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GOLF COURSE[®]

INDUSTRY

PRACTICAL GUIDE TO ENVIRONMENTALLY SAVVY MAINTENANCE

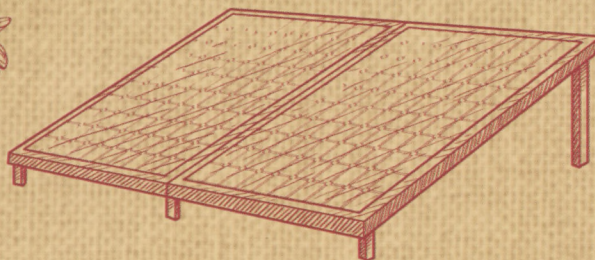
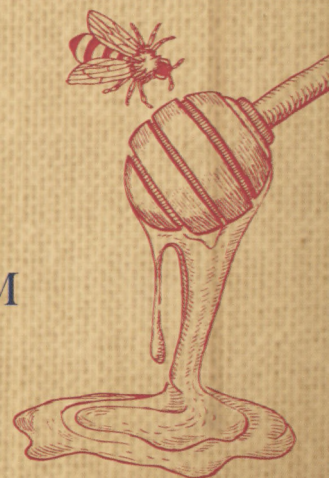
INSIDE:

30 YEARS OF THE AUDUBON
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GREEN MONEY MOVES

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19

COLUMNS

- 16 GAME PLAN**
Henry DeLozier: Staffing for success III
- 18 OUTSIDE THE ROPES**
Tim Moraghan: The ratings game
- 36 GOLF THERAPY**
Bradley S. Klein: Environmental by nature
- 36 GUEST COLUMN**
Anthony Williams: There's still always away
- 58 AMERICA'S GREENKEEPER**
Matthew Wharton: Dial in to turf talk

DEPARTMENTS

- 6 TEEING OFF:** Don't fear going green
- 8 NOTEBOOK:** TPC Sawgrass, a year later
- 14 WONDERFUL WOMEN:** Jennifer Torres
- 50 TRAVELS WITH TERRY:** Equipment ideas
- 57 CLASSIFIEDS / AD INDEX**

FEATURES

Cover Package

21 MORE THAN 18 HOLES

The Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program has been inspiring golf properties to environmental heights for 30 years.

26 GREEN MONEY MOVES

Financing environmentally smart practices takes time, but it can pay dividends for your course.

30 A PRACTICAL BLUE SKY

Refresh your environmental initiatives with motivational ideas from the team at Cog Hill Golf & Country Club.

Spotlight

40 PITTSBURGH-STYLE PROJECTS

Golden Age roots and modern relationships played big parts in the most recent golf course transformations at two enduring clubs.

Management

48 MEET ME IN THE MIDDLE

With a little understanding and constructive dialogue, that tough customer can be transformed into your department's biggest advocate.



Q&A WITH THE EXPERT



Q&A WITH ROB GOLEMBIEWSKI, PH.D.

Green Solutions Team, Bayer

1 Bayer featured Densicor 1 in its booth at GIS. Can you tell us a little about this new fungicide?

Densicor is an exciting new DMI fungicide that was built to tackle the toughest diseases across the golf course while providing remarkable turf safety. It offers both preventive and curative control for up to 28 days of the most challenging diseases, including dollar spot, brown patch, anthracnose, gray leaf spot and snow mold. And it features all the qualities you need in a great fairway fungicide including an ultra-low use rate and convenient packaging while also delivering powerful efficacy for greens applications.

2 There are many broad-spectrum fungicides on the market. Why should superintendents choose Densicor to address the top five turf diseases?

A national survey of superintendents indicated that the top five turf diseases are dollar spot, brown patch, anthracnose, gray leaf spot and snow molds. DMI fungicides are typically applied because of their broad-spectrum control

of both foliar and soil-borne diseases. However, not all DMIs are created equally; some products only have two or three of these top five diseases on their labels, leaving critical gaps in disease control. Densicor not only includes all of these diseases on the label, but also shows outstanding performance against each of them. In total, Densicor controls 13 different cool- and warm-season diseases.

3 Turf safety is important and some DMI fungicides are known to cause growth regulation and/or thinning. Is Densicor safe on turf?

Plenty of fungicides are "safe" on turf, but many DMIs can lose their broad-spectrum appeal due to negative growth regulation and phytotoxicity when the weather heats up. Densicor shows excellent cool- and warm-season turf safety under any environmental condition with or without plant growth regulators. This feature allows Densicor to be applied up to three times per year on greens, tees and fairways with no concerns, including in the heat of the summer.

4 Can you elaborate on the use rate of Densicor?

Densicor simplifies disease management for superintendents by offering a single, ultra-low use rate (0.196 fl oz/1,000 sq ft or 8.5 fl oz/acre) in a convenient bottle size. Densicor is tailored for fairway applications with one bottle treating six acres, resulting in less time spent measuring, loading, and rinsing.

5 When will Densicor be widely available for purchase?

Densicor has federal registration. Bayer is currently securing state registrations which will allow for an extensive demo program this summer. Densicor is targeted to be available for purchase mid-summer 2021. For more information and to sign up to receive updates on when Densicor will be available for purchase in your state, visit es.bayer.us/densicor. If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to your Bayer area sales manager.

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Get ready to make your stand against

the Frightful Five.



Nick White
Golf Course Superintendent

Dollar Spot

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*Densicor recently received federal registration and will be available for purchase this summer.

**Dollar spot, brown patch, anthracnose, gray leaf spot and snow mold were the five most common diseases according to a national survey among golf course superintendents.

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DON'T FEAR GREEN THINKING

Alligators once scared me, bees once bothered me and lush golf courses once dazzled me. Then I started hanging around golf course superintendents. Whenever I cross an alligator, I now see a majestic creature with fewer places to live. I view bees as producers of a healthy smoothie, oatmeal and yogurt additive. I don't need wall-to-wall green to play fun and imaginative golf shots.

Superintendents and their teams are among the most important protectors of the environment in developed communities. Managing vast open spaces comes with educational and resource management responsibilities. Think of how far golf has come in this area.

