

BRIEFS



HAHN, ARCHITECTS TO TALK

DELHI, N.Y. — Oak Hill Country Club superintendent Joe Hahn and golf course architects Geoffrey Cornish and Craig Schreiner will speak at a Golf Course

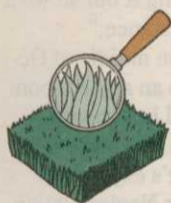


Joe Hahn

Design/Construction Seminar at State University of New York - Delhi, Aug. 16. Sponsored by the New York State Turfgrass Association in cooperation with area golf course superintendents organizations, the seminar will be highlighted by dedication of the completed turfgrass education building at SUNY Delhi. Hahn will speak on regrassing the old greens at Oak Hill, while Cornish will discuss contemporary design trends and Schreiner will talk on design and the environment.

NEW YORK TURF EXPO READIED

ROCHESTER, N.Y. — Former NFL referee Dr. Jim Tunney, who works with many Fortune 500 companies teaching skills needed to take a team to the next level, will deliver the keynote address at the New York State Turfgrass Association's (NYSTA) annual



Turf and Grounds Exposition here, Nov. 8-11. A 300-booth trade show will be held Nov. 9-10. More information is available from NYSTA at P.O. Box 612, Latham, N.Y.; telephone 518-783-1229.

RICKERT MOVES ON TO N.J.

MEDFORD, N.J. — Bruce Rickert has left the City of Brotherly Love for Medford, where he is head superintendent at Medford Village Country Club. He had been superintendent at Torresdale-Frankford Country Club, and before that was assistant superintendent at Huntington Valley Country Club.

STATE AGENCY HONORS FABRIZIO

CHARLESTON, S.C. — The Department of Health and Environmental Control has named Michael K. Fabrizio, superintendent at Wild Dunes Resort, one of the first recipients of its Clean Water Award. The award, given to 14 people statewide, recognizes Fabrizio's commitment to water quality protection here. He has been an active member in the state Nonpoint Source (NPS) Water Pollution Program. He was also awarded a certificate of appreciation for his volunteer service to the East Cooper NPS Project.



Michael Fabrizio

Winter simply kills Southeastern courses

By MARK LESLIE

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Golf course superintendents are taking different tacks in bringing their courses back to life after a devastating winter kill crippled or killed their Bermudagrass. Their options: sod/sprig Bermudagrass or replace their stands with zoysiagrass.

Most courses are not expected to fully recover until August or September.

"It's pretty major," said Patrick O'Brien, director of the Southeast Region of the U.S. Golf Association Green Section. "Tennessee was probably the hardest hit area, along with the western Carolinas and Kentucky. Atlanta was hit pretty hard. I was at Nags Head, N.C., right on the Atlantic where temperatures are usually moderate, and it was devastated."

The major culprit was a fateful, three-day period in mid-January. Superintendent Jerry Lemons of Old Hickory Country Club in Hermitage said that on Jan. 11 it was 59 degrees. "We had two



'Anyone who had poor drainage and cut their Bermudagrass at tee height lost it.'

— Jerry Lemons

inches of rain, and in 24 hours it was minus-2 degrees. It stayed that way for 72 hours. That knocked it [Bermudagrass] out — killed it. Anyone who had poor drainage and cut their Bermudagrass at tee height lost it."

It remained cold for almost two weeks. Then, many areas endured an ice storm Jan. 17. That blanket of ice stayed on the ground for four or five days, driving the cold deep into the soil and

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THE OLD WORLD VISITS THE NEW

The Americanization of Patrick O'Fee

By ALEXA AINSWORTH

WELCHES, Ore. — Irishman Patrick O'Fee has discovered that, in America, golf is more than a way of life — it is a business. That's why he's here, apprenticing under Superintendent Tony Lasher at The Resort at the Mountain.

A native of Bangor, Northern Ireland, O'Fee is working here as part of an exchange through Experience International. A 31-year-old turf management graduate from his native Greenmount College, he came to America looking for experience in pesticide use, and was surprised by the active golf industry.

