

January 2007

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GOLF

COURSE NEWS

Serving the Business of Golf Course Management



The Estancia Club's general manager Keith Underwood (foreground) and director of agronomy Mike Mongiello, CGCS



Adding Value

CLUBS UPGRADE PRACTICE FACILITIES TO GAIN AN EDGE

INSIDE:

Growing the game + Improving bunkers
Purchasing utility vehicles + The incoming GCSAA president

HAVE YOU SEEN US?



BROWN PATCH

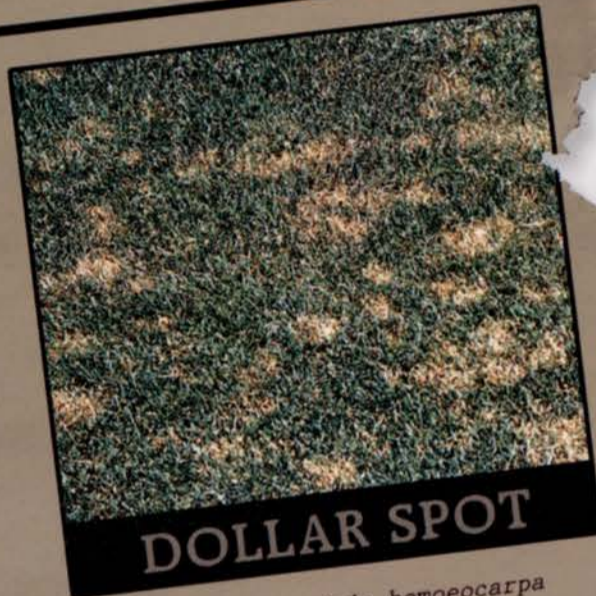
AKA: *Rhizoctonia solani*

Description: Yellow to light brown patches up to five feet in diameter

Caution:

Spreads rapidly

Last seen on our competitors' fairways



DOLLAR SPOT

AKA: *Sclerotinia homoeocarpa*

Description: Straw to tan colored sunken spots, one to two inches in diameter

Caution: Foliar and stem attacking fungus

Last seen being sprayed with fungicide



GOLF COURSES THAT INTERSEED WITH A BLEND OF BROWN PATCH-RESISTANT PENNEAGLE II AND DOLLAR SPOT-RESISTANT PENNLINKS II SEE LESS AND LESS OF THESE DISEASES, AND THEIR FAIRWAYS SEE LESS FUNGICIDE.

2003 mean brown patch and dollar spot ratings for entries in a bentgrass turf trial seeded fall of 2002 near Rolesville, NC and maintained at 0.5"

| Entry | Dollar Spot | Brown Patch |
|---------------------|------------------|------------------|
| PennLinks II | 5.0 ¹ | 7.2 ¹ |
| Penn A-1 | 7.0 | 5.8 |
| PennLinks | 6.0 | 5.0 |
| Penneagle II | 7.7 | 4.7 |
| L-93 | 5.3 | 4.5 |
| Penneagle | 6.0 | 3.7 |
| Penncross | 4.7 | 3.7 |
| Penn A-4 | 7.3 | 3.5 |
| SR 1119 | 8.0 | 2.5 |
| LSD (0.05) | 2.4 | 1.4 |

¹9 = no disease

2004 mean brown patch and dollar spot ratings for entries in a bentgrass turf trial seeded fall of 2003 near Rolesville, NC and maintained at 0.5"

| Entry | Dollar Spot | Brown Patch |
|---------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| PennEagle II | 5.7¹ | 8.2¹ |
| Seaside II | 6.3 | 8.0 |
| Independence | 4.0 | 7.9 |
| L-93 | 6.3 | 7.8 |
| Bengal | 5.0 | 7.6 |
| PennLinks II | 7.3 | 6.9 |
| Penncross | 5.3 | 6.1 |
| Seaside | 6.0 | 5.9 |
| LSD (0.05) | 1.3 | 1.5 |

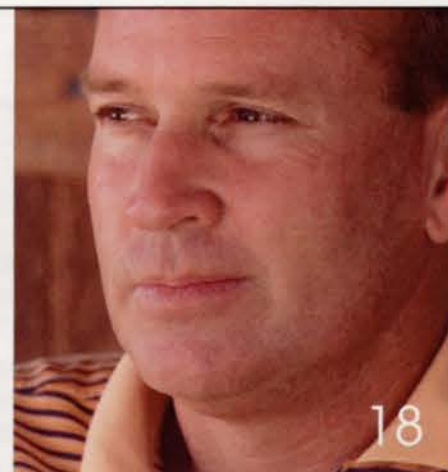
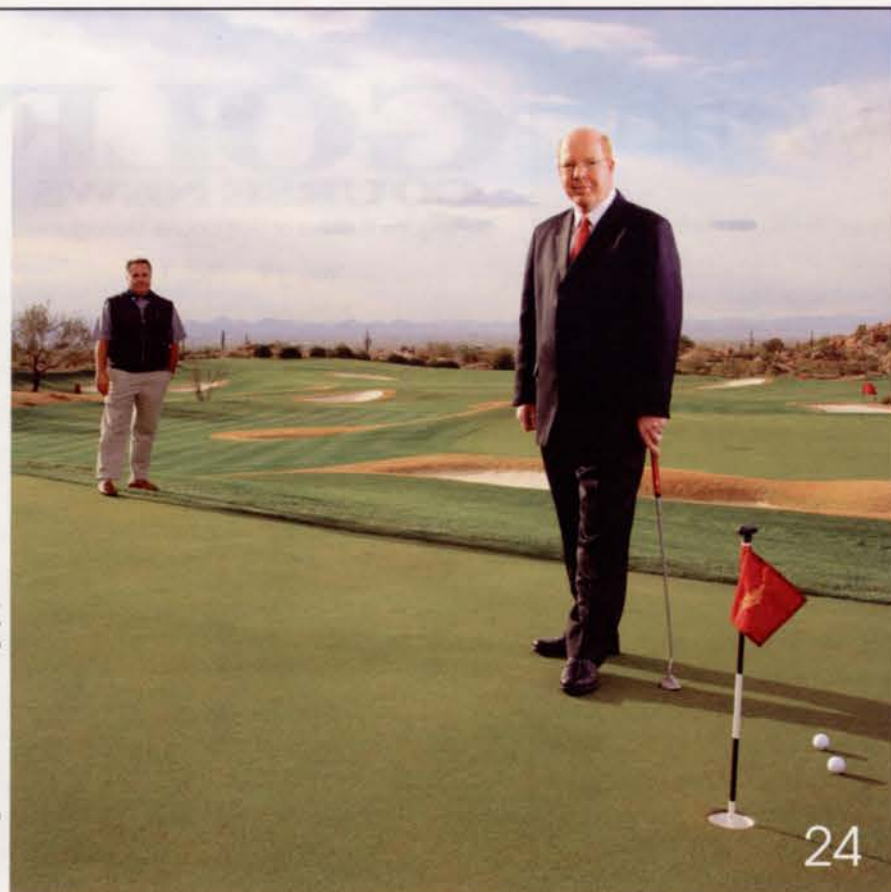
¹9 = no disease

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EDITORIAL MISSION STATEMENT:

Golf Course News reports on and analyzes the business of maintaining golf courses, as well as the broader business of golf course management. This includes three main areas: agronomy, business management and career development as it relates to golf course superintendents and those managers responsible for maintaining a golf course as an important asset. Golf Course News shows superintendents what's possible, helps them understand why it's important and tells them how to take the next step.

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Experts at the Ohio Turfgrass Foundation's conference shared money-saving turf-tending tips.



John Walsh
Editor

Knowing your worth

It's as simple as this: Golf course conditions affect revenue, and superintendents are responsible for course conditions, therefore, superintendents are extremely valuable to a golf facility. For most of you, I'm preaching to the choir, but how many owners, managers and club members aren't in this choir? Superintendents compete daily to prove their value, and sometimes they need to proclaim their worth, especially during difficult financial times.

Getting owners and members to clearly understand your value starts with developing positive professional relationships with your employers and employees. Generally, building solid relationships will help you resolve conflict and guide you through difficult times.

But you can't talk about value with out talking about success; and success means different things to different people, so you need to know what your employers want and how to give it to them. It's a matter of being No. 1 in their eyes.

As you're well aware, members/golfers view success differently, and it's difficult to make all of them happy because they all want different things. Member/golfer expectations continue to rise, but budgets don't rise along with them. Because of those factors, your career can be built and judged on the narrowest of margins. Never forget it takes many years to build a reputation and a few minutes to ruin it.

Golf is the main revenue generator for a golf club, and you're responsible for that main revenue generator, yet club managers often receive annual bonuses at clubs that are successful. Are you receiving the credit you deserve for that overall success?

Well, you can influence the bottom line and how your employers view your contribution and value to the facility. It's important to know your facility's financials and use them to your advantage. Take ownership of the revenues to which you contribute.

So what are you doing beyond the norm to remain valuable other than attending seminars and networking with peers? One general example is focusing on the business management aspect of your job. During a seminar at the Carolinas GCSA Conference and Show in November, Tommy Witt, CGCS, director of golf course operations at Northmoor

Country Club in Highland Park, Ill., presented many ways for superintendents to maintain and enhance their value. Some include:

1. Use photography to your advantage because it's a powerful and valuable tool. "Carrying a camera was the best thing I've ever done," Witt says. Photos sell your value to employers in so many ways. Even the most difficult people can't argue with photos.

2. Create the right business image. How do you make yourself memorable without compromising your integrity? Have principles, and live by them. Make it a point to be accountable.

3. Develop a public relations program and tell your story – internally and externally. Nobody will know it if you don't tell it. Invite action to gain visibility and recognition. Influence what people think of you.

4. Improve your communication skills. There are different audiences (young, old, male, female, ethnic) who prefer different modes of communication, so you might have to communicate differently with each. "The top three superintendent jobs in the Chicago area changed because of communication or a lack thereof," Witt says.

5. Be visible and approachable on the golf course.

6. Create a "play golf with the superintendent" sign-up sheet. This can encourage members to get to know you more and provides you the opportunity to find out what members think about the course.

The list goes on. This space doesn't. You've heard it many times before, but as I travel to various conferences throughout the country, I hear many top-notch superintendents continue to repeat it: You need to further develop your business acumen and people skills in addition to your agronomy knowledge. In this day and age, superintendents need multiple skills to succeed and be valued, just like any other businessman.

You play an important role in generating revenue at golf facilities, and you have a huge financial impact on the bottom line. Make sure the powers that be realize that, too. GCN

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Editorial Offices:
GIE Media, Inc.
4012 Bridge Ave.
Cleveland, OH 44113
Phone: (216) 961-4130
Fax: (216) 961-0364

Cindy Code
Editorial director
ccode@gie.net

John Walsh
Editor
jwalsh@gie.net

Heather Wood
Web editor
hwood@gie.net

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Terry Buchen, CGCS, MG
terrybuchen@earthlink.net

Pat Jones
psjhawk@cox.net

Kevin Ross, CGCS
kjross@vail.net

David Wolff
dgwolff@charter.net

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

Terry Buchen, CGCS, MG
Golf Agronomy International

Raymond Davies, CGCS
CourseCo

Kevin Downing, CGCS
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Tim Hiers, CGCS
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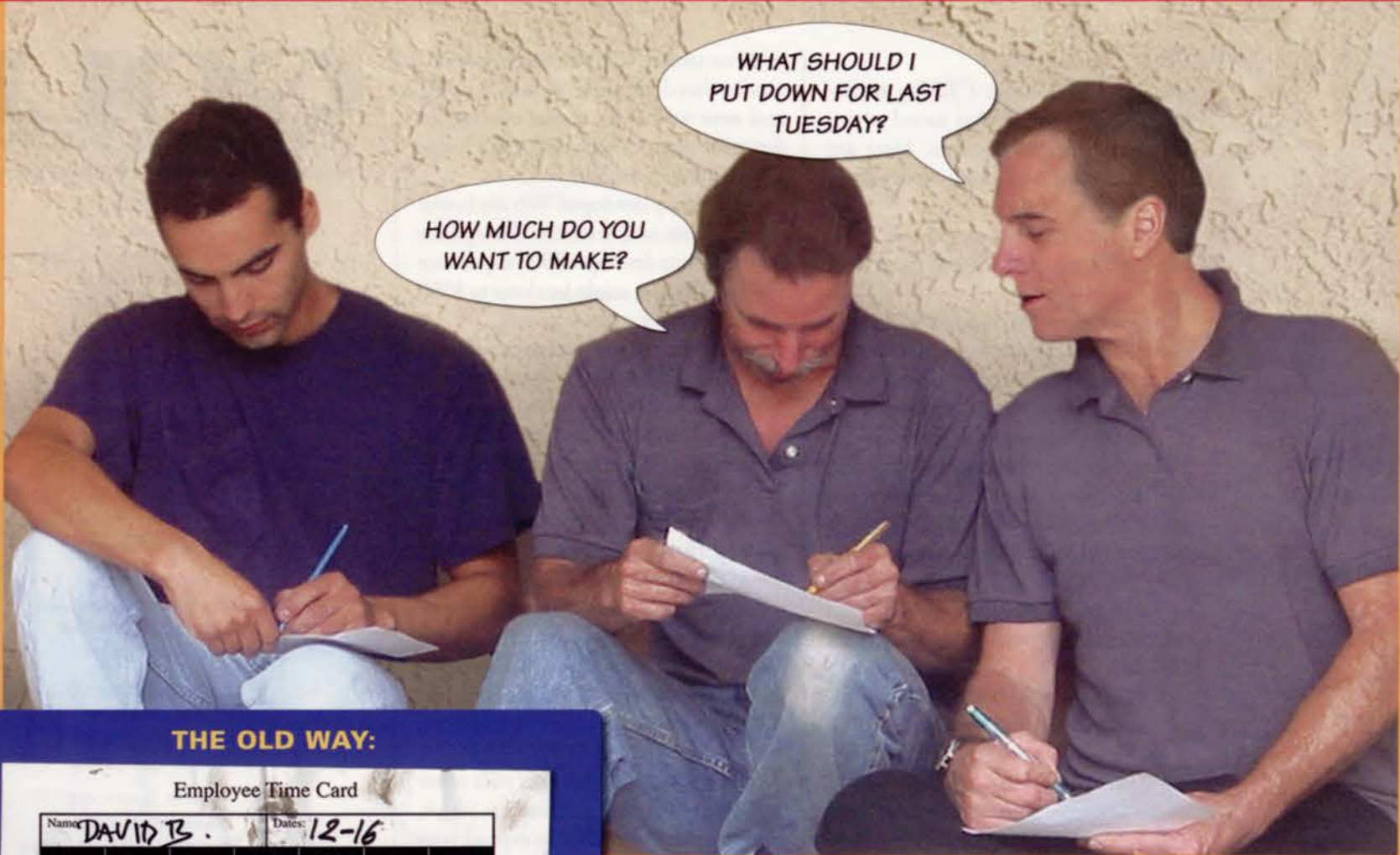
Matt Rostal
Interlachen Country Club

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We would like to hear from you. Please post any comments you have about this column on our message board, which is at www.golfcoursenews.com/messageboard.



HOW MUCH IS THIS CONVERSATION COSTING YOU?



