

BRIEFS



RMGCSA ELECTS HOOFNAGLE

GOLDEN, Colo. — John Hoofnagle of Valley Country Club in Aurora has been elected president of the The Rocky Mountain Golf Course Superintendents Association. He leads a new slate of officers, including Vice President Doug Jones of City of Grand Junction; and Secretary/Treasurer David J. Brown of Flatirons Golf Course in Boulder. New directors are Gregg Blew of Wellshire Golf Course in Denver, John Fitzgibbons of Meadows Golf Course in Littleton and George Stovell of Gunnison Golf Course.

MASS. SHOW TURNS REGIONAL

BOSTON, Mass. — The Massachusetts Turfgrass Conference & Trade Show will be held Jan. 15, 16 and 17 at the Boston Marriott Copley Place, a new location for the annual event. This year's show is being held in cooperation with state superintendents associations from Connecticut, New Hampshire and Vermont as well as the University of Massachusetts Extension. For more information contact Denise Ruszala at 413-562-0120, or for registration information contact Jennifer Howland at 413-545-0172.

ISS INKED AT PORT MALABAR

ISS Golf Services of Tampa has reached an agreement with Port Malabar Country Club to manage the maintenance operation of the golf course. The agreement calls for ISS to provide the personnel (both on-and-off-site experts), materials, and supplies for the on-going improvement and maintenance of the 18-hole facility.

CHAPTERS GO PLATINUM

LAWRENCE, Kan. — The Minnesota, Heart of America, Long Island and Carolinas golf course superintendents associations have renewed their Platinum Tee Club memberships by donating \$5,000 apiece to The GCSAA Foundation. An annual gift of \$5,000 or more earns membership in the club. The funds are split between scholarships and research.

WOMAC HONORED IN GEORGIA

Bill Womac of Dunwoody Country Club, will receive the Georgia Golf Course Superintendents Association's (GGCSA) Award of Recognition at the Annual Georgia Golf Hall of Fame Banquet to be held Jan. 6. Womac has been a member of the GGCSA since 1973 and served as a board member from 1977-1984. He served as the association's president from 1981-1982.

GOLF COURSE NEWS

Like father, like son: Williams passes the torch

By PETER BLAIS

If the name Williams sounds familiar when it comes to the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America presidency, well, it should.

Incoming President Bruce Williams' father, Robert, 82, was president of the GCSAA in 1958 and is considered one of the major players in elevating the superintendent profession to the prominence it enjoys today.

Bruce, 46, who has been on the GCSAA board of directors since 1991, not only follows in his father's footsteps as GCSAA president but also succeeded his dad as head superintendent at Bob O'Link Golf



Robert Williams (right) with son Bruce.

Club in Highland Park, Ill., back in 1979. Together they are the first father/son combo to ascend to the top post.

"When your dad is considered an icon in the industry, you're treated somewhat differently when you take over for him," the younger Williams said.

An icon. High praise, but well deserved.

The elder Williams first became involved in the golf business at his parents' course, which they developed in the 1920s as part of a residential development. The entire family began working on the course when the Depression struck in 1929. By 1937, his parents had to sell the course, but Robert had fallen in love with the golf industry and determined to remain a part of it.

He enrolled at the Massachusetts State

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The 'scout' foreseen as new golf profession

By MARK LESLIE

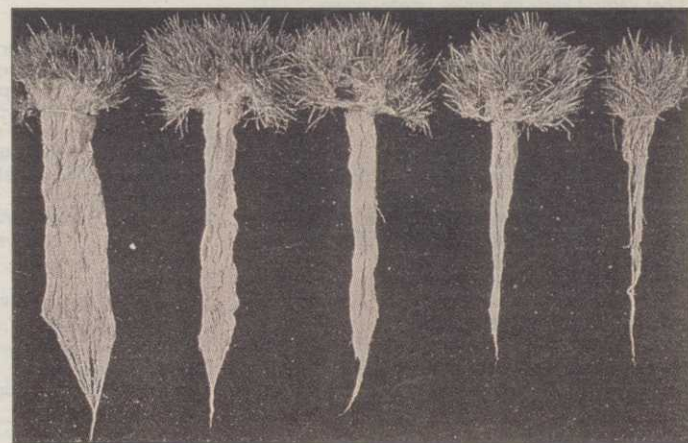
ORLANDO, Fla. — A new occupation is about to emerge on golf courses, according to the director of the U.S. Golf Association Green Section's Mid-Continent Region.

