

BRIEFS



MICHIGAN TURF CONFERENCE SET

LANSING, Mich. — The highlight of the 69th Annual Michigan Turfgrass Conference here, Jan. 18-21, will be honoring the retirement of Dr. Paul Rieke of Michigan State University (MSU). Rieke has garnered many honors, including the Distinguished Service Award from the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America in 1996 and the Green Section Award from the U.S. Golf Association in 1997. The conference will be held at the Holiday Inn South — Hotel and Convention Center. For further information contact Kay at 517-321-1660.



Dr. Paul Rieke

Association of America in 1996 and the Green Section Award from the U.S. Golf Association in 1997. The conference will be held at the Holiday Inn South — Hotel and Convention Center. For further information contact Kay at 517-321-1660.

UMASS STARTS FUSARIUM PATCH STUDY

AMHERST, Mass. — Dr. Gail Schumann of the University of Massachusetts is initiating a study to deal with some of the problems with Fusarium patch on golf courses. The study will include timing of fall applications for winter snow mold control, disease prediction during spring and fall outbreaks, and evaluation of fungicide resistance. People wishing to participate should contact Schumann at the Department of Microbiology, Fernald Hall, UMass, Amherst, Mass. 01103-2420; telephone 413-545-3413.



Fusarium patch on golf courses. The study will include timing of fall applications for winter snow mold control, disease prediction during spring and fall outbreaks, and evaluation of fungicide resistance. People wishing to participate should contact Schumann at the Department of Microbiology, Fernald Hall, UMass, Amherst, Mass. 01103-2420; telephone 413-545-3413.

Department of Microbiology, Fernald Hall, UMass, Amherst, Mass. 01103-2420; telephone 413-545-3413.

TEXAS A&M HONORS WATSON

COLLEGE STATION, Texas — Dr. James R. Watson, a long-time leader in the turfgrass industry, has been named an Outstanding Alumnus by Texas A&M University's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. The award was presented at the college's 1998 Faculty Awards Convocation on Sept. 11. Watson, vice president and agronomist for the Toro Co. since 1952, has been praised as a leader in all phases of the turfgrass industry, especially involving irrigation and environmental matters. As an assistant professor of agronomy at Texas A&M prior to joining Toro, Watson is a founder of the International Turfgrass Society, which he served as president one year and director since 1979.



Dr. James Watson

As an assistant professor of agronomy at Texas A&M prior to joining Toro, Watson is a founder of the International Turfgrass Society, which he served as president one year and director since 1979.

Mr. Certification: Feltman leads 2nd course in Audubon

By MIKE JAMISON

LONGWOOD, Fla. — Adam Feltman can't remember when he decided to become a golf course superintendent, but he knows exactly where his special relationship with the environment began. It all started, fittingly enough, at church.

"My Dad was a Baptist minister, and I kept up the grounds at the church when I was younger," said the 29-year-old native of Moultrie, Ga. "I really enjoyed that. That's when I found out that maintenance was much more than mowing grass."

Feltman is currently head superintendent at the semi-private The Legacy Club at Alaqua Lakes, a new Tom Fazio design in this Taylor Woodrow Communities development just north of Orlando, which opened Sept. 1.

The Legacy Club at Alaqua Lakes is a registered member of Audubon International's Signature Cooperative Sanctuary Program, and Feltman expects full certification soon. That means, among other things, that the developer spent approximately \$150,000 extra on construction and man hours to take special care of the natural environment. Audubon International has established enough standards and requirements to fill a pair of one-inch spiral notebooks, and the work, which starts at the very beginning of development, is monitored monthly throughout the life of the project.

Although Feltman is only seven years



Photos by Jerry White Photography



Environmental areas are everywhere at The Legacy Club at Alaqua Lakes, including along the 17th hole.

into his career, he has been the head superintendent at two of the first nine golf courses worldwide to achieve the Signature status. Prior to The Legacy Club, he was head superintendent at Champions Club, a Signature status club in south Florida.

Why go to that kind of expense and trouble?

"Obviously there is the benefit of doing the right thing for the environment," said Feltman, who majored in agronomy at the University of Georgia. "We also did it because of the recognition of being one of the top-notch semi-private facilities in the country. This goes hand-in-hand."

Sarasota-based Taylor Woodrow Communities gave Fazio plenty of land on

which to work, allowing ample natural buffer between fairways and homesites. As a result, two positive golf course qualities were born. Each hole became its own stage. On only one place in the routing is one hole completely visible from another. Nos. 9 and 18 share a tee, a lake and a stand of trees as they deliver golfers toward the clubhouse. The other holes are all framed by oaks and pines, wetlands and other natural areas.

Therein lies the second positive result of the land planning. The natural habitat, which includes 158 acres of wetlands, was left basically untouched. It's one of the many reasons why The Legacy Club met stringent Audubon standards for Signature status.

Continued on page 12

Retiring circumstances for two famed supers

Dan Jones resigns his post in Florida for job as regional sales rep, while...

... Bob Mitchell leaves The Greenbriar, eyeing retirement and turf consultancy

By MARK LESLIE

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — Golf course superintendents, especially in the South, are on "a collision course" with job pressures — pressures that are forcing them beyond their own personal capabilities, and pushing their turfgrass beyond its ability to survive.