THE OLD WAY:

Employee Time Card

Name: DAVID B. Dates: 12-16

| Day | Start | Lunch | End | Jobsite | Activity | Hours |
|-----------|-------|-------|------|-----------|----------|-------|
| Monday | 7 | 1/2 | 3:30 | Brentwood | Gen | 8 |
| Tuesday | 7 | 1/2 | 3:30 | ' | ' | 8 |
| Wednesday | 7 | 1/2 | 4 | ' | ' | 8 1/2 |
| Thursday | 7 | 1/2 | 4 | Brentwood | ' | 8 1/2 |
| Friday | 7 | 1/2 | 4 | ' | ' | 8 1/2 |

Employee Signature: *David B.* Total Hours: 41 1/2

Get in control of your manpower.

THE JOBCLOCK WAY:

Employee Report

Burns, David Date Range: 2/12/2007 through 2/16/2007

| Day | Date | Jobsite | Start | Stop | Cost Code | Hours | Total |
|-----|------|-------------|----------|----------|-----------------|--------------|--------------------|
| Mon | 2/12 | Brentwood 1 | 7:08 AM | 12:05 PM | Placing The Pin | 4:57 | |
| | | | 12:41 PM | 3:22 PM | Bunker | 2:41 | 7:38 hours |
| Tue | 2/13 | Brentwood 1 | 7:12 AM | 12:07 PM | Placing The Pin | 4:55 | |
| | | | 12:43 PM | 3:23 PM | Mowing | 2:40 | 7:35 hours |
| Wed | 2/14 | Brentwood 1 | 7:12 AM | 12:02 PM | Placing The Pin | 4:50 | |
| | | | 12:46 PM | 3:49 PM | Bunker | 3:03 | 7:53 hours |
| Thu | 2/15 | Brentwood 2 | 7:17 AM | 12:19 PM | Placing The Pin | 5:02 | |
| | | | 12:50 PM | 3:46 PM | Bunker | 2:56 | 7:58 hours |
| Fri | 2/16 | Brentwood 2 | 7:13 AM | 12:07 PM | Placing The Pin | 4:54 | |
| | | | 12:44 PM | 3:39 PM | Mowing | 2:55 | 7:49 hours |
| | | | | | | Total | 38:53 hours |

Signature: *David B.* Burns, David



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Rising to the top

John Walsh's column ("Rising to the top, October, page 6) has sound advice for future superintendents. Here are four important factors superintendents should think about:

1. Knowledge. No one knows it all, but respect those who know more than you.

2. Leadership. Management skills are a must. Who will work with you and gain your respect if you don't have a sense of direction or a plan of objectives? To gain respect, one needs to show respect. Leadership and management practices take time. Some have management skills, others don't. They require personal and professional skills. Management is a big factor nowadays. Management companies lease or run many golf courses, and communicating with them is difficult sometimes.

3. Mechanical knowledge. Every superintendent has to have some.

4. Common sense. This, as well as paying attention to detail, goes a long way with daily operations. You'd be surprised about how many members or public players notice trash cans, foot scrubbers, divot containers, tee markers, etc. The list goes on.

Rick Douglas
Golf course superintendent
Harmon Golf Club
Lebanon, Ohio

A personal Web site

Editor's note: GCN columnist Jim McLoughlin responds to inquiries about personal Web sites:

Some of you have contacted me asking for Web site development assistance and/

or a completed Web site that a superintendent has done well. I've been waiting, and now we have a model courtesy of Steve Renzetti, CGCS, at Quaker Ridge Golf Club in Scarsdale, N.Y.

Steve's newly developed Web site (www.stevenrenzetti.com) is terrific. Steve paid a local Web-site developer \$900 to produce the site. The cost might be closer to \$500 outside a major metro city area.

No matter. Your job isn't to copy Steve's Web site but to reach for and match the quality of it. When you find your Web site developer, ask him to note the quality of Steve's and then be creative in mixing your format. Your links basically will be the same, but your use of photos and your career path will differ sufficiently to allow for a customized site.

Note Steve used photos well, but he didn't overuse them, which many superintendents have a tendency to do. Steve's advice to every superintendent is to take digital pictures all the time and then use the best. Steve certainly has.

Finally, because the scope of your career might not be as deep and broad as Steve's, don't pressure yourselves to expand your credentials artificially so you can put a lot into each link. Work with the credentials you have for the place you are now, and as your career expands, grow your site to match it. You'll note Steve has said his site is in constant motion. This means he knows he'll be constantly updating it.

Good luck and do well.
JMCL

Outstanding content

This is a brief note to let you know I find your magazine content outstanding. I receive at least six industry magazines every month. I typically flip through them quickly, looking for items I need to know and to increase my knowledge. Your magazine is less cluttered, and the articles are often pertinent and helpful. I read the October 2006 issue. Great stuff. Thank you.

Bob Peterson
General manager
DarkHorse Golf Club
Auburn, Calif.

Correction

In a letter to the editor written by Bob Mitchell in the October issue (page 8), the Franklin County Country Club mentioned is in West Frankfort, Ill., and the Southmoor Golf Course mentioned is in South St. Louis County, Mo. The locations stated were incorrect. GCN

Readers with comments are invited to write to:

GCN letters to the editor
4012 Bridge Ave.
Cleveland, OH 44113.
Letters can also be faxed to 216-961-0364 or e-mailed to jwalsh@gie.net. Letters might be edited for space or clarity.



GOLF COURSE NEWS

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SALES OFFICES

GIE Media, Inc.
4020 Kintross Lakes Parkway, 2nd Floor
Richfield, OH 44286
Phone: (800) 456-0707
Fax: (216) 925-5038

Kevin Gilbride
Publisher
Phone: (216) 925-5090
kgilbride@gie.net

Russell Warner
Account manager
Phone: (216) 925-4647
rwarnar@gie.net

Amee Robbins
Account manager, West Coast
Phone: (310) 546-6060
arobbins@gie.net

Bonnie Vellikonya
Classified sales
Phone: (216) 925-5075
bvelikonya@gie.net

Marie Spencer
Marketing manager
Phone: (216) 925-4640
mspencer@gie.net

Debbie Kean
Manager, books
Phone: (216) 925-5011
dkean@gie.net

Maria Miller
Conferences manager
Phone: (216) 925-4657
mmiller@gie.net

GRAPHICS / PRODUCTION

Andrea Vagas, Art director
Mark Rook, Creative director
Helen Duerr, Production director
Lori Skala, Production coordinator

CORPORATE STAFF

Richard Foster, Chairman and c.e.o.
Chris Foster, President and c.o.o.
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Harmony In Growth

Education drives national show

by John Walsh

Visit the Golf Course News Web site, www.golfcoursenews.com, for daily news updates about golf course developments and renovations, people, suppliers, associations and industry events.



The Golf Industry Show is nearing, and golf course superintendents are excited to partake in the big event. While most superintendents aren't necessarily there to make purchasing decisions, education and networking are the main factors for their attendance.

When Tom Ackley, CGCS, at Juniper Hill Golf Course in Northborough Mass., goes to the national show, he attends seminars for two days to maintain his certification and to keep up with new ideas about diseases, weeds, management and irrigation.

"I once tried taking four seminars one year, and it was very draining – now I take two," he says.

Ackley has been going to the national show since 1991 and looks forward to it yearly.

"The GCSAA is always trying to add new education seminars," he says. "As long as I've been certified, it's hard to

find worthwhile courses to take. I'm looking forward to a couple of seminars that haven't been offered before, and the USGA always has an informative session."

Mark Storby, golf course superintendent at Oneida Golf and Country Club in Green Bay, Wis., has been going to the show since 1996. Storby attends two one-day classes and spends two days at the trade show. He takes a mix of agronomy and business management seminars depending on what issues arise during the year. This year he's taking financial and risk management classes, the latter to learn about liability issues to protect the club.

Terry Boehm, CGCS, at Avon Oaks Country Club in Avon, Ohio, has been going to the national show since 1994 and hasn't missed a year. Boehm's first four years attending the show were as an assistant, but he says he doesn't have it in the budget to send his assistant this year.

Boehm takes one or two days of seminars to earn continuing education points, as well as other sessions.

"There's every seminar you can think of," he says. "The most important aspect of the national is the education."

Boehm also has been playing in the golf championship before the big event since 1998.

"It's a great networking opportunity," he says. "The seminars don't stop at the door. The [superintendent's] job is all about how to do more with less. And what's the best way to do that? I get that by talking to superintendents and attending seminars. I also use the show to recharge my batteries for the coming year and develop a plan of attack."

Ackley says the show provides good networking opportunities as well.

"The nice thing is that you meet people from all over the country and other countries," he says. "We help



each other out.”

Another benefit of the event is the trade show, Ackley says.

“The floor show is enormous,” he says. “I go through the list of vendors and pick out who I want to see. You could spend two days going through the entire show. I look for new products – grass seed, equipment or chemicals; or if I had issues with a piece of equipment, I look to get answers from technical guys.”

Ackley doesn't purchase anything at the show. Instead, he makes recommendations to his owner each winter and then the inventory is assessed. He says he rotates triplex mowers every five years and is looking at leasing for the first time.

“I haven't seen too much from equipment manufacturers in advertising, so it will be interesting to see what they have,” he says. “We're always interested in new equipment.”

Storby doesn't do much purchasing at the show either. About 2 percent of his total purchasing is done there, mostly small supplies and accessories.

He purchases larger equipment through local vendors.

Boehm isn't looking to buy anything at the show but uses it as an opportunity to talk to technical representatives.

“There's always a better mouse trap to tweak your operations,” he says.

Like many superintendents, Storby's wife usually comes with him.

“We socialize in the evenings, but we don't turn it into a vacation,” he says.

“I'm not into the political part of it,” he adds. “Other than seeing my comrades from school, I see the national as an educational opportunity. I've never found a need to network with other superintendents throughout the country. I do that locally.”

Having owners and clubs managers present at the show hasn't made a difference to Ackley. His relationship with Juniper's owner hasn't changed since the National Golf Course Owners Association has been a part of the show.

“My owner goes as a member of the NGCOA,” he says. “I meet up with him

and have dinner. It's nice on the business side for owners to understand more about what we do as superintendents. It's helping them out in a positive way. They know more about what to spend on chemicals and seed.”

Storby says he goes out of his way to show Oneida's ownership the benefits of attending the show. The Oneida ownership doesn't attend the show, but the general manager usually attends every other year.

Each year, Storby says he gets more out of the event, especially on the show floor because of the solutions centers.

“The expectation grows every year because the show gets more detailed every year,” he says.

Boehm says he doesn't expect the show to be that much different than it has been in the past.

“I'm happy for what's it's been,” he says. “It's a great show. I don't think there's anything missing at the show. No matter what you're going for, you get a chance to meet those goals.” GCN

Golf Industry Show

Web site: www.golfindustryshow.com

Location: Anaheim Convention Center in California

Presenting organizations: Golf Course Superintendent Association of America, National Golf Course Owners Association, Club Managers Association of America

Supporting organizations: National Golf Foundation, American Society of Golf Course Architects, Golf Course Builders Association of America

GCSAA Education Conference: Feb. 19-24

NGCOA Annual Conference: Feb. 20-23

CMAA World Conference on Club Management: Feb. 23-27

Trade show: Feb. 22-24

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Becoming more involved



John Ekstrom is the assistant golf course superintendent at Hinsdale Golf Club in Clarendon Hills, Ill. Ekstrom also is the head of the Class C Advisory Committee for the Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents. He can be reached at snapp79@aol.com or 815-922-0587.

It's 4:30 in the morning, and I'm the only car on the highway. Minutes later, it's 4:45 in the morning, and my footsteps are the only noise I hear in the shop. As I walk in, I wake up Jazz, our goose dog.

Spending my early mornings and late afternoons checking the course have been some of the most tranquil times of my life. However, early in my career, I would check the course and feel very isolated – not because I was working alone at the course, but because I didn't know where my career path was heading. Fortunately, the past few years have highlighted the value of communication, collaboration, networking and a team effort.

I'm very proud to be the third Class C committee adviser of the Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents. I've been on the committee since its inception in 2003 as a committee member. The Class C adviser leads the committee, which is comprised solely of assistant golf course superintendents. Being a nonvoting member of the Midwest board of directors, I'm fortunate to represent the 130 assistants of the Midwest Association. The president of the association appoints the adviser for a two-year term, and I'm currently serving the second year of my term. The committee's purpose is to provide opportunities in the careers of assistants to help them become golf course superintendents. These opportunities include:

- The annual assistant winter workshop;
- Assistant shoptalks;
- Contributing to MAGCS' magazine, *On Course*; and
- Numerous opportunities to network with other assistants and superintendents.

The annual assistant winter workshop, which began three years ago, is the main event of the year for the Class C committee. We've had several different speakers talk about various topics, including consultant Pat Jones of Flagstick LLC and meteorologist Phil Schwarz from ABC 7-Chicago. On Feb. 8, consultant Jim McLoughlin of TMG Golf will present his strategic career planning seminar to our assistants and superintendents. We

look forward to McLoughlin's seminar. Our committee is always thinking and looking for new topics and speakers for future workshops.

Another critical event our committee sponsors are assistant shoptalks, which are opportunities for assistants to get together at a specified club's maintenance shop and discuss the industry, club projects and equipment. We usually hold four or five shoptalks throughout the year. Besides, it's always fun to see other maintenance facilities.

As a Class C committee, one of the things we focus on is contributing to our association's award-winning monthly publication, *On Course*. No matter how big or small the input, giving back to your association is always important. Contributing to the magazine is one of the easiest ways to become recognizable within the association. After all, not all members attend monthly meetings or trade shows, but all of them receive the publication.

Learn from experience

I know I'm preaching to the choir when telling superintendents and the veterans of this industry that networking is one of the most valuable assets of belonging to a professional organization. However, during my young career, I've met peers who don't completely realize the importance of learning from others in the industry to gain knowledge and experience.

A couple months ago, I gave a talk to turf students at a community college in the Chicago area. Most of them didn't have a clue about the realities of the job market, either for assistants or superintendents. My goal wasn't to scare them but rather to make them aware of market conditions. Unfortunately, some students have the illusion that once they graduate from college, jobs will fall at their feet. Truthfully, I thought this at one time as well.

It's true only time can bring experience. Hard work and dedication are just a few prerequisites for a great career. Neverthe-

less, some people with the best resumes still have difficult times. As with most instances in life, you must be aggressive and go after what you want. This is the message I deliver to the students I speak to. I'm honored people respect my opinion, and when speaking, especially to students, I take it very seriously.

I'm starting my 10th year in the business, the sixth as an assistant. I know there are many assistants in the industry with much longer tenures as assistants, and I appreciate their dedication to our industry. How many years will it

take me to get to my goal of becoming a golf course superintendent? I don't know, but I believe I'm on the right track. Being a member on the Class C committee

of the MAGCS has enabled me to meet people and form friendships that I never would have imagined. I look forward to many more opportunities to meet fellow professionals and learn from them.

Communication is key

During my last semester at Illinois State University in 2001, I remember thinking this will be the last time I'll have to give a speech or write another essay. Now, five years later, I've learned that verbal and written communication is, and will always be, the distributor of progress. They're as necessary for our profession as sprayers, chemicals and other machinery or equipment.

Verbal and written communication is the cornerstone on which the Class C assistant committee is built. Our committee is dedicated to communicating information about the industry and our profession with assistants and superintendents. We're constantly communicating in a variety of ways via workshops, shoptalks, written publications and networking opportunities to provide information that will help support assistants on their journey to becoming golf course superintendents.

No matter how isolated you might feel in your career, never forget your chapter organization is always seeking new ideas to help promote each other and our great industry. GCN

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Jeffrey D. Brauer is a licensed golf course architect and president of GolfScapes, a golf course design firm in Arlington, Texas. Brauer, a past president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects, can be reached at jeff@jeffreydbrauer.com.