The first of three stories written by Lee Carr in our "Guide to Environmentally Savvy Maintenance" explores the evolution of the 30-year-old Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program (page 21).

Cleveland Metroparks Washington Golf Course, a 9-hole, par-29 course five miles from the *Golf Course Industry* headquarters, resides in an industrialized Northeast Ohio neighborhood, yet it possesses ACSP Gold certification. Signs along the course describe the purpose of wetlands and help visitors identify wildlife. Without a professionally maintained landscape, deer, coyotes and birds would have abandoned the urban neighborhood years ago. The critters now share greenspace with children learning how golf benefits communities.

On a recent trip, I toured Dunes West Golf and River Club with longtime superintendent Robert Mackie. Dunes West is an 18-hole public course in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, a city north of Charleston that has gained more than 70,000 residents in the last 30 years. Dunes West opened in 1991, around the time Mount Pleasant's rapid expansion commenced. Robert started our tour by pointing to a pair of alligators lounging by a pond along the 17th hole. Golfers fired shots into the par 3 as the gators chilled. Robert knew exactly where the alligators bask, the proper observation distance and the importance of providing a healthy habitat. Homes are being built in Mount Pleasant at startling rates. Thanks to the land Robert carefully manages, the alligators still have a safe place to live.

Later in the trip, I visited The Sea Pines Resort on Hilton Head Island, home to three golf courses. I met superintendent Brook Sentell outside the clubhouse for Atlantic Dunes and Heron Point, where a statue of "Albert" the alligator greets golfers. A plaque declares Albert "an enduring symbol of The Sea Pines Resort's environmental stewardship." Combine clever signage with practices such as using recycled mulch and offering superb playing through targeted irrigation, and you can understand why Sea Pines, also home to Harbour Town Golf Links, boasts a trifecta of ACSP-certified courses.

Illinois public golf heavyweight Cog Hill Golf & Country Club (page 30) is another high-profile facility regularly touting its eco-awareness. Lee's story about Chris Flick and his team sparks as much curiosity about Fairway Farms and the apiary as it does the facility's beloved Dubsdread course.

Growing produce, harvesting honey and learning the nuances of wildlife takes time. Purchasing a precise irrigation system and electric equipment takes money. So is all this eco-minded work worth it? Lee explores this question in conversations with Missouri superintendent Isaac Breuer and legendary Florida superintendent Tim Hiers (page 26).

I'll argue there's a long-term payoff to thoughtful eco-driven measures within the confines of the job. Adding a pollinator plot can provide a pleasant diversion and positive talking point. Investing in electric equipment can create goodwill with homeowners and employees. Knowing the best places to spot alligators, birds and furry mammals can make golfers temporarily forget about double bogeys, four putts, and their work and personal stresses. Our guide isn't designed to turn golf courses into parched zoos. We're hoping it inspires readers to think more broadly about the job and the purpose of golf. Start small and stay committed. Environmentally savvy maintenance can help golfers overcome fears and annoyances. GCI



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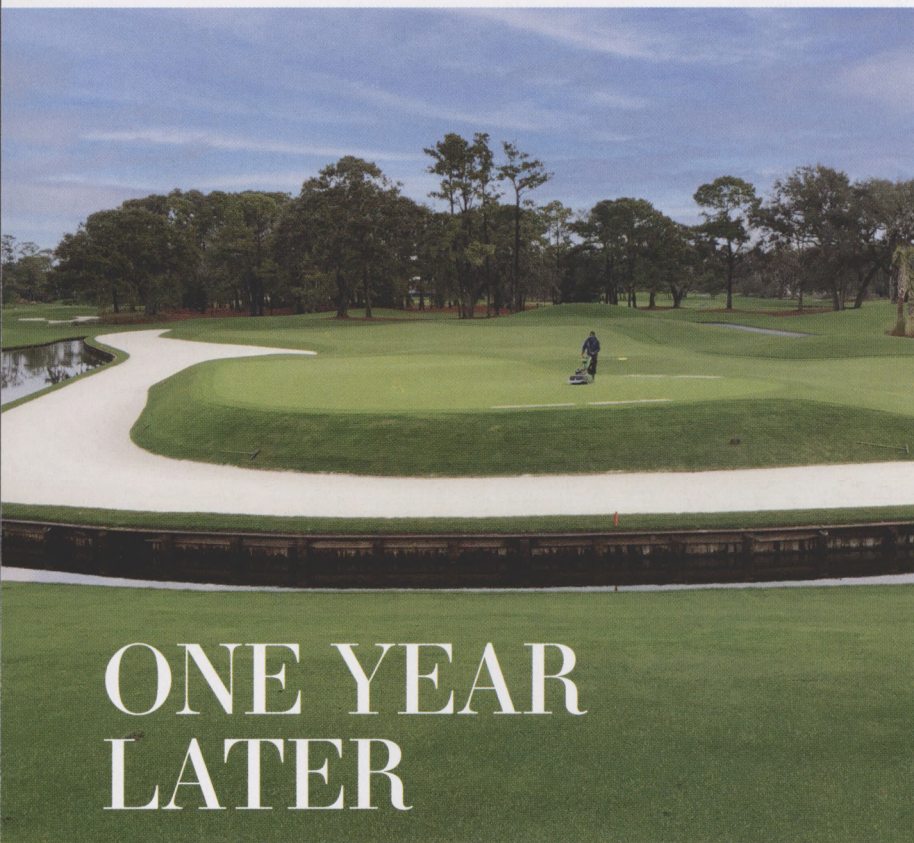
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ONE YEAR LATER

The Players Championship returned to TPC Sawgrass last month as its turf leaders reflected on a surreal experience.

The world paused on March 11, 2020. Schools and businesses closed their doors, sending everybody home. Every sort of entertainment and diversion followed. Sports disappeared almost literally overnight. One day, we were watching conference tournaments, the end of the NBA and NHL regular seasons, The Players Championship at TPC Sawgrass, and the next day ... we weren't.

Jeff Plotts and Lucas Andrews remember working on the Stadium Course at TPC Sawgrass late on the night of March 12, a Thursday — a day after the pause — still planning every moment for the second round of The Players. Plotts, the director of golf course maintenance at TPC Sawgrass,

was working under the impression that the course would be closed to spectators but competition would continue.

