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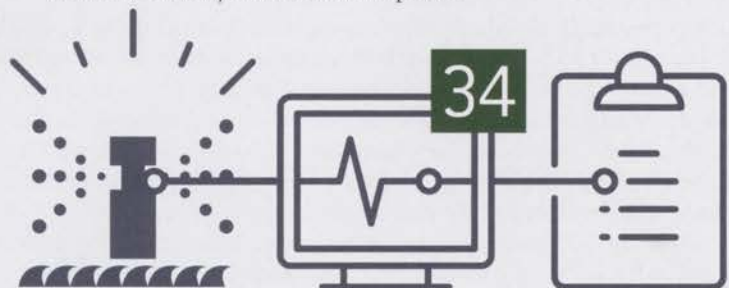
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DOLLARS AND SENSE

Attracting part- and full-time hourly labor is not a problem unique to the golf industry. Ask anyone from your local McDonald's manager to the owner of any one of the landscape companies operating in your community, and you'll find that you're all in the same boat.

Labor is the topic of this month's cover story, which is the first in a three-part series GCI will be featuring throughout 2017. This issue's story examines the bleak outlook many superintendents have about the qualified labor market entering this spring, and offers remedies some turf managers are trying to rectify this problem.

Unfortunately, when meeting labor needs, the majority of you are sitting in the same boat and it's missing its oars.

Let me explain. You hear political rhetoric that advocates "get Americans back to work" and "create job opportunities." Yet, not only do you have three positions to fill on your maintenance team, but you saw a half-dozen "Now Hiring" signs in business windows on the way to the course this morning. How can this be?



Mike Zawacki
Editor

The hard truth is many Americans don't want to commit to jobs paying minimum wage or just above. So, unless you have the budgetary means to substantially overpay the market average for part-and full-time manual labor, then your problems are going nowhere. Never mind that heading into this season you're competing against a multitude of similar labor-intensive industries all fishing in the same labor pool.

And it isn't a case of American workers being lazy. Instead, many seek realistic wages to support families, they desire decent medical benefits and need the ability to balance today's work/life commitments (i.e. family).

So how do you overcome this? Unfortunately, this problem has no easy answers. However, there may be a few hiring issues you've overlooked in your quest to fill these positions with qualified personnel.

When recruiting against a high-salary barrier, don't overlook or undersell the other performance-based rewards you can provide workers. Many of which won't dent your budget, either.

It's believed people don't leave a job over money, but rather management or working conditions serves as a deterrent or forces them away. Stress the camaraderie among those on the labor crew. Cite the extracurricular aspect of the job and give examples about how you show your appreciation and reward hard work – barbecues, flexible hours, continuing education opportunities, cash bonuses, time off, etc.

Reinforce their desire for job security by having them meet and spend time with long-term crew members who can talk about their experiences and why they've stayed so long. Explain to them the opportunities for advancement available on your team, or even in other departments. Let them know how you plan to invest in their continued success.

Finally, stress that the job they perform makes a difference. Not only will they be involved in daily turf maintenance, but explain how they are going to take an active role in upcoming capital projects that will improve the course. For example, target their sense of professional and personal pride by explaining how an upcoming bunker project they'll be a part of will result in greater enjoyment of the game for members or guests.

These tweaks to your approach to recruitment and hiring may not appeal to every candidate and you may lose out to a few more bucks in the paycheck, but maybe that's not a bad thing. Landing a worker who sees and values the bigger picture and appreciates the impact they can have on the course is more valuable to you than one who's just in it for the paycheck. **GCI**

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NOTEBOOK

Established in 1914 and played by Gene Sarazen, Walter Hagen, Ben Hogan and Sam Snead, Winter Park hosted 30,000 to 35,000 rounds per year despite weak grasses, tiny greens, overgrown trees, flat fairways

More than enough time for a better nine

Guy Cipriano describes how a superintendent and city combined with a worldly construction team to bring quality golf to a Central Florida community.

ED BATCHELLER DOESN'T MAINTAIN an 18-hole golf course. He has four co-workers and they must dodge automobile traffic to reach job assignments. His office rests between a par 5 and cemetery. Mondays can be as busy as Saturdays and Sundays.

In an industry where big and gaudy are often celebrated, Batcheller receives the daily fulfillment of overseeing the transformation of a city-owned course tipping out at 2,480 yards.

Batcheller is the superintendent at Winter Park Golf Course in Winter Park, Fla. The nine-hole facility reopened last October after a 31-week renovation. Golfers on the first tee and the final green of their careers – and players at every stage in between – are visiting the revamped course.

Efficiency, ingenuity, cooperation and dedication created a product being enjoyed by all. Established in 1914 and played by Gene Sarazen, Walter Hagen, Ben Hogan and Sam

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Snead, Winter Park hosted 30,000 to 35,000 rounds per year despite weak grasses, tiny greens, overgrown trees, flat fairways and a faulty irrigation system.

Batcheller understood the course's limitations. But like most superintendents, he completed daily tasks without complaining about failing infrastructure.

"Seeing what he had to deal with before ... How do you get up in the morning and want to cut those greens that were there?" says Riley Johns, a budding Canadian golf course architect who helped revive Winter Park. Keith Rhebb, another golf construction veteran transitioning into architecture, served as Johns' partner on the project. Rhebb says Batcheller and his crew were maintaining a "course that was never going to get better."

Greens averaged less than 1,500 square feet. Tree roots interrupted past-their-prime TifDwarf putting surfaces. Customers often hit and putted to the same spots because pin placement No. 1 often meant only one section where a pin could be placed. "TifDwarf is a great ultradwarf grass," Batcheller says. "But it was a struggle maintenance-wise. You could only mow the greens so low because they were so mutated."

The greens weren't the worst part

of the course. The irrigation left immediate impressions on Johns, Rhebb and Don Mahaffey for the wrong reasons. "I visited three times before the project started," says Mahaffey, who works on irrigation, agronomic and construction assignments. "I never visited when these guys weren't doing an irrigation repair." Batcheller now laughs when recalling Mahaffey's site visits. "Don would ask, 'Are those guys irrigation techs or what?'" he says.

MANEUVERING TO FIX A MUNI

City leaders recognized the severity of the problems, and stakeholders planned on fixing the course on a piecemeal basis. A task force persuaded the city to explore another route – renovating the entire course at once.

As Batcheller and his crew continued fixing irrigation leaks in the Florida heat, Johns and Rhebb found



Winter Park is on pace to exceed 60,000 rounds in its first year since reopening.

themselves moving dirt in northwest Nova Scotia, the site of a new Bill Coore- and Ben Crenshaw-designed course earning worldwide acclaim before anybody struck a shot. Cabot Cliffs and Winter Park are contrasting properties and concepts. The Canadian course borders Cape Breton and peak season greens fees exceed \$200. Playing Winter Park requires crossing busy central Florida streets six times and commuter trains pass behind the fifth and seven tees and sixth green. Greens fees are under \$20.

But Winter Park was built for the masses, and Johns and Rhebb learned during their time in Canada they harbored similar ambitions. After years of shifting and shaping dirt for others, they wanted to lead their own project. Neither a \$1.2 million budget (a meager total for a major renovation) nor the perils of working with a city government bothered Johns and Rhebb. Winter Park presented an opportunity for themselves and potentially thousands of others.

"Here was an opportunity to give back to the game that has given to

"We said, 'This is your golf course, this is for your community. What we can do is offer the golf expertise and our experiences in designing and creating golf,'" Johns says.



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us and say, 'Hey, this golf course is going to get the same TLC as Cabot Cliffs gets as Streamsong gets as Lost Farm gets,'" Rhebb says. "We wanted to give them the best value because we know how important muni golf courses like Winter Park are. If we are going to grow the game, let's invest in these golf courses."

Bringing Cabot Cliffs-like quality to Winter Park included sacrifice and hustle. Johns and Rhebb never left the site, working as designers and shapers. Their versatility shaved thousands from the project's cost and expedited approval processes. Mahaffey further reduced costs by designing an irrigation system that snugly fit the course's needs. Blake Conant and Mahaffey's son, Ryan Mahaffey, joined the trio on the construction team.

Batcheller and his crew worked

alongside Johns and Rhebb's group during every phase of the renovation. The city devoted personnel and resources to labor-intensive projects such as tree removal and sprigging. The cooperation erased skepticism. Johns and Rhebb trusted the city. And the city trusted the duo. Golf construction veterans admit synergy doesn't always exist in public projects.

"We said, 'This is your golf course, this is for your community. What we can do is offer the golf expertise and our experiences in designing and creating golf,'" Johns says. "They would defer to us on what we needed and they would do their best to get it sorted out. It was a huge success with how cooperation can get a project done in a seamless manner. It's how every project should go. I wish they all did."

SAND AND SLOPES

A physical characteristic of the site added to the positive and frugal vibe – an abundance of sand. The only sand imported to the site was used for greens and bunkers, a decision made to ensure playing consistency, Rhebb says.

Existing sand allowed the duo to shape an interesting course. Flat fairways and greens defined the old course. The new course features slope and undulation, with large green complexes. Greens range from 3,500 to 6,000 square feet, giving Batcheller multiple pin options for the first time in 10 years at Winter Park. The TifEagle surfaces can be maintained at levels once unimaginable. The rest of the course includes 419 Bermudagrass mowed at one height of cut.

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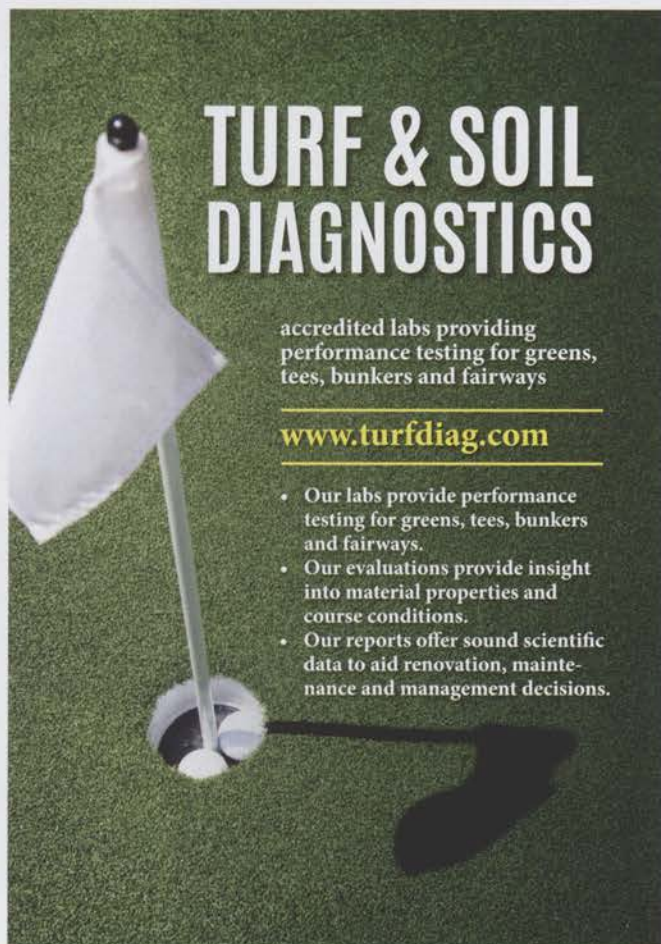
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— Mike Dachowski, Superintendent



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— Keith Wood, Superintendent



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and the slopes, and seeing what a bunker looks like when you are done raking it," he says. "It's also gratifying getting the greens at the speed that you want them to be at and watching people putt on them."

