

BRIEFS



**NEW MECHANICS ASSOCIATION**

LAKEWOOD, Colo. — Mechanics have formed the Rocky Mountain Golf Course Equipment Managers Association (RMGCEMA), intended to bring together mechanics and equipment managers to exchange ideas, knowledge and technical information. The association held its first meeting Feb. 15 at Fox Hollow at Lakewood's turf care center to form a governing body. More information is available from Fred Peck at 303-987-5422, or Greg Ziccardi at 303-973-2313.

**KTF ELECTS TANNAHILL**

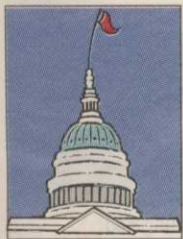
The Kansas Turfgrass Foundation has elected Don Tannahill president, heading a new slate of officers. Mark Willmore of Shawnee Country Club in Topeka is the new vice president, while new board members are Cliff Dipman of Manhattan (Kan.) Country Club and Dick Gray.

**POISON SURVEY RELEASED**

An annual survey of 73 poison-control centers nationally found that just 4.25 percent of calls concerned pesticide exposure, according to the American Association of Poison Control. Just 2 percent of those cases were classified as moderate to major cases in severity. Twenty-two deaths were attributed to pesticide poisoning, the majority from intentional ingestions. Four resulted from accidental exposure. Calls for pesticide exposure trailed cleaners, analgesics, cosmetics, plants, cough and cold medications and bites.

**N.J. SURVEILLANCE INCREASED**

Personnel from the New Jersey DEP Pesticide Control Program are increasing surveillance at recertification courses. The heightened attention is to ensure that pesticide applicators are attending the entire course in order to receive recertification credit.



Latecomers and those leaving for extended periods during the sessions will not receive credit. Pesticide Control Program policy states that in order to receive any credit, the entire course must be attended. No partial credit may be given.

**IPM SOFTWARE IS HERE**

Purdue Extension Service is offering IPM (Integrated Pest Management) monitoring software, which compiles a plant inventory while recording all insect and disease information throughout the growing season. It can also be customized to include pesticide records and inventories, treatment records, report and graph evaluations, labor and other factors.

# High-octane coffee klatch idea

Save money and valuable man hours with big pot

By MARK LESLIE

FALMOUTH, Maine — Kevin Ross is known for his inventiveness, forward thinking and progressiveness in agronomic matters. But ask him to name the best thing he did in 1994 and you'll get an odd response.

"People will laugh at me," he said, "but the best thing I did was buy a 48-cup coffee percolator and a timer."

Ross estimates the \$22 coffee maker and \$8 timer saved many man-hours and dollars in his budget at Falmouth Country Club.

"If you have coffee hounds and don't get a percolator you're behind the 8-ball," Ross said. And he was not imitating Joe DiMaggio.

Ross's assistant prepares the percolator at the end of the day's work and sets the timer for 4 a.m. When the crew arrives for work at 6 a.m., the timer and percolator have done their job and the coffee is ready. The routine saves man-



Ed.: This month we kick off a new column in Golf Course News: ShopTalk. Superintendents, their grounds crews and mechanics spend a major portion of their lives in their maintenance buildings. Creating the most cost-effective, space-efficient and time-saving operation possible is a goal of many. To that end we will use this space to share ideas that are passed along to us. We welcome your contributions. Just write: ShopTalk editor, Golf Course News, P.O. Box 997, Yarmouth, Maine 04096; telephone 207-846-0600; or fax 207-846-2292.

hours galore. In the old days, time was lost preparing the coffee in a small pot several times during the day and waiting for it to brew. "The routine was, get to work, make a pot and wait. Break-time, make a new pot and wait," Ross said. "Now the guys arrive for work, load up those big insulated mugs

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**THE TOUCH OF A SUPERINTENDENT, BY DESIGN**

General manager/superintendent Frank Dobie has tenderly cared for and changed the look of The Sharon Club in Sharon Center, Ohio, over the past 30 years until the private track has a winning look. This is the 16th hole. See story on Dobie, page 32.

# Information superhighway catches up with golf

Going on-line to stay on top, supers joining whole new world

By DAVID ROSE

The Third Wave. The Information Superhighway. The Infobahn.

Whatever your favorite overblown metaphor, there is little doubt the ongoing explosion in information technology is changing the way millions of people live and work. A growing number of golf course superintendents are taking advantage of this new technology, and they're finding that knowledge is power.

On-line services, which range from national fee-based systems to small, independent, often-free computer bulletin boards, provide users with a wide variety of features from sending electronic mail to downloading free software. In addition, a number of specialized on-line services tailored to the needs of golf course

managers are now available, accessible to anyone with a personal computer and a modem.

One such service is the Turfgrass Information Center (TIC) at Michigan State University, a fee-based service currently accessible via direct telephone dial-up. The heart of TIC is the Turfgrass Information File (TGIF), a bibliographic index of more than 30,000 turfgrass-related articles. Started in the 1960s, the database is continually updated with entries culled from more than 200 journals, magazines, and trade publications.

"This is, if you will, the industry's library," said TIC Administrator Peter Cookingham.

Users can search TGIF using key words, then browse through the records

# Saveth money when the tax man cometh

By TERRY BUCHEN

A free vehicle and housing, often among the fringe benefits given golf course superintendents, could also lead to a day in tax court — if the superintendent is not careful.

"I'd say half the people I know who have [company-bought] trucks don't claim them as income," said one superintendent. "The same goes for your house. If it's provided by the course for you to live in, you have to claim it."

To avoid claiming the vehicle as income, it must be used solely for job purposes and commuting to and from work. In the case of housing, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) arbitrarily determines what the home would fetch via rent in the local marketplace and adds that amount to the superintendent's gross income.

But there are ways to avoid paying any income tax on club-provided housing and vehicles. Each requires an agreement, in writing, with the club. The letter from the employer should clearly state that the superintendent is required, "as part of his job description," to live in the house provided by the club and to be on call 24 hours a day for protection of the club grounds. Also, the letter could designate the superintendent as the club's security chief who is required to live on club grounds "as a condition of employment."

If the club provides a superintendent a vehicle, he must fill out necessary IRS forms stating all mileage on the vehicle and whether it was used for business or personal use, claiming all personal use as part of his income.

To avoid this, many clubs consider the vehicle part of the maintenance department, to be used for whatever purpose the superintendent sees fit, by whoever needs

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that match the search criteria. "Our real bottom line," said Cookingham, "is to make all those back issues of publications more useful" by providing an index with which people can pull out information as it is needed.

Another major function of on-line services is to provide a forum for discussion among users on topics of common interest. That's the philosophy behind TurfByte, a free-access, dial-up bulletin board service for golf course superintendents based in Lawrence, Kan. Founded eight years ago by then-superintendent Duane Patton, TurfByte boasts 300 subscribers from some 30 states.

"Around 80 percent of our subscribers

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