

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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EPA-friendly

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Geese, Algae, etc.

Having problems keeping your ponds & lakes free of these and other intruders? See special report 40

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DR. DUICH EARNS ROSSI AWARD

Builders association President Jim Kirchdorfer (left) presents Dr. Joe Duich the Don Rossi Award during the builders' banquet in San Francisco. For story on Duich and a complete GCSAA Show Wrap-up, see pages 33-39.

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Truce!

Soil labs & USGA settle differences

By MARK LESLIE

FAR HILLS, N.J. — Comforted and hopeful after meeting with representatives of eight soil-testing laboratories, U.S. Golf Association (USGA) Green Section officials believe the clock is ticking toward a future where accreditation for labs is the norm.

"I'm very relieved," said Green Section National Director Jim Snow, who entered the February meeting expecting an angry mob of lab technicians.

Saying a committee of lab officials "will hold discussions among themselves and tell the USGA what needs to be done," he said: "It will take awhile

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Owners buy into group purchasing

By PETER BLAIS

CHARLESTON, S.C. — Insurance, electric bunker rakes and used turf equipment are the latest products to find their way onto the ever-growing list of discounted service and merchandise available through the National Golf Course Owners Association Smart Buy Program.

The NGCOA group purchasing program provides the association's members with price breaks from preferred suppliers ranging from shirt makers to credit-card processors.

CNA Insurance Compa-

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BACK TO THE LINKS

A lonely pin stands starkly on the 18th green, as the sun sets on Ocean Forest Golf Club, a throwback, links-style design from Rees Jones. The 380-acre property sits on the tip of Sea Island, Ga., just where the Hampton River meets the Atlantic Ocean. For details on Jones' successful collaboration with nature and the Cloisters Hotel, see page 47.

EPA puts product approval on fast track?

By MARK LESLIE

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) new Biopesticides and Pollution Prevention Division, created in November to speed up registration of biological pesticides, is accomplishing the task, according to spokesman Anne Leslie.

A chemist and turf industry liaison with the EPA, Leslie said that in the division's first three months, three new active ingredients were registered and registration actions had been completed on three others. Historically, it has taken three to

five years to approve an active ingredient for use, she said.

"The EPA is committed to expediting registration of safer pesticide products," Leslie told an audience at the International Golf Course Conference and Show in San Francisco. She explained that for chemical pesticides, the EPA has initiated a priority set of procedures to hasten approval, while the new division was created to deal with biological pesticides.

In the case of chemical pesticides, "registrants can make an argument as to why

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Opryland Springhouse Golf Club in Nashville, Tenn. is among those courses designed by incoming ASGCA president Jeff Brauer.

Q & A

Brauer to assume ASGCA presidency

By MARK LESLIE

SCOTLAND — When the American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA) meets here in April on the eve of its 50th anniversary, a week of travel and meetings will be climaxed with the passing of the gavel to a new president — Jeffrey Brauer.

Already, Brauer's sights are set on April 1996 when the society holds its golden anniversary at the hallowed greens and fairways of Pinehurst, N.C.

Questioned about his objectives, the president of GolfScapes in Arlington, Texas, answered: "I will begin to play

on the 50th anniversary theme. In my view, while the challenges of golf course architecture are certainly significant today, with the environment and the financing, I think the challenges have always been there throughout the 50 years of the society. I think the top architects have met those challenges in the past and I'm certain will meet them in the future."

Golf Course News: What have those challenges been?

Jeffrey Brauer: Historically, if you look at the '40s, there wasn't any qual-

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Q&A: Brauer keys on ASGCA's 50th

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ity turf development. As we moved into the '50s there were the challenges of incorporating golf into real-estate. In the '60s and early '70s we were in an era of declining budgets and emphasis on maintenance; and those challenges were met. We moved into a golden era in the '80s where the challenge I think was to spend as much money as you possibly could. Our challenges that I see right now is, relatively speaking, we are in an era of declining budgets. You see the

effects on design in terms of 'minimalism.' Certainly the environmental challenges are strong and probably getting stronger every day. Other things are the usage of land, the overall regulatory constraints, water usage and some of the other technology that will work in partnership with superintendents and the USGA to keep the game going.

GCN: What technologies do you mean?

JB: Drought-tolerant plants, designing golf courses with less acreage of turf, and at the same

time accommodating the ever-lengthening tee shot.

GCN: What are your expectations traveling with the ASGCA to Scotland at the end of April?

JB: The most exciting thing for me is that John Colligan and Eric Nelson on my staff have achieved associate membership in ASGCA and will be going. I've shown them in pictures these great concepts, but I'd like them to see it first-hand. If you look at the design of golf courses after the architects took our first trip to Scotland in '80 there was a significant impact on design. You could see it on almost

everybody's work. It changed. The variety changed. The trend toward faster courses came out.

GCN: Has that effect faded?

