

What kind of information? Gopher ticked off a list on his paws: seminars on better soil penetration, efficient root-pruning, dealing with pesticides, trap avoidance, subterranean stimp metering (of water runoff) and, surprisingly, perpetuation and proliferation of poa annua.

I asked what poa had to do with gophers, aside from a possible meal. Greg smiled. "Hell, we wouldn't eat that stuff. By keeping the supers busy fighting it, we lessen their efforts combatting us." He tilted his whiskers in an attitude of smug satisfaction. "Divide and conquer, you know?" he smirked.

Since the gophers have organized, he continued, they were able to effect mass purchasing practices

and get the poa at wholesale in large quantities.

Asked how the creatures were so adept at springing traps, he said that it was not always thus. Again, through organization, members were educated in the techniques of trap-tripping. The latest method was borrowed, he said, from the Teen Aged Mutant Ninja Turtles. "A little armor here, a sword for trigger tripping, and voila!, no problema. Well, we do get our share of lacerations and amputations, but each golf course has an infirmary, and we have trained E.M.T. personnel. While he acknowledged that the infirmaries were usually at the same site on every golf course, he would not divulge the location.

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## Media, Feldman should get the story straight on pesticide use, versus salt and aspirin

To the editor:

In response to the article by Peter Blais in the March issue of *Golf Course News*, which states that Jay Feldman feels golf courses use too much pesticide as compared to agricultural users.

Did Mr. Feldman compare the land used for agriculture to that used for golf courses? I believe more land is used for agriculture than for golf courses in this country.

Mr. Feldman said golf courses use 18 pounds per acre as compared to 2.3 pounds for soybean. What about corn, wheat, vegetable crops, and let us not forget the fruit industry that uses its share of pesticides.

But, of course, no one wants to say anything about John Doe who puts pesticides on his lawn without

reading the label or having a license to do so.

Secondly, the sarcastic remark made by Mr. Stossel about "left to our own devices, superintendents would poison our customers and kill the town" is just another report of someone jumping on the bandwagon with sensationalistic reporting.

Mr. Stossel fails to report to the public some facts about Lt. Prior as stated in *The Florida Green*, 1987 issue, such as, "Lt. Prior's involvement in top-secret biological warfare and the possibilities of its contribution to his death."

(I have read that Lt. Prior died of a rare skin disease rather than chemical poisoning. However, I can not quote where I read that.)

Also, why did the Navy conduct a closed-door autopsy and investi-

gation into his death? "No Daconil 2787 was found in any of Lt. Prior's tissue or body fluid — just on his shoes, clubs and golf balls."

Mr. Stossel and Mr. Feldman fail to recognize that golf course superintendents and crews spend two to three times as many hours on the golf course as do golfers.

We certainly do not want to poison ourselves or anyone else. Superintendents and their spray technicians are licensed with their respective states before they can dispense a pesticide.

A few more facts as stated in *The Florida Green*, spring 1987, pages 51-52:

- Daconil 2787, also called Bravo, is used on nearly all vegetables and fruits.

- Considerably more people suffer from allergies to seafood, milk, pollen and grass itself, than they do to Daconil 2787 on golf balls.

- In laboratory tests, it takes three times as much Daconil 2787 than table salt to kill test animals and 13 times more than aspirin.

- One alleged death due to Daconil 2787 is negligible compared to golf course deaths that occur due to insect attacks, lightning, heat stroke, heart attacks, and even golfers being struck by balls.

It seems that the news media is trying to compare golf courses to hazardous waste dumps without foundation!

Dennis C. Cassidy  
Superintendent  
White River Golf Course  
Rochester, Vt.

*Editor's note: In fairness to John Stossel of ABC Television, tongue was firmly planted in cheek when he said the general concern surrounding golf courses and pesticides seems to boil down to whether "left to your own devices, you (superintendents) would poison your customers and kill the town."*

### Letters...

Letters to the editor are welcome. Address them to: Letters, *Golf Course News*, P.O. Box 997, Yarmouth, ME 04096



"THE FLAGS WERE THE ONLY CONCESSION WE HAD TO MAKE TO OBTAIN OUR FINANCING."

## Add an acronym for gopher society

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What about bombs and smoke devices? "Those," he grinned, "are really a gas. It's a kick to watch a grown man on his hands and knees lighting a fat stick, jam it into a hole and then madly cover the hole with soil. Then they sniff—without fail, they sniff the air." He went on to explain that throughout the labyrinth of gopher colonies are circulating fans. "When smoke comes, we turn on the fans and direct it into the club bar through the plumbing. There's so much cigar smoke they never know the difference." He grinned a toothy grin.

We got around to the big question. Why? Why do gophers adamantly choose golf courses on which to ply their trade. Greg was

thoughtful for a moment, then said, "I guess it has to be the scenery. Golf courses are such beautiful places and the superintendents do such a fine job keeping them that way."

I queried with, "Well, if they make life so good for you, don't you feel any guilt about making life miserable for them?"

"Not really," he answered. "We provide employment for many people." He looked embarrassed, then added, "Ok. We could go easy on the supers, but Man, those Greens committees. If you could be in our paws, listening to those guys telling the supers how to maintain a course, complaining about the greens and frequently threatening the greenskeepers' jobs, you'd want to

retaliate."

Failing to find any logic in his argument, I changed the subject. "I guess there have been gophers as long as there have been golfers."

"Longer," he said. "If you consult your Bible, you'll find that God commanded Noah to build his ark of gopherwood."

I saw our time was about up. As Greg shrugged into his tiny parka, I asked the final question.

"Why not enjoy the golf course, but do your digging someplace adjacent to it? I mean, you continually face danger, frustration, humiliation and get bad-tempered. Why do you stay on the golf course?"

He shrugged his furry shoulders. "Why do you play golf?" he countered.



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