"We will see a whole new profession: the scout," Jim Moore predicted at Golf Course Expo, held here by Golf Course News. "The superintendent is often too busy to check the course. A scout can save thousands of dollars in pesticide applications catching problems before they start."

The scout is not a new concept. In fact, Cornell University implemented a scouting service to area golf courses a couple of years ago. But the position exists rarely if at all on courses today.

"As we are less able to apply water and pesticides, scouts and others like them will be responsible for hitting 'hot spots' and [other localized conditions]," Moore said. "Scouts will be more necessary and higher paid, so that courses can keep them."

Indeed, he said, the industry should study paying more and



At Golf Course Expo the USGA's Stan Zontek shared this photo of cultures of velvet bentgrass grown under different conditions of light (from left to right): fully exposed to sun all day, fully exposed forenoon only, fully exposed afternoon only, speckled sun all day, shade all day.

adding benefits to keep key personnel. "Top management companies do this," he said. "But a lot of superintendents have no retirement plan. We're losing experience because employees leave clubs and new ones don't know the golf course. Lack of

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FIRST OF TWO PARTS

Winter months are the best time to doctor trees

By LAURA MILLER

A winter decrease in golf activity on courses throughout the United States provides many golf course superintendents with time to plan and perform tree maintenance. If you have limited funds and resources, pruning and planting tasks will help make effective use of this time.

Proper winter care will get trees off to a good start. During the winter you can prune trees, inspect recently planted trees and select new planting sites for the spring. By helping to prevent problems, proper pruning and planting reduces tree repair and replacement costs.

Although maintenance pruning of most shade trees can be done year-round, intensive pruning should be performed in the dormant season. Late winter to early spring, just before new growth begins, is a good time to prune trees. Proper pruning cuts made in the



Place pruning cuts outside the branch collar, the swollen area where the branch attaches to the main trunk.

winter close more rapidly than cuts made at other times of the year.

When trees lose their leaves in the winter, it is easier to spot problem areas and place pruning cuts, said Richard Rathjens, a technical adviser with The Davey Tree Expert Co.

"The new leaves that emerge the following spring will help hide cuts made in the winter," he said. "Also, pruning in late fall and early winter minimizes sap flow from pruning cuts on trees such as conifers, maple, birch and walnut."

Winter pruning also minimizes damage to some tree species. The bark of



USGA goes online

By MARK LESLIE

FAR HILLS, N.J. — On-line and up-front ... the U.S. Golf Association (USGA) has joined the world of the Internet, and is already boasting success, and Michigan State University's Turfgrass Information Foundation (TGIF) is on the verge.

When TGIF joins World Wide Web — perhaps as soon as January — its material will be exclusively turfgrass-related, while USGA's site is multi-faceted.

"We're getting a lot of people logging on," said Dean Knuth, USGA's senior director of handicapping who, with Members Program Manager Chris Law, oversaw implementation of the computer package which went on line Nov. 13. "We've gotten 75 people today alone who have signed our guest book with wonderful comments... We think we're reaching the right audience — the general, uninformed public. People have even been joining the USGA every day over this."

"From my viewpoint, the web structure will make all this work worthwhile," said TGIF director Peter Cookingham, whose library was established and supported the USGA to amass and centralize

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Mirror image: The Williamses

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College (today called the University of Massachusetts) winter turf school in 1936, 1937 and 1939, where he was a classmate of former Tom Morris award winner Sherwood Moore. During that time, Williams worked at Chicago's Medinah Country Club under Norman Johnson [GC-SAA president in 1954]. He later worked at Ohio State University's course and spent three years in the service during World War II before taking over at Beverly Country Club outside Chicago. Robert spent 12 years at Beverly before being offered the job at Bob O'Link while finishing out his presidency in early 1959.