Bunker maintenance in mind

Some golf course superintendents have asked me about my thoughts about how individual bunker design relates to maintenance. Well, I've been thinking about bunkers a lot lately, given the golf economy's downturn and the rising standards expected of bunker maintenance.

Bunker maintenance requires time and money, particularly when you think about how golfers expect bunkers to be perfect playing surfaces. During the past 40 years, I've seen the quality of greens progress from bumpy to perfect, tees maintained to former green standards, fairways maintained to former tee standards, and roughs maintained to former fairway standards. Now the focus is shifting to make bunkers better, if not perfect, playing surfaces. The goal seems to be that they're groomed to make bunker shots just as difficult as fairway shots.

But to me, a lower standard of bunker maintenance would save money and restore integrity and meaning to bunkers. It would be a cheaper, easier way to make a course more challenging, in contrast to the expense of earthmoving, grassing, irrigation, cart path construction and subsequent maintenance required to extend tees for more length.

The standard, preferred course of action seems to be to spend more on bunker construction and maintenance. Bunkers always have been considered more expensive to maintain than turf, although in the old days, raking them three times a week versus mowing rough three times a week shouldn't have cost substantially more. Nowadays, higher bunker standards require daily hand-raking and edging and weekly leaf/clipping blowing. Some courses deep-rake bunkers to loosen sand for better play when there's been too much rain and water bunkers to firm them when there's been too little rain.

With high standards desired, bunkers consume a far higher percentage of maintenance dollars than their total and relative acreage would suggest. Bunkers cover no more than two to three acres or about 2 to 3 percent of the 100 to 150 acres typically maintained. But they might consume 20 to 30 percent of the maintenance budget if all maintenance actions are accounted for.

To facilitate desired conditions, bun-

kers are constructed with a bunker liner to separate sand from subsoil and full herringbone tile with flush-outs or large clean-out boxes. Some have experimented with the equivalent of choker and gravel layers for better drainage. Many course managers think nothing of using sand from a thousand miles away because it's whiter or eliminates plugged lies because of its angular structure. Buying this type of sand is expensive because of the special screening required to make it fit USGA recommendations perfectly and shipping costs. And it's not just a one-time expense because the sand must be replaced every so often.

Despite these higher construction standards, bunkers still cost a lot to maintain. Superintendents say liners reduce, but don't eliminate, their maintenance problems of clogged drains, sand that washes from rainfall and the need to replace sand from wind loss or contamination. The consensus is that sand needs to be replaced and bunker drainage rebuilt every three to five years without a liner or every five to seven years with a liner. Perhaps some of that rebuilding is because of rising golfer expectations as much as it is contaminated sand, which might still play acceptably long after it's lost its color from contamination.

Changing style

Architects are focused on bunker design and placement to enhance play, but I've changed philosophies of bunker style to accommodate new expectations – and budget realities – to reduce bunker maintenance.

One way is to reduce the number of bunkers. Given that few sites have the natural sandy soil, it's hard to justify bunkers as natural design elements. Architects probably have overemphasized the use of steep-sloped cape-and-bay-style bunkers, morphing them into visually dramatic and artistic elements that can be a signature design. Many golf architects prefer the look of cape-and-bay-style bunkers with sloped sand. Fabric bunker liners were supposed to make these more practical, but they don't eliminate sand washing completely.

I've flattened my cape-and-bay-style bunkers, reducing maximum slope from 25 percent to 12 percent, which usually allows them to hold up in moderate rains. However, attaining the same visibility us-

ing half the slope doubles the bunkers' front-to-back dimensions, increasing size and daily hand-raking.

We can creatively use fairway slopes, grass bunkers and mounds, steep banks and good old-fashioned depth perception tricks to make shots challenging. In many ways, using different hazards should allow us to make each hole a bit more unique. For instance, aren't there too many greens with bunkers left and right already?

Another style change is to reduce bunker sizes. Before, a maintenance-friendly bunker had 16- to 20-foot-wide minimum bays to turn mechanical bunker rakes at the bunker ends comfortably, making for fairly large bunkers. Smooth curves and edges allowed courses with a tight budget to rake right to the bunker edge with power rakes.

Smaller bunkers should reduce raking time as well. Aesthetically, this is often an improvement because smaller bunkers are often in better proportion to the greens and create the right aesthetic balance. Superintendents are finding hand-raking consumes as much labor as power-raking because they always use two-man crews (one riding the power rake and another to hand-rake edges). And while hand-raking takes more time, travel time of utility vehicles is greatly reduced.

Generally, superintendents prefer flat sand bunkers with steep grass banks. They accept the regular schedule of bunker-bank hand maintenance – or look the other way as employees push the limits of riding mowers – more than the unpredictability of sand shoveling.

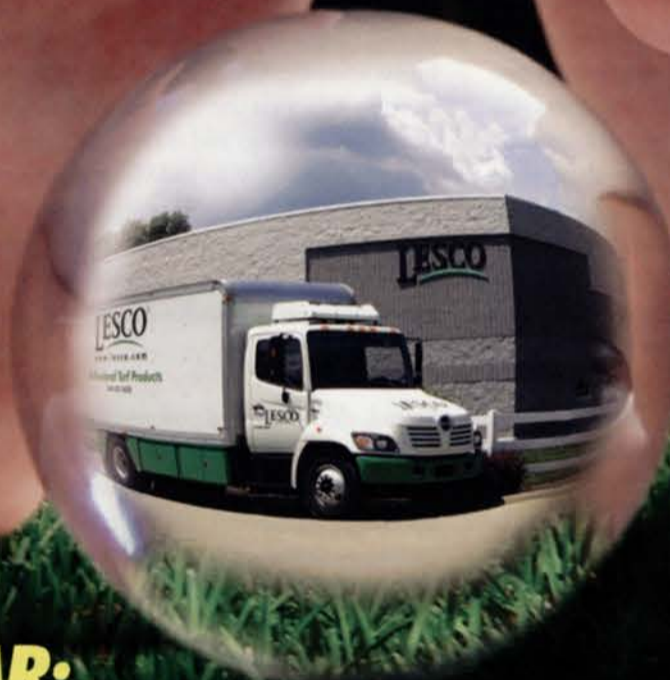
In this instance, players side with superintendents. In a cape-and-bay-style bunker, a shot missing the green by 5 feet often plugs in sloping sand, while a 10-foot miss finds flat sand and a better lie. In flat-bottom bunkers, the 5-foot miss deflects off the grass bank and lands lightly in the flat bottom, giving all misses better lies.

Bunkers are placed and shaped at the discretion of the architect. If money is a factor, it makes sense to use discretion to build bunkers that are more easily maintained. If I do, my bunker designs will less likely be eliminated during the next recession, as has happened to so many bunkers during times when money is tight. GCN

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Jim McLoughlin is the founder of TMG Golf (www.TMGgolfcounsel.com), a golf course development and consulting firm, and is a former executive director of the GCSAA. He can be reached at golfguide@adelphia.net or 760-804-7339. His previous columns can be found on www.golf-coursenews.com.

A first-time ballot

A vicious circle can be defined as when one thing leads to another thing and then the other thing reverts back to the one thing. Unfortunately, the GCSAA election process offers one of the better examples of how a vicious circle can undermine effective governance. Over 99 percent of all eligible votes within GCSAA national elections are accumulated by chapters in blocks, which are then used as tradable chips in upcoming elections. This happens because Article I of the association bylaws empowers the board to define the standing rules for membership, which states “a member’s vote will automatically be assigned to the chapter unless the individual member indicates on an appropriate form that he/she wishes to vote as an individual.”

Left standing, this defaulting election policy will continue to increase the number of indifferent, uninformed members while at the same time discouraging natural leaders within the membership from seeking board/committee service.

The obvious way to move away from chapter block voting would be to allow members to vote as individuals directly to the GCSAA via the Internet where: (i) eligible voters could gain access to a computerized election process via their unique member ID numbers; and (ii) safety protocols would prevent members from voting more than once on any single issue.

This would appear to be the perfect solution to a serious problem. However, when elected association leaders are canvassed by interested parties – including myself – about this matter, they consistently state or imply that because members generally are indifferent to, and therefore not adequately informed about basic election issues, they can’t be trusted to vote.

There it is, the vicious circle: Individual members shouldn’t be given the opportunity to vote because they’re uninformed. But they’re uninformed because the chapter block voting process dictates this. The obvious solution to this dilemma would be to educate GCSAA members about election issues via the Internet and chapter town hall meetings and then allow them to vote electronically as individuals directly to the GCSAA. But this isn’t about to happen because it’s apparent that elected GCSAA and chapter leaders don’t want members voting as individuals.

Checks and balances

Sound, election-based government requires a system of checks and balances to insure conflicts of interest don’t permeate and undermine government. The best example illustrating this premise is the three branches of the U.S. federal government. Imagine how the federal government would function if the executive branch served alone, without the counter-balancing influence of the legislative and judicial branches? The office of the president would become a dictatorship, and the country would be diminished accordingly.

Similarly, it should be noted the GCSAA bylaws virtually are void of any system of checks and balances and the association is indeed being diminished accordingly. For example:

1. Article V assures that chapter delegates will cast all votes for their chapter members in GCSAA elections – an approach that bypasses individual member voting, which is the very cornerstone of a system of checks and balances.

2. Article VII grants the board of directors the sole power to appoint all members of the nominating committee. Regrettably, this: (i) fosters board secrecy because those with contrary thinking are denied board access; (ii) denies the membership the opportunity to hold the board accountable because member issue-voting can be/has been denied indefinitely; and (iii) creates a serious conflict of interest because the nominating committee, along with politically appointed past presidents and members at large, serve as the board oversight task force every third year, i.e., the board is basically reviewing itself.

3. Article VII solely authorizes the

president to establish all standing committees of the association and to appoint all members to each of these policy-setting committees – an approach that basically positions the president as a monarch or dictator, depending on which side of the political fence you reside.

To be fair and accurate, recent GCSAA boards of directors can’t be held responsible for putting these lax bylaws in place. The onerous policies contained within these bylaws were established many years ago. Clearly though, it’s time to revisit this situation now.

The obvious solution to addressing these lax mandates would be to amend the bylaws. However, this is an almost impossible task because a mandatory two-thirds member voting approval is required to amend the bylaws and the articles of incorporation. (See my November 2005 column.)

Against this backdrop of bylaws lacking any semblance of checks and balances, it’s time to sample membership opinion on a key democratic issue, i.e., would the members prefer to vote in GCSAA elections as individuals, or default their votes to chapters to vote for them?

Accordingly, all classes of GCSAA members are invited to participate in this straw poll electronically (a yes or no vote) as indicated in the box below. Results will be published in a forthcoming issue. Granted, this is a nonscientific poll asking voting ineligible GCSAA members to participate, but I’m seeking the widest possible sampling of informal membership opinion at this time.

Like it or not, this straw poll will serve as a referendum to measure member indifference to voting opportunity. Light member participation will advance the premise that GCSAA members can’t be trusted to vote because they don’t care enough to be informed. Clearly, the GCSAA bylaws need to be revised to reflect a more democratic process if the association is going to have any chance of effectively leading/serving its members in a demanding 21st century. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first time the GCSAA membership has been invited to provide a collective opinion about an associationwide issue. Cast your ballot as you like, but don’t blow the opportunity. There might not be another. GCN

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I would like to see block chapter election voting discontinued and individual member voting guaranteed via the Internet. Yes No



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Robert A. Milligan, Ph.D., is professor emeritus from Cornell University and senior consultant with Madison, Wis.-based Dairy Strategies. He can be reached at 651-647-0495 or rmilligan@trsmith.com.

Implement a recruitment plan

Think about the success of great sports coaches – Vince Lombardi of the Green Bay Packers, Don Shula of the Miami Dolphins, Mike Krzyzewski of the Duke Blue Devils and Bobby Cox of the Atlanta Braves. They're outstanding leaders, but they didn't win championships every year because winning a championship requires more than strong leadership. An exemplary coach also must have gifted players and excellent team spirit.

Similarly, a first-rate golf course requires more than a first-rate superintendent. It requires an excellent staff, as well as motivation, commitment and team spirit among all employees. These requirements are influenced greatly by, if not dependent on, recruitment.

With a tightening job market in most parts of the country and uncertainties about immigration policies, some frustrated superintendents and assistant superintendents think hiring reliable employees is impossible. Some resort to hiring whomever can be found.

Recruiting is frustrating for almost all managers; however, it's crucial. Because of the need for excellent employees and a responsibility to the club, it's critical to excel when recruiting. Excellent recruiting is more than just writing want ads. It starts much earlier by developing a recruitment plan.

You wouldn't wait until turf showed a nutrient deficiency to plan your fertilization program, or wait until you found weeds or insects in turf to plan your pesticide program. Waiting until it's time to recruit new employees or fill a position isn't much different.

The first part of a recruitment plan is to consider and shape the image of your facility as an employer. Believe it or not, there are businesses, including golf facilities, that don't have to recruit because they have a waiting list of applicants. They have the image of a preferred employer. Who are the preferred employers in your community? How did they become preferred employers? Here are two examples:

1. A manager of several agricultural businesses, including a turf business, always spoke in the college human resource course I taught. His business was a preferred employer. He would often

sheepishly tell the story of a young man who came to his business seeking employment. After a few minutes of questioning the young man, he realized, to his amazement, he had moved more than 50 miles for the sole purpose of working at his business.

2. A business is a preferred employer for high school students at three local schools. It has mastered the challenge of providing student employees flexibility and knowing they'll show up when assigned work. It accomplished this by providing opportunities for the students to indicate work preference but then required student employees to honor the resulting schedule. It worked.

So how does a golf course become a preferred employer? It's not that different from how a golf course becomes a preferred course for golfers. First, you must provide a great workplace, which doesn't mean excessively high compensation or just being nice to employees. It means you have to have competitive compensation. Most importantly, you must be a great employer by:

- Treating employees with respect;
- Being relentlessly fair to employees;
- Providing clear expectations and detailed feedback;
- Creating opportunities to grow and advance; and
- Developing a team atmosphere that's attractive to join.

Next, you have to promote your course as great workplace. A good place to start for promoting your maintenance staff as a preferred workplace is members or golfers at your course. At many facilities, members look down at the maintenance staff and perhaps all staff. That attitude is detrimental to the future of the club or course as it makes recruitment more difficult. Part of your recruitment plan should be to reduce or eliminate that attitude. Here are some ideas:

1. My wife and I exercise at the St. Paul Gym on the University of Minnesota campus. There's an information board just inside the door. The names

and pictures of every staff member were posted on the board so I was able to learn the names of the employees I interact with. Seeing the pictures personalized the staff for me and provided recognition for them. Why not post pictures of your staff in the pro shop, clubhouse or even near the first tee?

2. Develop a recognition program where employees' accomplishments are highlighted with their name, accomplishment and picture where all can see. The recognition should be for specific accomplishments, not overused employee-of-the-month-type programs.

Starting and continuing programs like these take time and energy. Keeping a program like this in place will happen only if you make it a priority. Making it

a priority can come only from a recognition that being a preferred employer is critical.

Another key part of a recruitment plan is identifying the labor pools that

are most likely to contain excellent candidates for positions on your staff. Thorough recruiting targets specific, identified labor pools rather than the general labor market. Some examples:

- For years, McDonalds has been a master at targeting the pool of part-time high-school students. As that pool shrinks, it's also targeting senior citizens.
- One golf course that targets high school juniors and seniors, who in many cases work at the course through college, has a more select pool. They send a letter to all juniors and seniors elected to the honor society.
- Other golf courses target members of the local school golf team or children of members of the golf club.
- Many of you target the immigrant labor pool; however, this pool is shrinking in many areas of the country.

