

BRIEFS



DIXY LEE RAY HEADLINING

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Dr. Dixy Lee Ray, author of *Trashing the Planet* and recipient of the United Nations Peace Prize, will give the keynote address at the American Sod Producers Association's Midwinter Conference and Exposition at Wyndham Paradise Valley Resort here, Jan. 20-22. A former governor of Washington and chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, Ray will speak on "The Science and Politics of Environmentalism." More information is available from the ASPA at 1855-A Hicks Road, Rolling Meadows, Ill. 60008; 708-705-9898.

PESTICIDE GUIDE PUBLISHED

The 1993 *Pesticide Directory*, a guide to the producers, products, regulators, researchers and associates in the United States, is now available. Basic manufacturers and formulators are listed with a listing of their products and key personnel. In addition, agricultural colleges that work in pest control, Extension personnel, USDA research stations and independent contract researchers across the United States are listed with addresses. It costs \$49.95 and is available from—Thomas Publications, P.O. Box 9335, Fresno, Calif. 93791; 209-435-2163.

GGCSA ANNOUNCES SCHOLARSHIPS

The GGCSA 1993 Scholarship recipients were announced recently, following interviews at the University of Georgia, Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College and Lake City Community College. Recipients of the \$1000 scholarships include Timothy Cunningham of Norcross, attending the University of Georgia, and Edward Lee Crosby of Omega who will also be attending UGA. Bard Salmons of Athens was chosen as alternate. Each receives a \$1000 scholarship, a plaque of recognition, as well as an expenses-paid trip to the GGCSA Annual Meeting, to be held at Kiawah Island Resort, S.C.



RECYCLING PESTICIDE CONTAINERS

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Ohio State University instituted a pesticide container recycling program at its Turfgrass Research Field Day here Aug. 17. Superintendents could drop off their clean, empty pesticide containers, which Grower Service Co. will grind, granulating them for further processing. Eventually, they will be made into new containers or be put to other safe uses. The program was supported by OSU Extension, the Ohio Department of Agriculture and Ohio AgriBusiness Association.

GCSAA battles being waged behind doors

By PETER BLAIS

The departure of top executives and officials of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America has shed light on a behind-the-scenes battle being waged over the association's future.

The initial public skirmish was fought at last winter's annual meeting when members resoundingly defeated several proposed bylaw amendments and voted out two incumbent board members.

Opponents claimed the bylaw changes would have given the board too much power and diverted attention away from the superintendent by encouraging more non-superintendents to join.

That vote apparently established a battlefield pitting an old guard versus new guard. The old consisted of past expansion-minded presidents, their boards and Chief Executive Officer John Schilling. The new guard is headed by current President Randy Nichols, leader of what many view as the more inward-looking current board.

That conflict was partly responsible for the Arthur Andersen management study that played a role in the resignations of Schilling, senior directors Robert Ochs and Diana Green, and Immediate Past President Bill Roberts.

"The new board feels it is operating from a mandate that it received at the annual meet-

ing. I attended that meeting and heard no such mandate," said GCSAA Past (1990) President Gerald Faubel.

"To pull back when the needs of our members are being met just doesn't make sense. I believe our members are being served better than ever before."

Richard Fahey, president of GCSAA's Maine chapter, sees it somewhat differently.

"There does seem to be a change in the wind," he said. "Exactly why, I don't know. But there is a real difference of opinion out there about GCSAA's future."

"Branching off to attract members, like club managers, bothers a lot of people. We

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Ornamentals: A wave of the future in golf

By MARK LESLIE

For golf course superintendents familiar with bentgrass, ryegrass, fescues and such, the likes of maiden grass, fountain grass and giant reed grass might sound foreign.

Indeed, some ornamental grasses, like Chinese silver grass, originated on foreign ground.

But as superintendents search for ways to reduce chemical use and labor costs, more may find themselves planting these exotic grasses in the rough, around tee boxes, between fairways.

"They're an excellent plant to have on the golf course," said Richard Kaiser, superintendent of the five-course Fairfield Glade Community Club outside Crossville, Tenn. "Ornamental grasses don't require any attention, compared to shrubs, annuals and perennials. You create aesthetically pleasing areas and have lower maintenance costs."

"There's been increasing interest in ornamental grasses over the last several years," said Dr. Eliot Roberts of Sparta, Tenn., a retired soil and turfgrass scientist who enumerated some of their positives: "No insects, no diseases, no water, no fertilizer after they've gotten started, and no maintenance except to cut them back each year. Able to withstand sub-zero temperatures. Here are plants that will grow from five to 15 feet tall, opening up vistas, then gradually closing them out during the year. They change the colors of the



Giant reed grass, left, shows off its beautiful seedheads, while at right Chinese silver grass fronts plume grass.

landscape."