"I got a call during the 1959 conference from the people at Bob O'Link asking me if they could get some advice on how to go about selecting a new superintendent," Robert remembered. "I talked to them, but never had any intention of applying for the job, nor did they intend to hire me. I gave them my sales pitch about how the superintendent's profession was advancing and what a club could be with the right person in charge. They weren't aware of how the profession had progressed. They didn't have anyone in mind like the person I was describing and asked if I'd be interested."

The elder Williams said his career has benefited from the fact that he and a handful of others were among the few university-educated superintendents who were stressing the need to operate a golf course as a business back in the 1930s, '40s and '50s.

"Superintendents tended to be hands-on guys back then," he said. "Many became superintendents after selling their farm to a developer who built the golf course. Few liked to work in an office. They rarely went into the clubhouse or attended board meetings. There were a few of us who were giving educational seminars on budgeting, long-range plans, and office systems. It was largely an era of trying to take guys out of overalls and into the office."

GCSAA experienced a shakeup at the staff level when the executive secretary resigned under pressure during the elder Williams' term back in 1958. The association underwent a similar staff change two years ago.

"The biggest issue was getting the staff back in line with what we [superintendents] wanted them to do," Robert said. "There were only three employees back then compared to 74 now. But shake-ups seem to occur in seven-year cycles. It always seems to come down to a weak board of directors and an aggressive staff person who the board lets step in and make decisions."

Bruce said he remembered the "pomp and circumstance" surrounding his father's election to the presidency back in 1958 and

seeing a magazine cover that featured Vice President Richard Nixon and his father at a meeting in Washington.

"I grew up around a lot of superintendents and it's had a lifelong impact. Seventy people who have worked with my father [including past presidents Theodore Woehrle, 1977, and Bill Roberts, 1992] have eventually managed courses of their own. That's made it a lot easier to work my way into the business and network."

When he took over Bob O'Link, the elder Williams inherited a Donald Ross-designed course that hadn't changed significantly since it opened in 1916. Over the years,

the elder Williams oversaw many improvements, including relocating bunkers, building lakes, rebuilding tees, updating the driving range, establishing a tree planting program to replace the 600 plants lost to Dutch Elm disease, developing an ornamental planting program, and installing a new irrigation system.

Bruce worked for the company that installed that first automated irrigation system in 1970. Prior to that he had helped his father summers on the course. Over the years he worked at several golf properties, including the Highland Park District, Fort Sheridan, Onwentsia Club in Lake Forest, Ill., Sharon

(Ohio) Golf Club and Glen View Golf Club in Golf, Ill.

But after seeing the demands his father's profession made on his family life, Bruce originally thought a superintendent's career wasn't for him. He earned a bachelor's degree in English and speech at Baldwin-Wallace College in Berea, Ohio, and taught for a couple years.

"I enjoyed studying English," Bruce said, "but I knew I couldn't make a living teaching or that it was a career I could do the rest of my life. I kept thinking about the things I'd done, the areas where I had experience, and what I enjoyed most. I kept coming back to

golf course superintendent."

With his parents' help, Bruce enrolled in Michigan State University's two-year turf management program, where he studied under Dr. Ken Payne and received the outstanding student award in his second year. After graduation, he worked for his father for a season and was readying to move onto another course when his father decided to retire.

"Dad's recommendation would not have been to hire me, his sense of fair play wouldn't have allowed it," Bruce said. "But the members wanted someone in the same mold and offered me the job."

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Membership tops bylaw decisions

Continued from page 1

Lawrence, Kan., and was approved by the national board of directors at its October meeting.

"We're trying to strengthen the local and national associations by doing this," said GCSAA President Gary Grigg. "Of the 95 chapter delegates at the Lawrence meeting, 90-plus were in favor."