No one pool fits all. The challenge for you is to develop a recruitment plan complete with the right labor pools and then earn and create an image as a preferred employer within that pool. This isn't easy, but if it were, everyone could do it. GCN

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Planting seeds for the future

A TEXAN PREPARES TO TAKE HOLD OF THE GCSAA'S REINS

by
PAT
JONES

GCN INTERVIEWS
RICKY HEINE,
CGCS, THE
INCOMING
PRESIDENT OF THE
GCSAA.

Most superintendents find their passion working on a golf course in their late teens or by playing on their high-school golf team. Ricky Heine, CGCS – soon to be president of the 20,000-member GCSAA – found his passion as a 13-year-old sod farmer.

“I grew up on a farm and loved the outdoor environment,” he says. “My older brother, Bobby – who’s almost 22 years older than I am – was working as a golf course superintendent and needed to grow in a truckload of sod. I respected him a lot and wanted to be like him and be a superintendent from the time I was about 10. So, when I was about 13, he brought me a truckload of sod, and I hired other kids from my class to help me. We planted the whole truck of sod by hand and turned it into a three-acre sod-production farm. That’s how I earned money when I was little.”

Nowadays, Heine earns his living as the general manager and director of grounds at Golf Club at Star Ranch, a semiprivate facility near Austin, Texas. He’s only 43 but has been a GCSAA member for 23 years, joining before graduating from Texas A&M in 1985. He’s one of those guys who just never found a reason to wander too far from home. His job in Hutto, Texas, is less than 30 miles from where he was born. Now, a fellow who stayed close to home will travel the world and mix with the powerful and famous as the GCSAA’s top elected official. Here’s how he’ll handle it.

Q Your year as president is about to begin. Does it feel like the finish or starting line?

It feels like the starting line, but it’s actually been 17 years of continuous board service. I started out with the Central Texas GCSA, then the Lone Star GCSA and now the national. Once you commit

to becoming engaged in the GCSAA, you really never finish. You just pass through phases.

Q What’s the most important thing you’ve learned about the industry during your time on the board?

I’ve learned a lot quickly. Probably the most important thing is that change doesn’t happen in a vacuum. The profession is changing as we speak. The golf business is more competitive, and time is so precious for our customers. Facilities and superintendents have to understand that change is inevitable and manage it.

You have to broaden your perspective and knowledge of the facility from turf only to the full spectrum – insurance, net income, food cost, risk management – you name it. Now, superintendents are getting those questions. Some are responding, and some aren’t as quick to get on board. Successful superintendents will respond. I’m not sure this dynamic is any different than any other industries or professions. Change is a constant in modern life.

Q Do you have a theme for your presidency or any specific goals?

I see my role as planting seeds and providing the direction and leadership that will advance the association and the profession. I don’t have a checklist or agenda that I will carry with me this year.

During my six years on the board, I don’t think anyone had a set agenda, but I think about what past president Jon Maddern said: “We are a board of nine ... not nine individuals and a president.” The president has to involve the other eight members, including the newest members. Once the debates are over, we have to support each other and

respect each other.

But, that said, I identified three key initiatives at the delegates’ meeting. First, we need to support our chapters to become more effective and efficient. Second, we must increase membership so we can have a stronger voice and advocate even better on its behalf. And third, now that our first class A group has met the new PDI standards of continuing education, we must effectively market them to employers and golfers like never before.

Q The new PDI/certification requirements went into effect mid-year. What have the short-term impacts been in terms of membership numbers, classifications, etc.?

When we first brought this concept forward in 1994, we knew membership would decline if standards were adopted. Plus, you’ve had the recession, 9/11 and a flat golf economy. There’s no doubt we lost some members because of the standards, but we reaffirmed our commitment to the concept. Some membership growth has been lost, and PDI implementation didn’t help that, but once we establish our professional value in the marketplace, the idea of PDI will be vindicated.

Q What do you think the impact will be in five or 10 years?

The value of golf course superintendents will grow during the next five to 10 years, and even more during my lifetime.

Q Has your general manager title presented any challenges for you politically?

No. There have been a couple of cases when people asked about it. It’s just a few more people to manage and a few more areas of expertise to keep up with, but it’s the same philosophy: detail and



follow through.

I served as a superintendent for 16 years, and I'm still involved with our golf course management team. Three of my guys and I have been together for 18 years. They probably know what I'm thinking before I even think it.

The GCSAA wants to provide the tools and opportunities for members to become general managers if they want to, but we don't promote that. I didn't go through a formal education process and seek the position, it just happened.

Q Has it given you a different perspective that might help you lead the association?

I hope so. Golf is becoming more of a business every year. I've learned a lot about running this facility, and I've tried to manage it like it was my own these past three years. That's been a great experience for me. If a superintendent becomes involved with the success of the facility, it will help the business succeed and advance his or her career. Understanding produces knowledge, and that knowledge can lead to respect, appreciation, pay and tenure for our members.

Q What's your take on chapter restructuring?

I'm in Texas, and we have six chapters around the state. We've discussed this a little. We're watching, listening and learning. It has to do with chapter effectiveness. We have pilot programs in Michigan and Pennsylvania. The concept is the affiliated state chapter can provide the effectiveness and efficiency while the unaffiliated local groups provide the networking, camaraderie and some education. Why do we need duplication of services such as Web sites, bookkeeping, insurance, etc.?

We've hired two field staffers to manage the process. One is working more

Photo courtesy of Carlton Wade Photography

on current chapter structures, and the other is working with Michigan and Pennsylvania to be a liaison to help with the restructuring. Eventually, this could lead to more in-the-field staff if the testing proves productive.

Q What should members who grumble about board expenses understand about board

service they don't know?

At the last delegates' meeting, there was solid approval for the checks-and-balances process. Once we communicated the business case for what we've been doing, the response was better. It will be less and less of an issue. Members can be assured nothing inappropriate is happening. No one on this board ran to enrich themselves. I don't expect

a pity party about the demands of the position either. We knew what we were getting into. The most important thing to know is we spend what we need, not necessarily what we have budgeted.

We do our best to do what's right and spend the association's money as if it were our own. When I get off this board, I won't have a stockpile of unused logo shirts and clothes to carry me into retirement. That said, the association task group recommended ideas about expenses and reductions, and we'll look at those. We need trust and transparency. I'm hopeful we'll accept those recommendations. They were good ideas.

Q National board service has taken its toll on previous members. Do you think you could have survived all the way through had it not been for the governance changes put in place a few years ago?

I have a great employer, so that helps. Also, consider average tenure for superintendents was about five years, and now it's about eight years. The change was evolutionary. Past boards had to do some heavy lifting. But – it sounds contradictory – we now have greater control even though our time and travel commitment has been reduced. I would have survived, but it wouldn't have been as much fun.

Q How can your work load be less and control greater?

It's like being a managing superintendent. We have our indicators that tell us how the association and staff are doing. It's very defined, and we can measure performance. We tell our c.e.o., 'We want this done.' At year's end, when those indicator numbers come in, we can decide if we've been successful or not. The control comes when those numbers are in. That's where the rubber meets the road.

Q Given that, are you encouraged that more people are interested in serving?

Yes, extremely. More good members are considering it. They're not waiting for the right time when their careers are established and they can do it. We also understand people are more family-centric as well. It's all about that balance. You have to have a strong relationship with your family and employer to even consider it. I successfully navigated

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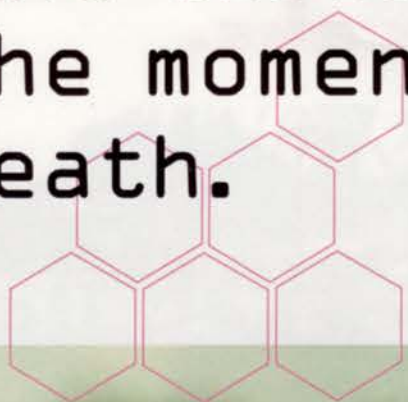
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those waters, and many others can do the same.

Q How many days do you think you'll be on the road next

year for the association?

I haven't done the math, but I'm planning on about 75 days. I passed on a couple of things this year that just didn't fit with the balance I mentioned earlier.

Someone else from the board is always willing to fill in. If you're a board of nine, you can still be effective.

Q What travel secrets have you learned throughout the years?

I know exactly how long the drive is to the airport, and I know an airplane seat makes a pretty good office.

Q Tell us about the folks at your facility who keep things running while you're serving the association.

I have the best staff of friends anyone could ever imagine. My golf course superintendent, Travis Carlson, grew up on a family farm about a mile from my parents' farm that I grew up on. He's an Aggie, too. Samantha Fulford is my assistant manager, and we've worked together for about 12 years. She might be the smartest person I've ever met. Our director of golf, Rob Fulford, knows as much about the business as he does about playing the game. Megan Woodard, our sales manager, does a tremendous job with anything we ask of her. It is so much fun to go to work or to head off on GCSAA business and know things are going to be fine. Last, but not least, our owners, Tim Timmerman, Joe Cotter and Ray Wicken have entrusted everything to me, and they have been incredibly supportive through this whole process.

Q Who's your hero?

My father, Herbert, who passed away several months ago at age 94. He had an active pesticide license when he was 88. I helped him get to the continuing education classes he needed. I told him he probably could just let me handle anything he needed, but he said, "You never know, it surely won't hurt anything." So he attended the classes and renewed his license. That's commitment. We could all learn from that.

Q How do you want to be remembered as past president?

A few years ago, I read a book called "The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader," and I focused on three Cs in it: character, commitment and compassion. It would mean a lot to me if that's how I'm remembered by my family, my friends and my fellow members. GCN

Ricky Heine can be reached at rickyheine@hotmail.com.

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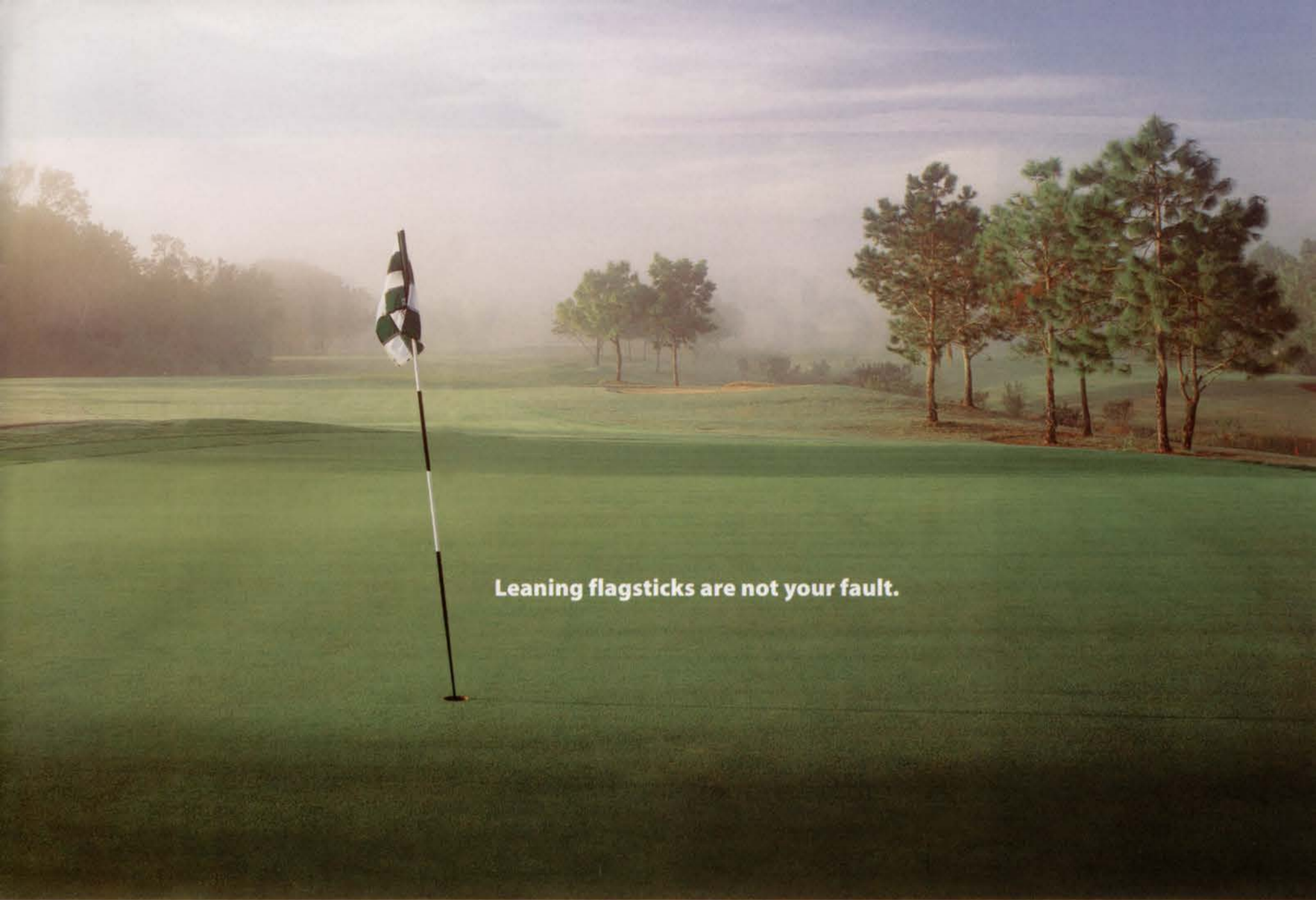


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CLUBS UPDATE PRACTICE FACILITIES TO BENEFIT MEMBERS AND REMAIN COMPETITIVE

by T.R. MASSEY



Trends in golf are changing with the times. Course owners and operators are locked in competitive races to lure players and members and to distinguish themselves from other facilities. Sometimes that means upgrading areas of their facilities.

Enter the driving range ... err ... make that the modern practice facility. Nowadays, the term "range" doesn't really do them justice. They're sophisticated uses of available land, and facilities need to make the most of them.

In cold-weather climates, where the season can be six months long at most, heated stations or indoor buildings with open bay doors are springing up. Clubs that expand practice areas are building bunkers and practice fairways that allow players to hit shots they'll face on the golf course.

Keeping an edge

One can look no further than one of the North's most well-known, old-school private clubs as an example. When the 2004 Ryder Cup ended at Oakland Hills Country Club in Bloomfield Hills, Mich., the members of the private 36-hole club remodeled its antiquated driving range into a modern practice facility.

Oakland Hills has a history of hosting major championships, and the PGA Championship will be played there in 2008. With a high-caliber course and clubhouse, it offers one of the area's most alluring private-club memberships, but the practice area was always the club's least highlighted attraction.

"As you look across the landscape of our facility, the practice area was a step down from the rest," says Rick Bayliss, the club's chief operating officer. "We are first and foremost a golf club, so upgrading the facility plays to the demographics of our members. The practice portion is a great part of the recreational

enjoyment. As busy as everyone is, enjoying 45 minutes on the practice range is a big part of what they join for. We wanted to improve our practice facility dramatically. Before, it wasn't that good. Now, it's a jewel, and our members really appreciate it."

Oakland Hills contracted the architectural firm Arthur Hills/Steve Forrest and Associates to improve the practice area. A short-game practice area was added, and the size of the teeing space in the existing facility was tripled from 1,800 square feet to 6,000 square feet.

"We moved the swimming pool, went into existing property, regraded and put in target greens and bunkers," Bayliss says. "The short-game area moved to a quiet place on the property, and it's a real jewel because of its practical benefit."