Construction savings were returned to the project, which allowed the city to add a nine-hole putting course adjacent to the nine tee. The putting course was not part of Johns and Rhebb's initial design.

Winter Park is on pace to exceed 60,000 rounds in its first year since reopening. On a sunny, 75-degree day this past winter, Batcheller relaxed on a brick patio outside the golf shop. A youth program performed drills on the first tee as a foursome of women walked off the ninth green. Not many superintendents ended their day with a better view. **GCI**

Tartan Talks No. 9

Richard Mandell stopped by the GCI headquarters between visits to a pair of Northeast Ohio clubs last month to record a "Tartan Talks" episode.



Mandell

The fast-paced studio session addressed a variety of golf course architecture topics, including tee shot distance equity, bentgrass to Bermudagrass greens conversions, whether Golden Age design principles apply to today's games and the storied Maples family. Mandell also explained how his business has flourished despite slowdowns in golf construction and described the difficulties many architects encounter when pursuing projects at elite facilities.

"I would like to do more of the high-end private country club work," he says. "That's a bit of a challenge because for some reason these clubs think that if you haven't done one of those, you're no good. And that's just not the case."

Enter bit.ly/2n3jQxk into your browser to hear more candid observations and anecdotes from Mandell.



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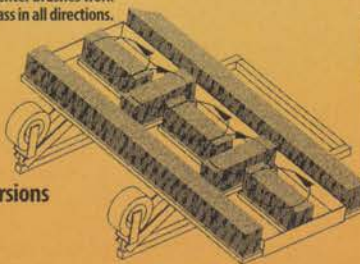
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Tim Moraghan, principal, ASPIRE Golf (tmoraghan@aspire-golf.com). Follow Tim's blog, Golf Course Confidential at www.aspire-golf.com/buzz.html or on Twitter @TimMoraghan

Recently, I was visiting one of America's top 100 courses, touring it with the superintendent. It was in fabulous shape, but the super and I were discussing minor refinements and small tweaks to reach an even higher level.

At one point as we were driving around, my host said to me, "See that guy over there? I have to pull over and talk to him. Do you mind?" Of course I didn't, so he got out of our cart, walked over to one of his members, and I could see them talking – rather animatedly – for about 10 minutes, at which point he returned to our cart dejected, shoulders slumped, muttering to himself, a deflated version of the happy-to-lucky guy I'd just been riding with.

His only comment: "No matter what I do or say, I just can't please that guy."

"Wait a minute," I said. "Ten minutes ago you were in a super mood, we were having a great time strategizing ways to make your already great course better. And how you're basing your demeanor and your entire day on one person? You're better than that, your course is better than that, and you shouldn't let one guy get to you like that."

It was a very telling moment, and although we got back to checking out his course, there was a black cloud over his head the entire time.

You can't please all of the people all the time. My dad taught me that and I've found – often the hard way – it to be absolutely true. In my own experience, I've found for every 100 people you meet, 10 are going to be jerks (or your word of choice). That's right: 10 percent of your members, customers, board members, suppliers, sometimes even friends and acquaintances are going to be difficult.

Which means 10 percent are never going to be happy with your course's conditions no matter how good you know it is. So what are you going to do about it?

As I said to my host that day, you can't let the 10 percent, or that one person, have that much control over how you feel about the job you do. You have to know that no matter how much you try to win him over, you'll never succeed. He'll never really appreciate your efforts, even if you do everything exactly as he tells you to (and I'm sure he tells you exactly what he thinks you should be doing down to the rough height and green speed).

The truly successful superintendent does not focus on what others—members, guests, the board, even the golf pro – say about the course. Focus on doing what you know is right.

You're the one with the training, education, intuition and instinct to take the best care of your facility. If you have questions, there are lots of people with the right experience, as

well as some distance, to give you good, constructive answers. But trust me, right answers and good instincts are not going to come from someone already at your club.

If that sounds cynical, I'm sorry. And maybe there are some members whose opinions you value, and perhaps the pro gets it and can be of some use. (Chance are he has his own 10 percent, griping about every event, the junior program, even the shirts for sale.) But when it comes to personal satisfaction, I'm afraid you're going to have to make due with self-satisfaction.

Of course, this only applies if you really do know your golf course and are doing things properly. If so, your job is to keep making it better by properly applying the resources, finances, and labor available to you. You're the one who should know where the problems are and where the opportunities lie. And that's where you should be focusing your attention, not on what the random angry voice has to say.

If you want to worry about something, choose from this list: the weather, rising cost of supplies, aging equipment, and the difficulty of finding, hiring, and training good people. Then throw in these possible worries: your family, your friends, your health, your happiness.

I've said this before, but if you're looking for validation, look inward.

To many golfers, we're nothing but farmers and grass-mowers. They're rarely going to thank us for doing the job we've been hired to do. That's why I'm very sensitive when watching golf on television. **GCI**

MORE ONLINE...

If you love Tim as much as we do, then you don't want to miss the second half of his April column, available exclusively in the online digital edition at golfcourseindustry.com.

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BY GUY CIPRIANO

HOW HIGH CAN YOU GO?

**SUPERINTENDENTS REVEAL
WHAT MEASURES THEY
ARE TAKING TO ATTRACT
ENTRY-LEVEL HOURLY WORKERS.**

Competition for a dwindling workforce lurks everywhere.

Think about your commute. That restaurant on the corner. Hiring. That coffee shop using Italian words to describe drink sizes. Hiring. That developer who purchased the land surrounding the club. Hiring.

Brian Powell sees the conundrum whenever driving through the Durham, N.C., neighborhoods surrounding Old Chatham Golf Club. Plywood, nails, concrete, shingles. He realizes the building materials help North Carolina's Research Triangle expand its tax base and national prominence.

He also knows what it means for Old Chatham and other area golf facilities. "We are now in a demand cycle for labor where demand has exceeded supply," says Powell, the only superintendent in Old Chatham's 16-year history. "It's taking us longer than it ever has and longer than I have seen in my 30-year career filling an open position."

Three time zones away, Josh Clevenger attempts to perform labor miracles. He's seeking seasonal help in the Bay Area. Clevenger, the superintendent at Claremont Country Club in Oakland, Calif., can offer seven 40-hour per week positions from March 1 to Oct. 31 to supplement his full-time crew. He had filled three spots when spring started March 20.

Claremont increased its starting wage from \$11.50 to \$15.50 in recent years "just to get people to think about it," Clevenger says. But the peak golf season will begin with

four open maintenance positions. People aren't thinking about working at golf courses in the Bay Area, where median household incomes approach \$100,000 and average monthly rents exceed \$2,300.

"It's not just us having a hard time finding people," Clevenger says. "We're having a hard time finding dish washers, line cooks, service people. We talk a lot about the struggles we have as a club to find those entry-level positions. It's not getting any better. We're having a hard time now and we're looking out five, 10 years from now. It's pretty bleak in terms of where we are going to be and what type of wages we have to pay just to get people to come here and show up for a job."

Even facilities in markets where recessions begin earlier and end later are experiencing labor challenges.

Country Club of Detroit superintendent Ross Miller lost multiple employees last fall because of revived factories offering an hourly wage \$3 per hour higher than what the club could pay. The factory jobs also offered full benefits. Miller says he's not encountering the same issues finding job applicants as facilities in golf-dense parts of Detroit, but the pool of potential candidates capable of passing the club's screening process has decreased since he arrived in 2014. "I would post at \$9.50 and you would get 50, 60 applicants when the economy wasn't doing as well," he says.

A facility's reputation matters little to most hourly workers. Bellerive Country Club in St. Louis, Mo., is hosting the 2018 PGA Championship, yet it faces the same dilemma as thousands of other clubs.

"You can see it, you can hear

it," says superintendent Carlos Arraya, who served as a general manager in Florida before landing at Bellerive. "The highest of the highs ... Everybody is facing it. They can say they aren't, but they are. You can get bodies, but are you able to attract the right people to retain and train to be great employees?"

ALWAYS COMPETING, ALWAYS LOOKING

Superintendents are wary of the labor market. Only 7 percent of the 531 respondents to GCI's 2017 State of the Industry survey consider it an industry crisis, but 48 percent say they are nervous about what awaits.

"We have been asked to deliver a certain product and people have a set expectation level of the quality we are trying to deliver on the golf course, and you can only do that with enough labor and the right-trained labor once you get it," Powell says. "It's frustrating to see a new home being built and see people that are filling those jobs that otherwise could be filling your job and working for you. And I have some friends in the commercial construction industry. They're feeling the same pressures."

Superintendents in Sun Belt states are often the most affected by construction patterns. Isla Del Sol Yacht & Country Club's Kevin Sunderman experienced more than a dozen crew changes in 2016 because of an uptick



COMPARABLE INDUSTRIES

General labor present the biggest challenges, with 59 percent of superintendents saying they are the most difficult positions to fill with qualified candidates. The hiring challenges coincide with a national unemployment rate resting below 5 percent for the past 11 months, according to Department of Labor statistics. The unemployment rate never dipped below 7.7 percent from 2009-13.

Other industries face the same labor crunch as golf in an improved economy. GCI's sister publication, *Lawn & Landscape*, reported in its 2016 State of the Industry report that only 21 percent of landscape contractors say a lack of quality employees is not hindering their respective companies' growth. The other 79 percent say a lack of quality employees is hindering their growth in at least some capacity.

