

BRIEFS



STEVINSON RANCH A SIGNATURE TRACK

STEVINSON, Calif. — Stevinson Ranch's Savannah course has achieved Audubon Signature status, as bestowed by Audubon International, and was presented this honor at a ceremony held Nov. 3. Stevinson Ranch was the first golf course outside of Florida and one of only four golf courses in the nation to receive Audubon Signature status. During the building of the Savannah Course, 100 acres of wetlands were restored and an unprecedented 120 new acres of wetlands were created.

FTGA ELECTS BATES

TAMPA, Fla. — The Florida Turfgrass Association (FTGA) has elected Roy Bates president of its more than 1,200-member organization. Bates is superintendent at Imperial Golf Club in Naples, where he supervises 32 people at the 36-hole facility. In the past few years, six of his assistants have become superintendents

A member of the FTGA since 1981, Bates has held a position on the FTGA's board of directors since 1988, serving as vice president in 1995-96.

HAHN SUCCEEDS FEINDT

ROCHESTER, N.Y. — The retirement of Bob Feindt from Country Club of Rochester (see story page 16) has brought a shakeup at other clubs as well. Joe Hahn, a staple for 14 years at



Joe Hahn

Oak Hill Country Club in Fairport, succeeded Feindt when Feindt retired on Dec. 31, and John Gasper of Ridgewood Country Club in Paramus, N.J., is replacing

Hahn. Hahn served as a director of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America for a term beginning in 1992 and has served on several of its committees.

IGM CITES MARSHALL

MERRITT ISLAND, Fla. — Bob Marshall, superintendent at The Savannahs golf course here, has earned a Total Quality Management (TQM) award from International Golf Management (IGM) for the overall quality of the Brevard County-owned golf course. Before coming to the county-owned golf course a year ago, Marshall served four months as superintendent at Palm-Aire Spa & Racquet Resort in Pompano Beach.

Empowerment proves effective on grounds crews

By MARK LESLIE

LINCOLNSHIRE, Ill. — Autonomy and empowerment are the operative words in assembling the most effective employees, according to Pebble Beach Co. Vice President Ted Horton.

Horton was one of several national figures offering succinct and deliberate advice to superintendents and other golf course managers at Public Golf Forum here in October.

Pebble Beach received a federal grant to develop a training program for its 1,000-plus employees. Drawing from that

study, Horton has implemented a plan encompassing partially to fully empowered teams of workers, "town meetings," comprehensive training for managers and crews alike, and using managers as trainers, among other measures. All of this to "master peak performance."

"We're talking about autonomy and empowerment," he said. "I have several teams that are fully empowered. It frees me to work with teams not yet fully empowered and to concentrate more on day-to-day business."

Horton urged managers to create a

standard, then lean on or improve upon that standard. He recommended that the superintendent, after hours, walk his crew to training on the course — for instance, to a putting green where he can discuss what he wants and how to accomplish it.

"Give freedom to your best employees to do the job right," he said. "Coach and direct, but give them freedom and get out of the way."

The heart of the Pebble Beach system? "Feedback: The Breakfast of Communi-

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OTF takes leap of faith into future

By MARK LESLIE

COLUMBUS, Ohio — The new president of the Ohio Turfgrass Foundation (OTF), who at one time oversaw all six City of Dayton golf courses, intends to



Hank Chafin

lead the organization through the initial steps of its new strategic long-range plan calling for "major changes in how we function."