JB: If you analyze it, it kept up. But so many people were doing it that it melded toward the middle. We all came back really talking about the origins of golf, about how different it was.

What are the plans for the ASGCA's 50th?

JB: Plans are still developing. We want to return to Pinehurst, if nothing else to recreate the first photo [of members] out on the veranda. The last time we were there, we played the

Pinehurst courses, but not Mid Pines or Southern Pines, which are pretty much untouched [Donald] Ross courses. We will try to play those untouched Ross courses this time.

GCN: Turning attention to course construction, what's your take on expenditures today? Is more money spent?

JB: No. There are two primary reasons why the cost of building a golf course is still rising. First, environmental mitigation costs are rising at an alarming rate. It is not uncommon for over five miles of silt fence to be required in the construction of a new golf course. I understand from Bill Kubly that the Caves Valley Course in Maryland required nearly \$1 million of environmental protection, most of it in the form of erosion control. Less than ten years ago, I built some fairly nice golf courses for just over \$1 million.

The clients desire more sophistication, despite the pressure to offset other rising costs. Irrigation systems run by computer, lightning protection (due to lawsuits), and wall to wall irrigation even in the most benign climates, have made irrigation a more significant cost component of the golf course. Some changes are also reflective of environmental demands. For example, at Giants Ridge we were required to avoid use of low pressure heads, which were thought by the environmentalists to be more likely to wash pesticides off leaf blades. As it happens, the lower pressure heads tend to be the lower cost heads.

Environmentalists and superintendents alike want more precise control of the irrigation system. The design response for this is closer spacing of heads and more flexible control, both of which drive up cost. In addition, it is now common for dual heads to be placed on the perimeter of the greens. One head will be used to spray on the green (in the south, Bentgrass, which has varying precipitation needs than the surrounding Bermudagrass) and a second to spray the banks. In some cases, more part circles are required due to the use of effluent water, or the desire to protect certain native areas from a change in environmental habitat.

Lastly, as of late 1994, the financing crunch seems to have eased somewhat for golf courses. While this is good news in general, the golf course supply and construction industry, which has held back price increases over the last several years due to economic conditions, has seized the opportunity to raise prices. For example, the price of most plastic pipe materials has risen four times this year alone.

GCN: Minimalism. Has it, or has it not returned to golf course design?

JB: Minimalism has returned to a degree, but not as much as several magazine articles will have you believe, and not necessarily for the reasons they would have you believe. While it is true that course design critics probably do influence the thinking of most architects, it is also true that speed of construction, envi-

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Q&A with Brauer

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ronmental concerns and the ever present desire for a "new look" among better architects are the primary causes of the new wave design. I sense that everyone's designs are beginning to look alike, with excessive mounding and we are all realizing once again that the best way to create a unique golf course is to utilize the natural features on the site to create a unique "sense of place." This is the first lesson any aspiring landscape architect learns in Landscape Design 101.

Minimalism has been an important feature in my work, primarily as an assistance in cost control. On a good site, nothing drives up the cost of golf course construction faster than stripping topsoil, shaping the fairway to create man-made rolls and knobs, and re-topsoiling that fairway. Of course, erosion-control measures must be implemented for all areas graded. Typically, the cost of such fairway shaping can run between \$2,000 and \$4,000 per acre, resulting in a total increase in golf course construction costs of \$200,000 to \$400,000. On rolling site, I have never believed that it is worth the money to grade in the fairway unless a change of grade will create vision to the target areas, level the fairway to provide a fair stance or lie, or to create drainage that would not otherwise exist where the site is so flat.

Only the most egotistical designer would think that he could better create naturalistic rolls than what was provided by nature itself. In fact, most designers tend to have a limited pallet of ideas in creating fairway rolls as compared to the infinite variety of nature. Thus, we often see golf courses in which extraordinary amounts of money have been spent for grading, but the effect is more repetitious than if no changes were made to the landscape at all.

Beyond these changes, I do not expect golf course design to return to copies of early American design. No designer, whether golf course architect, building architect, or civil engineer, has ever been successful by copying styles of the past and ignoring the current needs of his/her client. Golf courses must now be designed as business entities and design elements such as bigger greens and tees to distribute foot traffic, better drainage to allow quicker return to the golf course after a rain, not to mention the new design challenges of incorporating environmental sensitivity and wheelchair accessibility according to ADA regulation, plus a myriad of other new regulations in requirement must have precedence in design over mimicking a particular historical style.

The great designers of the past were following the same rule I've outlined. They were satisfying the needs of their clients, utilizing existing construction technology, and responding to the economic realities of the day as they knew them. Since these have changed dramatically over time, we should not expect that the final result of today's designers would resemble the final results of de-

signers from yesteryear any more than they actually do.