"We had a good night that night," Plotts remembers. "Our team performed really well in a split shift and had the golf course ready to go for Friday. It was still light. It was probably 8 o'clock or so, maybe even a little later than that. Those are long days for us, Thursday and Friday."

Plotts conferred with Andrews, the Stadium Course superintendent, then walked to his car and started to drive home.

"He had made it two minutes before he called me and said, 'Can you talk?'" Andrews says. "I pretty much knew then that it was only *when* we were calling it."

After a single round of play, Hideki Matsuyama topped the leaderboard at 9 under. Not long after that, PGA Tour commissioner Jay Monahan said that "as the situation continued to escalate, and there seemed to be more unknowns, it ultimately became a matter of when, not if, we would need to call it a day." Plotts and Andrews were among the first to know.

"I think we all knew deep down inside as we were kind of talking about how things might fold out," Plotts says. "There were a lot of meetings going on at a very high level that didn't include Lucas or me, but internally it became evident that once Disney closed, there were going to be some substantial changes here to take place the next day."

Plotts recognized the similarities between guests at Disney World and patrons at TPC Sawgrass — the sheer numbers, sure, but also the outdoor physical distancing — and he knew that however Disney acted, everybody in the hospitality industry would follow. Once Disney closed and TPC Sawgrass followed, attention turned almost immediately from the course to their crew of 100 volunteers.

"Our focus really became the volunteers," Plotts says. "What do we do with the volunteers? How do we support them? These are young people, men and women, that are trying to find their place in our industry. To go through something like that and be that far from home" — 60 of the 100 volunteers last year were international — "it's a little bit of a scary adventure. So we had to remain calm and just kind of reassure people that they were going to be taken care of, and that this is kind of part of life — that you're going to have this kind of adversity and you're going to have to overcome."

Many of the volunteers were unable to change their flights to an earlier departure. Even without a tournament to work, their accommodations and



▲ Plotts



▲ Andrews

expenses were still covered. “The Tour was very understanding,” Plotts says.

After the blur of that Thursday night, Andrews returned to the Stadium Course the next morning with his crew “and just aerated the greens, just to get a jump,” he says. “We knew there wasn’t going to be any golf being played through the weekend so we took the opportunity. We had an aggressive cultural program and targets last year, and those three extra days gave us an opportunity to get a leg up on the year, really get off to a good start for the summer.” More aeration followed throughout the year, with greens aerated three times each month, and tees, fairways and approaches aerated “four or five times” throughout the year. Andrews says his crew also topdressed weekly, “so that kept us really busy.”

In early May, Dye’s Valley at TPC Sawgrass received the first slot on a rescheduled Korn Ferry Tour — Luke List won the new Korn Ferry Challenge by a stroke on June 14 — but the club had served as a host of sorts for regular play throughout the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic: About 90 players from the PGA Tour, the Champions Tour, the Korn Ferry Tour and the PGA Tour Latinoamérica descended on TPC Sawgrass for informal two-day competitions every week from late March to early June. “I think it was pretty smart of them,” Plotts says.

TPC Sawgrass never closed, Plotts says, and the club was able to avoid furloughing any crew members in part by not filling internships after the last round of interns headed home. Like many clubs across the country, the rest of the year was strong.

When the 2021 Players commenced March 11, emotions were in full swing. Plotts and Andrews were leading the crew again. Ten volunteers from last year were among the 75 working on the course. Television cameras caught every blade of grass.

“The closer you get to perfection, the more finite the details that you have to look at,” Andrew says. “I’m really, really, really proud of the team. We really pulled together this year and the guys that didn’t get to finish the tournament last year, they’ve been working with a chip on their shoulder to get it done. This has been really good for us as a team and I think it’s a really good step in the right direction for us moving forward. I’m excited for the new standards.

“We’re just looking forward to getting this one in the books and putting our focus on ‘22.”

Matt LaWell is Golf Course Industry’s managing editor.

Who needs a show floor to reveal winners?

After nearly a decade on the floor at the Golf Industry Show, #GCITweetUp presented by Aquatrols turned virtual this year — with the best and brightest of turf social media recognized and honored on March

31, live on Zoom as part of the Super Social Media Awards.

Drew Miller, the program advisor for the esteemed turfgrass management program at Brentsville District High School in northern Virginia and on Twitter at @TurfgrassTiger, accepted the 10th annual Kaminski Award with many of the program’s hundreds of students cheering him on. If you don’t already listen to the program’s excellent Tiger Turf Talk podcast, download an episode or two — and maybe even call in as a featured guest.

A trio of talented superintendents (and tweeters) picked up Best Twitter Feed honors: **Dan Grogan** (@purdueturfy) of The Sagamore Club in Noblesville, Indiana; **Jeff Sexton** (@ECC-Super77) of Evansville Country Club in Evansville, Indiana; and **Thad Thompson** (@TerryHillsMaint) of Terry Hills Golf Course in Batavia, New York. All three manage to blend work and life in entertaining and informative daily doses.

Ryan Cummings (@RCummings38) of Elcona Country Club in Bristol, Indiana, and **James Bledge** (@JamesBledge) of Royal Cinque Ports Golf Club in Deal, Kent, in the southeast corner of England were both honored with Best Overall Use of social media for excellency in blogging and videography, respectively.

Elsewhere internationally, **Morgan Creighton** (@creighton_mm), a rising assistant superintendent around Calgary, Alberta, was honored with the Best New Program award for her continuing work building up the ever-expanding Women in Turfgrass Management.

Golf course architect **Trey Kemp** (@TreyKempGCA), who recently joined Kimley-Horn and Associates in Fort Worth, Texas, received top honors for Best Idea Shared for his ongoing #GolfCourseAerialoftheDay, which is exactly what it sounds like — and a welcome burst of color and design into your feed.

Longtime Florida turf pro and environmentalist **W. Craig Weyandt** (@grsfarmer), superintendent at The Moorings at Hawk’s Nest in Vero Beach, received the Conservation Award for his decades of earth-focused work in the Sunshine State.