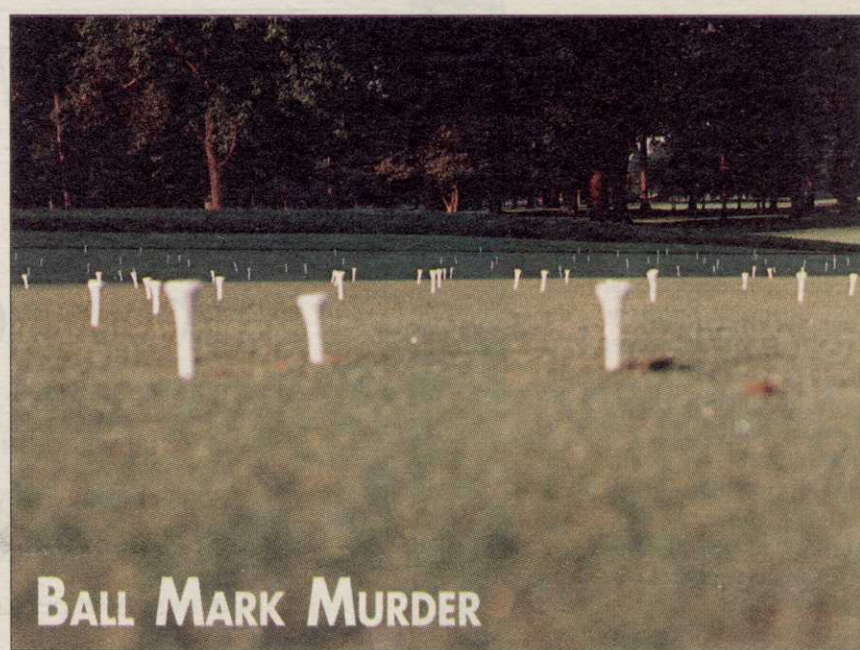
"I devoted a lot of time to OTF in 1996 and will do whatever is necessary this year," said Hank Chafin of Dayton, who stepped into the presidency at the OTF Conference and Show here in December. The board of directors adopted the strategic plan in November.

An accomplished golfer, Chafin has been in the industry 33 years, including 1988-93 as general superintendent over the six Dayton municipal facilities. He was superintendent at Dayton's Community Golf Course, Madden Golf Course and then Kittyhawk Golf Center from 1975 until his promotion in 1988.

Now a full-time minister and agronomic consultant, he said: "I'm planning to be on call whenever there is anything to be done. I'll be driving to Columbus a couple times a week, speaking at various functions, and appearing before state legislative committees on various environmental and golf-related issues."

First on the plate of the long-range plan is setting up a full-time staff, including an executive director, to implement the strat-

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BALL MARK MURDER

A plethora of tees (634 in all) spot unrepaired ball marks on a North Shore CC green.

Shamed golfers repent — for now

GLENVIEW, Ill. — When the number of unrepaired or ill-repaired ball marks on the putting greens became abominable, North Shore Country Club superintendent Dan Dinelli took an action that paid dividends — for the course, golfers and grounds crew alike.

At one of the greens, Dinelli placed a golf tee in every visible ball mark (634 tees on a 6,300-square-foot green). There were so many tees that it was difficult to putt from one part of the green to another. Dinelli then enlarged a photograph of the hole to poster size, framed and hung in the

clubhouse next to a U.S. Golf Association poster about ball marks.

Seeing the damage on one green struck home with members of this private club, convincing them to repair their ball marks.

The USGA poster said: "A fresh ball mark repaired by a player takes only five seconds. A freshly repaired ball mark will completely heal in 24 hours. A fresh ball mark left unrepaired for only one hour requires 15 days time before the ugly scar has satisfactorily healed. Please repair all ball marks and divots."

"We went spikeless this year and it was a big success. The only problems on the greens now are these ball marks," Dinelli said.

The poster "worked," he said, "at least for awhile."

Riordan: Buffalograsses more accepted, making greater contributions

Terry Riordan is a professor at the University of Nebraska and a leading expert on buffalograss, a native turf that has received considerable attention because of its drought resistance and slow-growing nature. Beginning with a \$4,000 grant back in 1984, the university turfgrass science team has received approximately \$500,000 in United States Golf Association Green Section research funding for buffalograss. Riordan received his doctorate in turfgrass plant breeding from Purdue University, worked eight years as an O.M. Scott researcher, and has taught at the University of Nebraska for the past 18 years.

Golf Course News: How has the acceptance of buffalograss as a golf course turf progressed in recent years?

