

# GOLF COURSE NEWS

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## INSIDE

### Habitat & Humanity

USGA's Wildlife Links awards first three grants for university research, publications ..... 18

### Q&A with The General

Arnold Palmer and sidekick Ed Seay share their perspectives on the world of course design ..... 35

### Legally Speaking

Employee lawsuits can prove a money pit for club managers ..... 47

## Winter hangover lingers in Midwest

Crown damage, desiccation rampant

By MARK LESLIE

Superintendents from Minnesota and Michigan to Iowa and Illinois were up against the wall this spring, their courses belted with desiccation, crown damage and direct low-temperature kill that set season openings back weeks.

"Instead of having March, April, May, we're having March, March, March," said Bruce Williams of Bob O'Link Golf Club in Highland Park, Ill., president of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA). "Harsh winter kill seems endemic from Colorado through Kansas, Iowa and areas like that."

"When we first started

greening up in late April — which is very late for us — all the high spots came out green and all the low spots were dead stone-cold dormant," said Dick Stuntz of Alvarado Country Club in Lawrence, Kan., attributing damage to a snowmelt that froze again. "Guys with ryegrass fairways lost it. For those of us with zoysiagrass, the loss isn't large but it will be a terribly slow recovery."

While Jerry Faubel of Saginaw (Mich.) Country Club was "very fortunate and escaped damage" because he added drainage in key areas last year, the former GCSAA president said: "Courses throughout

Continued on page 26

## Jacksonville restoration still in limbo

By HAL PHILLIPS

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — An extremely complicated turf war has developed here concerning property that used to be a golf course, and may be again. Officials at the Florida Communities Trust (FCT) in Tallahassee will decide this month whether the city of Jacksonville will retain funds to restore a golf course on a controversial urban parcel known as Blue Cypress.

Once a privately owned golf facility called University Golf & Country Club, the Blue Cypress land was

Continued on page 44



Weather Station Report pp. 31-34

## Survey: Benefits on the rise

By TERRY BUCHEN

Since this decade began, I have been taking a random survey of superintendents regarding the fringe benefits they receive. I have some interesting results to report.

The first question I usually ask is whether they benefit, in both wages and fringe benefits, as a result of their most recent job change. The answer is an overwhelming "yes". Most supers believe they are underpaid and the only way to improve themselves professionally is to make a job change for more money and benefits.

Everyone willing to share the "before/after" comparison of their most old/new jobs enhanced their total package significantly. The average tenure of a super prior to the 1980s was 10 to 12 years. Today a super will stay 4 to 5 years until a better opportunity

Continued on page 24



SPIKE MARKS, WEAR AND BALL ROLL

The differences between metal spikes, plastic spikes and flat soles have never been quantified scientifically — until now. Penn State professors reveal the data, page 15.

### COURSE MAINTENANCE

Researcher discusses putting greens & water .... 15  
Focus on Squaw Creek's Mike Carlson ..... 16  
New GCN Book Shelf filling up ..... 29

### COURSE DEVELOPMENT

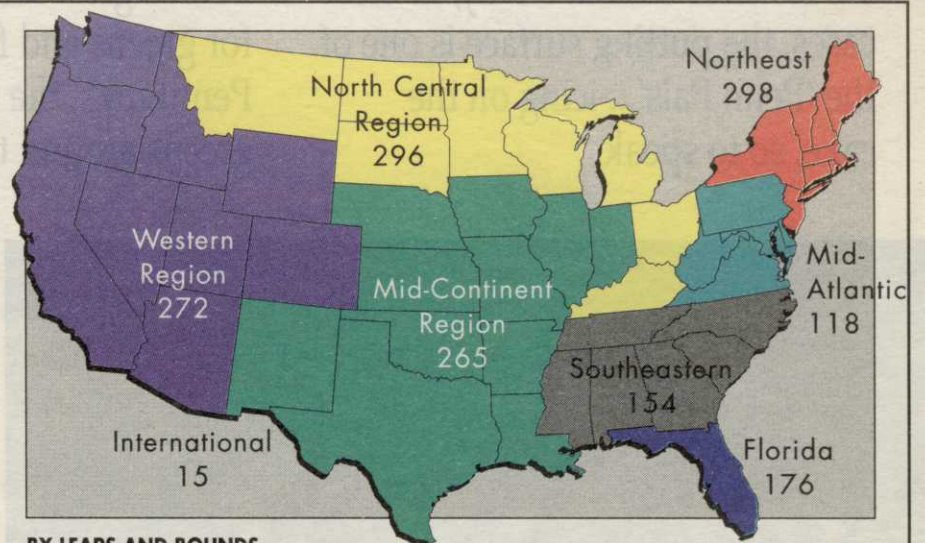
GCN Development Letter a 'must read' ..... 11  
Builders find trouble collecting bills ..... 35  
Nicklaus News: Gary joins Jack and Jack Jr. .... 42

### COURSE MANAGEMENT

Masters moves aggressively in Southeast ..... 47  
Ohio clubs computerize marketing campaigns ... 48  
KSL expands into Georgia territory ..... 62

### SUPPLIER BUSINESS

Belgian firm establishes U.S. presence ..... 51  
Milorganite celebrates birthday with honors ..... 52  
TerraBiotics adds Hydretain to product line ..... 54



### BY LEAPS AND BOUNDS

Just five years old, the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System, as administered by the New York State Audubon Society, has experienced astounding growth. For an update on one of golf's most striking environmental success stories, see page 15.