"There is a lot more money in the golf course industry here than there is at home. It is a business!" said O'Fee. "At home they are a lot more reticent to invest — more conservative."

O'Fee has grasped the idea of an American "golf industry," with its course-per-day development mentality and for-profit management style. According to O'Fee, the golf industry in Ireland is about to boom. Northern Irish farmers are converting their land, he said, as the population of approximately 1.5 million proposes building 40 golf courses over the next five years.

The golf industry has a large future in the Emerald Isle and O'Fee wants to be prepared for it.



Patrick O'Fee, left, of Bangor, Northern Ireland, with American host Tony Lasher at The Resort at the Mountain.

"Americans are much further ahead in turf management techniques and treat it much more scientifically than we do in Ireland," said O'Fee. "Americans are professional in everything from machinery maintenance to man management."

People here show a greater willingness to invest in equip-

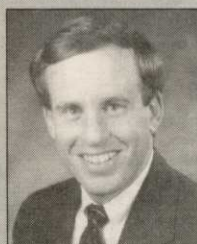
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GCSAA continues metamorphosis

By HAL PHILLIPS

LAWRENCE, Kan. — The legacy of Arthur Andersen lives on.

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) has continued its restructuring effort with the creation of three new departments here at association headquarters: Chapter Relations, Technical Information Services and Career Development.



Steve Mona

These new departments reflect the impact of last year's Arthur Andersen study, which thoroughly evaluated the business and outreach systems at GCSAA. The study's recommendations have sent shock waves

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State gives bucks to boost Clemson research

By MARK LESLIE

CLEMSON, S.C. — Recognizing the turf industry ignites South Carolina's economy, the state Legislature has allocated \$530,000 a year to help expand Clemson University's turfgrass program.

"It's exciting to get new money in this kind of economy," said Dr. John Kelly, chairman of the Horticulture Department, adding that another \$379,000 was approved for the state university's ornamental horticulture program. "All across the country, university budgets have been cut. The Legislature was sending a clear message: When it comes to economic development-type activity, turf is a huge trigger in South Carolina."

A recent survey found the turfgrass/golf course industry is worth about \$640 million a year to the South Carolina economy. The state sports 339 golf courses.

Recognizing the significance of environmental stewardship to the turf industry, Kelly said, "Our intent in getting the funding was to address environmental problems faced by that industry and to expand the programming around solving those

'The Legislature was sending a clear message: When it comes to economic development-type activity, turf is a huge trigger in South Carolina.'

— Dr. John Kelly

problems through research and public service, or Extension programs."

The South Carolina Turfgrass Foundation, primarily composed of superintendents, was a key player in lobbying for the funds.

Clemson had asked for \$913,000, and the House and Senate had agreed upon \$780,000 until a major waste site clean-up forced across-the-board cuts.

Officials are rethinking the plan based on \$913,000, and Kelly said, "Still, we will be able to do quite a bit." The university is committed to not tying all the money up in salaries, he said.

A portion "will remain in program enhancement so the existing faculty will have

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GCSAA reordering

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"One of our mandates here was to get our house in order," said GCSAA Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer Steve Mona. "And that's a large part of what we've done during my first five months here."

Indeed, Mona is a product of Andersen's impact. Since the study was issued, GCSAA has seen the departures of longtime Executive Director John Schilling, legal counsel Robert Ochs and Director of Membership Services Diana Green. Per Andersen's recommendations, GCSAA has created a completely restructured hierarchy, with Mona filling the newly created position of executive director and CEO (Schilling was merely the former).

The association also created the positions of chief operations officer — filled by Joe O'Brien — and chief financial officer, filled by Julian Arrendondo.

Since the Andersen study, GCSAA has suspended overseas publications; worked more closely with allied industry associations, particularly the United States Golf Association; and joined the chemical trade association RISE (Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment) — something it refused to do under the Schilling regime.