Retired turf legend **Matt Shaffer** (@MattSha20619144, which might look like a bot account but most definitely is not), rounded out the awards. Shaffer, who retired in 2017 after a run at Merion Golf Club in Ardmore, Pennsylvania, took home Rookie of the Year after a spirited 2020 debut on Twitter and LinkedIn — proof that you’re never too old to keep learning.

— Matt LaWell





Not your traditional volunteer program

The upcoming U.S. Women's Open Championship, which is scheduled for the week of May 31-June 6 at The Olympic Club in San Francisco, will be played amidst an assortment of historical overtones.

It marks the 75th anniversary of the most prestigious event in women's golf. It will be the first women's professional event contested at the historic Olympic Club, which has hosted 10 USGA national championships, including five U.S. Opens.

It will also be an occasion for women in the turf industry to come together in support of the game they love and the industry that is their passion.

Troy Flanagan, the club's director of golf maintenance, is planning to supplement a staff of 43 with 50 outside volunteers, about 25 to 28 of whom will be women.

Flanagan, who has been at The Olympic Club since 2014, began contemplating the idea of a more female volunteer corps around five years ago, after the club was officially designated as the host of this year's Women's Open.

"I just started thinking, 'What a great thing to do,'" Flanagan says. "We have the Women's Open, it's our first women's professional golf championship at The Olympic Club. We've had so many great (championship events) over the years. It's the first women's event we've done. Why wouldn't we want to do something like this?"

"And not just make it a volunteer experience, but make it another kind of educational/networking event. Being able to volunteer and help out, but then during the day do other things as a group."

When the pandemic hit last year, the concept had to be shelved until the USGA assured Flanagan that outside volunteers would be permitted on site during the championship. With that assurance, Flanagan reached out to Kimberly Gard, a territory manager for Syngenta, with whom he has an existing professional relationship. Gard started making phone calls and in relatively short order Flanagan had all the volunteers he needed and more. Rain Bird is joining Syngenta as a sponsor of the program.

Flanagan is envisioning a week that will see the volunteers not only assisting with the tournament but also taking advantage of educational and networking opportunities.

—Rick Woelfel



Cipriano lands on prestigious writing list

Golf Course Industry editor-in-chief Guy Cipriano is among the top golf writers in the country. Again.



Cipriano landed his second award in three years from the Golf Writers Association of America, this time for his May 2020 cover story, "Driving Through," about a five-day drive home across the country during the early weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic. The story highlighted the importance of golf courses then and always, and provided snapshots of a handful of courses and superintendents well off the beaten path.

The story was recognized with a tie for second in the non-daily features category along with a story published in Golf Digest, and edged only by a feature published in The Golfer's Journal.

Cipriano, a member of the GWAA, was previously honored with a second-place award in the special projects category in the 2018 contest for his three-part series about the flooding and subsequent rebuilding of The Old White TPC at The Greenbrier.

Trade publications are almost never recognized by the contest's judges. Cipriano's two awards are the only such honors for trade publications in recent memory, according to those judges. The annual contest started in 1957.

Tartan Talks No. 57



▲ Matthews

W. Bruce Matthews III is a lifelong Michigander with deep industry roots in the golf-rich state.

A third-generation ASGCA member, Matthews joined the Tartan Talks podcast to discuss familial and personal

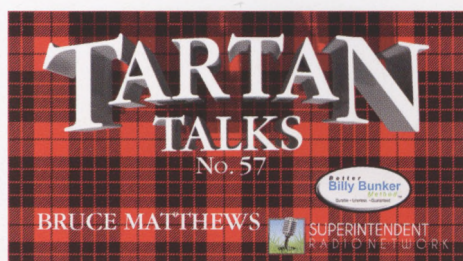
longevity, why golf is a big deal in his native state, and working at courses originally designed by his grandfather, W. Bruce Matthews I, and uncle, Jerry Matthews.

The Matthews family has been designing, maintaining and managing courses since 1925 and Bruce is motivated to ensure they reach 100 years in the industry. "One of the fun things about this business is that you don't have to retire," says Bruce, who started his career picking and washing range balls and working for superintendent Roger Barton at the family's Grand Haven Golf Club in the 1960s. "You can pick and choose your work."

The way Bruce sees it, the family has stayed in the business through numerous booms and busts because it can relate to fellow Michigan golf enthusiasts.

"We're known here," he says. "If you look at my name in Mississippi or Colorado, nobody is going to know who I am. In Michigan, they know who we are, and they call us. It has worked out well even in slow times."

Visit the Superintendent Radio Network Page on Apple Podcasts, Spotify and other popular distribution platforms to hear the conversation.



INDUSTRY buzz

Syngenta has expanded its WeevilTrak monitoring efforts into Kentucky for the 2021 season. The University of Kentucky's Dr. Jonathan Larson will lead monitoring in the state.

The Rutgers University Board of Governors recently appointed extension specialist **James A. Murphy** to the Ralph Geiger Chair in Turfgrass Science. Murphy joined the Rutgers faculty in 1991.



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Are You Ready?

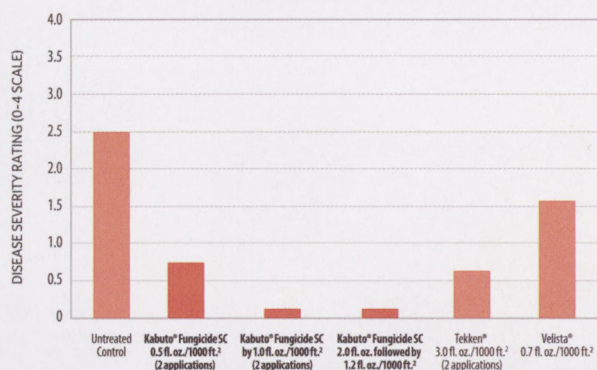
It's one of the most damaging diseases in Bermudagrass, and there is no cure – The only way to stop it is to prevent it. It's Spring dead spot, and the time to fight it is now.