The practice facility was built in an area between the clubhouse and the old practice range, so it's useful and easy to access. Also, the short-game area allows members to replicate shots needed on both of the hilly courses.

"We designed it for 60- to 70-yard bunker shots," Bayliss says. "We built two enormous greens. You can hit shots from the rough – all kinds of things."

The club also installed a new indoor teaching facility, complete with cameras, computers and areas for club fitting.

"It's a huge benefit for the membership," Bayliss says.

Even though Oakland Hills is known throughout the country, that doesn't mean members simply join because of its name.

"The new practice facility further distinguished us in our market as well," Bayliss says. "The market in metro-Detroit is very competitive. Many clubs are struggling and competing for the same membership base. Distinguishing yourself further at every opportunity is important. When it comes time to focus on membership service and recreation

service, we want to make sure we don't have an Achilles' Heel."

Bayliss also says Michigan has more public golf courses per capita than any other state in America.

"So our members have options to play in resort areas," he says. "We try not to rest on our laurels."

The short-game area of Oakland Hills' practice facility was part of an overall \$4.5 million project that included upgrades to the swimming facility as well as the tennis and platform areas. The driving range tee expansion and short-game construction cost about \$1.3 million.

"Our operational model provides funds on an annual basis to improve the facility, so there was no assessment to our membership," Bayliss says. "It certainly has given our membership the most benefit. In this climate, you have swimming and tennis only for about 90 days."

Bayliss says it's difficult to measure the return on the investment in terms of direct dollars.

"But from membership satisfaction and a competitive standpoint, we're doing great," he says. "We had a full membership roster and still do. But our membership satisfaction is quite high because we've measured it."

The club is fully staffed with professionals, so it didn't need to hire a new employee as a result of the practice-facility renovation. And the staff is teaching more lessons than ever, Bayliss says.

Unlike staffing, maintenance has been impacted more as a result of the renovation.

"The triple-row irrigation in the practice fairways resulted in a moderate increase in cost, but it's an incremental cost and not prohibitive by any stretch of the imagination," Bayliss says.

Copying the course

Across the country in Arizona, the 11-



Lancaster Country Club suffered from a lack of practice space, so it expanded its practice facility, which is a selling point. Photo: Lancaster Country Club

year-old, Tom Fazio-designed Estancia Club felt the need to improve its practice area to keep up with the current trend. General manager Keith Underwood says members at the private facility often hold other memberships throughout the world and expect the best when it comes to every phase of the club's operation.

"We have to remain competitive with other clubs and increase our distinction in the market," he says.

Also, when the club was built, the practice range wasn't designed to allow players to replicate shots they'd see on the course. The new area will do just that, and it's part of a course overhaul that includes a bunker redesign and greens renovation under the watchful eye of Fazio.

"We had the capital to do this," says Underwood, who declined to disclose the price of the project. "It didn't come out of an assessment, but came from capital funds. It was money well spent to continually improve services to our members and remain one of the preeminent clubs in Arizona."

The fully staffed club needed no new golf professionals to work on the range.

Estancia's director of agronomy Mike Mongiello, CGCS, realizes practice areas are an important part of modern golf.

"Back when, it was called a driving range, and you didn't pay a great deal of attention to it," he says. "Now it's more popular and sophisticated. It's not a driving range anymore, it's a practice facility."

Mongiello says the membership was chomping at the bit to use the new practice area, which was completed in early November.

"I'm a fan," Mongiello says. "It's a redesign by Tom Fazio's design team, and they took everything into consideration."

Because the club will start remodeling bunkers this year, Mongiello and the Fazio staff used the short-game-area bunkers as models for what they will build on the course.

"We can show the members different sands to choose from," Mongiello says. "It's a great place to wiggle your feet and nestle down and chunk as many balls as you want."

In that same mode, Estancia built the chipping greens to mirror on-course models.

"They're the same as they are on the course, so they can see how a ball reacts on the course," Mongiello says. "It's as exact as we can make it to playing conditions on our golf course."

The transformation of the short-game area is remarkable, Mongiello says.

"We took an existing area and expanded it and built a mound between the driving tees and the short-game area," he says. "We built a new green and three bunkers and a regular tee for that area that gives them anywhere from 40 yards out to bump-and-runs. We contoured around the green so they'd have uphill and downhill lies, flat lies and bump-and-runs. We took every shot on the golf course and duplicated it in this area. There's not a shot on the course that we don't have. We built a bunker on the desert edge of the course that's fairly flat where they can hit a 280-yard shot out of a sand bunker."



Estancia Club's members expect the best when it comes to every phase of the club's operations, including the practice facility. Photo: Estancia Club

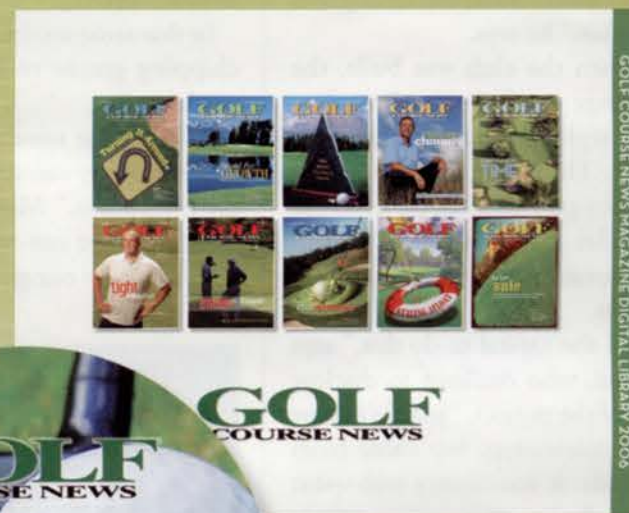
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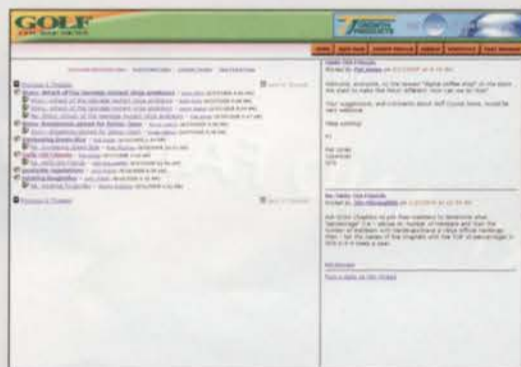
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And there's maintenance to consider in the new practice area.

"There's always maintenance to everything if it's done properly," Mongiello says. "In the short-game area, there won't be huge divots like there will be on the tee. Of course, there's maintenance when you add turf or sand or greens. There's a dollar figure attached to it, but we can handle it."

A selling point

Clubs without national reputations are jumping on the practice-area bandwagon as well. At Lancaster Country Club in central Ohio, general manager Steve Ververis and director of golf operations Ed Grooms say the club's practice facility was outdated. A new one was built

in 2001 and opened in 2002, using land the private club owned but never used before.

Ververis says the almost 100-year-old, 18-hole private club (nine holes of which were designed by Donald Ross), suffered from a lack of practice space.

"Until 10 or 20 years ago, no one of our generation had a practice facility," Ververis says. "In the climate of the private-club sector, a practice facility is a drawing point. We had to retrofit the club with a good range as an additional selling point. What we had before wasn't cutting it. Before, our range was for a quick warm-up. Now the facility is a destination. Guys come out and practice for an hour."

The new teeing ground is more than

100 yards wide and 275 yards deep, uphill. It has four target greens, a practice pitching green and area, greenside bunkers and a fairway bunker.

"So you can hit just about any shot you'd have on the course," Grooms says.

The members were assessed for the improvement.

"We lost a few members because of it, but that's been offset by new members," Ververis says. "Many new members love the idea of having a facility to practice. It's worked out pretty well. We don't charge for the use of it, it's built into the dues. Membership satisfaction is way up."

Grooms now has a teaching spot on the opposite end of the range with electricity



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"So our ability to teach has been enhanced," he says. "My lessons have increased considerably. Each year, I give more lessons."

The club kept the older, smaller range for clinics and junior outings.

"We're fortunate to have two ranges," Grooms says.

On pace with the Joneses

Like Lancaster, Naperville Country Club is an old-school course in Illinois that opened in 1921. Years later, architect Tom Bendelow remodeled the course but didn't pay much attention to the range, which by today's standards was much too short and narrow. Often, wayward shots flew into the adjacent maintenance area or onto neighboring fairways.

"We wanted to make it a better, safer, bigger and longer practice area," says head golf professional Jim Arendt. "We eliminated one of the holes that ran parallel to the driving range. The fact that we made it longer is an additional bonus. The maintenance facility was at the end of the range, and that's moving so we can use regular range balls."

The club also is rerouting many of the other holes on the course, all of which has been done by Arthur Hills/Steve Forrest and Associates. In the practice area, new target greens and a larger teeing area were constructed.

"We have a lot of people who get off the train in the evening, and they want to hit balls for an hour or decompress," Arendt says. "People get together and talk and set up their games for the weekend."

Naperville doesn't have swimming or tennis, so the members are strictly about golf.

"They have a much better facility than they did previously," Arendt says. "The reason we embarked on the project was to update our facilities and to attract golfers in general."

In the area surrounding the club, there are three newer private clubs connected to housing developments. The upgrades to the course and practice area let Naperville compete at a higher level.

"Many good players would come out here and say, 'It's cute, but it's the kind of course where you can't see your ball land.' The redesign makes it completely different. We're hoping to attract good golfers and more of the regular golfers as well. You're moving to make progress or you're falling behind. You have to keep

up with the Joneses."

Steve Forrest, the lead architect on the project, says it's one of the most rewarding projects of his career.

"The course will be so much better," he says. "And if you have a good imagination, you could play the course on the practice tee."

Forrest says the idea of replicating shots on a driving range derived from those on a course first occurred in 1996 at a course they designed at The Lakes of Taylor in Michigan. They've been doing it ever since.

"The practice range is much more visually appealing and fun," he says. "People will use the range, particularly the short-game areas. You don't just have to stand out there blasting balls with drivers all day. You need to learn to hit shots from 100 yards in." GCN

T.R. Massey is a freelance writer based in Columbus, Ohio. He can be reached at trm@columbus.rr.com.



Naperville Country Club renovated its practice facility because it was too short and narrow. The club is hoping to attract golfers as a result. Photo: Naperville Country Club

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a lost ROSS

SAN JOSE COUNTRY CLUB REDISCOVERS ITS DONALD ROSS-DESIGNED GOLF COURSE

by MARK
LESLIE

The original Donald Ross-designed golf course was in its burial clothes, much of it literally underground, unceremoniously interred along with memories of past glory. Then, the light finally shone on officials at San Jose Country Club in Jacksonville, Fla.

After the club decided to institute a long-delayed reconstruction of its dilapidated greens, Ray Benson presented his fellow members with proof that a classic golf course lay unseen on their property. It only needed resurrection.

Perhaps the greatest of all golf course architects, the Scotsman Ross walked the property, routed 18 holes through 115 acres of what was planned as a resort, and compiled extensive hand-written notes and drawings of the course.

Benson discovered and photocopied all this material at the Tufts Archives in Pinehurst, N.C. Tufts Archives maintains an exhaustive library of Ross's projects throughout the country. Meanwhile, the club possessed aerial photographs from 1928 and from the 1940s, '70s, '80s and '90s, showing the rapid "de-Rossing" of the club's course.

Early on, most of Ross's bunkers were filled in to reduce maintenance costs because the planned resort never materialized. Throughout the years, the remaining bunkers also were filled in, even after the newly formed San Jose Country Club bought the course. Then, a 1988 renovation departed further from the original design, focusing on aesthetics and building a system of irrigation ponds.

"Back in '88, when the last renovation was done, people weren't interested in maintaining a Donald Ross-designed course," says the club's golf course superintendent Clayton Estes, CGCS.

Sixteen years later, the members discovered what they had.

"Our members are very aware of who Donald Ross was, and they're proud to

be a member of a club with a Ross-designed course," says Charles Cofer, the club's president.

A whole new level

Like homeowners discovering a lost Van Gogh in their attic, club members took stock of this new-found blessing and decided to take their greens-renovation project to an entirely new level. Enter golf course architect Dan Schlegel of Edgewater, Md. The club hired Schlegel in the spring of 2004 to guide what had morphed into a total restoration and reconstruction. Members approved the project and were assessed \$3 million to implement it. The sting of the assessment was lessened by giving members a wide range of payment options that could be spread throughout as many as 36 months.

"Our marching orders became for Dan to do research and put the course back in place with today's technology," Estes says.

Schlegel immersed himself in all things Rossian. He spent many hours in the Tufts Archives pouring over Ross construction drawings and visited such Ross creations as Pine Needles in Pinehurst, N.C., Aronimink Golf Club in Newton Square, Pa., and Augusta (Ga.) Country Club that remained unchanged. They became Schlegel's classroom until he could return to San Jose feeling the Ross touch and strategic thinking.

"I was able to get inside the mind of Ross, or at least read what he intended," he says.

It was crucial to do so. Golfers familiar with Pinehurst No. 2 might think all Ross's greens were domed. Not so. He often designed bold contours, including a par 5 at San Jose that features a 2.5-foot-deep diagonal swale that runs away from the shot to the back of the green, which Schlegel rebuilt and called "Ross's Trough."

Modern golfers often look aghast at

blind shots, but writing about a par 3 at San Jose, Ross wrote that a bunker fronting the green should have a back mound high enough to obscure the putting surface.

And even though the course lies over only 115 acres, Schlegel still had enough space to add 300 yards in length, he says.

Ross also was more interested in strategy than aesthetics. Thus, his bunkers flash sand but only high enough to be seen and affect how a golfer plays a hole.

"The routing is brilliant, the way it flows, its sequence, the tees next to the greens making it a wonderful walking course," Schlegel says.

Calling the project a sympathetic restoration, Estes says it was a tremendous undertaking.

"When the 1988 renovation was done, everything was set up on top of the earth – the greens and bunkers pushed up, so this entailed major shifting," he says.

On 14 holes, Ross's strategy and bunkering are exactly the way he designed them, Schlegel says.

"There's not a single bunker on the course that was left over," he says. "And most all the bunkers we built are put out there the way Ross had them on his master plan to set up the same strategies he wanted. Not the same distance, perhaps, because modern technology has added so much distance to the ball, but the strategy is the same as Mr. Ross intended."

Schlegel used Ross's existing corridors, but with the bunkering and greens complexes, it's visually incredibly different, says head golf professional Todd Bork.

Water management

For Estes, the renovation made life simpler. Consistently layered greens, new turfgrasses, tree removal and an upgraded irrigation system all make the golf course more predictable, he says. Even though the old greens supposedly had been rebuilt to USGA specs in 1988, the layer-

AT A GLANCE

San Jose Country Club

Location: Jacksonville, Fla.

Web site: www.sjccjax.com

Type of project:
Restoration/renovation

Architect: Dan Schlegel

Builder: MacCurrach
Golf Construction

Superintendent:
Clayton Estes, CGCS

Cost: \$1.7 million for the golf course; \$3 million including clubhouse improvements, complete pool replacement, tennis facilities and security enhancements

Construction started:
March 13, 2006

Course opened: Oct. 14, 2006

Greens: TiffEagle Bermudagrass

Fairways and tees:
419 Bermudagrass

ing of materials was inconsistent.

"We had some greens with 10 to 12 inches of rock, 5 inches of choker and 4 inches of greens mix," Estes says. "That made it difficult to keep a consistent quality product. We had done some coring and knew where the thick areas were. We had low areas in the greens that would dry out and high areas that would stay wet."