Superintendents cite landscape as an industry competing for similar employees. The average entry-level mower operator makes \$10.50 per hour, according to L&L research. The average entry-level hourly wage for a golf course crew member is \$10.60, according to GCI research. But landscape contractors own their businesses, thus allowing them to quickly react to labor crunches by raising wages, benefits or available overtime hours. "Over the years, I have lost some really good seasonal employees to landscape companies paying \$17, \$18 an hour with benefits and a full-time job," says Josh Clevenger, the superintendent at Claremont Country Club in Oakland, Calif. "It's frustrating, but you can't blame them."

Construction is another industry superintendents cite as a hiring competitor, and homebuilders are becoming increasingly desperate for reliable employees. A National Association of Homebuilders report released last year estimated there are around 200,000 unfilled construction jobs in the U.S. The average cost of building a home in 2016 was 13.7 higher in 2016 than 2007 while 17 percent fewer people are working in construction than when the housing market peaked, according to report.

in construction in the St. Petersburg, Fla., area. The turnover contrasts what Sunderman experienced when the housing market struggled.

"There were all sorts of people working in that industry and then when it crashed, they were no longer building or remodeling houses," he says. "It was easy to find help. As that has picked up the last couple of years, those people have left and went back to framing houses and doing plumbing, electrical and HVAC work because they can make more money doing that. We are left struggling finding a workforce that wants to show up on time at 6 o'clock in the morning, wants to work out in the heat all day long, wants to work weekends and, oh by the way, do it for maybe a couple dollars over minimum wage."

Sunderman spent inordinate time in 2016 training new employees unfamiliar with golf course maintenance fundamentals such as how to travel between holes, walk mowing and raking. He's always accepting referrals from veteran employees, but the volume of leads produced by existing crew members is shrinking. Superintendents are a persistent lot, and Sunderman says he's considering approaching ministers at local churches about the job opportunities the golf industry can provide congregation members.

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LABOR 2017

GCI's three-part look at the labor situation in the golf industry.

Part 1: Shrinking hourly pool

Part 2: Future of assistant superintendents, interns and other specialized positions

Part 3: Agronomics of labor

H-2B and other visa programs aren't a widespread labor solution in Florida or other golf havens. Only 11.7 percent of golf facilities are using some type of a visa program to fill positions, according to GCI's research.

"I'm not aware of anybody participating in H-2B in my area," Sunderman says. "Part of the challenge is you have to be able to demonstrate the fact that you cannot hire American workers to fill those jobs. I can hire American workers to fill jobs. Anytime I put out an ad out I get people that apply and I can hire. Whether they work to the quality that we need, that's where the challenge comes in."

Finding quality employees has become a 365-day pursuit. Sean Reehoorn tries to supplement his crew at Aldarra Golf Club in Sammamish, Wash., with college or high school students interested in spending a summer on a golf course. Reehoorn grew up playing golf and working on golf courses. He says students who play golf are ideal summer employees because they require little training on the game's nuances. But golf-playing students look-

ing for summer jobs on a golf course are almost extinct species in suburban Seattle. "It seems like the kids who play golf don't want to work on a golf course," Reehoorn says. "You're having a hard time finding college and high school kids who think, 'That's a summer job I want to do.'"

Asked when he typically ends his search for seasonal student workers, Reehoorn says, "I don't ever really close it." He forges ahead with loyal full-time workers who remain committed to the club despite a thriving local economy, which includes the presence of Costco's headquarters less than 10 miles from Aldarra's entrance. Boeing, Microsoft, Amazon and Starbucks are among the other prominent employers in the region.

"Finding labor is hard," Reehoorn says. "A lot of guys are struggling in our area and trying to mix in part-time guys, and that's hard because people want benefits. Cost of living has gone up substantially in Seattle in the last five years. The hourly market was held down for so long artificially. Now to keep quality hourly workers you

have to pay them north of \$15, 16, \$17, \$18 an hour."

ON THE WAY TO \$15

Rising minimum wages add to the labor challenges confounding the golf industry.

Seattle leaders passed a law in 2014 that will gradually increase the minimum wage for all workers to \$15 per hour by 2021. Large companies (501 or more workers) must pay workers who do not receive medical benefits \$15 per hour as of Jan. 1, 2017. Small companies (501 workers or less) must pay the same workers \$13 per hour. Workers at small companies, a category golf courses not owned by management companies fall under, must be paid \$11 per hour if they receive tips or if the employer pays toward medical benefits.

The state of Washington enacted an \$11 hourly minimum wage for all workers on Jan. 1. The state's minimum hourly wage will increase to \$13.50 by 2020. Golf facilities in the region are already hiring entry-level maintenance employees above the mandated minimums, Reehoorn says.

California's current

minimum wage is \$10.50 per hour, but the state has passed a law that will boost the rate to \$15 for all businesses by 2022. Multiple Bay Area cities, San Jose and Oakland, will reach \$15 an hour sooner. Superintendents are curious how minimum wage mandates will affect staff morale, and Clevenger says they could produce animosity among workers because new seasonal employees without benefits might be receiving higher hourly rates than experienced workers earning benefits.

Brian Benedict, the superintendent at The Seawane Club on Long Island, must cope with similar numbers and mandates affecting East Coast operations. New York will enact a \$15 minimum wage in phases, with all New York City businesses hitting the number by 2019, followed by suburban Nassau, Suffolk and Westchester Counties in 2021. A \$15 per hour minimum wage will increase most golf course labor budgets by an average of 20 percent, according to Benedict, whose course sits in Nassau County.

"I foresee two areas of concern," Benedict says. "Forced increase wages by NYS resulting in exponentially increase labor costs that are static resulting in less weeks worked or layoffs. The other major issue are the crew members that are above the yearly statewide increased hourly rate. What do they get when they see their other crew members getting \$1 raises from 2018 to 2021? Do they get the same increase even though they're over the minimum wage threshold all ready? It's a tough question. Probably only one that the larger budget clubs can handle monetarily."

"WE ARE NOW IN A DEMAND CYCLE FOR LABOR WHERE DEMAND HAS EXCEEDED SUPPLY. IT'S TAKING US LONGER THAN IT EVER HAS AND LONGER THAN I HAVE SEEN IN MY 30-YEAR CAREER FILLING AN OPEN POSITION."

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NO. 1 REASON FOR LEAVING

Higher-paying job in another industry	57.4%
Higher paying job at another golf course	11.5%
Desire to work different/better hours	8.9%
Job is too demanding	8.1%
Leaving the area	4.9%
Lifestyle change	2.6%
End of a visa program	1.1%
Disagreement with supervisor	6%
Other reasons:	4.9%

Source: GCI's 2017 State of the Industry survey

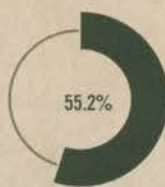
WHY IT'S CHALLENGING TO FILL MAINTENANCE POSITIONS



Pay



Hours



Demanding physical nature of work



Generational changes



Competition from other businesses/industries



None

Source: GCI's 2017 State of the Industry survey

The Northeast is the most expensive place to support a golf course maintenance crew. The average entry-level wage is \$11.20 per hour, and 66.7 percent of the region's maintenance departments have labor budgets above \$300,000. The District of Columbia (\$11.50), Massachusetts (\$11), Connecticut (\$10.10) and Vermont (\$10) have minimum wages above \$10 per hour. Increasing hourly rates mean shorter tenures for seasonal staff at many Northeast facilities.

"It seems like the seasonal labor period is getting shorter," Benedict says. "With increasing wages every year set by the state and federal government and the labor budget staying the same, something has to give. If the hourly rate per man goes up with the wage increase and the labor money stays the same, the only variable that changes is the weeks in season worked. Years ago the crew used to work 34 to 36 weeks per season and now we're down to 27 to 28."

IT'S USUALLY ABOUT PAY

Pay is the No. 1 reason employees give superintendents for leaving a golf course maintenance job, with 57.4 percent of workers leaving for a higher-paying job in another industry. Another 11.5 percent leave for a higher-paying job at another golf course.

Stagnant participation rates and an oversupply of facilities put golf course operators in tricky spots. A restaurant owner, for example, can pass increased labor costs onto

customers by incrementally raising the price of sandwiches or drinks without losing business. Golf facilities, especially ones in saturated markets, become vulnerable when dues and greens fees are increased. "You have people on fixed incomes that don't want to see their dues go up and the cost of rounds go up, but they are going up because you are going to have to compete for workers," Arraya says.

Creating an inviting culture for employees is helping Bel-

HAVE YOU EVER USED H-2B OR ANOTHER TEMPORARY VISA PROGRAM TO FILL POSITIONS



Source: GCI's 2017 State of the Industry survey

SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYEE RETENTION STRATEGIES

Wage/salary increases	76.5%
Provided uniforms/meals	50.9%
Morale boosting activities	45.0%
Increased golf privileges	30.9%
BBQs/cookouts	21.7%
Offered more paid vacation time	11.9%
Golf/golf outings	7.9%
Awards/rewards	6.2%
Contest/events	4.9%

Source: GCI's 2017 State of the Industry survey

"YOU CAN SEE IT, YOU CAN HEAR IT. THE HIGHEST OF THE HIGHS ... EVERYBODY IS FACING IT. THEY CAN SAY THEY AREN'T, BUT THEY ARE. YOU CAN GET BODIES, BUT ARE YOU ABLE TO ATTRACT THE RIGHT PEOPLE TO RETAIN AND TRAIN TO BE GREAT EMPLOYEES?"

— CARLOS ARRAYA, BELLERIVE COUNTRY CLUB

lerville attract workers. The culture involves managers crafting flexible schedules based on employees' personal needs.

"We have a big staff because we have taken full-time equivalents and we have found enough people that want to be flexible," Arraya says. "We have taken people with three or four different schedules. We get more done and we save the club money because we are not paying full-time benefits to these people."

Powell has found the oppo-

site works at Old Chatham — full-time, year-round positions are more attractive to prospective employees than seasonal positions. The club also offers medical benefits, lunch and uniforms, and the starting hourly wage has increased \$1.50 since 2008. Once they join the crew, most employees find the work rewarding and they recommend Old Chatham to family members and friends. The average tenure of an Old Chatham maintenance employee is around six years,

according to Powell.

When an employee receives a higher-paying job, Powell says he makes it a point of wishing him or her well. "The rest of the staff pays attention to how a person is treated," he says. If a key crew member is considering leaving, Powell will approach club leadership about possible tactics to retain the employee. But money-driven defections are unavoidable.