That is the assessment of Dan Jones, who after 33 years has retired as a superintendent in Florida, where he once served as president of the Florida Turfgrass Association and South Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association (GCSA).

"The pressure on superintendents is getting more and more every day," said Jones, who has left Banyan Golf Club here after 18 years of service to take on a position as sales representative for Toro Co.'s Liquid Ag Systems Inc. in Florida. "It's like a locomotive gaining steam all the time. It has to be lower cuts, no weeds, perfect conditions, like Augusta National every day."

"Our job has gotten much more volatile in the last few years," he added. "Twenty-five or 30 years ago, we used to do our jobs,

Continued on page 16

By MARK LESLIE

LEWISBURG, W. Va. — The world of CPAs never did get him. Now the world of golf course superintendents has lost him from its "active" roles after 48 years. Bob Mitchell, longtime executive director of grounds at The Greenbriar hotel and resort here and 1972 president of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA), has retired from his post.

"I had a real good life in golf course superintendency. I don't regret a nickel's worth," said Mitchell. "I had bad times. All superintendents do. When my grass is good, I feel great. When it's sick, I am, too. It keeps you around seven days a week all season long, but I still like it. Now I'm glad it has drawn to a close, and I hope I can help people."

To that end, Mitchell will work out of his home as a turfgrass consultant, doing business as RVM Enterprises.

Growing up working on golf courses as the son and grandson of golf superintendents, Mitchell nevertheless wanted to be a CPA like his uncle, whom he idolized. Yet, it was his other idol, Arnold Palmer, whose career path he most closely followed. Attending Southern Illinois University as a business student, he received a golf scholarship as the team's No. 1 player his final year. And when he graduated, he remained in golf as a superintendent, putting to use the experience he had gained working for his father at Franklin County Country Club in West Frankfort, Ill.

His first job, in 1950, was for the town of Alton, Ill., maintaining its nine-hole public course and ball diamonds, and later

Continued on page 14



Dan Jones, left, receives an editorial award from Clay Loyd of the Golf Course Superintendents Association for Florida Green magazine.



Bob Mitchell

Mitchell retires from Greenbriar

Continued from page 11

another nine-hole facility. In 1958 he left for a 12-year stint at Sunset Country Club in St. Louis. It was here that he and other colleagues started the Missouri Valley Golf Course Superintendents Association and the Missouri Valley Turfgrass Association, both of which he served as president. He also served a term as president of the Midwest Regional Turfgrass Foundation, which is centered around Purdue University.

Becoming active in the national GCSAA and elected as an officer in 1967, Mitchell moved to the influential Portage Country Club in Akron, Ohio, in 1971, and a year later became president of the GCSAA. It was, as past president in 1973, when he was preparing to captain the GCSAA golf team against their British and Scottish counterparts, that The Greenbriar came calling to persuade him to join them in bringing back life to the Old White Course, and later rebuilding The Greenbriar and Lakeside (now Meadows) tracks.

"The Greenbriar," Mitchell said, "is staggering. The job got bigger and bigger, and today it's quite huge."

Besides the three courses, the property includes 60 to 70 acres around the hotel and a number of homes, and the grounds crew is responsible for landscaping all of it. Mitchell employs 31 on his golf course maintenance crew and 29 on his grounds unit.

With Jack Nicklaus as the architect, The Greenbriar was rebuilt in 1976 for the 1979 Ryder Cup. "And almost every year the first 10 or 12 years they added buildings at the hotel and landscaping had to be done for each one of them," Mitchell recalled. "We doubled greenhouse space and added so much landscaping that it is utterly staggering."

In 1984 Mitchell was made executive director of golf and grounds, a position he held until Robert Harris was hired as director of golf, and Mitchell could devote full time to his true love.

"The job has gotten more strenuous," he acknowledged. "But the camaraderie of superintendents hasn't changed. I've never seen more friendly and helpful people."

"I've seen [an evolution to] more dedicated people in taking care of golf courses, doing a better job financially, getting paid better, too, and spending money more wisely. The tenacity with which they have gotten down together for golf is fantastic."

Mitchell said the demand for lower-cut greens and disease-resistant grasses has not always started with the golfer, but often with the superintendent.

"The superintendent wants

something better to maintain — not easier, but better," he said. "We don't make grass grow, God does that. But we are taking a plant out of its natural environment and doing things to it to make it good for golf. When you do things like that you have to make all kinds of concessions and do whatever is pos-

sible to make it live."

Over the years, Mitchell has been recognized for his contributions to the profession. He received the 1995 Scotts Tradition of Excellence Award, established by The Scotts Co. to recognize "outstanding achievements among superintendents in advancing the science of course maintenance and in making golf the best it can be."

Asked if he had any advice for turfgrass students entering the field, Mitchell said: "I've always preferred country clubs over public courses. By and large you're under the gun more and stress is higher. But you are more appreciated. At the public course you're just one of them. Golfers don't have the same appreciation, it appears to me, although I enjoyed that part of my life."

DESERT GREEN CONCLAVE SET

HENDERSON, Nev. — Desert Green, a two-day conference focusing on the challenges faced by turf and landscape professionals in the arid Southwest, has been set for Nov. 12-13 at Henderson Convention Center. For more information call Bob Morris or M.L. Robinson at the Cooperative Extension at 702-222-3130.

HERE. THERE. EVERYWHERE.

How's that for application guidelines?



1-800-523-3757