

GCN JANUARY/GCN NOVEMBER

BRIEFS



SUPPLIER BUSINESS '98:

News of the Textron acquisition of Ransomes was dancing off the wires from the very beginning of this 1998, ushering in a year that has seen many changes, consolidations and new hope for technological advances.

The new face in the market is Textron's Golf, Turf Care and Specialty Products group that will now be headed up by Carl Burtner effective January 1, 1999. Burtner will oversee nine global operations, 3,600 employees and revenues exceeding \$700 million.

There were four new single rider car offerings put on the market. The companies involved claim the single-rider is the golf course's answer to speeding slow play, while the concepts detractors say that maintenance costs may work against the new one seaters.

The future is now

January: LawnNibbler acquires taste for turf

By FRED WRIGHT

GAINESVILLE, Fla. — A robot lawn mower called LawnNibbler, created at the University of Florida, may soon be pruning the tees and greens of the neighborhood golf course.

Designed by the university's Machine Intelligence Laboratory, the prototype can cut grass intelligently — avoiding dogs, kids, trees and golfers. It uses a radio wire buried at the perimeter of its work area and a navigation beacon system using sonar and infrared emitters and detectors that tell it where it is in its environment.

The LawnNibbler has four wheels, a chain drive, electric motor and lead acid battery and it works on the principals of a tank: It can turn on a dime — or a divot.

"We've done no engineering to date in terms of endurance," explains Keith Doty, director of the lab that designed the original model two years ago, but he

Continued on page 26

November: John Deere looks skyward

By MICHAEL LEVANS

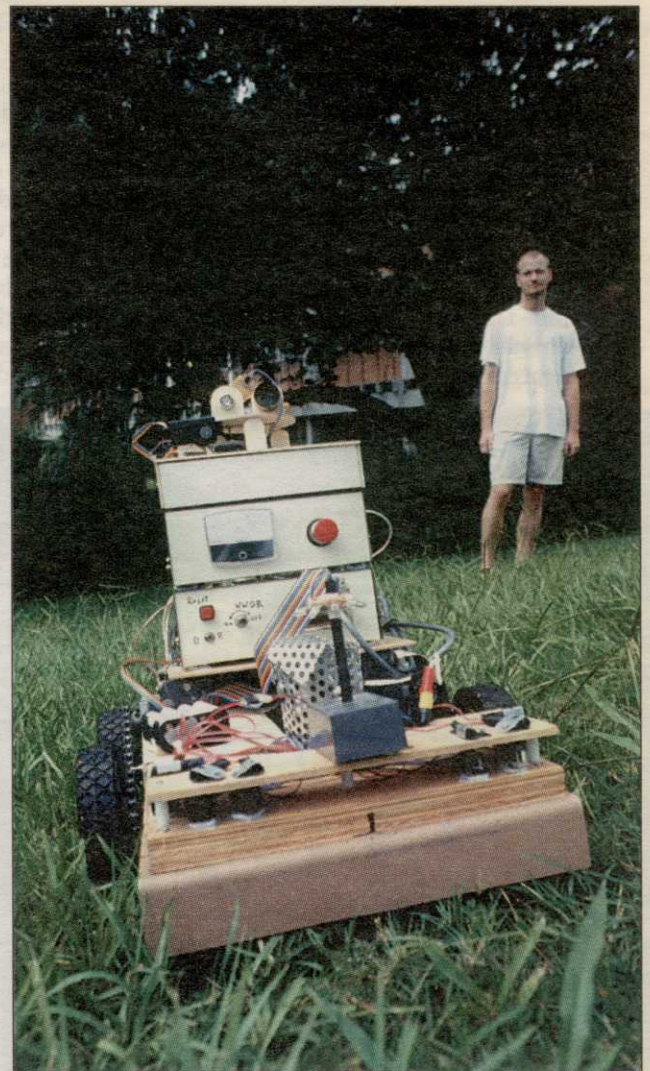
RALEIGH, N.C. — With its recent acquisition of Charlestown, Mass.-based Player Systems Corp., manufacturer of the SkyLinks golf course management technology that utilizes the global positioning system (GPS), John Deere has taken a long look up into the future.

"John Deere now has the ability to leverage the GPS technology across different applications," said Shawn Phillips, new general manager of Player Systems. "The GPS technology has been limited to the golf car. Now we have a chance to help the golf course owner justify this technology across various applications."

Just where John Deere can go with this technology married to its turf equipment line is anyone's guess. According to Phillips, the plans for exactly how Deere can take full advantage of this new acquisition are constantly evolving.