Spring dead spot is caused by three species of fungi from the fungal genera *Ophiosphaerella*. The fungus attacks Bermudagrass roots, rhizomes and stolons through the fall and winter, weakening the plant rather than killing it outright. The disease then appears in spring as dormant rings or circular patches that can grow up to several feet in diameter and eventually collapse into sunken areas. Those patches collapse, forming sunken areas that can linger through the summer and into fall.

Most common in professionally managed Bermudagrass, Spring dead spot takes 3 to 5 years to develop in a new stand. Spring dead spot will

Spring Dead Spot Control Ultradwarf Bermuda Putting Green
Disease Severity Rating (0-4 Scale)

North Carolina State University, 2017/2018



Applied: October 26, 2017; Second Applications applied November 10, 2017

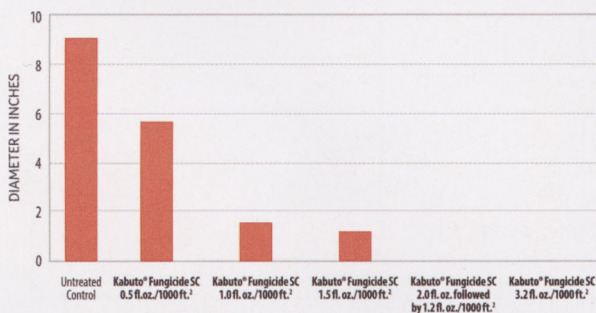
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grow more severe if left unmanaged, and presently, there is no cure. That's why right now is time to take control.

The most effective method of Spring dead spot control is to prevent it with fall fungicide applications, and studies show that Kabuto® Fungicide SC from PBI-Gordon delivers exceptional results. Used in conjunction with sound turf management practices, sequential applications of Kabuto at 1.6 fluid ounces per 1,000 square feet provide the best control.

Spring Dead Spot Control Champion Bermudagrass Putting Green
North Carolina State University, 2017



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Jennifer Torres

SUPERINTENDENT, WESTLAKE GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB, JACKSON TOWNSHIP, NEW JERSEY

Jennifer Torres was nearly 30 years old when she decided to make the turf industry her career and enrolled in the two-year program at Rutgers University. Today, she's the superintendent at Westlake Golf and Country Club, a private club situated in a 55-and-over community in Jackson Township, New Jersey, about an hour outside New York City.

She's also a staunch advocate for her profession and the people who work in it. She has given her time and energy to the National Golf Day initiative, traveling to Washington, D.C. to meet with lawmakers. Torres got involved in the effort at the encouragement of Cece Peabody, the former executive director of the GCSANJ and current executive director/CEO of the New Jersey Turfgrass Association.

"She said 'If you want to make this a full-fledged career, you need to get out there, you need to network, you need to get involved'" Torres recalls. "And she pointed me toward the Grass Roots Ambassadors Program through the GCSAA. They're the ones that work with We Are Golf, who has National Golf Day."

Torres made her first trip to the nation's capital for the National Golf Day in 2018. She was accompanied by her son Ricardo, who worked for her and was considering going into the turf industry himself, then and now. Torres recently discussed the trip and her advocacy work on the Wonderful Women of Golf podcast hosted by Rick Woelfel.

"We went down and actually got to aerate the National Mall," she says, "so every time I see pictures of that sacred area, it brings tears to my eyes and chills to my spine, knowing that I was there and had a part of making it a better place."

The heart of the trip was the opportunity for turf professionals to meet with members of Congress and make them aware of their concerns — specifically, of how government regulations impact the turf industry.

"The key thing was educating our lawmakers," Torres says. "They don't always understand what it takes for us to do our jobs. So getting down there and talking to them (was important), expressing our concerns and things that we need, help from them to do our jobs."

Torres's credibility was enhanced by her serving four years in the Army before enrolling at Rutgers. She relished the opportunity for face-to-face interactions with lawmakers.

Torres believes the relationships that she and her peers established with federal lawmakers were especially valuable in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"If we hadn't had those relationships prior to the pandemic hitting, I don't think our industry would have done as well as it did," she says. "We were able to reach out to the lawmakers and say 'These are the things that we can do to make golf safe.' Since we had that relationship, they understood us."

Last year's National Golf Day was cancelled because of the pandemic, but this year there are plans for a virtual event May 10-12. Torres says it's important for lawmakers to understand how committed turf professionals are to being good environmental stewards.

"If we don't take care of the environment, we won't have a business to be in," she says. "If we didn't love what we did, we wouldn't be getting up at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning to make sure that we're here to provide a golf course for everyone to play on."

"There is just so much stigma that has been brought to the golf industry by many that want to pull everything — that we want to fertilize everything and we want to spray chemicals for no reason."

"It's the exact opposite. We use our education, we use the testing, we use the university studies to help us make our decisions. What chemicals are we going to put down? How much are we going to put down? How much needs to be put down at a certain time?"

"If we didn't love what we did, we definitely wouldn't be in this business." GCI



If we hadn't had those relationships prior to the pandemic hitting, I don't think our industry would have done as well as it did."



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CULTURE: THE SECRET SAUCE OF SUCCESS

Game Plan continues its series on staffing for success with the third of three installments. After looking at how the pandemic has afforded club and course managers the opportunity to reevaluate their teams and strategies for finding and hiring the right team members, we turn to creating a culture that inspires and retains top performers.

A Supreme Court justice once defined obscenity by not defining it. “I know it when I see it,” Justice Potter Stewart famously said in 1964. It seems that an organization’s culture might fit into the same category: difficult to define, but obvious once illuminated.

The difficulty in defining organizational culture is because it is so many things at once. An amalgamation of personality, values, reputation, purpose, style and traditions framed by a set of written and unwritten rules developed over time and considered inviolable. Put them all in a pot, let them simmer for a while — a few years or maybe a few decades — and what’s left is culture!

Culture then is nothing less than an organization’s heart and soul, and its importance rivals any other asset or advantage. It is the glue that holds the organization together. It inspires loyalty in employees and motivates them to act consistently and pridefully. It influences them to perform at a high level because they feel a responsibility to uphold their end of the cultural bargain.

Culture is also an important factor in retaining top performers. Randstad, the international employment and recruitment firm,

lists toxic cultures with poor pay, limited career opportunities, lack of challenging work, lack of recognition and work-life imbalance as the leading reasons people leave their jobs. There is an urgent need to pay attention to the culture growing around your club or course or risk losing top talent.