That problem doesn't exist anymore. So far, the greens' layering consistency is much better, as evident by improved water percolation through the soil profile, Estes says.

"We're able to do much more spot-watering of the greens," he says. "We don't need to water the entire profile every day. The layering consistency helps with water management."

Additionally, individual valve and head controls were installed throughout the irrigation system, which has helped manage water better because all the heads were individually wired back to the satellite in the previous renovation, Estes says.

Turfgrass health

Before the renovation, the greens featured Tifdwarf Bermudagrass that had been mutating since 1998. Elsewhere, 419 Bermudagrass and various mutations of

the warm-season turf covered the course. During the renovation, MacCurrach Golf Construction of Jacksonville, Fla., planted TifEagle Bermudagrass on the greens and 419 on the fairways and tees, blending and grading the old turfgrass and new together.

Turfgrass health had become an issue because of excessive shade caused by a number of pine and maple trees that had been planted on the course during the past 80 years.

"Dan and I went through the golf course and marked individual trees hole by hole," Estes says. "We viewed the trees during the day to see how the sunlight would hit the greens throughout the year, then put together a map to get permitting."

In the end, 171 trees were cut down, greatly improving sunlight and air movement.

"Membership wasn't very happy about the number of trees removed, but on the first tour of the construction site, many people said, 'Wow!'" Estes says. "They were happy, and with the exception of several trees that were prominent, they couldn't tell where we had taken them out."

To a tee

One part of the renovation that added

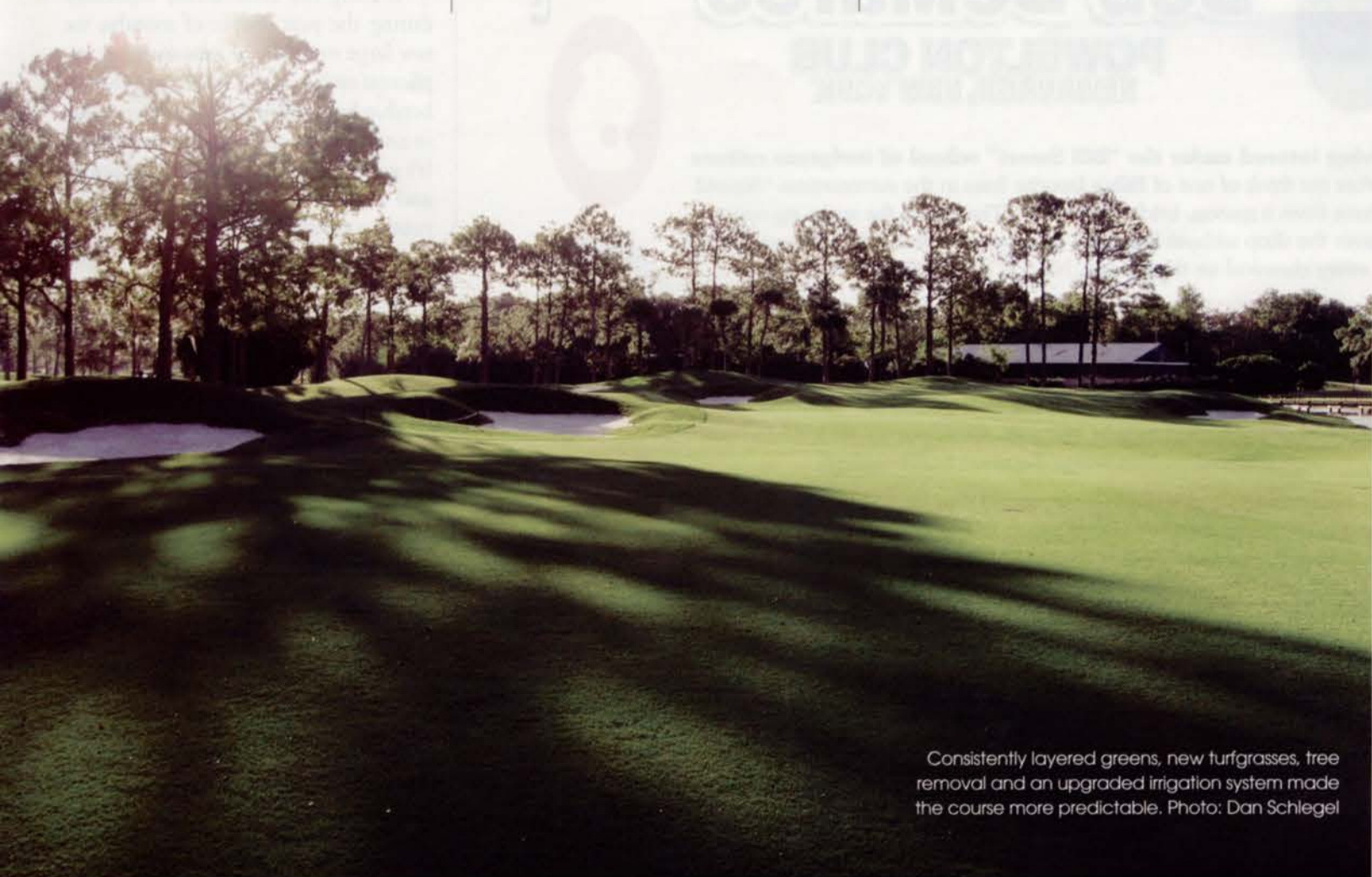


Bunkers built during the restoration were similar to what Donald Ross had on his master plan.
Photo: Chris John

to Estes' workload was the restoration of the tee boxes back to the original square shapes Ross designed.

"It's good for design concept and aesthetic value, but they require a lot more work," Estes says. "But it's a good trade-off because we have more usable tee surface than when we had a free-flowing tee design."

Estes' crew has returned to the old-style mowing, that is the fairways run right up to and wrap around the greens.



Consistently layered greens, new turfgrasses, tree removal and an upgraded irrigation system made the course more predictable. Photo: Dan Schlegel



During the restoration project, 171 trees were cut down throughout the course to improve sunlight and air movement. Photo: Dan Schlegel

Throughout the property, the mowing design has broadened the fairway cut, providing golfers with huge landing areas.

"That was part of the plan to institute the Donald Ross feel back to the golf course," Estes says. "In the old days, we used to move the tee markers off and mow with a seven-gang mower."

Estes says he wouldn't know the effect the square tees have had on man-hours until next summer when the fairways and tees are mowed four or five times a week.

Perhaps the most curious area of the project was the 12th green. It sits on the edge of what was a swamp when Ross designed it. In 1925, the construction crews laid cypress trees in a crosshatch pattern to create a pad so the green wouldn't sink into a swamp. During the recent renovation, MacCurrach dug out the cypress logs and replaced them with native soil. The area wasn't swampy anymore because lakes had been created.

Rave reviews

During construction, the entire club, except for the golf course, remained open. Bork conducted a kids golf camp and golf instruction on the practice range, and general manager Scott Irwin organized a slew of social activities, including outdoor dining.

After San Jose reopened Oct. 14, Donald Ross – and his modern design associate, Dan Schlegel – received high marks.

"Dan has elevated San Jose's status tremendously in the area," Bork says. "The members' initial reaction was very favorable. Not only is it visually far superior, but its conditioning is fantastic. Clayton and MacCurrach Golf Construction did an A-plus, yeoman's job."

Cofer says Schlegel's design work has transformed a good course that could be played without giving thought to strategy, into a course where one has to give thought to just about every shot.

"This really helps to engage the play-

er," he says. "With modern technology and instruction, our course was losing its ability to challenge the younger and lower-handicap players. Dan was able to add length and difficulty to the course that we weren't aware would be possible. Even so, his design is still very playable for the senior and higher-handicapper."

The renovated course has a lot of depth deception, Estes says.

"There are hidden bunkers that make the players become students of the game," he says. "They have to learn the golf course."

Bork agrees.

"It makes you think your way around the course," he says. "It's visually more intimidating because of the bunkering, but there's still plenty of room to play the golf course. There are a lot of ways to make par. Nobody says you have to hit driver off a certain tee box. You can always lay up. You have to play to your strengths."

Membership growth

As a result of the renovation, membership has grown already. Irwin and his staff were proactive, marketing the project to members in advance of the vote. He expected a 10-percent attrition of membership, but experienced only 5 percent and replaced them right away.

"During the renovation, especially during the past couple of months, we saw large numbers of new-member applicants each month," Irwin says. "Membership has swelled from 1,200 to 1,260 in anticipation of the course reopening. It's good to see the Donald Ross Room and 19th hole full again. The club is running on all cylinders."

The renovation sets up the club to hold high-profile amateur events in the future if the membership decides to do that.

"We want to give the course time to mature, but we've talked to the USGA, and I think we'll get a lot of exposure and a lot of interest in this area for hosting some major amateur events like we did in the past," Bork says.

Schlegel agrees.

"Absolutely," he says. "I think that given notice and being able to get the course at tournament condition and green speeds, it would present all the challenge any tournament golfer would need." GCN

Mark Leslie is a freelance writer based in Monmouth, Maine. He can be reached at gripfast@adelphia.net.

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Growing the game

Since its inception in 1997, The First Tee reached 975,000 kids by the end of 2005, according to Joe Louis Barrow Jr., the organization's executive director. Photo: The First Tee



Impacting the future now

YOUTH PROGRAMS PLANT SEEDS TODAY TO GROW THE GAME LATER

by JOHN WALSH



Spurred by a stagnant number of rounds played, a decline of new course construction and declining club membership numbers, many executives in the golf industry have been talking about the crucial need to grow the game, which means encouraging more people (women, minorities, the disabled, youth, baby boomers, etc.) to play the game more often.

"Our growing-the-game effort has been going on for a while," says Mike Hughes, chief executive officer of the National Golf Course Owners Association. "We've been educating owners about this since the '90s. It's been on

our radar since 1997."

But it's not just the present executives are concerned about. It's the future. There are several programs in place to help secure that potentially bright future. They include: Play Golf America, The First Tee, Sticks For Kids, Hook a Kid on Golf, Kids On Course, Link Up 2 Golf and Take Your Daughter to the Course Week, to name several. The NGCOA is involved with many of these programs. Yet, there are many more throughout the country at the facility level.

"Kids are a long-term solution, but we also need to get people to play now," Hughes says. "Both have to be done."

More than a game

As part of securing the game's future, The First Tee views its program holistically, as more than just encouraging kids to play golf. Its business model consists of five components:

1. To reach young people who normally wouldn't choose to play golf;
2. To provide consistent and affordable access to golf;
3. To promote local ownership of First Tee facilities;
4. To create public involvement; and
5. To position golf as more than a game.

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growing the game

ment, most of The First Tee's growth was between 2001 and 2005, during the second phase of its development. By the end of 2005, the program reached a total of 975,000 kids, surpassing the goal of 500,000 kids, says Joe Louis Barrow Jr., executive director of The First Tee. The program reached 675,000 kids at facilities throughout the country plus an additional 300,000 kids in the national school program.

"When taking a percentage of the young people that participated, 75 to 80 percent of kids had never participated in the game of golf," Barrow says. "At the chapter level, we have three-, six- and nine-hole golf facilities. The goal was to have 500 relationships with nearby 18-hole golf courses, and right now, we have 690. As the young people mature, they can graduate to the 18-hole courses, but we're not moving them too quickly."



The hope is that kids who partake in The First Tee program eventually progress to play 18-hole golf courses. Photo: The First Tee

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It's well known there are three main deterrents the industry faces to growing the game: the time it takes to play a round, the difficulty playing the game and the cost. The First Tee address those by:

1. Offering three-, six- or nine-hole courses so it doesn't take that long to play. "We're expecting the kids to play in less than one hour," Barrow says. "Beginners are playing with other beginners."

2. The holes are shorter and don't have as many hazards. "We don't make it difficult," he says.

3. The fees are modest. "If someone

can't afford it, he or she can work at the facility to earn money to play or earn a scholarship."

Another component of The First Tee is the nonprofit organizations that run the program's chapters. There are 202 chapters operating 257 facilities in 46 states.

"If the local community can't embrace The First Tee, it will never be successful," Barrow says.

There's a unique relationship with public and private partnerships, Barrow says. The First Tee hasn't had to buy land, and most facilities are on

ON THE WEB

Below is a list of Web sites for growing-the-game-type programs geared toward kids. Find out how your facility can be more involved with encouraging kids to play the game.

- www.playgolfamerica.com
- www.thefirsttee.org
- www.hookakidongolf.org
- www.kidsoncourse.org
- www.nrpa.org/content/default.aspx?documentId=4756
- www.golf2020.com/linkup2golf.asp
- www.getlinkedplaygolf.com/index.aspx?ID=556

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long-term leases. All the land that comprises the facilities is worth about \$200 million, Barrows says. The private sector provides resources to improve the facilities.

But now the model has shifted: 25 percent of the facilities are stand-alone and the rest are part of another golf course or park.

"The 'attached' model is what we want because the golf course superintendents who maintain the 18-hole courses can also maintain The First Tee facility," Barrow says. "We would like to see that 25 percent go down even more. Most partnerships are with well-working facilities. We don't encourage buying poorly run golf properties and don't encourage our chapters to take on debt and challenges of a poorly operating facility."

One course's mission

One of those partnerships is with Colbert Hills Golf Course in Manhattan, Kan. Colbert Hills, which generated about 30,000 rounds last year, is the brainchild of PGA professional Jim Colbert and was designed to help Kansas State University's men's and women's golf teams and introduce golf to disadvantaged kids. The course is about a mile from the university.

The Manhattan, Kan., golf market, like many, is competitive. There are 19 courses in a 50-mile radius, according to David Gourlay, director of golf operations/general manager.

"It's unbelievable," says Gourlay, who's been at Colbert Hills since it opened in 2000. "On paper, you wonder how it works. You need a good marketing effort to bring people in here."

Part of that marketing effort includes The First Tee. The daily-fee facility, which includes an 18-hole championship golf course and a par-3 course, hosts The First Tee National Academy each year. Annika Sorenstam's coach is one of many who comes to the academy

and devotes some of her time to help teach the kids, Gourlay says.

During The First Tee programs, Gourlay speaks to the kids about the various professions in the golf business.

"Many kids think the only job in golf is the golf pro, so we're enlightening them with the other opportunities," he says. "This is done so they're not lost when they find out that they can't be a golf pro."

Gourlay says the academy is planting a seed.

"We're optimistic about the future," he says. "The seed isn't just germinating here in Kansas because the kids go out all over the world. They come away more grounded. Today's society moves so fast it's easy to get lost in the shuffle. The First Tee helps them pursue goals confidently. It's a life-changing thing for them."

To continue a young person's link to golf, Kansas State created two programs for high schools to keep The First Tee kids involved with the game.

The program's impact

The third phase of the program's development started in January 2006 and will go through 2010. Operating the facilities efficiently will be the focus during this phase.

"We have relationships in the queue and have 10 to 16 projects in the development phase and opened about 10 in 2006," Barrow says. "In phase three we want to be in all 50 states and in 90 of the top 100 [metropolitan statistical areas]. We want the education to be consistent among all locations. We're focusing on quality and consistency."

The First Tee opened 50 facilities in 2005 and 50 in 2004.

Even though The First Tee is in its third phase, there's still a need to measure the program's success.

"We've tracked retention rates

through the five levels of the curriculum," Barrow says. "In 2003, there was 27-percent retention; in 2004, there was 34 percent; and in 2005, there was 35.5 percent retention. We have First Tee kids playing high-school golf."