"Every time I turn around we're re-writing the business

Continued on page 26



LawnNibbler technology could be coming to a shed near you.

GCN APRIL /GCN JUNE

Single-rider market heats up

April: Ortho-Kinetics jumps in with Fairway 8000

By JOHN FARRELL

WAUKESHA, Wis. — Fairway Golf Cars, a division of Ortho-Kinetics, Inc., is introducing the Fairway 8000 Single-Rider. In development for four years, the Single-Rider features a dual motor drive, a 48-volt power system with transaxle, maintenance-free AGM batteries, and a dynamic braking system which offers smooth deceleration as well as continuous recharging during braking action.

"Twenty years ago, getting on and off a course in four hours was a bad day," said John Perez, director of sales and marketing for Fairway, "now it's a miracle."

June: Pride enters market in a big way

By MICHAEL LEVANS

EXETER, Pa. — Pride Golf, a new division of scooter and liftchair manufacturer Pride Healthcare, has entered the single-rider golf-car market with quite a bang.

It was recently announced that Pride Golf's car, the second single-rider to enter the golf market from the home medical equipment industry, will be the vehicle of choice for disabled golfer Casey Martin, should he earn a berth in this year's U.S. Open at The Olympic Club in San Francisco.

Pride was chosen following a recent testing session held by The United States Golf Association (USGA) in Denver. "They [USGA] were looking for a cart for Casey and if your's met certain specifications they invited you to send a cart out of testing," said Pride spokesperson Craig Otto.

"We sent one out, they put it through the paces and it turned out that it was the most suitable cart for him. It's a great way to get started," Otto added.

Waukesha, Wis.-based Ortho-Kinetics Inc., one of Pride's chief competitors in the home medical equipment field, is ready and waiting to take Pride on the golf market. Ortho-Kinetics launched its Fairway division at the beginning of this year.



Ortho-Kinetics new Fairway single-rider.

GOLF COURSE NEWS

GCN OCTOBER

Crisis in Canada puts clamps on course spending

By PETER BLAIS

TORONTO — The cry of the Loony — as Canadians call their one-dollar, bird-imprinted coin — has been a mournful sound for superintendents and suppliers of U.S.-manufactured course equipment as the plummeting Canadian dollar has made those items increasingly expensive for Canadian course managers.

By early August, the Canadian dollar had fallen to a record low, an equivalent of approximately 65 cents in U.S. currency. That represented a 15-percent decline from a year earlier and was forcing some superintendents to consider cutting back, or at the very least delaying purchases of U.S. and other foreign-made supplies.



"It's no wonder that people who make large purchases in the U.S. would be backing off or reducing them this year," said Vince Gillis, executive director of the Canadian Golf Superintendents Association (CGSA).

Added CGSA President Doug Meyer of Cedarbrook Golf & Country Club in St. Sophie, Quebec: "This will definitely affect our capital budgets when we are buying new equipment, as well as other course supplies such as chemicals, fertilizers, seed, parts and course supplies. The only products that will not be affected are those produced in Canada."

Continued on page 26

YOUR "ONE-STOP" SOURCE FOR AMERICA'S LEADING GOLF SURFACES & SUPPLIES!

PARTAC®
GOLF COURSE
TOP-DRESSING

HEAT TREATED

FLEXIBLE GOLF COURSE MARKERS
TURF DRAG MATS & BRUSHES
WINDSCREEN & BALL NETTING

TYPAR®

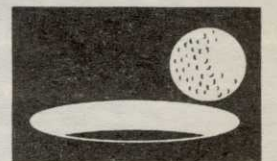
GEOTEXTILES & TURF BLANKETS

Terra-Green®

THE POROUS CERAMIC
SOIL CONDITIONERNEW PARTAC® NEW
COLORED CERAMIC
GREEN SAND
DIVOT REPAIR MIXPARTAC® GREEN SAND BLENDED
WITH PARTAC® PREMIUM
TOP-DRESSING FOR EXCELLENT
GERMINATION AND
DEEP GREEN COLOR!

THE BEST DIVOT REPAIR MIX AVAILABLE!