There was opposition to the original Chapter Relations Committee proposal that would have required all head superintendents to hold dual membership

rather than grandfathering existing members, Grigg said.

"The initial idea that everyone be required to join GCSAA was a problem for many of us," said Bob Mitchell, head superintendent at The Greenbrier in White Sulphur Springs, W. Va., and delegate of that state's local chapter. "But pretty much everyone agreed on the July 1, 1997, compromise."

Sandy Queen, past president of the Kansas GCSA and head superintendent at Overland Park Golf Course, said he was one of

several people named to the Chapter Relations Committee two years ago who was likely to question any GCSAA efforts to extend its reach.

"I was skeptical at first," he said. "But eventually we came to the conclusion that if we wanted a strong national association it was in everyone's best interests for everyone to be members of both organizations."

As for the second proposed bylaw change, Grigg noted that GCSAA's 2,000 assistant superintendents currently pay the same \$210 annual fee charged the 10,000 Class A and B head super-

intendents. This is a hardship for many assistants since clubs are more likely to pay GCSAA dues for their head superintendents rather than their assistants and the \$210 is often a financial strain on an assistant's salary, he added. In theory, reducing dues to \$105 for assistants would attract more of them to the association.

"We'll take a hit on our budget over the next few years," Grigg said. "But we could eventually see twice as many assistants join. That will help us in the long run."

Meanwhile, GCSAA lawyers have been inspecting the association's often-ignored chap-

ter affiliation agreement and recommended several modifications, mostly having to do with protecting the national and local associations from lawsuits. No membership vote is required to alter the chapter-relations agreement and the national board recently voted to accept the modifications. To remain affiliated with GCSAA, local chapters must now:

- Legally incorporate.
- Purchase directors and officials liability insurance [between \$300 and \$600 annually if purchased through GCSAA].
- Require that the majority of local chapter board of director members be superintendents.

"We want to keep this a superintendent's organization," Grigg said. "Otherwise, the affiliation agreement will remain pretty much the same."

Beginning in January, local chapters will have two years to comply with the new affiliation pact — a one-year reaffiliation period, followed by three-month grace and nine-month probationary periods. If a chapter ever falls out of compliance, it will have a year to get back in line or lose its GCSAA affiliation.

As for Grigg, he will turn over the presidency to Bruce Williams of Bob O'Link Golf Club in Highland Park, Ill., at February's annual meeting. It has been a hectic year for Grigg, who began his term last February on the same day he was appointed head superintendent at Royal Poinciana Golf Club in Naples, Fla. The course is just finishing up a 36-hole renovation that included rebuilding all the greens, constructing new tees and bunkers and installing additional drainage.

"My message all year has been that superintendents need to become part of the decision-making process at the local and national levels," Grigg said.

He said he has spent much of his term carrying on the efforts to improve chapter relations initiated by his immediate predecessor, Randy Nichols of Dunwoody, Ga. A chapter relations department headed by GCSAA staffer Don Bretthauer and a regular newsletter for affiliated chapters are among the fruits of those labors, Grigg said.

Williamses

Continued from last page

Inevitably, there have been comparisons between the father and son who have overseen Bob O'Link the past 40 years.

"It's part of the deal," Bruce said. "For the first six to eight years I was referred to as Bob's son. That started to change between years eight and 10. After that, he was referred to as Bruce's son. He always told me to just bide my time, be patient and my day would come. It's different when you take over from anyone who has a reputation like my father's. You're not trying to walk on water, you're just trying to keep your head above it."

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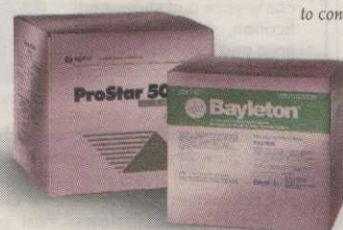


Water-soluble packets reduce applicator exposure.

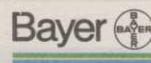
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