

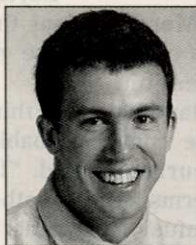
Renovation work making its mark on industry

The slowdown in new golf course construction over the past year and a half has been well documented. For those of you keeping score at the 19th hole, golf development slid nearly 30 percent between 2000 and 2001.

Golf Course News has tracked this trend and the impact it is having on the golf course industry. While the business seeks a comfortable balance between supply and demand, renovation work has increased as golf courses try and stay on top in a fiercely competitive market. Some golf course builders and architects report that their renovation projects have surged more than 50 percent.

As a result, we are refocusing our coverage to reflect this trend. This month we are introducing a revamped section – Development & Renovation – where we will cover both new course development and the renovation projects, both large and small, that are proliferating across the country.

Kevin Downing, superintendent at Willoughby Golf Club in Stuart, Fla., and *GCN* advisory board member, kicks off the new



Andrew Overbeck, editor

section this month (see page 15) with the first installment of a four-part series outlining the extensive renovation project that his club is undertaking this summer. From the planning process, to selling the project to members, to the construction bidding, to the nature of the work itself, Kevin will provide complete coverage of the renovation issues that impact superintendents.

In addition, we will also cover individual projects that offer tips and insights and showcase new techniques and products. For example, on page 16, we checked in with Rick Holanda at Aronimink Golf Club in Newtown, Pa., to learn how he and his club worked together with architect Ron Prichard and builder McDonald & Sons to implement a new master plan in less than two years

while still accommodating play. As we delve into renovation issues, we welcome feedback from our readers – superintendents, builders, architects and owners alike. Tell us about the projects you are planning or implementing. Share your renovation hints, suggestions or experiences with the industry by dropping us a line, giving us a call or dashing us an email (see contact information at right).

This month also marks the

return of our Point/Counterpoint forum as we present the debate over the feasibility of organic golf (see below). The movement has gained some steam as an appellate court in New York recently decided in favor of pro-organic golf activists (*GCN* April 2002). Take a look and fire off your responses to us here at *GCN*.

Due to the return of Point/Counterpoint, our letters to the editor section has been mailed back to page 28.



POINT

The time for organic golf has arrived

By NEAL LEWIS



Neal Lewis

Golf has become a target for efforts to reduce toxins in our environment due to its substantial and highly visible use of pesticides. The public is becoming increasingly unwilling to accept the use of substances that are possible carcinogens over drinking water supplies, alongside streams and wildlife habitats, or near homes.

Environmentalists, for the most part, are adamantly anti-golf. However, as executive director of the Long Island Neighborhood Network, I am an environmentalist and a golfer who believes golf can be a great source of environmentally friendly recreation. We call our project Organic Golf, because our goal is not to eliminate golf courses but instead to eliminate the toxic pesticides from golf courses.

The increasing environmental pressure against chemical pesticide use and the greater availability of innovative organic products make this a good time to consider converting to non-chemical methods of golf course maintenance. However, before simply replacing synthetic fertilizer with organic fertilizer and calling it an organic management program, it is important to understand the underpinnings of a true organic approach to turfgrass maintenance.

Healthy soil is teeming with a diverse ecosystem of microorganisms. These microbes are the key to non-chemical methods of turf maintenance. Beneficial microbes feed on the microbes that cause disease, out-compete the disease-causing microbes, depriving them of food and water, coat the roots and blades of plants blocking pathogens, and make nutrients more readily available.

Continued on next page

COUNTERPOINT

Is organic golf realistic?

By MATT NELSON



Matt Nelson

Much of our society believes golf course maintenance is inherently bad for the environment. They see golf courses as artificial surfaces that are only possible through rampant and negligent use of fertilizers, pesticides and water. The perceived end result is the degradation of water resources and wildlife habitat and exposure risks to humans and animals.

To be sure, golf turf maintenance represents the horticultural extreme. Yet, our industry has stepped forward to investigate our environmental practices through independent university research studies that the United States Golf Association has helped fund. We have learned to identify best management practices that significantly reduce risk to the environment, and we have also learned that the turfgrass community is an amazingly dynamic system with its own network of environmental safeguards.

There are currently several communities throughout the country lobbying for the elimination of all synthetic pesticide and fertilizer use on golf courses. Without question, these voices are being heard and the stones cast are sending ripples throughout the golf industry. I would hope that those representing our industry will listen to these concerns and address them in logical, open-minded, scientific and concerned fashion.

Our industry has learned an incredible amount regarding golf course management and the environment in recent years. Products with reduced toxicity, mobility and persistence are constantly being developed. Integrated pest management strategies and best management practices are being adopted by numerous golf operations. Improved equipment, mapping technology, record keeping and product storage and handling devices are available. Grasses have

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