

Hal Phillips,
editor

GCN to go global in '97

The Global Economy™ has become one of the today's most ubiquitous and, by consequence, obnoxious catch phrases. However, it's impossible to ignore the ever-expanding bounds of the marketplace. Our marketplace, the golf course marketplace, is no exception. Superintendents are taking their skills abroad; developers are targeting ever-more accessible but nevertheless exotic locales; and manufacturers are shipping product all over the globe. Every time a golf course opens around the world, opportunity expands.

In response, we're launching *Golf Course News International* at January's BIGGA (British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association) Show in Harrogate, England. Scheduled to publish six times in 1997, *GCN International* will feature management, development and maintenance news from every corner of the globe — delivered to qualified, industry readers in every corner of the globe.

There are more than 15,000 courses in Europe, Canada, Asia-Pacific, South and North Africa, Central and South America; *GCN International* will be read by top decision-makers at every one of them.

The Asia-Pacific edition of *Golf Course News*, published quarterly since 1993, will become part of this new International edition. For those dedicated Asia-Pacific readers and advertisers who fear their market will not receive the attention to which they've grown accustomed, worry not. With six issues instead of four, Asia-Pacific will receive the same thorough coverage — plus news, trends and analysis from golf markets on six of seven continents (sorry, *GCN Antarctica* still in planning).

A global news source for a global economy. Annoying phrase, but an idea whose time has come.

...

What else do we have up our sleeves here at *GCN*? Plenty. After months of feet-dragging and mind-numbing delays, we're finally ready to launch *Golf Course News On-Line*... well, almost.

The on-line incarnation of *GCN* — at the website address www.golfcoursenews.com — will appear some time between

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Course maintenance trends coming full circle?

The Internetting, weather station-watching, Global Positioning Systems-installing, genetic engineering golf industry is so excited about and focused on its superhighway into the future ... are we ignoring our past?

When Will Durant said, "Most of us spend too much time on the last 24 hours and too little on the last 6,000 years," he could have been fingering golf. Specifically, he easily could have had in mind compost use as top dressing, or spikeless golf shoes.

Two of the sizzling topics of the mid-1990s were indeed hot topics of — breathe deeply, now — the early 1900s.

Peruse with me the book, "*Turf for Golf Courses*," published in 1917 and authored by U.S. Department of Agriculture agronomist (a real word) Charles V. Piper and agronomist Russell A. Oakley. Some 89 years ago they wrote:

Mark Leslie,
managing editor

• "We believe that if we were forced to use for all purposes only one form of fertilizer, we would take compost. Nothing that we have done has given as good results as top dressing with compost; apparently it can be used with good results at almost any time of the year. Piles of compost on different parts of a course are real safeguards against many of the dangers that may arise, and the truly remarkable results that a light top dressing will accomplish are astounding."

• "As a dressing for turf, a good compost can be prepared by piling sod in alternative layers with manure, leaves and leaf mold."

• "Compost prepared in this way is so valuable, and at the same time relatively so cheap, that every club should see to it that an adequate supply is available at all times for use on its course."

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Letters

NTEP DIRECTOR MORRIS OFFERS THANKS

To the editor:

On Aug. 6, President Clinton signed the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 1997. This bill provides continued support of the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP) and increases the level of support to \$55,000 — a 10 percent increase. This support allows the NTEP to continue its arrangement with the USDA at the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, Beltsville, Md.

As many of you know, the USDA, Agricultural Research Service (ARS), proposed elimination of the support for NTEP in the FY97 budget. However, as a result of the overwhelming response from the turfgrass industry, the money was included in the USDA appropriations legislation by the appropriate congressional subcommittees and signed by the President.

The NTEP wishes to thank all those who wrote or called the USDA and/or their Congressional representatives. As a result, the USDA-ARS received more letters and calls about this one issue than any other in recent history. Your efforts did not go unnoticed!

The NTEP also wishes to acknowledge the efforts and contributions of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA), Turfgrass Producers International (TPI) and the Georgia Agribusiness Council. These three organizations used their resources to inform key Congressional subcommittee members of the importance of funding for turfgrass research and NTEP. We are appreciative of their efforts and support.

Kevin Morris
director, NTEP
Beltsville, Md.

Ed. — In the spirit of putting up holiday decorations ever more early, we offer the following holiday verse. Besides, as *GCN* publishes its annual *Buyer's Guide* in December, the poem below would not have been appropriate in January. So, season's greetings!

'T WAS THE NIGHT BEFORE MOWING

'Twas the night before mowing, and all through the land,
Not a mechanic was working, not even old Stan.

The tools were all hung by their benches with care,
In hopes that nothing would break down for repair.

The operators were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of turf care danced in their heads,
And the boss in his coveralls, and I in my smock,
Had just settled down for a nip from my crock.

When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,
We sprang from our chairs to see what was the matter.
Away to the doorway I took off like a bat,
Tore open the door and tripped on the cat.

The stars on the crest of the newly cut lawn,
Gave a luster of sparkles and a wish to belong.
When what to my wondering eyes made me shutter
But a miniature mower with nine tiny cutters.
With a little old operator so lively and odd,
I knew in a moment it must be Saint Sod.

