

# The hole story

**S**uperintendent Owen Coulson shared with GCI an outstanding photo essay of his maintenance crew's spring aerification regimen at Vestavia Country Club, Birmingham, Ala. Check out this issue's app version to view the complete photo essay.

"Two times each year the membership gives the golf course to the golf maintenance crew so we can 'tear up' the great playing surface that they've been enjoying," Coulson says.

"Each spring and fall for the last eight or so years we have been tweaking our process of aerification to get it perfect. Each time we actually get pretty close but we can usually pin point at least one little tweak here or there. This process has been made easier because of our record keeping from previous years, which includes everything down to quantity and type of pizzas we order for the crew on aerification day (2013 was 15 total for a crew of 22 - 4 pep; 4 saus; 4 Hawaiian; 3 chicken). Our 'checklist' makes it easier to have a starting place for each step of the process. We may not apply the exact same amounts each aerification, but we cut down considerably on the amount of time we spend during the set-up stage for each step.

"The greens at Vestavia Country Club were first constructed by George Cobb around 1951 and then renovated by John LaFoy in 1989. Then in 2001, the top 6 inches of turf and material were removed and new greens mix was brought in and seeded to L-93 bentgrass.

"With the existing drainage and majority of the greens profile being 24 years old and even the newer/renovated portion being 12 years old, a lot of sub-surface cultivation must take place for them to perform in a way that is suitable for our membership. By utilizing the deep-drill machines along with the larger hollow tine in conjunction with our process, we have been able maintain a putting surface that the membership is consistently happy with."



## Great idea



**H**ere's an idea from the United Kingdom. To create a better communication link between the grounds crew and the mechanic, John Critchley, the course manager at Les Mielles Golf and Country Club, St. Owen's Bay, Jersey, UK, has introduced a machine log system. Each machine has an associated clipboard hanging in the mess room, which the operator must complete after use.

"We've had a couple of occasions where poor communication has affected golf course maintenance," Critchley says. "Also, if the mechanic is not on site once you have finished your task, people may forget to report the

faults. It resolves all these scenarios and many others."

To get his crew to buy into the concept, Critchley kept the form simple and clean. It contains blanks for the operator's name, times and dates, and any comments or faults. "It is then the mechanics responsibility to check these and complete any tasks needed," he says. "The crew have taken to this system far better than I thought, it creates organization and professionalism within the department."

Check out Critchley's blog at: [lesmiellesgroundscrew.blogspot.com](http://lesmiellesgroundscrew.blogspot.com)



## From THE FEED



We're already past 1,500 downloads of the new GCI app, with more and more readers getting the chance to really interact with the issue. We don't want to brag (well, not directly, anyway), so we'll let some of our followers do it for us!

### Joshua Smith @JoshfromCCTX

well worth the download too, now it takes a week to read an issue, it's really amazing.



### Thad Thompson @TerryHillsMaint

Anyone interested in golf course maintenance. I urge you to follow @GCI Magazine and download their AMAZING app!!!



### Michael Shaw @MickPhudd

app is very impressive!



### iTurfapps @iTurfapps

Just read Feb addition of @GCI Magazine U will find yourself touching the screen on EVERY page to see what happens! Check it out #innovation



### John Kaminski @JohnKaminski

that was "better spread the word more. The digital version is freakin awesome!"



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### Trevor Morvay @TrevorMorvay

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## Heavy metal

There's dollars in that rusting scrapheap behind the maintenance shack, just ask superintendent Chris Cook.

Cook and his crew at Bailey Ranch Golf Club, Owasso, Okla., started a metal recycling program during the winter of 2011-12. This past winter, Cook and his crew continued cleaning out the old equipment and scrap metal – old brake levers, reels, tools, shafts, and hydraulic motors. "Once we felt that we had harvested all the useful parts off of the equipment, I contacted a local scrap-metal facility and they explained their guidelines for accepting material – no fuel, oil, batteries," he says. "They brought us a 30 cu. yd. roll-off bin and we got to it. I quickly realized that we were going to need several more bins."

The local scrap metal facility they worked with required a minimum of 3,000 lbs. or they would charge for the service. No problem, says Cook, adding the Bailey Ranch crew recycled nearly 20 tons of metal, which earned them more than \$2,000 for the effort.

"We'll most likely spend that money on various small-engine tools that are in desperate need of replacement," Cook says.

As far as other recycling endeavors, Cook says they're exploring recycling the trash from off the course (mostly beer cans), but they haven't gotten any further than the idea. "I recycle all my trash from the office – print offs, trade mags, brochures, etc.," he says. "This adds up and I probably recycle 20-30 lbs. of paper each month."

### FOR MORE...

Check out the issue's app version for more photos of Bailey Ranch Golf Club's metal recycling effort.



## Dr. Know

Congrats goes out to Dr. Emily Merewitz, assistant professor in molecular turfgrass biology at Michigan State University, for being selected to receive The Musser International Turfgrass Foundation 2013 Award of Excellence.

The award is given to outstanding Ph.D. candidates who, in the final phase of their graduate studies, demonstrate overall excellence throughout their doctoral program in turfgrass research.

Dr. Merewitz received her B.S. degrees in plant science and plant biotechnology from Rutgers University. She went on to earn her Ph.D. at Rutgers under the tutelage of Dr. Bingru Huang in molecular turfgrass physiology which is now the focus of her teaching and research at MSU.

"I am very grateful to be considered and to have received such a prestigious award," Merewitz says. "It is quite an honor and it will motivate me even more to excel in the turfgrass industry. The industry has been extremely supportive of my research and this award is something that means a lot to me."