If this amorphous entity known as culture is so critical, what steps can you take, what keywords can you prioritize for search engines and what KPIs do you elevate to bake it into your organization? If only creating or transforming culture were so easy. Every winning culture is part of a unique set of attributes and characteristics that cannot be invented or imposed. It must be discovered from within.

But that doesn’t mean you should sit back and wait for culture to reveal itself — or for it to form in ways that could be detrimental to your future success. The road to a sustainable and winning culture ensures that employees:

- Understand the club’s/course’s vision and how they contribute to it. When everyone knows where their leaders are steering the ship, it’s much easier to get people onboard and for employees to feel good about rowing.
- Know how their performance is measured and what their personal success looks like. What results are expected? Are there both quantifiable and qualitative measures?
- Are consistently recognized for contributions that meet

and exceed goals. Nothing is more motivating than recognition in front of colleagues.

- Recognize a commitment to diversity and inclusion. Employees of color and minorities want to see evidence that their opinions and work is valued and that they’re on a level playing field.
- Feel that their managers are taking steps to safeguard their health and well-being. In a post-pandemic world, employees want to feel confident that their job is not putting them and their families in danger.
- Are rewarded through a set of personal, flexible, creative benefits. Baby boomers, millennials and Gen Xers think about benefits and perks differently. To make them meaningful, managers must understand what each employee values most.

In addition to helping retain top performers, an engaging and embracing culture also has competitive advantages, particularly when it comes to sustaining high performance. Bain & Company research found that nearly 70 percent of business leaders agree that culture provides the greatest source of competitive advantage. In fact, more than 80 percent believe an organization that lacks a high-performance culture is doomed to mediocrity.

Culture may not be the easiest thing to define, but you can take steps that encourage a culture in which your organization thrives. You can’t rush culture, but you’ll know it when you see it. **GCI**



HENRY DELOZIER is a partner at GGA Partners, trusted advisors and thought leaders. He is currently Chairman of the Board of Directors of Audubon International.

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RATINGS GAME

As someone who loves golf and has been lucky enough to play some of the great courses, I'm always interested when the major course rankings come out. Like everyone else, I want to see if others like the same courses I do.

But as a superintendent, former golf course rater, and someone who tries to keep our industry's interests first and foremost, the rankings concern me. Because whether it's ranking the top 100 courses in the country or comparing your course to one down the street, conditioning is going to be a factor even if you've been told a thousand times — promised, sworn to — that it's not the case.

Whenever the ratings issues of the golf magazines come out, I ask, "Are the rankings really worth it?" Do we need to assign numerical values or say "this is better than that" about courses we already know are great?

Is there really any purpose — let alone a verifiable system — for saying that Pine Valley is better than Cypress Point or Augusta National?

Yes, there are reasons. They are bragging rights, members' egos and the rater's ability to check off another course from their bucket list. All of which are perfectly legit but have very little relevance in determining which of the greats is the greatest.

But a discussion about needing the rankings is for another time. Right now, I want to discuss how superintendents should deal with them. Because to repeat what I said above, you will never convince me that conditioning doesn't factor into the ratings equation.

What do they mean by "aesthetics" if not conditioning?

What are a course's scenic values if not landscaping, vegetation, water features, etc.? All of these fall smack in your wheelhouse and are wide open to the individual rater's interpretation.

Let's say a rater is playing in the Southwest desert: Do they have an appreciation for the dormant (Bermudagrass) look? Or what about playing at a course that doesn't elect to overseed or paint? Does color matter to the rater? Can this person — who, after all, could be just about anybody, I don't care how many courses they've seen and played — see beyond the type of turf condition? Pardon me ... aesthetics.

How about a course that didn't have houses along its perimeter when it was built but they now line its fairways because a) it's a development and that was always the plan, or b) the course is in what used to be farmland and is now suburbia? What do houses do for aesthetics? And isn't it ironic that proximity to a good course can increase a home's

value, but proximity to homes can knock down a course's stature?

It goes without saying that "ambiance" is part of any course's charm. Is it still charming if the interstate was added 50 years after the course was built? Or power lines? Or an airport? How do these affect the so-called "walk in the park?"

Conditioning also includes how firm, fast and rolling were the fairways, or how firm, yet receptive, were the greens and how true the ball rolled on them the day the rater played. What if it rained the night before and drainage is slow because the course isn't built on sand? If it doesn't play firm and fast "enough," is the rating affected?

And what if the rater isn't there at the right time of year? It makes sense that busy private clubs, that might want the prestige of appearing on the lists, must think of their members first and not let raters on until the off-season. So, the course may not be at its best, visually or condition-wise.

We all know how few golfers understand that, in agronomy, timing is everything. Turf transition, end of season, wear and tear. At certain points in any season courses are just flat-out tired. Now add all the extra COVID-19 traffic. Raters don't want to hear excuses and courses shouldn't have to explain how agronomy works, but is it fair to judge a golf course when it simply is not at its best?

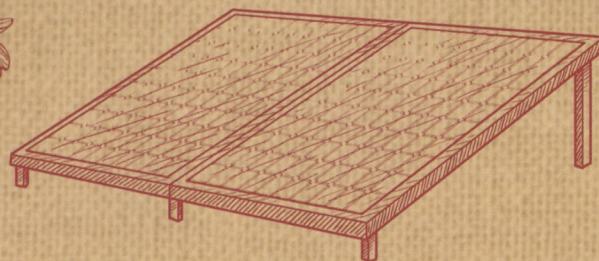
MORAGHAN continues on 55

“At some point, every golf course will need to be renovated or otherwise updated. Because just like us, features age or just wear out.”



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

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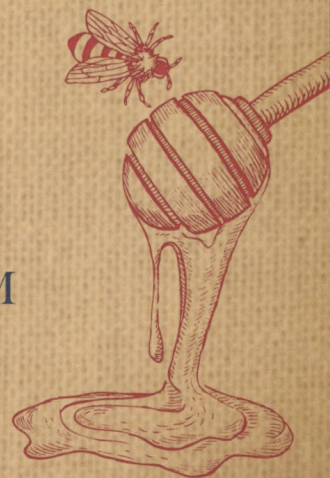
PAGE 21

COG HILL-INSPIRED IDEAS

PAGE 26

GREEN MONEY MOVES

PAGE 30



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MORE THAN 18 HOLES

The Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program has been inspiring golf properties to environmental heights for 30 years.