Barrows says Golf 20/20 conducted an analysis that concluded if golfers came to the game through a junior golf program, they would be likely to



The third phase of The First Tee program is to concentrate on operating facilities efficiently. Photo: The First Tee

growing the game

spend \$1,000 on golf in one year; and those who came to golf from outside a junior golf program were likely to spend \$600.

"That's a \$60 million impact on golf downstream," Barrow says.

The key to The First Tee's success is positioning it as more than a game, Barrow says. The program is in 140 additional school districts and 4,000 elementary schools, reaching two million young people. The school program is

delivered by teachers and is a mandatory two-week class in the physical education rotation.

"Seventy-six percent of the parents whose kids have participated in The First Tee program said they saw increased confidence in their kids, 62 percent saw grades improve, and 66 percent saw an improvement in their kids' social abilities," Barrow says.

Additionally, the program is reaching a wider audience.

"The perception of golf is that it's an exclusive, white game," Barrow says. "Fifty percent of the kids involved in the program are minorities, and 35 percent are girls. We're reaching a more diverse group of people than all of golf. We're reaching four million people through the participants and their friends, relatives and family. More cross-sections of society will be involved in golf in 2010, 2015 and 2020 because of The First Tee." GCN



Programs such as Sticks for Kids make it easier for kids to play the game. Photo: GCBA

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Program puts kids on courses

Like The First Tee, Sticks For Kids is a golf program gaining momentum. Started by the Golf Course Builders Association of America during the late 1970s as the Sticks for Kids Foundation, the association is tweaking the program to make it stronger.

The GCBAA's Web site states: The future of the game of golf in the United States depends on those young boys and girls interested in learning and respecting the game. The responsibility to secure the future of golf lies with

The GCBAA had 30 Sticks for Kids programs in place throughout the years, and all the programs were set up where a member had to take charge, says Bill Kubly, c.e.o. of Landscape Unlimited and president of the board of directors of the GCBAA Foundation, the charitable arm of the GCBAA.

"That was the original direction, and 15 were still active a few years ago, but we discovered some programs weren't as successful as we'd liked

based at the GCBAA headquarters in Lincoln, Neb.

The GCBAA has partnered with US Kids Golf, a company that manufactures golf clubs for kids, and every facility will receive 10 sets of clubs, Kubly says.

"We'll be buying a minimum of 1,000 sets of clubs a year," he says. "The clubs will be used in the classroom, on the driving range and on the golf course. This is a 12-month program. Our investment, which is about

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those of us benefiting from golf today. The GCBAA established the Sticks for Kids Foundation to provide the tools and opportunities necessary to allow as many junior golfers as possible to enjoy the game.

For golf courses that would like to participate in the SFK program, there are four requirements. Each facility:

- Must have an active junior program – the SFK program may establish, enhance or replace a current program;
- Must have the ability to store the clubs for use by junior golfers;
- Is expected to promote the program through the use of posters and displays; and
- Is expected to work with local media and businesses to promote the program.

because we all had full-time jobs," Kubly says. "We needed a partner, so Paul Foley (executive director of the GCBAA) hooked up with the National Recreation and Parks Association, which has embraced golf. The NRPA had done this type of work with tennis, and there are 700 tennis programs now. They have 6,000 members that represent 10,000 golf courses. NRPA is connected to municipal golf courses. They are a major player."

The NRPA and the SFK program was a good fit because the NRPA didn't have a golf program. The GCBAA Foundation is committed to starting 100 programs a year for the next three years. The GCBAA is supplying golf clubs to these programs and is helping market and administer the program, mainly through an assistant

a quarter of a million dollars, will touch at least 100 kids per program."

Kubly says there have been 245 course members sign up already, but only 100 are going to get in.

To measure the success of the program, Kubly says the GCBAA needs to know how many kids are using the clubs, how many times the clubs are used and to closely monitor the program to see how well it's doing.

The SFK program, like the other programs designed to grow the game, is about inclusion.

"Our sport has always been a blue blood sport, so we wanted to reach kids who otherwise wouldn't play golf," Kubly says. "It's also important to work with baby boomers, women, etc. Every initiative to get more golfer out there is important." GCN



There are 245 golf facilities interested in participating in the Sticks for Kids program. Photo: GCBAA

Out with the old, in with the new

A COMPLETE ASSESSMENT AND PREPARATION
ARE NEEDED BEFORE REBUILDING BUNKERS

by JIM
CONNOLLY

It's difficult to imagine a complete game of golf without 18 tees, fairways and greens. In fact, one might argue it wouldn't be proper golf. It's also difficult to imagine a game of golf without a few sand bunkers dotting the landscape. The reason for tees, fairways and greens is obvious, but the reason for bunkers isn't always so clear.

How does one justify a bunker's existence? How many should there be? What's their purpose? What does it cost to maintain them?

Golf course superintendents might have a difficult time answering these questions, which is why bunkers are a sore subject for many of them. Without

a clear understanding of objectives, goals and standards for bunkers, superintendents can spend many hours thinking about them and how to please members and golfers. It's like shooting at a fast-moving target. Let's look at objectives, goals and standards.

Bunker usage

Bunkers are an integral part of golf course design and have different purposes. Some architects have become famously linked to their bunker designs. Pete Dye and his railroad ties are an example. Some famous golf courses have become linked to their bunkers. Pine Valley and its Devil's Asshole is an example. Conventionally,

bunkers are used for one or more of the following:

- Aesthetics;
- Defining shot value;
- Defining line of play;
- Keeping the ball from a worse outcome; and
- Preventing errant shots from hitting neighbors.

Additionally, there are several unconventional uses that might serve purposes indirectly related to golf:

- For postcards and brochures, which affect sales and promotion;
- To look good on TV; and
- To better a designer's posterity based on unique or unusual appearances.



Poor drainage conditions result in sand contamination.
Photo: Jim Connolly

In rare instances, bunkers have been known to achieve all three unconventional goals. A good example would be Desmond Muirhead's shark-teeth-shaped bunkers surrounding an island green at Stone Harbor Golf Club in New Jersey.

Maintenance considerations

Aside from design and usage, maintenance is another important aspect of bunkers. The perception of bunker-maintenance cost is often inflated because of golfers' constant complaints about sand conditions. Bunkers receive much attention, but a good percentage of that attention might be mental. The only way to determine the exact cost is to document all expenses associated with bunker maintenance. A complete assessment requires the following steps:

1. Document all maintenance costs, including grass surrounds.
2. Identify chronic problems that are adding to the annual maintenance costs. This includes washouts, sand contamination, poor drainage, sand quality and turfgrass quality around the bunker.
3. Determine the necessity of each bunker as it relates to economics, strategy and aesthetics. A golf course architect, working with a superintendent and green committee, should review the design and its impact on the maintenance budget.
4. Develop a long-range plan that includes bunker elimination and/or addition, rebuilding or renovation.

Chronic maintenance problems, which

usually can be traced to deficiencies in one or more areas, impact bunker costs, too. It's also important to understand why bunkers deteriorate to the point where rebuilding is wise economically. Knowing the cause will improve communication during the presentation of the renovation program. Here are four areas:

1. The second law of thermodynamics. All things left to themselves progress from a state of order to disorder. It's unreasonable to think bunkers will last forever.

2. Improper maintenance. Mechanical rakes have damaged thousands of bunkers to the point where renovation is required around the edges. Some bunkers aren't constructed to allow bunker rakes to enter or exit, or are too small.

3. Storms and disasters. Heavy rain and floods will wipe out even the best bunker, or at a minimum, remove the sand. In September 2003, Typhoon Maemi cut through Jeju Island on Korea with 120-mph winds and dumped four feet of rain in one day. At The Club at Nine Bridges, all 120 bunkers, which were constructed excellently, were damaged.

4. Chronic construction woes. This area can be the most troublesome and difficult to assess because it's a slow deterioration of a bunker and surrounding area. Deterioration is often a result of inferior construction methods. Chronic deterioration can be a result of:

- Improper irrigation design of grass surrounding a bunker;
- A lack of or faulty drainage;
- Contaminated sand from constant erosion;
- Atmospheric pollution from dust contaminating sand;
- Continually adding new sand, making a bunker too deep;
- The surrounding area channeling water into a bunker; and
- A wrong bunker design for the social, economic or climatic environment.

Rebuilding or renovation is the best course of action when chronic bunker disorders are identified. Continually treating symptoms is costly and is part of the annual maintenance cost for bunkers.

Superintendents also might need to prepare for partial or complete construction that will provide long-term benefits and reduce yearly maintenance costs. The table on page 43 shows some construction considerations.

Down the drain

Drainage is an aspect that impacts bunker maintenance considerably. Bunker design should include internal subsurface drainage, internal and surface drainage of water adjacent to a bunker, proper pipe size and drainage exit connections to overall golf course drainage.

Water flows through bunker sand at a high rate, so it's important to have internal drainage pipe that receives water and

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transports it at a rapid rate. One of the problems with slotted pipe with small openings is the inability to receive water through the openings. If water can't enter the openings, it will flow through the gravel surrounding the pipe, carrying fine particles that plug drainage gravel.

For a drainpipe to function properly, one must consider the total area of surface openings in the collector pipe, blockage at the available surface area and water pressure at the interface area. Responding to this, many companies have introduced more effective methods of draining bunkers. All of these work on the principle of having bigger holes to receive water. Examples include Drain-core2, ECS and EZFlow.

The landscape surrounding the bunker also is important for proper drainage. The area should be constructed so water is directed away from the sand. When surface or subsurface water can't be directed away from the bunker, an intercepting drain should be installed

Sand selection guidelines

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Particle size | 0.25 mm to 1.00 mm |
| Particle shape | Angular |
| Crusting potential | Silt and clay less than 5% |
| Chemical reaction, hardness | pH test, noncalcareous |
| Infiltration rate | 20 inches per hour |
| Color | Matter of taste |
| Moisture holding capacity | As a percentage of water holding |

Source: USGA

four feet from the bunker edge. Installing an intercepting drain too close to the bunker will destabilize the bunker wall's integrity.

Even with thoughtful design, most bunkers have a grass or sand side slope. During heavy rain or irrigation, erosion can occur on slope lengths of less than four feet of grass. Sand face erosion depends on precipitation volume, velocity, rate and sand texture.

Sand also affects drainage, and the best

sand is one that drains well, has a high angle of repose and has some tendency toward compaction. See the chart above for factors that should be considered when selecting sand. The USGA publication "How to Select the Best Sand for Your Bunkers" is an excellent source.

Construction sequence

Once it's determined a new bunker is required, advanced planning and attention to construction sequence is needed.



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Plugged drains, contaminated sand and damage to the golf course can result from out-of-order construction. The following is one recommended construction sequence:

1. Survey and stake according to a detailed drawing with written specifications. Determine cut, fill and soil need.
2. Prepare enough plywood or other material that will support traffic and minimize turfgrass damage.
3. Remove sod around the bunker.
4. Locate drainage exit and place a wire mesh over pipe opening.
5. Remove sand and old drainage. Stockpile contaminated sand for use surrounding the bunker.
6. Detail staking, shaping, and cut and fill as per the plan. Stockpile topsoil and import fill if necessary.
7. Install perimeter irrigation.
8. Stabilize bunker edge using plywood, sandbags or other materials.
9. Compact and smooth bunker base.
10. Install bunker liner following manufacturer's recommendations.
11. Install sand to a depth of five to six inches, then compact wet sand.

Subsurface preparation

Look at steps nine and 10 more closely. Before filling a bunker with sand, its

subsurface has to be compacted. If soils are rocky or compaction isn't possible, clay soil can be used as a base. For conventional bunkers with a flat bottom and a slim chance of erosion, compacted clay should suffice. Combined with good drainage, a compacted clay bottom should maintain its integrity for many years. For bunkers in moderate to high rainfall areas with expansive or partial sand faces, additional subsurface treatments can prevent future sand contamination.

Another method of stabilizing the base is applying synthetic polymers, such as liquid polyurethane, which are sprayed on the subsoil to help stabilize soils and prevent sand contamination.

Once the base is established, liners are installed. Liners have been used in bunkers for many years. Early liners were plastic or woven materials that gave way to nonwoven geotextile liners such as Trevira Spunbound, a porous polyethylene fabric. Nonwoven, needle-punched fabrics have questionable long-term performance qualities, especially in the area of water permeability. Another disadvantage of nonwoven liners is their potential to be snagged by bunker rakes. Older liners helped prevent contamination but did little to prevent erosion or

sand slipping.

Recently, a number of geosynthetic bunker liners have been introduced. The liners come in various thicknesses, from about 0.25 of an inch to thicker than 1 inch, and are manufactured from man-made materials. Bunker liners serve two important purposes:

1. To prevent contamination from underlying soils by forming a physical barrier between the sand and subsoil; and
2. To reduce erosion on steep sand faces. Water flows through the liner, to the subsoil, reducing sand slipping/erosion. Liners provide a rough surface, increasing the sand's angle of repose, allowing a steeper sand face without erosion.

All sands have an angle of repose. When sand is piled on the ground, there's a maximum angle of the pile that can't be exceeded. One factor that affects the angle of repose is the coefficient of friction at the base. Sand piled on glass will achieve a lower angle than sand piled on a rough surface. Another factor is moisture. Sand with the correct moisture-holding capacity will achieve a higher angle than very dry or very wet sand. Angular sand will also achieve a higher angle.

Get control

It would be nice if we could return to the days of yesteryear when bunkers were primitive and feared greatly. Nowadays, bunkers are tame and domesticated, and superintendents are expected to groom and care for them. As a result, bunkers require money. This year, superintendents should make it their goal to reduce mental stress by getting control of those costly bunkers. GCN

Jim Connolly is president of JCC, Ltd. A former USGA agronomist, he's a consultant and can be reached at jim@jcturf.com.

Bunker construction considerations

| Area of concern | Action |
|--|---|
| Drainage and water issues | Diversion of surface flow area from sand |
| Irrigation | Install perimeter irrigation to maintain turfgrass health |
| Sand selection | Color, texture, particle size distribution |
| Surrounding grass areas | Reduce slopes and need for hand mowing |
| Sand slope stabilization and protection from contamination | Install geotextile bunker liner |
| Bunker rake access | Modify surrounds to allow for easy entry/exit of mechanical rakes |

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Making the switch

SOUTH CAROLINA SUPERINTENDENT GRADUALLY CHANGES UTILITY VEHICLE FLEET

by JOHN WALSH

A fairly new trend regarding utility vehicles has been to convert them from gas to electric, mainly because of noise and gasoline prices. However, that trend wasn't what drove Mike Fabrizio, GCCS, director of grounds and golf maintenance at Daniel Island Golf Club in Charleston, S.C., to change his utility vehicle fleet. Instead, Fabrizio is gradually switching his fleet from Jacobsen to Club Car.

Daniel Island, which has about 500 members, is a sizable 12-month operation. The facility features two 18-hole golf courses: the Tom Fazio-designed Beresford Creek Course (7,293 yards), which opened in 2000, and the Rees Jones-designed Ralston Creek Course (7,446 yards), which opened in 2006.

Fabrizio has more than \$2.5 million to spend to maintain the golf courses and grounds – 230 acres of irrigated Bermudagrass and 500 total acres, including low-maintained and no-maintained areas. He says the club tries to keep the capital expenditures budget between \$100,000 and \$200,000 a year.

Along with his budget, Fabrizio has 45 full-time employees and three to five seasonal employees during the summer to help him maintain the courses and grounds.