## Palmer Mgmt. has grand expansion plans

By PETER BLAIS

ORLANDO, Fla. — Arnold Palmer Golf Management, operator of 17 courses nationwide, plans to eventually bring as many as 500 courses under its management wing through a variety of mergers, acquisitions, and other arrangements, according to company President Peter Nanula.

Palmer Golf recently launched its campaign by reaching an agreement with Pennsylvania-based Toll Brothers Inc., a leading developer of luxury homes, to operate courses at Toll Brothers' developments and jointly acquire troubled resi-

dential golf communities nationwide.

Palmer-managed Bay Hill here also hosted a summit meeting in March when the heads of 15 management companies with portfolios ranging from five to 30 golf facilities discussed the topic of consolidation within the management industry. The recent acquisition of 43-course Golf Enterprises Inc. by National Golf Properties, the real estate investment trust established by the founders of giant American Golf Corp., was also a major topic.

Nanula told the Orange County Busi-

Continued on page 14



# Job benefits boom making superintendents more mobile

Continued from page 1

comes along. Most supers interviewed felt that after 3 to 4 years, they were taken for granted and the super who replaced them always received more wages and benefits.

Another "take-it-for-granted" theory is the new super will get the equipment and maintenance budget increase the superintendent who left couldn't get. And the super who left for greener pastures will get more money and benefits, plus increased capital and maintenance budget considerations compared to his/her predecessor.

Let's take a closer look at the fringe benefit package for all types of golf courses:

✓ Paid vacations, holidays, and sick leave are pretty much standard in the industry for the majority of supers;

✓ As are dues paid to the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA), local chapter dues, conferences/seminars/chapter meeting expenses and golfing privileges for the super and his/her family members, including using the rest of the facility.

✓ Supers are usually allowed one group of golfing guests per week or, at worst, every other week.

✓ Medical insurance, for the entire family, is common with most golf courses, but becoming less common with public

entities because of the large expense involved (Quite a few management companies take away health insurance for the hourly worker as the first way to cut costs).

✓ Dental insurance and life insurance are in slow decline, because of the state of insurance industry premiums. Life insurance, when offered, usually equals up to twice a super's annual salary. Disability insurance is usually available as part of a life-insurance policy.

✓ A vehicle provided by the golf course, a monthly vehicle allowance or a combination of the two is common. Vehicle allowances vary but usually take the form of a monthly fee paid to the super who either leases or purchases the vehicle while making monthly payments. The super usually provides for insurance, while gasoline and maintenance are provided by the golf course. When the course provides a vehicle, the course pays all costs for the lease/purchase, fuel, insurance and maintenance. When a super leases or purchases a vehicle he/she sometimes will charge for mileage in lieu of a vehicle allowance, at the maximum allowed rate of 31 cents per mile for all business-related travel. Under this arrangement, the super will pay for all fuel, maintenance and insurance.

✓ Meals are furnished, more often than not, during working hours only, and at

special functions as they occur.

✓ Bonuses vary from the traditional Christmas affair, which is common at most courses, to the annual performance bonus which is sometimes tied in to staying within the maintenance budget. Bonuses are also given as part of a profit-sharing program, at development-type courses, and/or for just doing a good job.

✓ Clothing allowances are becoming more common, seeing as the superintendent wearing the golf course logo identifies him/her as an employee and helps generate income from sales in the pro/golf shop. Items not provided by the golf course are usually available at cost.

✓ Pension plans are also becoming more common as some are provided by the employer. Many will allow for employee contributions as well. A few are the matching-fund type where the course matches contributions made by the super.

The 401(k) plan is becoming more popular as the employer oversees all contributions and investments. Some pension plans will let you take it with you, if you change jobs, but it must be reinvested for income-tax purposes promptly. Most pension plans do not tax any money until it is taken out (usually if the super is in a lower tax bracket) when they retire beginning at age 59 1/2 years old. However, they must begin withdrawing by

age 70. Most plans are now fully vested in 4 to 5 years.

Some new trends include:

• Discounts — on housing lots, or completed houses and lots on development-type courses.

• Deferred compensation — where the plans are fully vested in 4 to 5 years and are taxed when they are withdrawn, similar to pension plans. Supers may contribute to them. Some private deferred compensation plans are non-funded, fully vested plans, and thus do not grow as an investment and are usually a non-contributing type.

• Stock options — In publicly held companies involved in land-development, courses are also a viable benefit. Some land development courses, because of their many connections with mortgage banking firms, offer supers deal on mortgage loans for houses around the golf course, or for off-course housing as well.

• Spouse travel to the GCSAA International Golf Course Conference & Show is usually not paid except by private clubs. Housing on the golf course grounds, or even an off-course house arrangement, is not common. When it's offered, it's usually at private clubs.

• Another new trend is direct deposit of pay checks to checking and savings accounts and deducting moneys for U.S. Savings Bonds from a super's check.

## Same Idea, But Ours is a Little Easier to Swallow

Ever faced with "water-in-the-cup" problems? Here's a better remedy—use Par Aide's exclusive Cup Hole Cleaner, a syringe-action device that literally "pulls" water from the hole in seconds. So banish the turkey baster, sponges—or cocktail straws—from your greens kit and call your dealer today. Because when it pours, it reigns.



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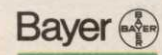
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