AVAILABLE NATIONWIDE

800-247-2326
IN N.J. 908-637-4191PARTAC PEAT CORPORATION
KELSEY PARK, GREAT MEADOWS, N.J. 07838
ORLANDO (FL) MEMPHIS (TN) RENO (NV)HIGHLIGHT GOLF HOLES,
IMPROVE VISIBILITY,
& MAINTAIN CONSISTENCYU.S. GOLF HOLE
TARGETS™STABILIZER®
BUNKER SEALTerraFlow™
Drainage SystemsAND MANY MORE
GOLF SPECIALTY PRODUCTS

CIRCLE #127

Deere/Player

Continued from page 25

plan because it's getting bigger and bigger," said Phillips. "Due to all the possible applications, we really can't get our arms around it."

At the heart of the Player Systems deal are two components: Precision Turf Care and Sky Links. Precision Turf Care controls the precise spraying of wa-

ter, fertilizer and pesticides and is being marketed as a tool for general turf care management.

SkyLinks is mounted on golf carts and acts as an electronic caddy, giving the player distance measurements, tips and graphical representations of greens and fairways. It can also be used to send messages from clubhouse to cart and vice versa while allowing the course operator the chance to monitor speed of play.

"The founders of the company realized that the potential of GPS within golf is much more than yardage," said Richard Beckmann, director of sales and marketing for Player Systems. "It's truly information technology."

Where will this all lead? "Anything is possible," said Beckmann. "You're going to see this technology on every course in some shape or form very soon."

LawnNibbler

Continued from page 25

estimates the LawnNibbler can run several hours before needing a recharge.

A graduate student, Kevin Hakala, added sensors and a guidance system last year.

The buried wire acts as an obstacle that the LawnNibbler cannot cross. Just 24 inches high, the LawnNibbler is just under 24

inches long and just over 12 inches wide. It weighs 35 pounds.

"The microprocessor control allows it to spin on itself, left, right, back, forward," Doty said. The navigation system uses a trilaterization process, like a Global Position System (GPS) using a satellite, from three poles placed to define the LawnNibbler's territory.

"The game plan is to have a robot dog house — the LawnNibbler would go to the dog house and recharge itself whenever it needed to," explains Doty.

The prototype has been tested in conditions ideal for golf course care — wet grass up to six inches high, on a 12-degree slope, even over tree roots. No problems. The LawnNibbler uses a weed trimmer-like nylon cord to cut a six-inch swath with, not a blade.

Doty projects that the initial cost of producing working models of LawnNibbler would place the price at about \$2,000 per unit.

The market originally conceived for the LawnNibbler was as a machine to prune the grass around Florida's orange groves.

ROHMID

PREVENT GRUBS. STOP THEM IN THEIR TRACKS. OR MAKE SURE IT'S NOT EVEN AN ISSUE.



Now you can control grubs preventatively or curatively. With a single application. Only with new MACH 2™ Turf Insecticide.

MACH 2 is a powerful killer with a new chemistry that accelerates the molting process of target insects.

Just hours after ingesting MACH 2™, the insect stops feeding. Then it dies beneath the surface in 2 to 3 weeks. It's that simple.

With MACH 2™ Turf Insecticide, you'll kill target

enemy insects all season long. Grubs. Cutworms.

Armyworms. Sod webworms. Plus, odorless

MACH 2™ is easy to apply. You don't even have to water it in immediately.

So don't let grubs control your grounds, or your schedule. Depend on MACH 2™ Turf Insecticide. It's all you need to prevent or cure.

For more information or for the distributor nearest you, call 1-888-764-6432.

MACH 2™
TURF INSECTICIDE

**ALL YOU NEED
TO PREVENT OR CURE.**

Textron

Continued from page 1

American arm of Textron Turf Care and Specialty Products is based in Racine, Wisconsin, with Jacobsen's Phil Tralies as president. Tralies will report to Wilson.

Peter Wilson is naturally excited with the developments at what is now a very well placed market competitor.

"It creates a very strong company from both a financial and technical viewpoint," said Wilson. "It gives us a wonderful range of products and we obviously have a leading range of brands."

Crisis in Canada

Continued from page 25

"At this time it appears that U.S. products will increase in cost more than those from Europe. As a result, many golf clubs may choose to lease equipment manufactured in the U.S. rather than buy new equipment outright. As for the rest of the products, we will have to budget an extra 15 percent for our next budgetary year. Some courses will delay purchases until the spring in the hope that the Canadian dollar rebounds. However they choose to deal with the situation, the low dollar is sure to negatively impact profits in the coming year."

The effects of Canada's struggling dollar may be somewhat offset by this year's increased play at Canadian courses, according to Nolan Duke of G.C. Duke Equipment Ltd. of Burlington, Ont. "The exchange rate," Duke said, "has caused our prices to go up 7 to 8 percent, which really would have screwed up budgets."