Generally, Fabrizio purchases most of the equipment he and his staff use, with one exception – the Toro Reelmaster

5500 D series fairway mowers, which he leases for a 36-month period.

"Fairway mowers are the lifeblood of the operation," he says. "They are high-tech pieces of machinery, and I don't want to get into replacing reels and other parts. I don't want to rebuild them. I like the philosophy of getting a new fleet every three years. A reasonable life span for everything else is five years or more."

With utility vehicles, Fabrizio is in the midst of slowly changing the fleet from Jacobsen to Club Car's Carryall Turf 2, which is primarily used to move people and tow greens mowers across the course. This change has been an ongoing process that started about three years ago. The 36-vehicle fleet consists of 19 lightweight vehicles (Jacobsen and Club Car), 10 mid-weight vehicles (Cushman, Toro and Club Car), five heavy-duty vehicles (Toro and Cushman) and two sprayers (Toro).

"Throughout the past three years, we've been switching three to five vehicles a year, costing between \$20,000 and \$30,000 a year," Fabrizio says.

The reason Fabrizio is making the switch is partly because Jacobsen hasn't had a stable distribution system in the eastern part South Carolina, he says.

"They have had several different distributors during the seven years I've been here," he says. "But now Vereens seems to be making a dedicated effort for the long haul."

The other reason Fabrizio is making the switch is because Daniel Island's general manager, Greg Keating, decided to switch from E-Z-GO golf carts to Club Car models, and he would like to see all vehicles at the facility be Club Car branded. Club Car also gave Daniel Island an incentive to switch.

"I like trying to stick with the most economic and simplistic utility vehicle

when they're just used for moving people or towing greens mowers," says Fabrizio, who's been at Daniel Island since April of 1999. "You need to have heavy-duty vehicles, but there's no need for an \$11,000 utility vehicle to be pulling a greens mower across the course."

Fabrizio considers his maintenance operation to be normal and utility vehicles should last five to eight years. He says the Jacobsen utility vehicles he's been phasing out didn't last that long and had engine failure because they were used during the construction and grow-in of the courses and took more abuse than normal.

Fabrizio also says utility vehicles generally take a beating because they tend to be used by younger workers who are less responsible than older workers and by people who turn over quickly.

But before Fabrizio makes a purchasing decision about equipment, such as utility vehicles, he receives input from the mechanic, the general manager and his maintenance staff.

"The service of the distributor and the timing of the delivery of the parts are important," Fabrizio says. "The service aspect is the No. 1 consideration. The general manager provides input because he would like to see Club Car carry over to the maintenance side of the operation."

Overall, purchasing utility vehicles nowadays is much different than 30 years ago.

"There are definitely a lot more choices than there used to be," Fabrizio says. "Back then, your choices were Cushman, Red Rider or modifying a golf cart. Now, because there are so many choices, you can make a better educated decision." GCN

Mike Fabrizio can be reached at m_fabrizio@danielisland.com.



Mike Fabrizio, CGCS, receives input from the mechanic, general manager and maintenance staff before purchasing equipment. He's in the midst of switching his fleet from Jacobsen to Club Car.



Around for a while

SUPERINTENDENT IN OREGON USES EQUIPMENT LONGER THAN MOST

Bud Lisac doesn't have a nice fat budget to work with while maintaining the 18-hole Sah-Ha-Lee Golf Course in Clackamas, Ore. In fact, Lisac doesn't have a set budget at all.

"We run on a shoestring budget," Lisac says. "We buy what we need when we need it."

Because of this limitation, Lisac uses his golf course maintenance equipment, including utility vehicles, much longer than most golf course superintendents.

Lisac and his brother, Steve, own Sah-Ha-Lee. They own a total of 65 acres, 35 of which comprise a par-3 golf course and 15 of which comprise a driving range. Lisac and his brother built the public golf course, which is located in an urban area on the outskirts of Portland, and opened it in 1990.

Lisac considers the course a learning center that caters to family and seniors, yet accommodates everybody from scratch golfers to those with a 36 handicap. The seniors and ladies leagues are the biggest at the course. Green fees range from \$7.50 for seniors to play nine holes up to \$19 for golfers to play 18 holes on weekends and holidays.

The course's maintenance staff, in addition to Lisac, consists of two full-time workers and three part-timers.

Because of his shoestring budget, Lisac doesn't lease any equipment – he purchases everything.

"I keep equipment a lot longer than most," he says. "For example, we had our first two greensmowers for 10 years. Other superintendents will typically lease some equipment for three years. Because our green fees are so low, I need to keep my equipment a lot longer than the big boys."

The utility vehicle fleet consists of four John Deere vehicles, enough for everybody to run around the course during the summer, Lisac says. He has

two lightweight 4x2 Turf Gators and two heavy-duty ProGators. The two lightweight Gators are gas powered, and the two ProGators are diesel powered. Lisac says he'll stick with the gas-powered vehicles because he's not keen on the electric-powered ones. He has an electric golf car that he uses as a beverage cart, but he's not happy with the maintenance it requires.

"You get more years out of the diesel engine with the big stuff," he says, referring to the heavy-duty utility vehicles.

Lisac purchased his Gators separately. He says he and his brother will review the course's inventory at year's end and determine what needs to be purchased, if anything. Lisac's newest Gator was purchased this year, replacing an old Toro Workman that he had for 10 years. Lisac says the main reason for the switch is because Sah-Ha-Lee is eight city blocks away from a John Deere distributor and because he doesn't have a full-time mechanic, he needs to take equipment to a nearby dealer when a major repair is needed.

"This is something I take into consideration when purchasing equipment," he says. "I look at every type of equipment the same way. We own everything. We've got Toro greensmowers, four Ford tractors and a Bush Hog tow-behind rotary deck for mowing the rough."

Lisac says utility vehicles are just as imported to maintain as mowers.

"You can't throw shovels and buckets on the backs of your employees and expect them to walk all over the course," he says.

Flexibility is an important quality of utility vehicles as well, Lisac says. One of the Gators he uses has a hitch on it so a golf ball picker can be attached to clean up the driving range.

Durability is another important qual-

ity of utility vehicles because they take more abuse than other types of equipment, Lisac says. In the past, he has had issues with employees treating a utility vehicle like a race car.

"But I still paid \$8,000 for it," he says. "Sometimes employees don't treat utility vehicles as their own, but they tend to treat mowers differently because they're cutting grass at an eighth of an inch and realize mowers are more technical pieces of equipment."

Overall, Lisac says the Gators have held up well and he's pleased with their performance. GCN

by JOHN WALSH



Bud Lisac (sitting in the driver's seat) has just enough utility vehicles for him and everybody on his staff to run around the course during the summer.

travels with  **TERRY**



Terry Buchen, CGCS, MG, is president of Golf Agronomy International. He's a 35-year member of the GCSAA and can be reached at terrybuchen@earthlink.net.

Globetrotting consulting agronomist Terry Buchen visits many golf courses annually with his digital camera in-hand. He will share helpful ideas relating to maintenance equipment from the golf course superintendents he visits – as well as a few ideas of his own – with timely photos and captions that explore the changing world of golf course management.

Easy come, E-Z-GO

In the midst of replacing the golf cart fleet at Congress Lake Club in Hartville, Ohio, Scott Frase, CGCS, and Mike Florea, equipment manager, kept one – a 1989 gasoline-model E-Z-GO with a 2-cycle, oil-injection 1-cylinder engine – and turned it into a functional mechanic's cart.

Florea made no modifications to the cart's engine, but he removed the bag rack and built a 1/4-inch-thick angle iron frame to support the aluminum diamond-plate bed he built using a local fabrication shop. Two aluminum tool boxes were placed on either side of the bed. A hinged aluminum tailgate is held in place on the top end with a flat piece of aluminum and removable lynch pins.

At the bottom of the cart, where the bag rack used to be, Florea installed a 5-gallon air tank for use on the course. The tank is protected with an aluminum cover, which is bolted to the back panel. The back panel houses a pressure gauge and male and female air-hose quick connects.

A 2-inch receiver hitch was welded in place to pull utility trailers, which have turf tires. The windshield that came with the golf cart was reduced to 6-inches high to act as a wind deflector. The vinyl seats were painted with a charcoal-gray, automotive metallic enamel paint. The oversize wheels and tires were acquired from Cart Parts (www.cartparts.com), and a lift kit was made in-house and installed to raise the cart's height by 3 inches so the cart wouldn't be centered too high.

Florea even took a piece of aluminum, put his first name on it and put it next to the ignition switch.



| Material list | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| Aluminum tool boxes (2) | \$100 |
| Aluminum bed (local fabrication shop) | \$180 |
| Lift kit (built in-house) | \$30 |
| Tires and wheels | \$300 |
| Air tank (5 gal.) | \$35 |
| Fittings | \$35 |
| Paint (supplies) | \$55 |
| Total cost | \$735 |



A heavy-duty hauler

The trailer pictured transports sod pallets throughout the course at The Old Collier Golf Club in Naples, Fla. It was conceived and designed by Todd Draffen, golf course superintendent; Mike Koopman, equipment manager; and J.W. Stidham, assistant equipment manager, under the auspices of Tim Hiers, CGCS, director of golf course operations.

Koopman ordered a 4,000-pound-capacity utility wagon that had a solid axle, no suspension, wheels with no brakes and 35-psi tires from Northern Tool & Equipment Co. (www.northerntool.com) for about \$500.

Four 8-foot-long pieces of 2-inch-square tubing 1/4-inch thick (\$110) was welded and bolted in place and spaced equally on top of the running gear, which has a telescoping rod connecting the front and rear axles set on the shortest setting. The tie rods were beefed up to handle the weight of the steel plate and about 2,000 pounds of sod. A 4-foot-by-8-foot steel plate (\$200) 1/4-inch thick was purchased locally and cut to fit where the front wheels articulate back and forth by the tongue. The steel plate was painted with a rust protector (\$20).

The trailer is pulled by a Toro Workman utility vehicle to prevent cracking or damaging the cart paths.

Instead of placing a pallet on the ground in one location, the trailer can be moved anywhere the sod is being laid. The trailer also can be retrofitted with 5-foot-high wooden side boards to haul bales of pine straw or other supplies. GCN

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Pat Jones is president of Flagstick LLC, a consulting firm that provides sales and marketing intelligence to green-industry businesses. He can be reached at psjhawk@cox.net or 440-478-4763.

Are you a predator or prey?

A couple of months ago, I experienced one of those gorgeous Indian Summer days that helps carry me through the cold, nasty winters up here on the North Coast. I was visiting a course outside Dallas and playing a fun but mediocre round. I had my feet propped up on the dash of a golf car and was nursing a warm beer while killing time waiting for the group in front of us to clear a nasty little par 3. The moment didn't suck.

As our foursome chatted, I spotted a huge red-tailed hawk turning lazy circles in the azure Texas sky above us. It was an incredibly peaceful scene that made me feel slightly better about being forced to sit behind some boneheads who were convinced they each needed 10 minutes to line up their critical double-bogey putts.

Suddenly, the majestic bird broke its slow, smooth glide and rocketed straight down toward the native area to our right. At the last second, she spread her wings and slowed just enough to lower her talons and expertly snag something small, brown and furry that had – up to that moment – been minding its own business in the tall grass. She screamed that cool hawk victory cry and slowly flapped off into the distance to enjoy her snack.

It was a very bad day for that pitiful little varmint, but just another fast-food meal for one of Mother Nature's kick-ass predators.

That moment got me thinking: In the great outdoors, every day is life or death for that deadly killer hawk and for the cute little ground squirrel that had the misfortune of twitching a muscle at exactly the wrong moment and catching her attention. In the circle of life, you're either the predator or the prey.

Is our industry any different?

We have 16,300 golf courses each trying to get their share of a revenue pie that just doesn't seem to grow from the 500-million-round plateau it's been stuck at for a decade. Every course is different, but each has to hit a number that makes it economically viable to survive or even prosper. When it comes to hitting that number, are you the sharp-eyed, hungry hawk or the unsuspecting little fuzzy mammal? Are you the predator or the prey?

Take this quiz

Here's a quiz based on Jeff Foxworthy's "You know you're a redneck if ..." routine to help you gauge which category you fit in.

- You know you're a predator if you have a well-thought-out player development plan to attract and retain golfers at your facility.

- You know you're prey if you just assume people will show up and plop down money to play at your place.

- You know you're a predator if you're almost 100 percent focused on the golf course as your primary source of business.

- You know you're prey if you're spending all your time worried about choosing a new wallpaper design for the clubhouse or hiring a new pastry chef for the kitchen.

- You know you're a predator if you're aggressively finding ways to improve the golf course and keep up with modern club and ball technology and offer something new to players.

- You know you're prey if you think the course is just fine as it is and there's no need to consider any upgrades or improvements.

- You know you're a predator if you show up for work every day feeling like Conan the Barbarian, with a strong desire to crush your enemies, see them driven out before you and hear their women lament.

- You know you're prey if you think your competitors are pretty nice guys and you wish them the best of luck.

- You know you're a predator if you're driving around every Saturday morning to check how full the parking lots are at other courses in the area.

- You know you're prey if you're happy to fill half the tee sheet every Saturday.

- You know you're a predator if you've brought your management team together to do a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities) analysis of your facility.

- You know you're prey if you're just working off a bunch of unexamined assumptions about your course and your competition.

- You know you're a predator if you have a carefully developed marketing strategy that sets you apart from everyone else based on a unique selling proposition.

- You know you're prey if you think your course speaks for itself.

- You know you're a predator if you're investing in radio, print, TV and online advertising to bring new customers to your course.

- You know you're prey if you think word of mouth is all you need.

- You know you're a predator if you understand player retention programs, like coupons and frequent-player cards, are a cheap way to generate revenue.

- You know you're prey if you're not making attempts to keep players coming back for more.

- You know you're a predator if you're convinced a great superintendent is the most critical member of your staff and you're doing everything you can to find and keep a world-class professional for the job.

- You know you're prey if you think a new food-and-beverage manager will solve all your problems by lowering food cost or creating a new menu.

- You know you're a predator if you walk or ride your course at least once a week and critically analyze conditions based on how golfers perceive the course.

- You know you're prey if you think green is good enough and have fairways full of clover.

- You know you're a predator if you have an Internet site that compels Web-savvy golfers to give you a try and makes it easy to find directions to your facility.

- You know you're prey if you still believe Web sites are a silly waste of money.

So, how did you score? Is your facility a razor-clawed raptor or just another item on the appetizer menu? If you're a true predator, congratulations. You're likely to survive the tough business challenges during the next few years. If you're merely prey, you might as well go lie down and find a nice comfortable place to wait in the tall grass because that big red-tailed hawk is coming. GCN

EVERY COURSE IS DIFFERENT, BUT EACH HAS TO HIT A NUMBER THAT MAKES IT ECONOMICALLY VIABLE TO SURVIVE OR EVEN PROSPER.

Don't forget to check out Pat's Digital Coffee Shop column that appears twice a month in GCN's weekly e-newsletter. To subscribe to the newsletter, visit the GCN home page and click on the "news" drop-down menu.



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While others have rushed out the door to take advantage of off-patent opportunities, we have taken time to ensure that our supply source is secure, that our registrations allow us to be innovative and that our formulations have been extensively tested, ensuring that you get the premium quality and service that you've come to expect from Nufarm Turf & Specialty.

- ▶ Mallet™ 2F is a 2 lb. flowable concentrate containing 21.4% imidacloprid
- ▶ Long-term curative and preventive action with just one application
- ▶ Available in 2.5-gallon or 60 ounce jugs

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™ Mallet is a registered trademark of Nufarm Americas Inc.
Always read and follow complete label instructions.

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