"I would much prefer to have trained people on staff and I would prefer to have veterans

going out and doing certain tasks," he says. "But I'm confident my assistants and myself can adequately train people how to do things the right way. I feel confident that as long as we have bodies coming through the door we can be successful. What concerns me in today's economy — particularly in this area — is that we just aren't seeing the bodies come through door." **GCI**

Guy Cipriano is GCI's associate editor.

BE A MORE EFFECTIVE MANAGER



Henry DeLozier is a principal in the Global Golf Advisors consultancy. DeLozier joined Global Golf Advisors in 2008 after nine years as the vice president of golf for Pulte Homes. He is a past president of the National Golf Course Owners Association's board of directors and serves on the PGA of America's Employers Advisory Council.

Raise your hand if you spend part of each day with your feet propped on your desk, wondering how you're going to spend all that extra time you have on your hands and all that extra money in the budget? It's doubtful that many hands went up. Most operations are understaffed, underfunded and overstressed. We hardly have time to sit down, much less put our feet up. But we better make time for one thing – the most important thing, which is managing.

Stressful times demand that busy managers set clear goals, develop effective and efficient methods for getting the work done and effectively communicate performance results up and down the management team. If you're not doing those things already, you have a lot of company among your peers. But if you want to be a more effective manager and stand out from the crowd, there are things you can do to increase productivity and your value.

SETTING CLEAR GOALS

There's a saying: If you don't know where you're going, any path will get you there. Here's the corollary: If your team doesn't know where it's going, they should blame you. Your team will perform at the top of its game when the players fully understand what they are there to accomplish. Being specific is essential to a

manager's effectiveness.

Many people follow the SMART methodology of goal-setting: specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-based. Managers should think only about the steps that contribute to success and avoid getting bogged down in the details. Take the time to clearly define required actions to ensure they are the ones most needed to achieve the objective. Anticipate potential roadblocks and know what you're going to do when they crop up.

USING EFFECTIVE METHODS

If you're good at figuring out processes necessary to accomplish goals, and if you know how to organize people to tackle and accomplish the goals, you are distinctively skilled. Those managers comfortably assign responsibilities and deadlines. They monitor results and progress in a timely manner and design feedback opportunities into the project loop.

Here are several steps you can take to increase your effectiveness:

- Organize the work needed into smaller, time-specific increments
- Determine who will do the work and what resources are needed to complete the job successfully
- Look for synergies – actions you can combine – to increase efficiency
- Identify detailed checks and follow-up systems so nothing falls in the proverbial cracks

COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY, UP AND DOWN THE TEAM

Effective project communication has three phases: a beginning, middle and end. In the beginning, clearly communicate intended outcomes. As management guru Stephen Covey taught in his "Seven Habits of Highly Effective People," the place to begin effective communications is with a clear and concise description of expected outcomes and the steps needed to achieve the goal.

While the project is underway, provide regular updates that let the team members know the status of the project and that their efforts are appreciated. Remind them of the benefits that will come when the project is completed successfully. Managers also must communicate up the organization to supervisors, owners and boards, providing regular and credible updates as mileposts are passed.

In the third stage, after the project is complete, communications to your management and board should report on budget variances and any early signs that the intended benefits are being achieved. Throughout the three phases, keep communication simple, honest and straight-forward. Do not equivocate. If there is a setback, say so. Own the outcomes, good and bad.

GETTING THINGS DONE

Strategy and planning are critical, but a plan is merely words on paper until it is executed. Can you marshal the resources needed to accomplish goals? Are you effective at orchestrating multiple and sometimes interdependent activities simultaneously and congruently? Are you proficient at absorbing information, accepting and meshing good ideas, adjusting plans and staying on task, even as other priorities compete for your attention?

If you have all those skills, you're already a great manager. And if you need to shore up a few areas in your skill set, consider the suggestions discussed above. **GCI**



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PATCH WONDER

**FOUR STEPS SUPERINTENDENTS NEED TO TAKE NOW TO STOP
PATCH DISEASE BEFORE IT STARTS.**

By **Kyle Brown**

Patch diseases like summer patch and take-all patch cause headaches for superintendents. Once they appear on the course, it's tough to get rid of them. But with the right approach, superintendents can minimize the hassle of dealing with them later in the year. Here are four tips to get ahead of patch diseases before they become a problem.

OPTIMIZE CONDITIONS FOR ROOT GROWTH

Regardless of the patch disease, prevention is the key, says John Inguagiato, assistant professor of turfgrass pathology at the University of Connecticut, and solid cultural practices are a big part of prevention.



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PESTS & DISEASES

"It's really important to remember that these are root diseases," he says. "They're soil-borne fungi that affect the roots of the turf. If you're trying to manage these diseases, you've got to really optimize conditions for root growth."

A robust, healthy root system gives turf a better tolerance against threats like take-all patch or summer patch, he says, and early spring and late fall give superintendents opportunities to use cultural practices to get ahead.

"Whenever you have a recurring disease, you always look at the environment," says Zac Reicher, green solutions specialist for Bayer Environmental Science. "Is it too wet? Is there poor drainage? Is it too hot, or too much compaction? When I get to the point of talking about fungicides, I'm assuming you've optimized everything you can in the cultural environment. If you haven't done that part of it, then the fungicides aren't going to be very effective."

One of the major steps a superintendent can take toward good cultural conditions before patch diseases strike are to make sure that there's minimal compaction, he says. That includes an aggressive aerification program in the spring and fall.

Diseases like summer patch thrive in areas with high foot and cart traffic, like leading onto fairways, says Inguagiato. Core cultivation in those places relieves some of the stress on the turf.

"What's important is the timing," he says. "If you go out in late May or even early

June, [aerification] can actually be detrimental and enhance the severity of summer patch. That's just before the heat and stress of the summer."

With aerification later in the season, the turf won't get much root growth into the newly opened soil. In fact, it could be damaging what root growth the turf has already developed.

"The take-home message is that cultivation can be beneficial, but it's important to do it earlier in the season, to really take advantage of the time when soil temperatures are conducive to root growth and build up the root system of the plant and make it more tolerant to infection," Inguagiato says.

Look for soil temperatures favorable for root growth – around 60 degrees – to maximize the benefits of a spring aerification program before infection occurs, he says.

Use varying depths for repeated solid-tine aerification, however. Going to the same depth over and over can create a hardpan that restricts root growth and penetration, says Inguagiato.

Thatch control is a more continuous practice, according to Reicher, with topdressing and vertical mowing to keep stress off rootzones.

Using aerification and thatch control to improve turf's tolerance to disease is common sense, says Kyle Miller, senior technical specialist at BASF. But limiting stress also includes other cultural practices, like mowing at a slightly higher cut.

"Anywhere you're elevating the stress level of the turf,

you've got a greater chance for disease to cause damage," he says. "Mowing very closely is a stress on the plant. Think about making sure you have a good balance there between your playability and your stress level.

"Even raising that mowing height up just a tick can make

any longer. "Fungicide applications should be timed when soil temperatures reach 65 degrees at a 2-inch depth for three to five consecutive days, typically in late spring when the initial infection is occurring," he says. "In general, two to three applications may be necessary on a 28-day

“When I get to the point of talking about fungicides, I'm assuming you've optimized everything you can in the cultural environment. If you haven't done that part of it, then the fungicides aren't going to be very effective.”

—Zac Reicher

a huge difference,” he adds. “Then you've got a deeper, stronger root system, because you've got more turf on the top to photosynthesize carbohydrates and make energy for the plant.”

GET AHEAD OF THE INFECTION

One of the reasons that summer patch remains a problem for superintendents is that the symptoms don't show up until well after the disease has already attacked the turf, says Reicher.

“It starts to attack in the spring, before people are thinking about it,” he says. “The infection usually occurs a month or more before symptoms show up.”

Heat or drought stress can cause the symptoms to show up, says Matt Giese, field technical manager for Syngenta, but by that point prevention isn't an option

interval or four to six applications of 14-day intervals.”

Similarly, Giese recommends take-all patch applications be timed around soil temperatures in the 50s and low 60s, with two applications in the spring and two in the fall.

Timing for the initial summer patch fungicide applications is critical, says Reicher, and often are done too late to be effective. “Most people wait too long to do it,” he says. “Once temperatures start inching up to 65 degrees, put it down. It's better to be early than late.”

That first summer patch application can also coincide with a second take-all patch application, says Miller. Fungicide product choice makes a big difference as well, mainly between DMI (such as Mirage, Bayleton or Banner) and QoI products

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DMI fungicides offer better control in his opinion, says Reicher, though some superintendents lean away from DMI products during midsummer because of a reputation for causing phytotoxicity or growth regulation.

"But those are still the most effective products, so I'm a big believer in continuing to use DMIs through the summer," he says. "If you let that summer patch get a hold of your turf, it's really hard to control." Reicher suggests a DMI application about every four weeks during the summer, watered in, especially in areas with a history of summer patch.

Equally important for take-all patch and summer patch is following the initial attack (with a 28-day interval between applications) in spring with another one-two combo in the fall, says Miller. Superintendents should set their fungicide programs, especially for diseases that have historically been a problem on the course, and stick to them to stay ahead of the disease before damage can occur.

"The application late in the year, that's one that's easy to slip by, because you think, 'It's starting to get a little chilly. Soil and air temps are cooling off. I'm not needing to spray as much anymore,'" says Miller.

"But you can't let it slip by."

Another easy pitfall is to try to just use a higher volume of water with the application to skip the process of watering it into the turf, says Miller. But spreading the application that way won't allow the product to get down to the roots of the turf.

"It won't do its job if it can't get to the disease," he says. "The turf has a lot of leaves, and they hang up the spray. We want to maximize what we get down to the soil. Water it in."

CONTROL NUTRIENT INPUTS

Though it's tempting to push the turf to get moving with a strong nutrition program as

soon as the season starts, it's safer to hold back a little, especially with nitrogen, says Inguaggiato. "One thing they might want to consider is to favor root growth," he says. "It might be advantageous to avoid excessive nitrogen fertility through those early spring months. You're absolutely going to get a growth of foliage in the spring, but by applying more nitrogen than is necessary and contributing to more growth, the plant's growing more foliar tissue at the expense of establishing a good, strong root zone early in the year."

Being judicious with nitrogen early in the year can promote deeper, healthier roots

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earlier in the season, which gives turf a better tolerance against summer patch. Using some nitrogen is fine, but when superintendents start seeing excessive clippings, it's a sign to back off, says Inguagiato.

Maintaining adequate fertility and using slow-release acidifying fertilizers such as ammonium sulfate is believed to reduce summer patch and take-all patch symptoms by lowering soil rhizosphere pH and avoiding rapid lush plant growth, says Giese.