"I don't know of anyone in the country who's worked with them longer than I have, and I get more and more enthused by them," said Guy Robbins, superintendent of grounds at the University of Tennessee at Martin. "They're fascinating."

Robbins, who in 25 years has never once needed to spray ornamentals for insects or diseases, said he uses them "because of all the things they do for you. One thing, they provide a cheap [aesthetic] show. They give you virtually 10 or 11 months of color."

"By the time people are outdoors in the early spring, these plants are already coming up and growing. So we get early emergence, early interest and early presence. They look good all spring, summer and fall. They have very attractive blooms in late summer and fall. And when we have a hard freeze they turn

brown."

"As soon as the weather starts to cool off the inflorescences start to come out — beautiful, feathery inflorescences," reminisced Roberts, who got his first ornamental roots from Robbins. "They will last late into the fall, even into ice storms and still be beautiful."

Robbins added that many people plant ornamental grasses because of their languid movement and music in the slightest breeze.

Fulton Country Club superintendent Lynn Newton has been assisted by club member Harry Reams, who has made what Robbins termed "a horticultural extravaganza" at the South Fulton, Tenn., course. "We like them, their benefits and the look they give us," Newton said.

While Newton started using ornamental grasses to cover up unsightly areas, he quickly discovered they could

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Barrier island turfcare presents tough challenges

By MARK SMART

CORPUSCHRISTI, Texas—Good cultural practices are the key to managing a barrier island golf course, according to Carl Suding, superintendent of the recently renovated Padre Isles Country Club here.

The only golf course on the state's 115-mile-long Padre Island, it has been swamped twice during hurricanes and is constantly bombarded by sand, salt and ocean breezes.

"Grass doesn't grow well with so much salt," said Suding, who is vice president of the Gulf Coast Superintendents Association and a board member of the Texas Turfgrass

Foundation. "Turfgrass will tolerate only so much."

The Padre Isles course uses Tifdwarf Bermudagrass on the greens and 419 Bermuda on the fairways. Seashore paspallum grows naturally on the island, but is used only in some of the lower, saltier areas of the course. Suding said he has also experimented with Adelaide, but he promotes Bermuda because of its better texture and color.

To counter the salt Suding recommends paying very close attention to aeration and water management, including drainage

and use of wetting agents.

Padre Isles CC irrigates with effluent water from a nearby wastewater treatment plant. Salt water seepage raises the salinity to 2,500 parts sodium per million.

Care has to be taken not to over-water. "Watering too much will result in standing water, which dries out and leaves salt deposits in the soil," said Suding, "so we have to water as accurately as possible."

He uses gypsum and lime which contains calcium to help displace the sodium in the soil. Aeration helps the salt pass through

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Winds of change at GCSAA

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need help at our level. GCSAA is supposedly for us, the superintendents. If we're going to expand, I'd rather see us offering more programs for our assistant superintendents and mechanics. They are very important in running our courses."

Fahey was one of 113 chapter presidents and voting delegates invited to attend a special meeting at GCSAA headquarters in Lawrence, Kan., Sept. 25-26.

"We're supposed to talk about the bylaws. But I'm sure we'll dis-

cuss Schilling, too," Fahey said.

Schilling said the board has discussed, in general, the type of individual it wants to replace him.

"But the search probably won't get serious until mid-October," said the outgoing chief executive officer, who has agreed to stay on until January. "The board has asked me to help explain what the job entails to people they interview. Obviously, I won't be involved in the selection process."

Nichols said last month that GCSAA could eventually do busi-

ness with Schilling's new management firm, St. Andrews Corp.

"No specific agreements have been reached," Schilling said. "We're looking at the association's needs and what St. Andrews can do. If there is a fit there, then maybe we can do something. Right now, there is nothing in the wind."

St. Andrews has looked at purchasing several sites for its offices, including GCSAA's old headquarters building in Lawrence.

"We're looking at it," Schilling confirmed. "But we'd have to consider its rental potential. It's too big for just us."

Since he is still a full-time GCSAA

employee, Schilling said his duties at St. Andrews are limited to what he can do outside regular 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. business hours. Ochs and Green, his partners at St. Andrews, are performing the day-to-day functions of setting up the business.

Top management's sudden departure and Andersen's methods in conducting the management study have been questioned privately. Whisperings of lawsuits have surrounded the administrative shake-up, although no one will say who might sue whom or over what.

With the \$700,000 settlement in former Executive Director James McLoughlin's case still fresh in their

minds, some members were alarmed at the recent housecleaning.