Now GCSAA has created three new entities to deal with issues it feels haven't been fully addressed:

Chapter Relations: According to Mona, this department will interface with the association's 113 chapters nationwide. Unrest at the chapter level was particularly evident at the 1993 GCSAA Show in Anaheim, Calif., where all but one of the by-laws — drawn up in Lawrence — were killed by voting members.

Technical Information Services: "One of the things we've heard over the past few months is, we are the logical people to gather and disseminate technical information, and we don't do it," said Mona. "This is the information age, and creation of this department is a reaction to that."

Career Development: Mona noted GCSAA membership enjoys a very high percentage of employment. However, turf schools are turning out more and more qualified graduates each year — and the number of jobs is not keeping pace. In fact, the stock of private clubs is declining.

"We hear a lot about guys in the field for 20 or 30 years, making a nice living, at a good club for a long time," said Mona. "But what becomes attractive to the club is a young kid, with a good education, who draws half the salary. I hear a lot of those stories."

"I think you do two things: Give the older superintendent the opportunity to seek continued education if he wants; and give him the tools to better state his case to the club."

"Also, the association has to tell the story to their employers. In the great scheme of things, \$30,000 or \$40,000 in a multimillion-dollar budget is a drop in the bucket. We at GCSAA need to be able to tell that story."

Strengthening ties one of major aims of new regime

Arrendondo and O'Brien Mr. Inside and Mr. Outside

By PETER BLAIS

Strengthening ties with state and regional chapters, meeting with numerous committees, finding tenants for the association's excess office space, re-assigning staff and re-establishing ties with allied golf associations have been among the major chores undertaken by new Golf Course Superintendents Association of America Chief Operating Officer Joe O'Brien.

The GCSAA board of directors named O'Brien to the newly created post in January, about the same time it appointed Julian Arrendondo as chief financial officer. The two have formed a sort of Mr. Inside/Mr. Outside tandem to assist new Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer Steve Mona.

"Julian oversees internal services like MIS (Management Information Systems), accounting and graphic services," O'Brien said. "I deal with those outside the headquarters building, like members, committees and other golf organizations."

O'Brien expected to have met with the 10 GCSAA committees he oversees by mid-June. He has also talked with many leaders of the association's 113 affiliate chapters and is laying the ground work for September's chapter relations meeting. Many claimed last fall's gathering was the key to passing January's controversial by-laws amendments, many of which were overwhelmingly defeated the year before.

"The chapters are the foundation for the national organization," O'Brien said. "They do excellent work, particularly in the areas of scholarship and research. We're looking at ways we can help them."

The national association recently hired a new real estate broker to market its excess office space. O'Brien said GCSAA staff only occupies five-eighths of the new, 40,000-square-foot office building. Less than half

of the old building, which GCSAA still owns, is rented, the COO added.

"The association could eventually need all the space. But that day is far off in the future," O'Brien said.

Following the annual meeting, O'Brien said the board directed GCSAA's 72-member staff to focus on three areas — its own internal staffing needs, rebuilding relations with other golf and green industry associations, and returning the organization's focus to meeting members' needs.

A few people have left, notably Government Relations Manager Kirk Kahler, Tournament Manager John White and Membership Director Janet Rose, O'Brien said. Several others have been reassigned.

"We found a lot of talented people inside these walls," O'Brien said.

The new upper management staff has reviewed recommendations in the Arthur Andersen management study conducted last year, the COO said. Those found valid have been instituted, including better coordinating computer hardware and software programs; seeking higher-yield investments for association funds; developing a new employee handbook; investigating flex-time scheduling; expanding the work week from 37-1/2 to 40 hours; and hiring a compensation consultant to analyze roles and salaries (see related story on page XX).

Two years ago, GCSAA withdrew its annual donation to the United States Golf Association's research efforts, straining relations between the two organizations.

"We'll be making a donation to the USGA this year," promised O'Brien, adding that GCSAA plans to build bridges and mend fences with other organizations as well.