"In addition, research indicates that a two-pound per acre rate of manganese annually in the spring helps reduce sum-

mer patch symptoms appearing later in the year," he says. Manganese sulfate can also limit take-all patch, applied at a rate of eight pounds per acre.

GO TO FIELD DAYS

Though it doesn't immediately improve the turf, one major part of building the right cultivation and fungicide program is attending local field days, says Miller.

"Look at the trials on the particular disease you're dealing with, and see what's working in your geography," he says. "Lean on those products and try them out so you're giving it the best shot you can."

The solution doesn't even

have to be the product mentioned at the field day; it could be a change in technique or approach, says Miller. Not only does attending the local field day help support the regional community of superintendents, it gives superintendents the chance to talk about their approach to disease pressure, and how they're responding to it.

Armed with some new information, a superintendent should take it back to his course and put it to the test. Do trials on your golf course to determine what works under your conditions, Miller says. Take a fairway or green and split it in half, then treat

one side with one product or mix, and the other side with another. Collect the data on those results, and start over until the right product or approach is found.

"I just think it's really important for a superintendent to use his golf course as a research site, instead of relying on universities to do it," Miller says. "Even though they can give you a lot of good information, at the end of the day, it's all about your golf course and your conditions." **GCI**

Kyle Brown is an Akron, Ohio-based freelance writer and frequent GCI contributor.

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INNOVATION – GOOD OR BAD?



Brian Vinchesi, the 2015 Irrigation Association Industry Achievement Award winner, is President of Irrigation Consulting, Inc., a golf course irrigation design and consulting firm with offices in Pepperell, Massachusetts and Huntersville, North Carolina that designs golf course irrigation systems throughout the world. He can be reached at bvinchesi@irrigationconsulting.com or 978-433-8972 or followed on twitter @bvinchesi.

Every industry innovates and golf irrigation is no different. Without innovation, we would not be saving water, have remote monitoring and improved uniformity. Innovation results in changes to golf irrigation technology every year, but is that a good thing or bad thing?

We don't always see innovation come to fruition. At the Golf Industry Show, you see the concept for a product, but it never comes to market. In other cases, the product arrives prematurely – it's available, but may take several years before it works the way it was envisioned.

There are two reasons for this. One, the manufacture always wants to be the first to market with a new product feature. Second, there is always a course who wants to be the first to use a new product and they jump all over

it. This creates a "keeping up with the Joneses" scenario.

In the last five-plus years, we have seen lots of innovation in the golf irrigation market, including Rain Bird ICM and Toro Infinity sprinklers, for example. These products make your system smarter and maintenance easier. It is important products not just be innovated because, but they must also benefit the end user.

Sometimes products claim innovation, but actuality are not. For example, there is a concept for irrigation systems called side fusion. Side fusion fuses a fitting on to HDPE laterals much like you fuse the pipe together. It takes the place of a saddle or compression coupling for attaching the swing joint to the lateral and is less expensive.

Just like PVC 50 years ago, the industry continues to learn the limits

of HDPE systems. Learning a product's limits takes time and over that period we learn what works and what doesn't. Polygate taught the industry that you need to be careful about pressure ratings and dissimilar DR's between pipes and fittings when using HDPE pipe.

Side fusion is certainly an innovative concept. However, now that a little time has passed, we have learned the side fusion stresses the pipe and causes it to fail, not the fuse or the fitting.

Those of you who have been around a long time remember when systems used PVC gasketed mainline fittings. The fittings would crack in the hoop of the elbows and tees. Or they used epoxy coated steel mainline fittings that developed pin hole leaks very quickly after being installed due to poor handling during shipping or installation.

Two-wire systems constantly add features, which is the main reason they are innovative. Features can be added to the sprinkler and transmitted through the two-wire cable back to your central computer. Manufacturers will continue to innovate with two-wire products, and at this point no one seems to know what the limit is. The sprinklers and wiring becomes smarter, but at the same time more sensitive to bad wire splices, nicks and moisture. So is this a good thing?

As we see so much innovation on two-wire systems, are we seeing any at all with conventional satellite-based systems? Doesn't look like it. Just like HDPE is not the best choice for every golf course, nor is a two-wire system. So does it make sense to buy irrigation products that are not going to be improved in the future? Are the innovative products that are available now and in the future the best choice or the only choice?

What about the management team that takes over after you? Will they want the innovative products or the more proven and reliable but stagnant products? It's something to think about as innovation can be both good and bad. GCI



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Head **check**

The old adage about an ounce of prevention worth a pound of cure is especially true with bringing your golf course irrigation system back online.

By **Rob Thomas**

Spring is the time to recover from Mother Nature's deep freeze and prep the course for months of play to come. You'd be surprised the potential issues awaiting beneath the earth's surface once it's time to flip on the irrigation system.

The course's irrigation heads should be checked for proper operation in the spring, says Brian E. Vinchesi of Irrigation Consulting Inc. "You need to make sure all the sprinklers go on and off, pop up and down and most importantly – turn," he says. "You should make sure the nozzle is still in them, but that will be pretty obvious."

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IRRIGATION

The exact timing of these checks depend on the geographic territory, says Steve Sakurai, national golf products sales manager for Ewing Irrigation and Landscape Supply. "Typically, the best time is about one week before you start needing to use your irrigation system," he says. "If you live in an area that requires you to blow out your system for winter, the best time would be when it's time to recharge your irrigation system."

However, there is a proactive approach to checking for possible issues and failures, says Ian Williams, national specification manager at Rain Bird Golf. "You may not need to



A spring assessment can ensure an irrigation system is functioning properly before it is needed for the season.

necessarily wait until after winter has ended," he says. "Some systems allow for 'electrical' checks of the sprinkler heads during winter months without

the need for pressurized water in the lines. Feedback from the sprinkler allows you to verify that the sprinkler head is communicating, able to receive

commands and operate even prior to spring operation."

Williams refers to the company's Integrated Control (IC) System to reinforce his point.

PHOTO COURTESY OF STEVE SAKURAI

An advertisement for LeSEA Global FEED THE HUNGRY. The top half features a black and white photograph of several young children sitting at a table, smiling and eating from bright orange bowls. The text "love your neighbor" is overlaid in a large, white, sans-serif font. To the right, on an orange background, is the text "Over 30 years of trusted relief aid at home & abroad." Below this is a graphic of a white bowl with a black spoon. At the bottom left, it says "To change the life of a child, please visit www.feedthehungry.org or call 800 888-832-6384". At the bottom right, it says "LeSEA Global FEED THE HUNGRY A full life feels good." The word "FEED" is in large, bold, orange letters, and "THE HUNGRY" is in smaller, bold, orange letters.

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"With a status poll and an internal voltage measurement test of the ICM, the operator knows the 'electrical' status of every sprinkler head and valve on the property even before spring start-up," he says. "This is also a good opportunity to log module voltages so that comparisons can be made over time as a preventative measure to detect any developing wire or splice issues before they affect sprinkler head operation."

"During winter months, you can also perform electrical tests on sprinkler head operation from a PAR+ES satellite controller," he adds. "At spring start-up, while the lines are being slowly pressurized, it is

About to burst

Fall preparations are not without their potential missteps, warns says Ian Williams, national specification manager at Rain Bird Golf. It's important a properly sized air compressor is used to winterize a system.

"The air compressor's rating is very important," he says. "Because all irrigation systems are different, they can require compressors with different volume ratings to move sufficient water and prevent compressed air from damaging the system. The most common damage comes from water that freezes inside the sprinkler or pipes because the system wasn't properly evacuated during fall winterization."

Water expands and increases by $\frac{1}{11}$ of its



volume when frozen. This is enough to split pipes, fittings and rotor cases. If not properly winterized, water left in the pipes can make its way to low spots, collect and freeze if temperatures dip low enough for long periods of time.

"Exposed pipes, such as those in bridge crossings, will be affected by frozen water more quickly," Williams adds. "When relying on heating to prevent pump station components from freezing, be sure to monitor for power losses during freezing temperatures, or be prepared with a generator in case of a power outage. It's best to thoroughly winterize pump station components so in the event of a power loss, no damage can occur due to freezing."

important to exhaust as much air from the pipes through quick coupler valves and air relief valves at high points. Pump

station aside, this is also a good opportunity to check operation of the air relief valves, isolation valves and inspect for any pipe

failures that may be present. Once this equipment has been verified, each sprinkler can then be operated hydraulically



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verifying proper operation, while also checking for correct nozzle selection and arc adjustment.”

As for the most efficient and effective way to check, Williams suggests taking a systematic approach to operating all sprinklers throughout the system by area and hole. This ensures no sprinklers are missed.

“This procedure also pushes any remaining air out of the lines,” he says. “Operating each sprinkler for a few seconds from a smart phone or tablet provides plenty of time to check rotation and arc adjustment while also inspecting for any damage that may have occurred

Check that rotor

Unfortunately, springtime problems with golf course irrigation systems aren’t always easy fixes. Steve Sakurai, national golf products sales manager for Ewing Irrigation and Landscape Supply, has seen it all. If the problem isn’t as simple as an irrigation head, try these solutions to fix a rotor that is not turning on:

- Check to make sure there is water going to the head and that an isolation valve was not turned off.
- Verify that your system has adequate pressure to turn on the head. A minimum operating pressure will be determined by the type of sprinkler head on your system as well as the pressure setting.
- Make sure the controller or decoder has the prop-

er current and voltage to activate the solenoid.

- Check the solenoid to make sure it is functioning properly. A popular way to verify the solenoid is working correctly is to take a resistance reading of the solenoid with a multi-meter. The ohm reading should be between 20 and 60 ohms. (May vary depending on manufacturer.)

“You may also have to check to verify the pump station is on and operating properly,” Sakurai adds. “This includes making sure the pressure setting is correct. You can find the correct pressure setting for your system by checking the gauges on the pump station. Other issues may stem from debris in the line, old valves that aren’t operating properly or pipe breaks in the system.”

over the winter months.”

The most effective way to check the irrigation system starts at the heart of the struc-

ture — the central control system, Sakurai says.

“First, you’ll want to do a communication check to see

if there are any issues communicating to the controllers or decoders,” he says. “In areas where irrigation systems are

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blown out, you can do a check before the system is recharged. In areas where the pump station needs to be re-started, you should slowly charge the system and then look for breaks."