Q & A



Dr. Terry Riordan

Terry Riordan: A little slower than I thought it would. Total annual sales from turf farms and seed producers are running between \$1.5 to \$1.7 million. That's not insignificant, but not quite what I expected.

GCN: Who has been the major supplier?

TR: Crenshaw & Doguet Turfgrass [of Austin, Texas] by far. I thought sales by other suppliers in Arizona, California and Colorado would have been stronger. But they haven't.

GCN: Why not?

TR: The industry just isn't ready for it. The water crisis hasn't gotten severe enough, except in places like Austin and San Antonio.

Homeowners in Austin can get a \$250 rebate from

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Empowerment

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cators," said Horton, borrowing from the theme from Wheaties.

Correctly practiced, feedback results in:

- More accurate communication and understanding between management and employees.
- A friendly, more open, fulfilling relationship.
- Discovery of the issues that are most important to employees — usually not pay and benefits, but the working environment.

"Encourage feedback," he said, "Ask for and use it... Listen to what is said without rationalizing or justifying... Paraphrase to test for understanding... Think about the feedback you received and decide how you want to use it."

Horton suggested that superintendents hold "town meetings" with employees.

"It's all positive. No tearing down is allowed," he said. "It's absolutely amazing what employees will say. And you'll say, 'I never knew that bothered them. I can fix that easily.'"

He also recommended a chart for each employee, depicting a continuum of where they stand in their training. "It shows if they are improving, or if they may be due a promotion," he said.

Enhancing job roles, he said, develops people in areas that interest them; motivates the empowered employees; reduces turnover; and increases human resource productivity and effectiveness.

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"Why use computers?" Kevin Ross asked in a Public Golf Forum session on Computerizing Your Golf Operation. "One: You can become incredibly organized. Two: It is essential to record-keeping. One plus two keeps you efficient. And it creates professionalism."

Citing the fact that he has even downloaded photographs from a photo company, he asked, "Who knows what the future holds?"

Very helpful, he said, are TurfNet, formulas for fertilization, budgeting, documentation for employee records, factory-direct feedback from equipment manufacturers, parts inventory, and PowerPoint — a program that is "great if you're going to give a presentation to your greens committee or board."

"If you don't let computers scare you, they're easy," said Jerry Lemons of GolfLinks, who initiated the GolfLink weather and information network. "A click of a button brings you right to the information you need."

The cost? "If you don't have a clue as to the weather in the next eight hours and you are planning to irrigate or a pesticide application, computers can pay for themselves quickly. One fun-

gicide application for your greens can cost \$600 to \$800 and get washed away. But having that Doppler radar in your hands and knowing what the weather will do, can prevent that."

Speaking of using computers for remote sensing and disease forecasting, Dr. Randy Kane of the Chicago District Golf Association said: "With micro-computerization, we will be able to monitor on a much more precise basis."

Inputting information from soil and weather into the computer can help predict the occurrence of some diseases. If we get these [prediction models] dialed up properly, we may be able to accurately predict to within a couple of days the disease you have to deal with," he said.

Meanwhile, U.S. Golf Association Green Section Mid-Continent Director Paul Vermeulen spoke out about green speed.

Deciding how fast the greens should be should be predicated on more than one criteria, Vermeulen said. That criteria? His answer is in the acronym SPEED. SPEED stands for: Status of turf. Principle resources available. Environmental conditions (at certain times of the year you can get away with more). Expertise of the golfer (how good the club's golfers are). Design of the greens.

