

BRIEFS



**NORTH CENTRAL EXPO READIED**

ST. CHARLES, Ill.— The Illinois Turfgrass Foundation (ITF) will host the North Central Turfgrass Exposition, Dec. 3-5, at Pheasant Run Resort here. Pre-conference seminars will be offered Dec. 2 at the same location. ITF will hold an awards luncheon, Wednesday, Dec. 4 at which the 1996 ITF Distinguished Service Award will be presented, along with scholarships for undergraduate study. For information contact the ITF headquarters at 11 S. LaSalle St., Suite 1400, Chicago, Ill. 60603; phone 312-201-0101.

**IGM HONORS ROWE**

MELBOURNE, Fla. — Michael Rowe, superintendent at the Aquarina Country Club here, has earned a Total Quality Management (TQM) award from International Golf Management (IGM) for the overall quality of the course. "The overall quality, conditions, appearance and customer satisfaction at Aquarina is second to none," said Scott Zakany, vice president and general manager. Rowe joined IGM as the superintendent assigned to Aquarina Country Club in August 1995 when the club was in the grow-in stage.



**COOK PREPARES AWARDS BANQUET**

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. — The Seventh Annual Turfgrass Awards Banquet will be held this year at 5 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 9, at Cook Campus Center here. It will honor the 1996 graduates of the Rutgers Professional Golf Turf Management School, Advanced Golf Turf Symposium attendees, Cook College undergraduate and graduate scholarship recipients, and honorees in the turfgrass industry. For more information, or to register, write the Cook College Office of Continuing Professional Education, P.O. Box 231, New Brunswick, N.J. 08903; 908-932-9271.

**IRRIGATION SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED**

The American Society of Irrigation Consultants (ASIC) has selected three students to receive 1996 scholarships. They are Tim Grey, who is in the landscape architecture program at the University of Florida; Jerry Donaldson, who is majoring in landscape design and minoring in construction management at Colorado State University; and Katy W. Harrell, who is studying landscape architecture at the University of Georgia.

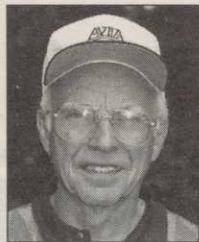
FIRST OF TWO PARTS

# Managing personnel a challenge often unmet

By ROBERT D. CHABOURNE

What's the difference between a good golf course superintendent and a great superintendent? "I have no statistics, but when a superintendent fails to move up, or loses the position he has, I feel I'm safe in saying he was probably deficient in some area of managing people," concludes Dr. Donald R. Marion, retired professor of resource economics at the University of Massachusetts (UMass), who teaches personnel management at the annual UMass Winter Turf School.

Marion's message to superintendents honing their skills, and assistant superintendents grooming their resumes, has changed over the years.



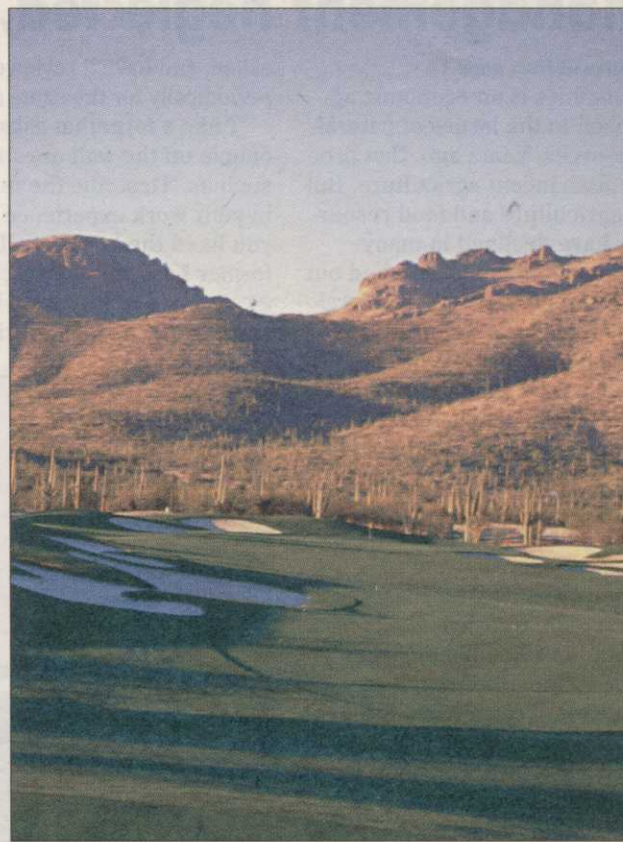
Dr. Donald Marion

"Back in the '70s we used to stress the routing, automating, and mechanizing of tasks as the complete answer to a smooth golf course operation," said Marion. "What's different today is the expanded role of the employee in the workplace." When asked to arrange lists of job considerations such as pay, promotion, benefits, responsibility, job involvement, job security, appreciation, tact in applying discipline, and assistance in dealing with personal problems, workers tend to rate appreciation and the degree to which management involves them in the overall process higher in importance than pay and benefits.

"The teaching point to superintendents is not how their employees arrange their lists," Marion said, "but how they are arranged in comparison to the superintendents' list. Ideally, results that are about the same would predict a smoothly running operation."

