

Columnist kudos

Congratulations to GCI columnist Monroe Miller on celebrating a monumental retirement! He was a superintendent at one club for well north of three decades. I've been a superintendent for 35 years, but this is my sixth stop as a super. And kudos to him for saving everything! ("Moving out... and on," page 16, March issue). I've saved a lot and given a lot away, but working at Merion and whiling away winter days in our archive room (which I believe is probably one of the best in golf), I realize the value of keeping everything. It's people like Monroe who allow someone that possibly isn't even born yet to realize what a great adventure it was to be a greenskeeper in the 1970s! I only hope his retirement is half as good as his working life, then he truly will have an adventurous retirement.

Matt Shaffer
Director of golf operations
Merion Golf Club
Ardmore, Pa.

I just caught Terry Buchen's column in the March issue of Golf Course Industry magazine (Travels with Terry, page 87). Thanks for the great article.

Jeff Jamnik
Equipment manager
Great Southwest Golf Club
Grand Prairie, Texas

'Food for thought' fails

In your March issue, Jeff Higgins offered the "Agronomist's view" on the meta-catalyst article ("A new approach," page 76). We hear familiar objections to microbial products: questions about shelf life, how such microbes are overwhelmed in the "natural" environment, and how "bugs in a jug" serve only as food for the indigenous microbes in the environment.

This viewpoint is hardly new, and represents deeply entrenched opinions that seemingly ignore recent advances in applied biological science. The risk is, of course, that we miss the value of whole categories of discovery and learning, including:

- The positive effects of secondary metabolites – rich content of naturally-occurring

biochemicals exuded by diverse communities of microorganisms;

- Groundbreaking science on elicitor and signaling molecules – pathways that may explain how microorganisms induce physiological changes in plants. To quote Dr. Joe Kloepper of Auburn University, "even a single species of microorganism can make a difference...if it is the right one" (a point well proven with many bio-control products);

- Discoveries about "extremophiles" – bacterial species that remain viable for eons under the harshest imaginable conditions.

There is a growing body of knowledge in soil microbial science – an area of which many experts agree we know less than 1 percent of what may ultimately be knowable. We urge the agronomist community to explore, for themselves, the fascinating results of work being done by credible researchers in hundreds of test applications. As the writer/philosopher Eric Hoffer once said, "It is the learners who inherit the future. The learned usually find themselves equipped to live in a world that no longer exists."

David Lanciault
President & CEO
Advanced Microbial Solutions
Pilot Point, Texas

Applauding April

I finally made it through the last few stories in the April issue. It took awhile because I found so many of the stories and columns so interesting and informative that skimming just wasn't good enough – I had to read practically every word. In particular, the package on private clubs was well researched and told from several perspectives so readers got a well-rounded view of the issue.

It was the kind of in-depth reporting that is too often lacking these days. Congratulations on a great issue.

Bill Bryant
Bryant Marketing Communications
Atlanta

I enjoyed and agreed with Marisa Palmieri's Teeing Off editorial in the April issue ("Refuting 'golf=bad,'" page 6).

Just because golf is a favorite of Wall Street, doesn't mean the people on Main Street are
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FEEDBACK

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opposed. It's the "weekend warrior" that keeps golf alive, not the guys who take helicopters to the course.

How many other sports give you one-on-one time with your son or daughter when life's lessons like self-reliance, creativity, discipline and honor can be taught in the same afternoon? The politicians should be telling people to get off the couch and take a walk on a golf course and enjoy the sunshine and fresh air.

Thank you again for a great editorial. I fear you're preaching to the choir, but that doesn't mean that those of us in the robes don't enjoy the words.

Scott C. Sweeney
President
Seago International
Hickory, N.C.

"All in the family" in the April issue is a great article (Parting Shots, page 90).

I've known the Connells for many years and they are the best! Kip has always had the best for the industry in mind and pushed ideas that have helped the industry. You've just got to love this guy!

Family-owned companies like the Connells' really do provide a superior value to their customers and many times are taken for granted. Your column was a timely reminder of the great service they offer and how important they are to this industry.

Thanks again for giving this wonderful family a little limelight.

Bill Vogel
CEO
Spring Valley
Jackson, Wis.

Thanks to Pat Jones for the great article about independent distributors (April, Parting Shots, page 90). He couldn't have picked a better bunch of people to write about than the Connells. They are as passionate about this business as anybody around. Pat's written or spoken highly about us independents for years. It's greatly appreciated.

Roger Ogalla
President
BTSI
Frankfort, Ill.

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