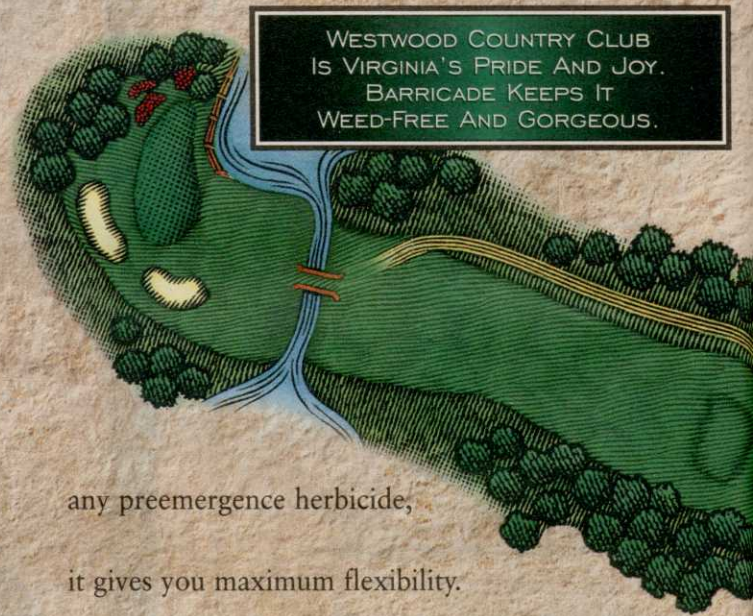
"As you increase green speed, you decrease the area available for setting the cup," he said.

Green Section's North-Central Region Director Bob Brame suggested removing rollers from greens mowers during the summer. "They sink the cut down another 1/64 inch and that can make a big difference," he said.

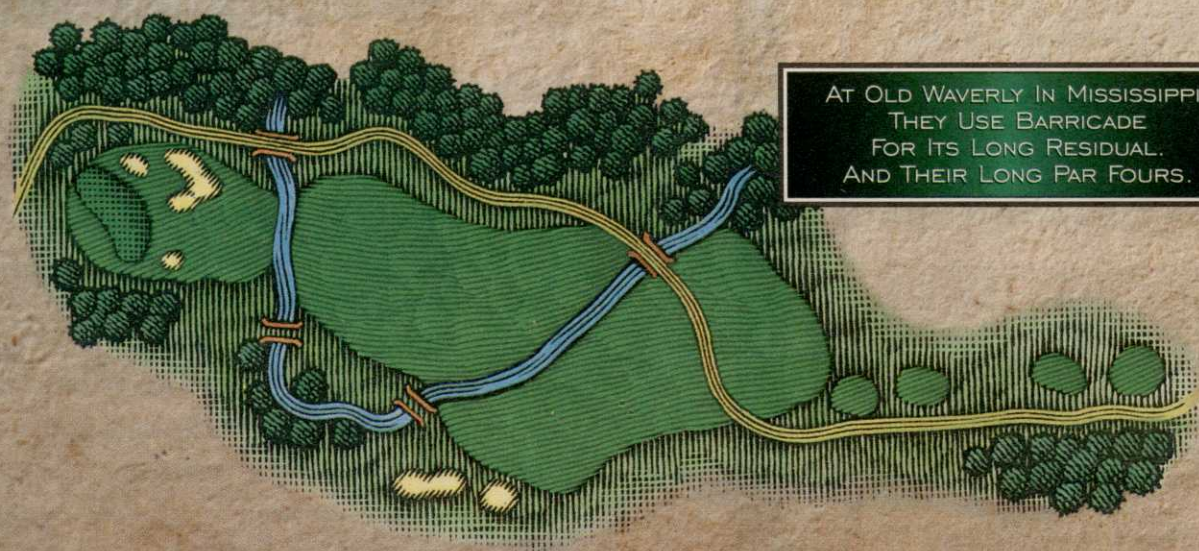
Brame added: "If you've got the roots, the tops will follow, and that's where we play golf."

CONFIDENCE AND SECURITY DON'T JUST HAPPEN.

Let's not mince words — your job's challenging. Just think about all the people you have to please. And about what happens if you don't. You need confidence. You need security. And you're not alone. Superintendents at some of the top courses in the country need the same thing. Which is why they use Barricade® preemergence herbicide to keep fairways, tees and roughs weed-free. So can you. Since Barricade has the longest residual of



any preemergence herbicide, it gives you maximum flexibility. You can apply when it's most convenient for you. And have full confidence that you'll get excellent



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