Marion, who holds bachelor's and master's degrees in agri-economics from Cornell University and a PhD from UMass, has seen his own field change with the times. Resource

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**MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES**

The Raven Golf Club at Sabino Springs in Tucson, Ariz., integrates wildlife conservation with urban development. The community features nine natural springs, each creating a riparian habitat within the fragile ecological area of the Sonoran Desert. Designed by Robert Trent Jones Jr., the project focused on protecting these areas to ensure they would continue to support a broad spectrum of wildlife and plant species. Desert wildlife species were relocated to natural protected wilderness areas adjacent to the property, or placed with an adoption program. Harris Environmental Group Inc. of Tucson also performed many duties vital to maintaining the ecosystem, including mitigation of the sewer easement and work with the local water company on location of the booster station and reservoir.



Lake Nona Golf Club superintendent Brett Harris (front) chats with assistant Murray Russell, who is operating their street cleaner.

# Brett Harris' war on thatch

By TERRY BUCHEN

ORLANDO, Fla. — A street sweeper on a golf course? Yes. Brett Harris, superintendent at Lake Nona Golf Club here, has perfected thatch removal on his 419 Bermudagrass tees and fairways with aggressive tricks of the trade that include using a street sweeper.

"I discovered the Lay-Mor [Street Sweeper] while sitting at a stop light when it was doing street sweeping," Harris said. "I looked at it up close, and what is so unique about it is that the brush is made of 50 percent steel wire bristles and 50 percent nylon brush material. The unit is self-propelled, turns in a short radius and a similar unit can be rented that will fit on the front of a golf course front-end loader tractor."

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# Turfgrass, molecular genetics and the future

By MARK LESLIE

EAST LANSING, Mich. — Citing "several-fold results" from the first international Workshop on Biotechnology of Turfgrass, scientists are excited about the future of genetic engineering and biological controls.

"Look over your shoulder and see where we were 10 years ago with bentgrasses, and that [progress] was just with conventional plant breeding," said Dr. Michael Kenna of the U.S. Golf Association Green Section, which co-sponsored the workshop along with host Michigan State University (MSU). "I think we will see some turfgrass varieties in which molecular genetics made a significant contribution."

"We can expect breakthrough after breakthrough very quickly," said Dr. Miriam Sticklen, an MSU biotechnologist who helped coordinate the three-day event. "In a decade there will be a big revolution in turfgrass maintenance, saving time and money and improving the environment."

Already, according to MSU Professor Jan Zeebaart, who spoke at the workshop, there is work on genes that can make grass shorter and thicker. And scientists are researching other genes with herbicide and pathogen resistance.

"We have several other useful genes, but because we are talking about patents, I can't discuss them now," Sticklen said.

Kenna tempered his assessment of the future. Acknowledging that Rutgers and Michigan State have bentgrasses that are resistant to the chemicals Finale or Roundup, he said: "The problem is, the companies that own the patents



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# Management neglected, but not by UMass' Marion

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economics is an economic approach to the issues of natural resources. Years ago, that pretty much meant agriculture. But as agriculture and food resources have declined in many areas, the field has reached out to embrace such other natural resources as turfgrass.

Marion feels his instruction is equally valid and timely for superintendents nationwide, with one exception. In Northern climates golf courses are seasonal, and while seasonal workers do often return each year, management approach and style can vary between full-time workers and a more transient work force.

Marion takes Winter Turf School students through an overview of supervision through the specifics of hiring, training, motivation, management style, communications, performance evaluations, discipline, budgeting/cost control, and public relations/politics.

**Supervision:** Know the difference between leadership and management, Marion said. Leaders direct, but not much else. Superintendents manage: plan, organize, staff, direct, control. There is a mission statement ("Why do we exist?") espoused by golf course owners or boards of directors. Toward that end, the manager has goals and objectives. Goals are steps along the way (a new irrigation system, rebuilt tees, resurfaced cart paths). Objectives are the specific tasks involved in reaching goals, and they have time limits until they are accomplished. "This is the 'how' of the mission statement, and it falls to the superintendent," said Marion.

**Style:** "It's the old 'X & Y' theory," said Marion, explaining, "Think of 'x' as the old Army 1st sergeant and 'y' as the diplomat. There are all kinds of examples in between, but our general drift is toward the diplomat. Employees are starved for appreciation and thanks, and as they become more educated and aware they want to be more involved in the process. In this respect we've moved closer to the Japanese form of employment."

**Hiring:** Have a job description for every position, he said. It should be thorough, but not exceed one page. The applicant should read it, and it should be made part of his records jacket. It also serves as an employer's protection that the job was fully explained in the event the applicant is hired and later found unable to perform his/her duties.

Have the applicant fill out an application. Use a standard form or design one, but have the course's attorney examine it to assure only legal questions are

asked, and have it reviewed periodically for the same reason.

"I like a form that asks a couple off-the-wall questions such as, 'Describe the manager in your work experience that you liked the least'; or: 'If your former boss were contacted as a reference, what would he say about you?'," added Marion.

**Conduct an interview in search of three answers:**

How well can he do the job? (ability). How well will he do the job? (motivation). How will he fit in? (suitability).

Give each candidate the good and the bad points of the job (if grooming grass is involved, count on working in inclement

weather and on weekends).

Thank every applicant for applying. Tell them when you plan to make your decision. Tell them they will be hearing from you and see that they do. Keep in mind that each applicant has served you whether they are selected or not. They have provided you with choices.

IN NOVEMBER...

Next month's final installment will cover the issues of training, supervision, communications, discipline, budgeting, cost control, personnel handbooks, employee performance evaluations and public relations.

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