By Lee Carr

"There are worlds of experience beyond the world of the aggressive man, beyond history and beyond science. The moods and qualities of nature and the revelations of great art are equally difficult to define; we can grasp them only in the depths of our perceptive spirit."

— Ansel Adams

All the above is true for golf. More than the scorecard or the Stimp meter reading. More than fairway laughter. Where the land changes, shifts and plays in different ways every day, natural elements shape the sport. Wind, trees, water, sun, soil, sand, turf. Where humans and nature compete it's possible for all the players to win and Audubon International is changing the game.

Based in Troy, New York and founded in 1987, AI is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. It's funded through sponsors and members. Certification and education are encouraged to promote robust envi-

▲ The Links at Spanish Bay was the first course in California to be certified into the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program.

ronmental stewardship. It's easiest to join through the website. Members receive multiple resources, "including the *Guide to Environmental Stewardship on the Golf Course*, which is pretty much our Bible," says Frank LaVadera, director of environmental programs for golf at AI. An initial site assessment is completed and then an environmental plan is created, addressing each of the technical components of the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program (ACSP), formally established in 1991.

Those components are water conservation, water quality management, wildlife habitat management, chemical use reduction and safety, and, importantly, outreach and education. Using the established environmental plan, AI provides expert advice to help each member reach standards required for certification. It's a unique process as some properties may have little to do to be certified and others will have farther to travel. Certification typically takes around two years but can be accomplished in six months.

When the property earns approval in all the technical areas, AI staff tour the site to ensure proper standards have been met and certification becomes official. To maintain certification, detailed information must be submitted after three years, with

another site visit three years after that. That first certification has the steepest learning curve.

Program costs are balanced by professional support and ideas shared by AI, customized assistance, and positive brand association. It costs \$400 to become a member, \$500 per year

once certified and some additional fees for site visits, which vary depending on location. There may be costs for each course to improve its environmental efforts (chemical use, water quality and water conservation are usually the tricky technical aspects of the program), but there are ways a course can become more environmentally friendly and cut expenses simultaneously.

Globally, there are nearly 2,000 ACSP members and it's been a "comprehensive and robust program for over 30 years," LaVadera says. AI is available to help properties ranging from world-renowned Pine Valley Golf Club to local municipal courses. These properties are all contributing to the momentum for environmental standards and garner third-party recognition for their effort.

Ted Horton, secretary of the AI board of directors (2014-present), has decades of experience in working in golf and the environment from his time as superintendent at Winged Foot (1966-79) to serving as vice president, resource management with the Pebble Beach Company (1993-2001). "We can go further to allow the community to enjoy the environment on golf properties," Horton says, "and we must keep trying." During his time with Pebble Beach Company, he changed some environmental perceptions of the industry and that is what those working with AI continue to do, too.

Let's examine how a pair of courses on different coasts, certified in different eras, are promoting environmental efforts.

THE LINKS AT SPANISH BAY

Horton was hired to ensure Pebble Beach Company was environmentally friendly. The Links at Spanish Bay, which is owned and managed by the company, had opened in November 1987 with a design by Sandy Tatum, Tom Watson and Robert Trent Jones, Jr. The course was built on an old

sand mining site and development was narrowly approved by Monterey County officials and the California Coastal Commission. Ownership committed to recreating the dunescape and restoring the native habitats.

The plants originally on site no longer thrived there because the sand that had been mined varied from the sand brought in to replace it. To restore the sand dune habitat, a different palate of native plants was carefully selected in collaboration with the California Native Plant Society. "The nursery onsite grew hundreds and thousands of those plants, which were planted along the golf course and the sand dunes bordering it," Horton says. "And the groups formed a good relationship by working together." The nursery is still in operation and native plants are shared with the local community.

It took time to build trust between the golf industry and several environmental organizations. To keep earning that trust and to challenge the perception that golf courses



Become a Member

The first step in becoming an AI member is to visit www.AudubonInternational.org. The pages are easy to navigate and full of useful information. Join to receive customized guidance materials and the support of environmental experts who are happy to help with certification.



◀ Duran Golf Club in Melbourne, Florida, was one of the last courses to be certified in person before COVID-19 restrictions.

were environmentally damaging, Horton and PBC organized an environmental golf summit. With the environment, communication and compromises are part of the process but are necessary for long-term gain.

Around the same time that Pebble Beach Company was placing more value on the environment, so was AI. The Links at Spanish Bay was the first course in California to be certified into the ACSP in 1994. Other Pebble Beach Company courses were certified also: Spyglass Hill (2000), Del Monte (2001) and Pebble Beach (2003). A new short course “The Hay” designed by Tiger Woods and TGR Design that is part of the Pebble Beach course will be a part of the certification (as was the Peter Hay course there previously).

“PBC has consistently upheld the guidelines and principles of the certification and have successfully



completed many recertifications over the years,” LaVardera says. “Their long-term commitment to the environment is commendable.”

In addition to PBC vice president and director of golf John Sawin, there are other senior members of the leadership team devoted to resource management and environmental affairs. The PBC directives for the environment are beyond inspirational. Genuine stewardship extends from the top down, from designated positions to solar pan-

els on the Pebble Beach maintenance facility to recycling at every Pebble Beach Company property.

Pete Bachman, superintendent at The Links at Spanish Bay, immaculately maintains *Poa* greens and a rye/*Poa* mix on the tees, fairways and roughs. The superintendent of each Pebble Beach Company course reports to Sawin and every employee is aware of, trained in and

contributes to environmental initiatives. By sunset, when the bagpiper begins to play, the environment and the course have been nurtured.

“The long-term commitment the company has made is amazing,” says Sawin, who joined Pebble Beach Company three years ago. “From preserving a quarter of the Del Monte Forest; to maintaining 50 miles of walking, hiking, and equestrian trails; to recovering and recycling golf balls from the ocean, add it all up and it really is impressive.”