Next, check the operation of each sprinkler head by verifying that they pop-up and rotate, Sakurai adds. "Check adjustments for part circles, and then check to make sure they turn off. Create a plan that



Clearing water from pipes during a winter shutdown will help an irrigation system once spring arrives.

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starts at hole one, and then work your way throughout the golf course," he says.

The most common issue is making sure the sprinklers are level and at grade, Vinchesi says.

Sprinkler head issues with rotors not coming on, not rotating or being out of adjustment are common issues that superintendents come across, Sakurai says.

Sakurai agrees with Vinchesi that a lot can be done in the fall to ensure less stress in the spring. "You can reduce the chance of springtime issues with your irrigation system by taking the time to start up your irrigation system to make sure it is running properly before you shut it down for the winter," Sakurai says. "It is also important to make sure you properly winterize your irrigation system and clear any water out of the pipes."

Assuming the system has been properly winterized, there is still plenty to do during the winter months to set yourself up for success in the spring, Sakurai says. For example, go through your inventory of parts to make sure you are prepared for any issues that may come up.

"Use any down time to clean up controllers," he says. "Make sure the areas where the controllers are wired up are free of cobwebs, bugs, snakes, mice, spiders, etc."

Next, make sure the data in the central control system is prepped correctly, including cleaning up data issues, or implementing updates. **GCI**

Rob Thomas is a Cleveland-based golf writer and frequent GCI contributor.

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FORCE MULTIPLIERS



Paul F. Grayson is the Equipment Manager for the Crown Golf Club in Traverse City, Mich., a position he's held for the past decade. Previously, he spent 8½ years as the equipment manager at Grand Traverse Resort & Spa. Prior to that, he worked as a licensed ships engine officer sailing the Great Lakes and the oceans of the world.

The Crown is going to start the season with its skeleton crew a couple of people short. Two one-season temps who helped finish last season did so waiting for the jobs they really wanted to open after the season ended and will not be back. The unemployment office said that when they need people to fill the spots in the spring, the Crown must start unskilled people at \$11 per hour and offer some kind of benefit package. Some places they said are offering signing bonuses after you have been there a month – or you get part of your bonus each month. They also said people will come from other jobs, not the pool of people currently unemployed. We should plan on hiring people away from the other courses nearby and adjust the pay and benefits to accomplish that. Superintendent Pete McCall will be doing that in the spring, not me.

McDonald's has a permanent electric sign added to its big sign by the highway that says: "now hiring \$11/hr." When I inquired (while having lunch), they said people already working there are paid less than that but any new hire, for any position, would start at \$11 per hour. I asked if

A sand blaster is a tool capable of saving labor and boosting productivity.

the people working there now could quit and come back as new hires. They said they didn't think it works that way. It seems just wrong that minimum wage is not a living wage in Traverse City. My neighbors work two or three minimum wage part-time jobs to try to cover the high expenses of this resort area. People drive what my family used to call "mill cars," they barter, cut wood in the winter, heat with wood, fix everything themselves and do without to get through the winter. Even migrant workers don't want to work at a golf courses in Traverse City. Hard work, out in the sun and weather all summer, for minimum wage – they would rather get paid \$11 per hour at McDonald's



or \$14.50 per hour at Burger King. It is indoors, air conditioned, there are bathrooms, you get a free meal, etc.

Then there is the beverage cart driver (a friend of my wife) who in tips grosses \$380 per 14 hours = \$27.14 per hour. Not too bad. That would be \$68,400.00 for six months of work if you could do that every day – and take the rest of the year off.

President Trump certainly does bring a different way of doing things to Washington and he is also a golf course owner. Perhaps he can come up with new ways to help the golf industry over the next four to eight years.

With the current shortage of people willing to work at a golf course, good tools can improve productivity to the point that one person can accomplish the work of many.

One tool is a sand blasting cabinet completely set up and ready to use. Just toss a part inside and sandblast it with no muss or fuss. It is a quick way to clean a part for painting.

Nearly everything in my two shops is on wheels so that one person can move things around to make room for whatever project is next. Both shops are outfitted identically, even the tools in the tool boxes are arranged the same way so that I instinctively know where everything is and what I have available to work with.

Specialized work areas where everything you need for that operation is close at hand like my wood working bench which is completely outfitted with tools, power strip, and supplies for repairing signs and furniture. It is on wheels so no matter where I move it to, everything for wood working is within arm's reach.

The vehicle lift arrived from Craigslist so I have matching lifts in the two shops. You will be surprised at how much more your mechanic can get done in a day after he gets a vehicle lift, if you don't already have one. **GCI**



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A FAST LOOK AT SLOW PLAY



Jeffrey D. Brauer is a veteran golf course architect responsible for more than 50 new courses and more than 100 renovations. A member and past president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects, he is president of Jeffrey D. Brauer/GolfScapes in Arlington, Texas. Reach him at jeff@jeffreydbrauer.com.

Pace of play is a major issue in golf. Back in 2009, I covered speed of play in this column. My ideas from 2009 still hold true, and as Casey Stengel said, you could look them up!

Eight years later, some things haven't changed, like the statistically improbable occurrence of the slowest players always being in front of me. What has changed, in the case of pace, is additional research, and more consultants professing ability to convert your turtle races to a greyhound track. And, more, if less researched opinions, still surface, such as:

- Picturesque holes that are "selfie centered" (I'm looking at you, Pat Jones!)
- Eliminate variety in green contours to make greens easier to read.
- Eliminate variety in hole difficulty, as mixing hard and easy slows play.

Few golf course architects consider these desirable, believing a variety of unique courses draws and holds players to the game. Most golfers play where they can shoot about their average score.

Despite slow play concerns, I doubt we will return to an era of dull, hazard-less "golf factories" to accommodate poor players and beginners. They have played all kinds of courses, and know the difference. They also know that they prefer better courses, to a point. Plain courses close, while "fancier" courses, survive, albeit, sometimes at

lower price points. And there is little to suggest this trend will change.

However, looking at the bigger picture, there are problems design tweaks can't address. Eliminating certain design features here and there can speed play, but retrofitting existing courses is a big task, as nearly every design trend since World War II ignored pace of play as a design criteria:

- In the '50s and '60s, Trent Jones and Dick Wilson led the way in designing nearly every course as a championship test and tour tough courses are too difficult for average golfers, slowing play. Multiple tees were a poorly thought out concession.
- In the '60s and '70s, most courses were built within real estate developments to defray construction cost. While closer to home and quicker to get to, more O.B. and longer cart rides between holes to maximize golf course lots added time to every round.
- In the '80s and '90's the "Country Club for a Day" movement took over, and more public courses were designed to be as difficult as private courses. Even muni courses were no longer bunny and green slopes for golf.
- From 1990 on, environmental concerns became dominant design considerations, causing more forced carries and long cart rides and reduced turf. Cost pressures

turned many acres of fairways into cheaper rough, and rough into no mow areas, causing more lost golf balls, more searches and more time added to the round.

It's hard to measure the aggregate effect of these trends, but they are major drivers of slow play. If pace of play becomes a higher design priority, design will certainly change, too. I predict a more specialized market, with more tailored designs, rather than focusing on the one size fits all "championship course." The bell curve probably applies:

- For the bottom 10 to 20 percent of courses, pace of play concerns should be top priority.
- For the top 10 to 20 percent of courses, pace of play concerns should be a lower priority than creating a unique and challenging course.
- For the 60 to 80 percent of courses in the middle of the pack, design priority of pace of play should be elevated to first, or at least 1A status with strategy, aesthetics, ease of maintenance and environmental sensitivity.

Even then, it won't be easy to turn the design tide.

Some will believe those changes come at the cost of "lower" quality as measured by current standards. The question is, "quality for who?" We might be forced into new design paradigms, starting with stopping design primarily for top players. Most courses would benefit from focusing on enjoyment of the average game of bogey golfers. Some new paradigms will paradoxically borrow from some very old ones.

Not all solutions will be design solutions. Relaxed USGA rules and course policies are a major component in this battle. At most courses, a combination of little things will add up to slightly shorter rounds. However, we must address overcoming at least 60 years of design that causes our current slow play problem. **GCI**

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Breathe easy

By Mickey McCord

One of the most dangerous hazards you and your turf maintenance crew face is inhaling harmful substances into your lungs. Although it's rare; mists from pesticide sprays; fumes and vapors from solvents or spray paint; and suspended dust particles from fertilizers, sands and soils, as well as mixing dry chemicals, can make you sick. And in extreme cases, they can kill you. When working with these types of materials, wearing the proper respirator will filter the harmful substance, and protect you and your crew's health. Follow these five fast tips for smart, safe respirator use.

- Do your homework. Never use a chemical or other potentially dangerous material if you are not sure of the respiratory risk. Check the label's Precautionary Statement, or section 8 of the Safety Data Sheet to see if a respirator is required personal protective equipment (PPE) for the product you're using.
- Quality choices. Choose the right respirator for the hazard. There are several types of respirators, a dual-cartridge, half-mask respirator will work for most pesticides, and a filtering facepiece (dust mask) respirator, commonly called N-95, is Ok for dust particles. Always select National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) approved respirators to assure they've been tested to meet Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)'s standards.
- Make training a priority. Provide proper training, before initial use, and on an annual basis, for any crew member who wears a respirator.
- Some adjustment required. Proper fit is critical, dual-cartridge respirators must have an air-tight fit to be effective. Annual "fit testing" must be performed by trained personnel, and the user should perform a seal check before each use.
- Take a proactive approach. Clean, maintain, and store respirators to prevent damage or contamination. Inspect respirators before each use, and immediately replace damaged, or contaminated respirators, and cartridges.

A 25-year career golf course superintendent, Mickey McCord is the founder of the maintenance crew safety training firm McCord Golf Services and Safety.