Serving membership needs will be the goal of all GCSAA research and education, he added. The research committee (for-



Joe O'Brien

mally scholarship and research) is scheduled to meet in September to adopt an official agenda. In the meantime, O'Brien has informally surveyed research committee members and said he found several common interests.

First, he said, there is a desire to focus on health and human safety, especially in light of the University of Iowa study on increased cancer rates among superintendents. Second is an emphasis on doing research on golf courses rather than at university test plots or in laboratories.

Educationally, new programs are on the drawing board for maintenance specialists, especially mechanics.

"Head superintendents report having a difficult time finding qualified people for that position," O'Brien said.

In no way, O'Brien assured, is adding specialist training a forerunner to a third run at a bylaw amendment to increase membership classifications. That measure was resoundingly defeated at the last two annual meetings.

"The members spoke pretty clearly regarding increasing membership classes," O'Brien said. "It certainly wouldn't be prudent to bring it up again without a lot of research."

Prior to coming to GCSAA, O'Brien spent 18 years in a variety of administrative positions with the Professional Golfers Association. During that time he witnessed the growth in stature of the club professional. A similar professional image is what many superintendents hope to attain.

"At almost every meeting I've attended, image enhancement has come up," O'Brien noted. "Members want help from national headquarters in building up their image. They have invested a lot of time and money in education and are employed in a high-risk occupation. They want more visibility with the public. And they want the people they report to to recognize the validity of their advice as educated course managers."

Irishman apprentices in America

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ment, he said, adding this is an area in which Ireland needs to improve. O'Fee has come to value machinery while working under Lasher.

"He is basically looking to learn as much as he can from American golf course maintenance," said Lasher. "Europeans do things differently than we do, and it's interesting to learn about their turf management practices and the way they approach agronomics."

While studying in his homeland, O'Fee learned little about pesticide spraying. He is studying it here and preparing for the Oregon pesticide application exam. He believes these are the experiences that will provide him the technical skill he seeks.

O'Fee has also noticed changes in the use of fertilizers and pesticides, both here and at home.

"Ignorance is no longer going to be all right," said O'Fee. "In the European market we're becoming a lot more environmentally aware... There is a lot of restriction."

O'Fee has noticed the German influence on the conscience of Europe.

"The restrictions are really tight in Germany. They've really cracked down

[on the use of chemicals]. The German influence has really spread to the United Kingdom. That is a trend that is going to manifest itself, some golf courses now are trying to go completely organic."

America, by O'Fee's observation, is changing in response to a different pressure — that of the media and the courts. The result is inconsistent policy from state to state. In this regard he believes European countries — smaller and more easily regulated — have an advantage.

He also noticed cultural differences in the attitudes of American golfers.

"Although golf is a popular sport here, the golf courses are used much more seasonally," said O'Fee. "When it rains here, people are not as likely to face the elements."

In Ireland golf is a year-round sport. Despite cold weather, the courses do not close down and most people still play, he said.

O'Fee would like to continue working in the United States, even when he finishes his apprenticeship at The Resort in October. His original intent was to return home, but he said he has a lot more to learn. So he may be here for a while...

Legislature gives Clemson a boost

Continued from page 15

operating money," he said, "and I assume we will develop an internal competitive grants program as one component of the funds."

"We've also got a real need to increase the quality of the turfgrass research facilities. And we will be hiring key faculty members, though I'm not sure what those positions will be."

University officials hope to have a plan in place by early July.

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Meanwhile, Clemson is in the midst of constructing an 18-hole handicapped-accessible golf course designed to be a "working laboratory" for researchers and students.

Keystone beats challenge

Continued from previous page

new SR 1020 bentgrass was grown in a 90-10 mix as well. We buy all our sand, top dressing or root zone and bentgrass sod through Tectonic. We want to keep everything consistent, from root zone to what the sod was grown in, to the top dressing we're using."