"I'd be surprised if we saw any lawsuits," Faubel said. "But with the experiences we've had, the board should have learned to move very cautiously."

Kevin Downing, head superintendent at Willoughby Golf Club in Stuart, Fla., has made a formal recommendation to the board of directors to establish an advisory board. It would consist of others in the golf industry who would advise directors on how legal, business and government issues could affect their decisions.

"We have some great people on the board," Downing said. "But they have golf courses to run and can't be expected to know everything."

"I've made the recommendation, but haven't heard yet. I don't know what they'll do with it. But I do know we can't have an association that is being hauled into court every four to five years."

Barrier island

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the soil, and installation of the large number of drains has reduced standing water throughout the course.

Padre Isles CC recovered fairly well from the two hurricanes, said Suding. Its fairways and greens are built up higher than the surrounding terrain in most areas.

The hurricanes deposited salt water in the course lakes which had to be pumped out and fresh water pumped back in.

Designed by Bruce Littell, the course blends with surrounding barrier island environment, with sea oats and other natural vegetation, small lakes and white, powdery sand dunes. However, coarser sand is imported for the bunkers and top dressing.

The links-style course, unique in south Texas, has over 24-inch-high heather rough and large greens considered the best in the area.

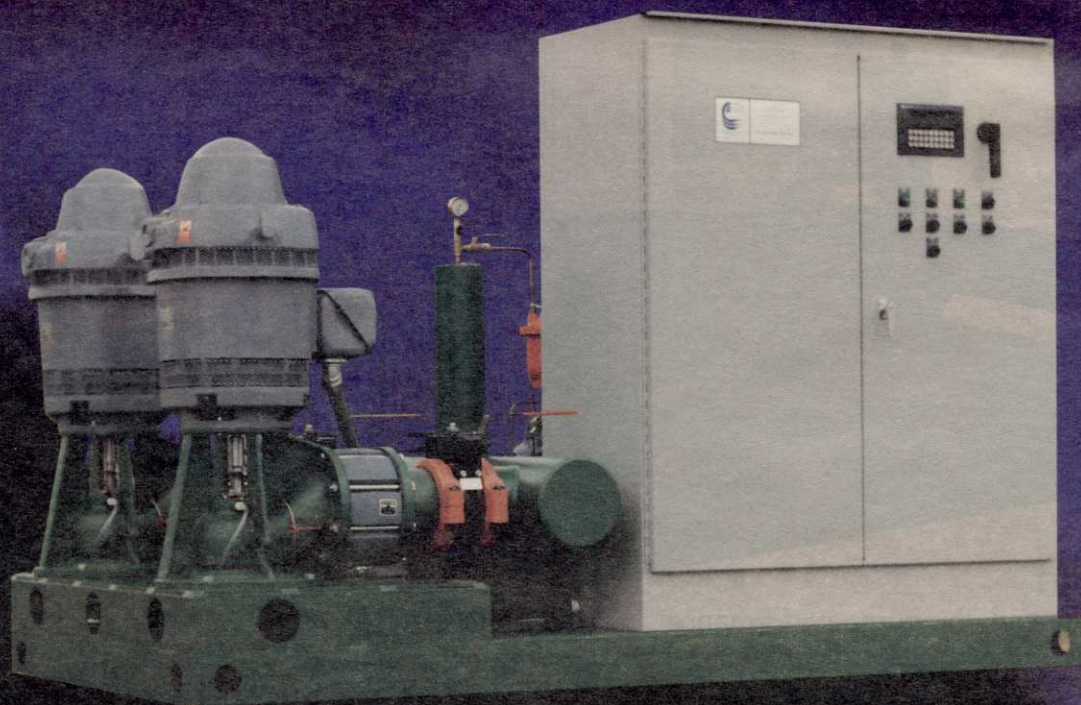
The 18-hole, 7,000-yard course was built 22 years ago in development of the adjacent Padre Isles boating community. With a new investor taking over three years ago, the course benefited from a six-figure facelift, greatly increasing its USGA rating.

Improvements include a new drainage system, 30 sand bunkers, a chipping green, driving range, carts and maintenance equipment, 500 palm and other various trees, and many new lakes.

"We have provided a lot of wetlands," said Suding. Many varieties of waterfowl live in the area, joined by exotic birds on winter migration. Animals that appear at the course range from jack rabbits to coyotes.

"We feel as if it were a wildlife sanctuary," said Suding. In respect to the more fearsome aspect of nature on the barrier island, the course has its own hurricane preparedness plan. It involves bringing in pumps and generators, storing fuel, equipment and supplies, and boarding up windows.

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