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Ryegrass Update
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INSIDE

Photo by Pat O'Connor, Colorado DOW

MAKE WAY FOR GOSLINGS

Colorado Division of Wildlife workers round up geese on a golf course to transport out of state. See story on page 13.

GCSAA to conduct exclusive research

Withdraws funding slated for USGA

By MARK LESLIE

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America has withdrawn financial support from United States Golf Association research program to launch research projects of its own.

The move was met with awe by some in the industry, but drew support from the USGA itself.

Jim Snow, national director of the USGA Green Section, said: "The GCSAA couldn't do its research without withdrawing funding from our program. They didn't pull out leaving us in the lurch... It wasn't a total surprise to me. They've expressed interest in doing some of these things for some time."

Saying that "in the end it won't affect what we do," Snow added: "In reality, more work will get done. I'm anxious to see the results of their work. We need all the information we can get."

USGA President Stuart Bloch said that although he did not like losing the funding, "I think it will work out

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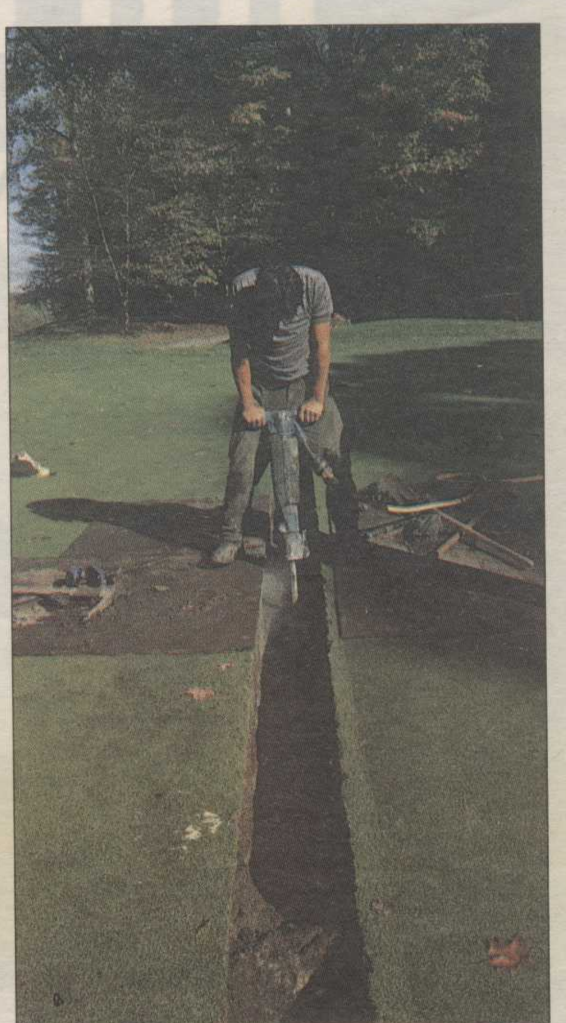

THE HEAVY-HANDED APPROACH?

A maintenance crewman at Burning Tree Country Club in Greenwich, Conn., takes a jackhammer to the 15th green. Why? Turn to page 54 for answers in this month's edition of On the Green.

Environmental liability at issue on finance front

By PETER BLAIS

Fleet Financial Group Inc. recently became the first major bank in the country to require nearly **all** major commercial real estate lenders to obtain environmental liability insurance before getting a loan, a move likely to be followed by other financial institutions that could add thousands of dollars to the cost of a golf course development.

The Providence, R.I.-based firm instituted the new policy for any loan of $1 million or more to protect the bank from having to clean up pollution on foreclosed properties.

The bank estimates a standard, $2 million policy will cost $10,000 to $15,000 with a $10,000 deductible for three years of coverage. After the initial period, the policy must be renewed annually as long as the loan is in effect.

Lenders have required such insurance on occasional golf projects in the

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Ransomes America working to sort out consumer confusion

'Our goal is to have a corporate brand identity by the 1993 GCSAA Show in Anaheim.'

— Irv Aal, president Ransomes America

By HAL PHILLIPS

MINNEAPOLIS—Different names, different colors, different sets of distributors, different directions.