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Shining in Summer

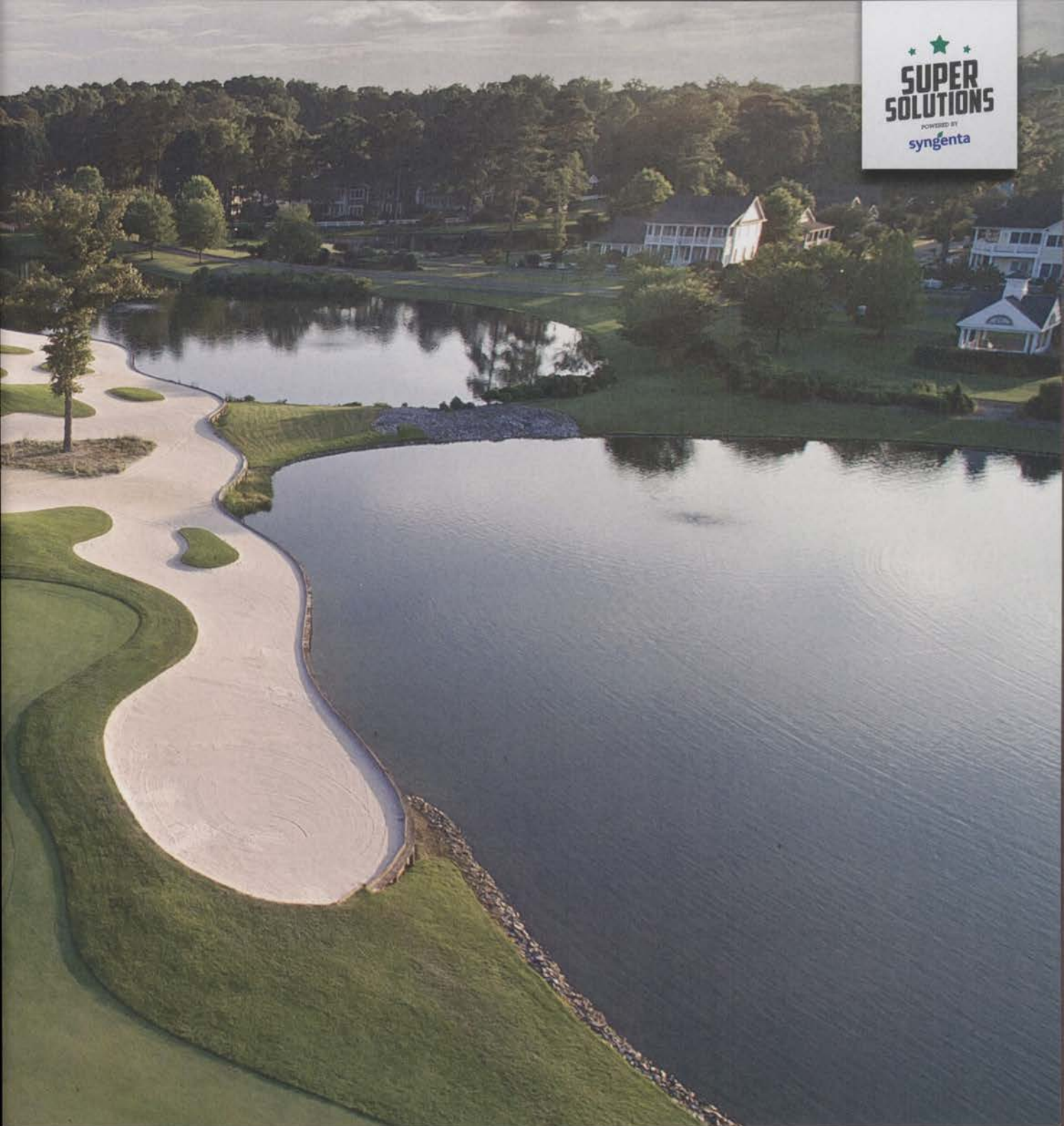
Nine months of careful planning allow superintendent **Jamie Palokas** and the **Baywood Greens** team to handle the busy, humid and unexpected.

By **Guy Cipriano**

Trying moments emerge in June, July and August, when Baywood Greens superintendent Jamie Palokas checks daily tee sheets and notices hundreds of names. He might then open a weather app and notice hours of punishing temperatures exceeding 90 degrees.

The brutality of it all seems distant on days like March 3.

It's a blustery Friday in the Delmarva Peninsula, a popular summer destination. Tourists who tote their sticks on vacation are stuck in offices in Baltimore, Washington, Philadelphia or New York



City. With 30-mile per hour winds pelting the exposed holes on the back nine, Palokas and consultant Jeff Michel are taking soil tests.

"The Mid-Atlantic is a very tough region to grow grass," Palokas says after returning to his office. "You spend seven, eight, nine months prepping yourself for basically June, July, August, and all of your prep work can go downhill really fast in those two or three months."

Thinking ahead has allowed Baywood Greens to outdistance competitors in a market where most of the golf development has

occurred in the last 20 years. Palokas has reached his 10th year at the Long Neck, Del., facility. Intricate landscaping surrounds Baywood Greens' consistent turf. The grounds feature more than 200,000 plants, with a horticulture team creating rotations promoting color throughout the year.

Palokas leads a turf team consisting of 30 employees who support more than 30,000 annual rounds. He constructs an agronomic program that has Baywood Greens playing its best when it receives the most use.

"July and August are our two busiest months of the year," Palokas says. "It's not uncommon for us to be right around 200 players a day – if not more – pretty steady throughout those two months. That definitely causes quite a bit of stress on the turf and that's where all of the programs we implement come into play. We use all of our resources to put the best product out there and defend that product against the stress of Mother Nature and against the amount of play that we get."

Planning for the next season starts in early fall. Palokas quizzes assistants and spray technicians about what they saw the previous season. He encourages and seeks input from turf professionals who maintain other courses or receive all-encompassing views of the region's golf scene. His network includes, Bill Lewis, the superintendent at Bulle Rock Golf Course, a touted Maryland facility where Palokas spent four years as an assistant superintendent before landing the head job at Baywood Greens.

At Bulle Rock, the former site of the McDonald's LPGA Championship, Palokas learned how to provide what Lewis calls a "country club atmosphere for a day." Satisfying customers means few peak-season respites for turf, Lewis says. "Every day it has to be championship conditions 100 percent," he adds. Now in his 19th year as the superintendent at Bulle Rock, Lewis has created a system where assistants grind for two to four years, learn the demanding Mid-Atlantic growing environment and leave well-prepared to lead a maintenance department. "We still

talk, we still network," Lewis says. "It's really fulfilling that you are seeing somebody like Jamie become so successful at Baywood Greens."

Bulle Rock is considered an intricate property with various microclimates, which further primed Palokas for Baywood Greens. The first 12 holes at Baywood Greens are wooded; the final six holes are open and meander around water features. Disease and water management tactics vary throughout the course, thus the emphasis on developing and tweaking plans during the fall, winter and spring. Spray records are thorough; conversations are frequent. Surprises can ruin a season, and chaotic summers are, well, not chaotic anymore.

"You have to prepare your course for an intense, brutal summer and focus on all aspects of your agronomic management," Palokas says. "The

Jamie Palokas is in his 10th year as the superintendent at Baywood Greens. A carefully constructed preventative spray program helps the course handle busy summers.

one or two things you let your guard down on is probably what will hurt you."

Even before the 2017 calendar reached March, Palokas started scouting for the annual bluegrass weevil (ABW), a pest problem he has managed to avoid. The scouting starts in winter because as Palokas says, "you have to go by what Mother Nature tells you." February temperatures exceeding 70 degrees are a sign 2017 could be different than 2016.

And 2016, according to area turf veterans, proved challenging. Solid cultural practices, precise hand-watering and a reliable preventative spray program allowed Baywood Greens' L-93 bentgrass greens, tees and fairways to withstand intense disease pressure.

Rotating fungicides is helping Palokas control dollar spot, the biggest disease challenge Palokas faced in his first three summers at Baywood Greens. Daconil Action and Secure are among the fungicides in his spray program.

"We never really spray a chemical class more than twice in a row," Palokas says. "That's one of the reasons I think we have been really successful – we haven't relied on one product or one chemistry. That's what has also helped over the last six, seven, eight years. A lot of new products have come out, not only new products, but some different and improved chemistries. Many of the newer products are safer to apply during the summer months and cover a wider range of diseases.





At times, you can now get away with one product in the tank to take care of multiple issues, whereas 10-15 years ago you'd be tank mixing two or three products for the same issues."

Fairy ring, another potential problem Baywood Greens faces, is also controlled preventatively through a rotation. Palokas has recently added Velist, a broad-spectrum fungicide released in 2015, to his fairy ring rotation. Palokas starts spraying for fairy ring in March, although the disease doesn't become noticeable until June at the earliest. "That goes back to the whole preparation thing," he says. "It's better to fight disease preventatively

than it is once you have it."

The preventative approach extends into Palokas' pest control program. After witnessing grubs creep into tees and fairways last year, along with causing more than normal damage in rough, Palokas reassessed his program and determined fixing grub-related turf problems distracted his team from pursuing scheduled late-fall and winter projects. Damage started in August and continued into November, and followed a multi-year pattern of increased grub activity.

Baywood Greens wasn't alone. Doug Rider, a Syngenta territory manager who covers the region for the company, says the last two years have presented "more and more issues with grubs in all facets of turf," including golf courses, lawns and athletic fields. Customers seeking championship conditions on all surfaces has made expanded

grub coverage on golf courses a practice being explored by more superintendents.

"The demands for high-quality turf just keep getting farther and farther from the flag," Rider says. "Not only do you have to maintain the bunkers to a certain standard every day, but now when you are dealing with the rough, where you may have hit a shot 10, 20 yards off line, that turf needs to be in just as good of shape as greens and fairways in a lot of cases now. You might be playing catchup in an area that might be out of the play to some. All different levels of a course are scrutinized nowadays to be in tip-top shape."

Conversations with other superintendents and Rider led to Palokas expanding his use of Acelepryn, an insecticide he used to control ABW on greens. Acelepryn is also labeled for grub control, and Palokas says he's planning to spray it "wall to wall" this year. In addition to 38 total acres of L-93 greens, tees and fairways on the existing course, Baywood Greens has 80 acres of tall fescue/bluegrass rough. Palokas will only need one spring application of Acelepryn to receive season-long grub control.

"At first, we were spraying it on greens as an ABW control, and I always thought that maybe we will go tees and fairways with it," Palokas says. "But we weren't really having grub or ABW issues to the point where we were interested in making the change and increasing our cost. Then, over the last two years, I had several conversations where I learned about the success guys have been having with Acelepryn for grubs. Five

years ago, I would have told you that you were crazy if you said we should spray Acelepryn wall to wall for grub control because of how much the price increases. After the damage we had last year, it becomes a no-brainer."

Repairing grub damage – and the damage caused by animals digging for the pests – can overextend a staff already fatigued from handling peak-season play. "It's not only fixing the areas you're sodding and reseeding," Palokas says. "You are also taking labor to fertilize these areas, to water them, to keep them alive for another three, four weeks until they root and stand on their own. It really, really taxed our staff at the end of the year when you are trying to do other things and projects and you have to delay those projects and plans because you are fixing damage that you didn't expect."