More noisy than stock cars his mowers they came,
And he whistled and shouted and called them by name;
"Now Toro! Now Jakes! Now Progressive! and Brouwer!
On Befco! On Landpride! On Bush Hog! and Rhino!
To the top of the hill! To the side of the wall,
Now cut away, trim away, mow away all!"

As dry leaves that before when the grass is too long,
When met with an obstacle, is where tri-decks belong.
So onto the fields the mowers they flew,
With a sleigh full of blades and, of course, Saint Sod too.

And then in a twinkling I heard from the shade,
The turning and humming of each little blade.
As I drew in my head and was turning around,
Down the laneway Saint Sod was coming along.

He was dressed all in coveralls from his head to his feet,
And his clothes were all covered in clippings and peat.
A bundle of parts he had flung on his back,
And he looked like a salesman just opening his pack.

His eyes, how they twinkled! His hair cut so neat,
His chin not too pointed, his lap top not cheap.
His droll little mouth was drawn up in a smile,
You could tell at a glance that he wanted a sale.

The stump of a pen he held tight in one hand,
And the ink it was leaking was all over his hand.
He had a broad face and a mid forties bulge,
That hurt when he bowled and more when he ran.

He was chubby and plump, and was looking for cake,
And I laughed when I saw him, for being out of shape.
A wink of his eye and a ring of his bell,
Soon gave me to know he had nothing to sell.

He spoke not a word but went straight to his work,
And filled all the orders, then turned with a jerk,
And over his belly and not seeing his toes,
And giving a nod, off the mower he rose.

He sprang to his tractor, to his mowers gave whistle,
And away they all mowed through the weeds and the thistle.

But I heard him exclaim ere he drove out of sight:
"Happy Christmas to all,
May your mowing be bright!"

J. Ray Winoski
Progressive Turf Equipment Inc.
Seaforth, Ont., Canada

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Leslie comment

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Now check this advertisement from 1921 (and depicted in the September-October issue of the U.S. Golf Association Green Section *Record*): "Save the Green. Get rid of those destructive 'spikes.' Have your shoes equipped with Steady Man Soles and Heels [made] of sturdy rubber. The

raised rubber studs give you the firm stance you need. No occasion to change shoes for luncheon or between games. Steady Man Soles and Heels do not disfigure rugs or floor, nor tear the turf or green."

These shoes were manufactured by The Stedman Products Co. in South Braintree, Mass. Sadly, Stedman Products no longer exists. I guess not enough people bought their shoes —

"soft-spikes" or otherwise.

Today, we have university research students donning metal spikes and soft-spikes and walking on turf plots to discover the damage, or lack thereof, of the two shoes.

Today, with the likes of Sciota and Muirfield Village leading the way in the realm of private clubs, we have nine Tulsa-area public golf courses banning metal spikes. We have

the Fort Collins and five Aurora, Colo., municipal courses mandating soft-spiked shoes. Superintendents' chapters are banning metal spikes in their tournaments. The tide continues its onward surge.

Some 82 years after Walter Hagen won the U.S. Open wearing hobnail shoes and began the long life of metal shoes and the malingering death of many a blade of grass,

leaders in golf are "pioneering" the transition to "safe" footwear. Need we even perform those studies to determine effectiveness?

If we could track down Mr. Stedman from South Braintree (who'd be about 120 years old or so) we'd heap upon him the Distinguished Service Award, the Mendenhall Award, the Old Tom Morris Award, the Award for the Shod-challenged — you name it.

Meanwhile, researchers at Cornell and elsewhere are digging into the nether world of microbial communities in compost.

"It definitely works — for whatever reason," says Dr. Eric Nelson of compost.

Eric, meet Charles Piper and Russell Oakley.

Let me see: Since 1917 we have broken the sound barrier, regularly; put men on the moon; spoken directly to people on the far side of the earth, as if we were face-to-face; stored gazillions of bits of information in little computer hard drives; built structures that scrape the sky; launched telescopes into the far reaches of our solar system; deciphered some of the core elements of life — even sent mail to Moscow for 60 cents.

But we have to debate simple things like compost and soft-spiked golf shoes?

How about just running alongside that swiftly moving bandwagon and hopping aboard before it leaves the IQ-challenged behind?

•••

Can better putting surfaces mean higher greens fees?

Possibly, says Dale Miller, director of maintenance at Barton Creek Club & Conference Center in Austin, Texas.

Barton Creek commands a \$120 greens fee, but if the putting surfaces are slow and bumpy, members and resort guests "don't look at that fee as justifiable," Miller said.

Now that he has converted his greens to a mini-dwarf Bermudagrass, he said: "We may be able to push up the greens fee a little because play is so good."

While four or five of Barton Creek's members didn't want to convert the greens, "now 99.9 percent are more than happy that we did," Miller added. "They are ecstatic about it."

•••

A fact to consider from Jack Swayze, who with PGA Tour pro Steve Elkington is operating the company Major Landscapes: "Two thousand trees is a standard number on an 18-hole golf course. The water used by young trees the first year is insignificant. But 20 years later they are consuming 20,000 gallons a day."



Blackwolf Run in Kohler, Wisconsin, features two 18-hole Pete Dye-designed championship courses.

Beautiful landscaping and attention to detail define both the Blackwolf Run golf courses and nearby 5-diamond-rated American Club hotel—both owned by The Kohler Company.



This Norwegian farm building was disassembled, numbered, and shipped to Blackwolf Run to serve as a rest station.