Cushman Inc., Steiner Turf Equipment and Brouwer Turf Equipment have all come under the Ransomes America Corp. umbrella since 1988. Not surprisingly, the last four years have brought a measure of consumer confusion in terms of name recognition and distribution logistics.

Yet when members of the golf course industry meet in Anaheim this winter, Ransomes hopes to

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Course owners explore the intricacies of group buying

By HAL PHILLIPS

The National Golf Course Owners Association (NGCOA) is implementing a cost-saving measure that management companies have employed for some time: Group purchasing.

Buying in bulk can save thousands of dollars in a single fiscal year, provided the management firm or association has enough member clubs to make the volume purchase worth executing.

However, the single biggest obstacle to group purchasing may be good ol'

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Sharek retires from Melex; promotions ensue

Executive Vice President C. W. Sharek, one of the original incorporators of Melex USA, Inc., retired, effective May 31.

Sharek has been responsible for directing the overall operations of the Golf Car Division since the company's inception in 1973. He will continue to serve as corporate adviser to the company. Sharek was a principal involved in the original design production and introduction of the Melex golf car.

President Marek Tralik also announced the following promotions and appointments:

- C.W. Sharek Jr. has been promoted to executive vice president and in addition to other responsibilities will direct the overall operations of the Golf Car Division.
- J.R. "Jim" Moran has been promoted to vice president-field sales, Golf Car Division.
- J. Bryan Taylor has been promoted to vice president-marketing, Golf Car Division.
- Shirley E. Wilson has been promoted to corporate controller.
- C.K. "Charlie" Emery has been appointed regional manager.

Ransomes' corporate identity

Continued from page 1

have sorted out its growing pains.

"It's a fine line we must walk," said Irv Aal, president of Ransomes America. "We obviously have a tremendous amount of brand equity in terms of Cushman, Brouwer, Steiner and Ryan. I think, at the moment, it may be confusing. In fact, I can understand the confusion in the marketplace.

"But we're trying to come up with a strategy that will get our name out while preserving our brand equity. It's an ongoing thing. But we're in the final stage of deciding just how to present ourselves to the public.

"Our goal is to have a corporate brand identity by the 1993 GCSAA Show in Anaheim."

The internal portion of this strategy happened in June, when Ransomes restructured into four primary business units: turf, professional lawn care, consumer, and industrial/commercial.

When all is said and done, Aal explained, superintendents will deal with one distributor — in the Turf Division — for all Ransomes products, be they Cushman (Ryan), Steiner or Brouwer.

Internally, the reorganization is a *fait accompli*. Ransomes America — part of the Ransomes Group established by Ransomes plc of Ipswich, England — started by moving its headquarters to Minneapolis earlier this year. In addition to Aal, who joined the corporation in 1991, top management includes Doug McCormick, vice president of sales and marketing; Ed Nachtsheim, vice president of finance; Mike Bruggeman, vice president of human resources and public affairs; and Marv Jaques, director of engineering and technology.

Prior to joining Ransomes, Aal co-founded the Phoenix International Corp., a specialized electronics company based in Fargo, N.D. Previously, he was involved in the farm equipment industry, serving in executive positions with Sperry New Holland, International Harvester and Steiger Tractor Inc.

"I felt it was important that we reassess where Ransomes was going. To that end, we reorganized internally before we reorganized externally," Aal continued. "I suppose it's an overused term, but we would like to think Ransomes is a product-driven company."

For superintendents caught off guard by the corporate transition, product questions remain: "Is my Ransomes dealer currently selling Cushman?" "Does my Cushman dealer now sell Steiner and Brouwer, or just Ryan and Cushman?" These are some of the queries that prompted the shake-up at Ransomes, and Aal answered them this way:

"We're aware of these problems. We really had three strong organizations selling through three separate distribution channels. And they overlapped.

"If I'm a superintendent, I should be able to go to one source for all of those products. That's our goal. It's happening even as we speak, but we still have a long way to go."

It may sound trivial compared to the corporate overhaul currently underway, but the 'paint question' also remains unresolved. "Ultimately, we're going to have one family color," Aal explained.

Will it be the green and red of Ransomes, Cushman green or perhaps a combination of the two?

Stay tuned.