I will admit that there is a certain sadness to this. As much as I admire the beautiful contour edges of an Alister Mackenzie bunker, and try to emulate them, I find that modern practicalities of machine maintenance, as well as our experience in those steep slopes causing maintenance problems each time it rains, that my version of these bunkers are flatter, larger and placed just a bit farther from the green. While I have heard golf course design critics lament the fact that many modern bunkers appear to be

cookie-cut, these are the practical reasons that force them into these shapes. It takes genuine creativity to vary the size, contour, shape and character of bunkers to provide a unique experience on each hole.

When designing a new course, I always bear in mind that great natural site does give me the opportunity to practice minimalist architecture, natural elements in place of man-made elements to create a pleasant golf experience. I am also well aware that the great variety of work being done by many architects derive their inspiration from early American

designs and who embrace minimalism, create the variety in the world of golf that we all desire. I fully expect that eventually our recent courses will be collectively viewed as those of a particular design era and will be judged as such, much as our older courses are now judged through our perspective today. In all probability, the best examples of that design will survive as classics. Other lesser examples will be modified to satisfy then current business conditions and then to rid the golf course of design elements which prove to be impractical or unpopular.

Palmer Design eyes renovations

Continued from page 45

tion manager for McCurrach Golf. He has over the last several months helped train fellow staff members fine-tune their skills on the AutoCadd computer system.

Their first project will begin this spring at Palmer's Bay Hill Club in Orlando. With Palmer directing the design, Moon and Veal will completely renovate the Charger course.

"The specs called for tee to green bentgrass. I compared and saw how much better Southshore was. Now in less than a year, these greens are the best in the area."

*Bob DiPalma, Superintendent
Minisceongo Golf Club
Pomona, New York*

Minisceongo Golf Club, the dream of developer Eric Bergstol, is tucked into the scenic hills of



Owner/developer, Eric Bergstol imagined a unique golf course when he purchased the land for Minisceongo Golf Club.

Rockland County, New York. Roy Case, as architect, began carving into the heavily-wooded, challenging landscape in March 1993 with Bob DiPalma already on board as superintendent.

The specs called for bentgrass — tee to green — with bluegrass banks and fescue roughs.

With so many new bentgrasses on the market competing with the old-time favorites,

Bob DiPalma thought it wise to visit some test plots.

"I saw the darker color and upright growth of Southshore compared to some of the others. That did it! We placed the order...enough Southshore for every tee, fairway and green.



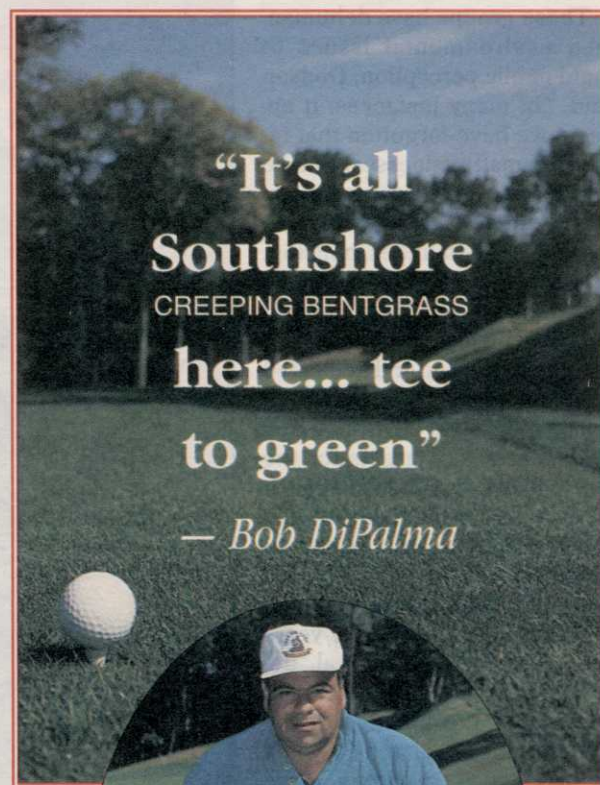
The out-of-play roughs at Minisceongo Golf Club are seeded with Reliant Hard Fescue for low-maintenance, natural beauty.

"Look at these greens! They were seeded in September 1993 and all 18 holes were opened for play July 1, 1994.

Now, less than one year later, the greens are the best in the entire area, bar none! Even with the severe winter and extremely hot summer we had, they came through beautifully. No disease problems and we used very little chemical. We're already seeing 12" roots on most of these greens.

"The tees and fairways are coming in nicely despite some washout problems. By next season this entire course is going to be top-notch. Eric is so pleased with what Southshore has done here, he's already considering it for his next project,"

— Bob DiPalma.



**"It's all Southshore
CREEPING BENTGRASS
here... tee
to green"**
— Bob DiPalma



This double green at Minisceongo Golf Club serves the sixth and fifteenth holes. Photos were taken less than one year after seeding.



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