The current project at Baywood Greens is a major one. Palokas and his staff are constructing a third nine. Six holes are done, and the nine will include multiple collection and native areas. The philosophies behind managing the new holes will remain the same. Each hole will be managed differently and calculated decisions will be made before tourists arrive.

"The cool thing about this business is that you are always learning," Palokas says. "You could be here for 30 years and you are going to see something new every year. Even on the course itself, each hole is unique, with its own microclimate that poses different challenges. Over the last 10 years, our staff has excelled in learning from and managing these challenges." GCI

FOUR ACTIVE INGREDIENTS...



The Fearsome Foursome

Turf experts outline a quartet of weeds you may see this season, and how to stop them.

By John Torsiello

CRABGRASS: There are about 200 species of crabgrasses native to tropical and warm temperate regions. "Crabgrass typically have spreading stems with wide, flat leaf blades that lie on the ground with the tips pointing upward or outward," says L.B.

(Bert) McCarty, Clemson professor of turfgrass science. "Crabgrass seed has a long germination period, requiring light for optimum germination, germinating in early spring when soil temperatures at four inches depth are 53 to 55 degrees Fahrenheit for 24 continuous hours." Crabgrass often invades weak, thin turf where light can reach the soil surface where seed are located. They also germinate earlier on south facing slopes and adjacent to sidewalks and driveways.



"Preventively, a number of preemergence herbicides can be applied," he says. "The key is to apply just prior to germination in your particular area and repeat applications 60 to 75 days after the initial. Post-emergence herbicides are highly dependent on the tolerance to the particular turfgrass species present."

Many preemergent products control crabgrass, such as ben-sulide, dithiopyr, prodiamine, and pendimethalin. PBI-Gordon has preemergent herbicides to control crabgrass and other grassy weeds; Bensumec 4LF and Tupersan are sprayable, and Pre-San Granular 12.5G is granular, says PBI-Gordon product manager Jim Goodrich. Postemergent, there are several crabgrass-control products, including Q4 Plus Turf Herbicide, which offers effective control, as well as a broad-spectrum broadleaf weed control.

NUTSEDGE: Nutsedges are similar to grasses with long, linear shaped leaves. Nutsedge leaves, however, are arranged in threes and a cross section of the stem is triangular. Leaves are also covered with a very distinguishable (shiny) waxy cuticle.

Yellow nutsedge is a perennial, but their shoots die down

in winter, McCarty says. Nutsedges are tolerant of wet conditions, so regulate soil moisture by using prudent watering practices and providing drainage."

Preemergence control is available, but being a perennial these products must be applied prior to tuber sprouting, which is hard to determine since the shoots die down in winter but the plant is still alive. Postemergent herbicides should be applied prior to June 21, when tuber production is initiated.

PBI-Gordon products that contain the active ingredient sulfentrazone in different concentrations work to suppress it, like Surge Broadleaf Herbicide for Turf and TZone SE Broadleaf Herbicide for Tough Weeds. Q4 Plus, which has a higher load of sulfentrazone, controls yellow nutsedge. Katana Turf Herbicide eradicates yellow nutsedge from warm-season turf.

CLOVER: Clover leaves divide into three leaflets. White clover is the most widespread in the U.S. It's a low-growing, perennial initially used as a companion crop in pastures due to its ability to fix its own nitrogen. White clover leaves often have a white, angled band partly encircling the base of each leaflet.

"Clovers typically invade low-maintenance turf sites that are insufficiently fertilized with nitrogen," McCarty says. "Providing sufficient fertilizer discourages this

invasion. Being mostly perennial, control is often with postemergent herbicides."

Increase fertilization and raise mowing heights to reduce clover pressure on your golf course. Curatively, many products control clover, but they can require multiple applications, as clover can grow over itself and reduce the amount of product reaching the lower portions of the plant. PBI-Gordon has several products for the postemergent control of clover; SpeedZone Turf Herbicide is a sound choice for clover control, as well as Q4 Plus, and TZone SE.

CHICKWEED: The most encountered chickweeds on golf courses are common and mouse-ear. Common is a mat-forming winter annual. Leaves are opposite, shiny, without hairs. Mouse-ear is a perennial, roots at nodes, and leaves are gray green and hairy. Flowers for both have five notched white petals, occurring in spring.

Postemergent chickweed control should take place in the fall into early winter before seeds are produced for subsequent generations and/or additional spread. Control is mostly with postemergent three- or four-way herbicides. As weeds mature, two applications seven days apart will be needed." GCI

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For more...

Check out this issue's digital edition at golfcourseindustry.com for more information about the four weeds, including images to better identify them on your course.

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Travels with Terry

Globetrotting consulting agronomist Terry Buchen visits many golf courses annually with his digital camera in hand. He shares 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.



Terry Buchen, CGCS, MG, is president of Golf Agronomy International. He's a 41-year, life member of the GCSAA. He can be reached at 757-561-7777 or terrybuchen@earthlink.net.

IRRIGATION TECHNICIAN'S VEHICLE

This 2010 Toro 3300D Workman has a hydraulic dump bed. The irrigation pipe rack (\$30) measures 6 feet by 4 feet using 1 ½-inch by 1 ½-inch tubular steel that is held in place in the stake pockets. A used cab is placed over the top of the operator's head for portions of the 20-foot sections of PVC pipe to rest on, which are held in place with bungee cords or tie-downs. The tool boxes (\$100) on either side were acquired at Tractor Supply and are held in place with bolts drilled into the bed rail and they hold power tools, hand tools, a variety of pipe fittings and spare irrigation head parts. Two short 8-inch diameter PVC pipes are mounted to the pipe rack for transporting shovels, valve keys, hand tools and rakes. Brake lights came standard and Napa brand flashers (\$20) were added. A 100 inverter (\$80) was installed in the cab for an electric sump pump and to charge the batteries for power tools. It took about five hours to put together. Robert Smith is the equipment manager at the Merion Golf Club in Ardmore, Pa. Matt Shaffer is the retiring director of golf course operations and Paul B. Latshaw, CGCS, has taken his place.



TRASH PUMP TRAILER

Three types of square tubing bar stock were used to build the trailer. The tongue is 30 inches long and the tires and rims were from an old Toro triplex greens mower – a 5/8-inch diameter rod was used for the axle. The trailer is 50 inches by 14 ½ inches, with the expanded 1-inch wire mesh floor measures 14 ½ inches by 22 inches. The box measures 18 inches long by 8 inches wide by 10 inches high. It is made from sheet metal and it stores the collapsible discharge hose. The green-colored suction hose hangs on 1-inch square tubing. The trash pump is bolted in place. It was purchased used from United Rentals and all the trailer materials were welded together. It took about six hours to piece together and build from recycled parts and materials. Brad Twidwell, superintendent, at the Cape Girardeau (Mo.) Country Club is creative in his many equipment ideas.



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CIVILIANS



Pat Jones is editorial director and publisher of *Golf Course Industry*. He can be reached at pjones@gie.net or 216-393-0253.

There is no question that we, as an industry, are superb at preaching to the choir. We work ourselves into a frenzy about how Golf Channel or CBS should do more to recognize the host superintendent for TV events. We vigorously denounce course vandalism or idiot golfers who take divots out of greens. When pictures are posted online after a novice operator dumps a mower into a pond we either laugh or castigate the person who posted them for "sending the wrong signal" to the public.

We pour time and attention into talking to each other. That's absolutely awesome in many ways...this community shares information and ideas better than any I've seen or any other green industry market we work with here at GIE Media. There is great value in preaching to the choir, as long as we're also preaching to the heathens who've yet to be converted.

The yet to be converted include damn near every golfer in the U.S. (about 24 million folks) and the rest of the country (another 300 million or so). Getting them to listen will be no small task. It only works when all of us chip in and do our part.

And, that's happening a little.

It may not seem like it, but we've made strides in recognizing the role and value of superintendents over the past few decades. As a former communications director for GCSAA back in the '80s and '90s, I can assure you media appreciation of supers is vastly im-

proved over those bad old days when reporters simply ignored us.

That's partially because the national has done a good job of bending the ears of the folks at Golf Digest, NBC and the Golf Channel. Decades of reminding them about the super during events and providing them with agronomic info began to move the dial. And all of those healthy appearance fees the association paid to David Feherty, Jim Nantz, Johnny Miller and a half-dozen other TV golf commentators to come to GIS and learn firsthand have been a great investment.

We should also thank the USGA for going out of their way to pay tribute to superintendents in their communications, particularly the "Fore the Golfer" video series that is just awesome. Mike Davis and his team continue to be great friends to superintendents.

Finally, the growth in awareness is due in large part to individual efforts by eloquent and capable tournament hosts like Ken Mangum, Matt Shaffer, John Zimmers, Bob Farren, Mark Kuhns, Chris Tritabaugh and a dozen others. With respected, media savvy spokespeople appearing on television to explain agronomy, we win.

So we are gradually making progress with America's golfers, at least via the golf media. But what about non-golfers? Those 300 million people who couldn't care less and are likely predisposed to think that golf is a silly game for rich white people with too many rules and a manicured look that demands too much water and nasty old chemicals?

I call those folks civilians. They're non-combatants in our fight to change golfers' minds, yet they are just as important because their views influence local issues. You never know when a turf-related issue might pop up at a country commission or water board.

When we meet civilians, we need to be prepared to find ways to do a little simple propagandizing. In fact, it's exactly the same messaging our industry uses around National Golf Day (which is/was April 26 this year).

- There are 15,000 golf courses in the U.S. and most are small businesses. They provide a place for average people to get exercise, enjoy the outdoors and have fun.
- Golf as a business has a \$70 billion economic impact in the U.S. every year. It contributes more to the economy than the furniture industry or motion picture business.
- We help create 2 million jobs in the U.S. One of every 75 U.S. jobs has something to do with golf.
- About \$4 billion in charitable support is raised annually by events.
- Golf isn't just private clubs...75% of courses (about 11,000) are businesses open to the public.
- Golf courses represent 2.1 million acres of ecologically important maintained greenspace in this country. They are sanctuaries for wildlife, giant AC units that cool the space above and around them and huge filtration systems that pump out oxygen and filter water.

I like to do one more thing when I talk to civilians about golf. I'll pull up a Google satellite map of their city and show them how much open greenspace golf creates in an otherwise crowded area. Non-golfers often have no idea how many golf courses are around them and how much green they represent in their community.

So, it's up to all of us to tell the story. Last month my message was "practice what you preach." This month, it's "preach what you practice."

Can I get an amen? GCI



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