And that's just one extraordinary company and a few very special courses. There are many more working for the environment and with AI.

DURAN GOLF CLUB

Shortly after the 2020 Golf Industry Show in Orlando, Duran Golf Club in Melbourne, Florida, was one of the last courses to be certified in person before COVID-19 restrictions swept the United States. Officially certified in February 2020, Duran has been an AI member since 2014 and really began its journey with the course design in 2004. That's 16 years of sustained ambition.

"Becoming ACSP certified was always a goal so the course was created with wildlife corridors and utilizing Florida natural plant materials," says Jeff Von Eschen, senior manager of golf operations. Superintendent Drew Norman is also a longtime staff member, helping with construction and the grow in. The hero of Duran's certification is Dr. Jim Papritan, a dedicated golfer and professor emeritus from Ohio State University's Department of Food, Agriculture and Biological Engineering.

"He was looking for something to do," Von Eschen says. "I said, 'Funny you should ask,' and we talked." He was organized and kept pushing. "With the course, you can get sidetracked with projects, so Jim set dates and times for us to get everything done."

Papritan handled paperwork and insisted that Duran do everything correctly. Papritan was the one in contact with AI. It can't be reiterated enough, it is worth enlisting help. LaVardera highly recommends configuring a "Resource Advisory Committee."

This public course was created on what was originally a sod farm. There are 18 holes with tees, fairways and roughs covered by Tifway 419 Bermudagrass. The greens are



▲ Frank LaVardera



ACSP options

The Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program is designed to help the environment by improving efficiency and promoting conservation.

ACSP for Golf: designed for established courses that demonstrate the best practices in six key areas: environmental planning, wildlife and habitat management, chemical use reduction and safety, water conservation, water quality management, and outreach and education.

Classic Sanctuary Program: for properties that are planning or undergoing a redevelopment, renovation or expansion while maintaining the original purpose for the property.

Signature Sanctuary Program: meant for new and undeveloped golf courses and properties that are planning future construction and development.

Sustainable Communities Program: working with cities, planned communities and resorts, this program aims to help create healthy places to live, work and play.

Green Hospitality Program: this environmental accreditation is for facilities in the tourism, hospitality and recreation sectors.

Green Lodging Program: for accommodation facilities that demonstrate commitment to water and resource conservation, energy efficiency, waste minimization and sound water quality.

TifEagle Bermudagrass. A few tee boxes are used as experimental plots to see if Empire and Icon zoysiagrass can be maintained at lower mowing heights. There are also pockets of Bahiagrass on the edges of the course and an extensive illuminated practice area and short course.

At Duran, there are well-used brush piles, bat boxes and bird houses for purple matins, Carolina wrens and tree swallows. There are acres of no-spray zones and naturalized areas to increase the carrying capacity of the property and an integrated pest management program to reduce chemical usage. Water is conserved by using nonionic surfactants and by hand watering dry spots. Ponds and wetlands are monitored to en-

sure appropriate water quality, and students frequently use the course for science projects.

Winds off the Atlantic Ocean influence playing conditions, but that doesn't bother the golfers or the staff. They enjoy it all, including seeing butterflies visit the pollinator garden. "We keep an eye out for gators during the removal of invasive species in the native areas," says Norman, who prefers tangible projects and plays a pivotal role in Duran's accomplishments.

"Part of the reason we wanted to be certified is because golf courses get a bad reputation for being awful polluters of the environment," Von Eschen says. "I know every superintendent in this area and certified or

not, we are stewards of the land and responsible in everything we do.”

Duran intends to maintain certification and continues to photograph and document new projects so the paperwork will be ready. “It was extremely rewarding to get that certification,” says Von Eschen—and, of course, Papritan was there.

“The certification documents submitted by the Duran Golf Club were truly amazing,” LaVardera says. “Dr. Jim Papritan, Jeff Von Eschen and the entire Duran team demonstrated a detailed understanding of establishing and implementing environmentally sustainable practices.”

LOOKING AHEAD

Besides certification, three AI conservation initiatives provide options to enhance and promote sustainability: BioBlitz, Raptor Relocation Network and Monarchs in the Rough. BioBlitz is open to every golf course and requires little planning. Accommodating participants young and old, people gather to identify and count species of plants and animals.

Super support

Find a frequent golfer, a neighbor of the course or a friend in administration interested in helping with the certification process — someone who genuinely cares about the environment, who wants to see the property be certified, and who is keen to take it all on will be a huge help. It’s easier to work together, stay on track and garner support for the certification if the maintenance staff enlists some volunteers.

Observing the on-course diversity demonstrates the value of these green spaces. Promotional materials and event instructions are provided.

Due to high nesting grounds and long views across the fairways, golf courses provide great habitats for owls, kestrels and hawks who help control insects, rodents and other golf course pests. The *Raptor Relocation Network* is a partnership between United Airlines Eco-Skies and AI to connect ACSP golf courses with airport wildlife managers in San Francisco and the New York metro area.

Monarchs in the Rough is a third conservation initiative option. This effort is trying to reverse the decline in the monarch population. The premise is to create pollinator habitats on a national network of golf courses to collectively reduce habitat

loss for these iconic butterflies. The 755 courses in the program have dedicated more than 1,000 acres for monarch habitat. Courses are eligible to receive an acre’s worth of regionally appropriate milkweed and wildflower mixes. Signage, posters and technical guidance are available.

AI is always moving forward, though Horton acknowledges it’s sometimes difficult to have the funding and staffing to check on certified courses. Virtual visits offer more potential since the pandemic. “We are considering recognition for the individual who has helped the course be certified,” Horton says. “It wouldn’t have to be a superintendent, it could be anyone driving the AI process.”

“As golf courses are being built or renovated, make sure there is a walking trail around it. Make sure any open space has some gardens for pollinators,” Horton says. “Courses generate oxygen, provide wildlife habitat, filter water, help control flooding and so much more. All these things are positive and we need to talk about them. Decisions made with enthusiasm move the success needle and result in reaching goals and personally experiencing something amazing.”

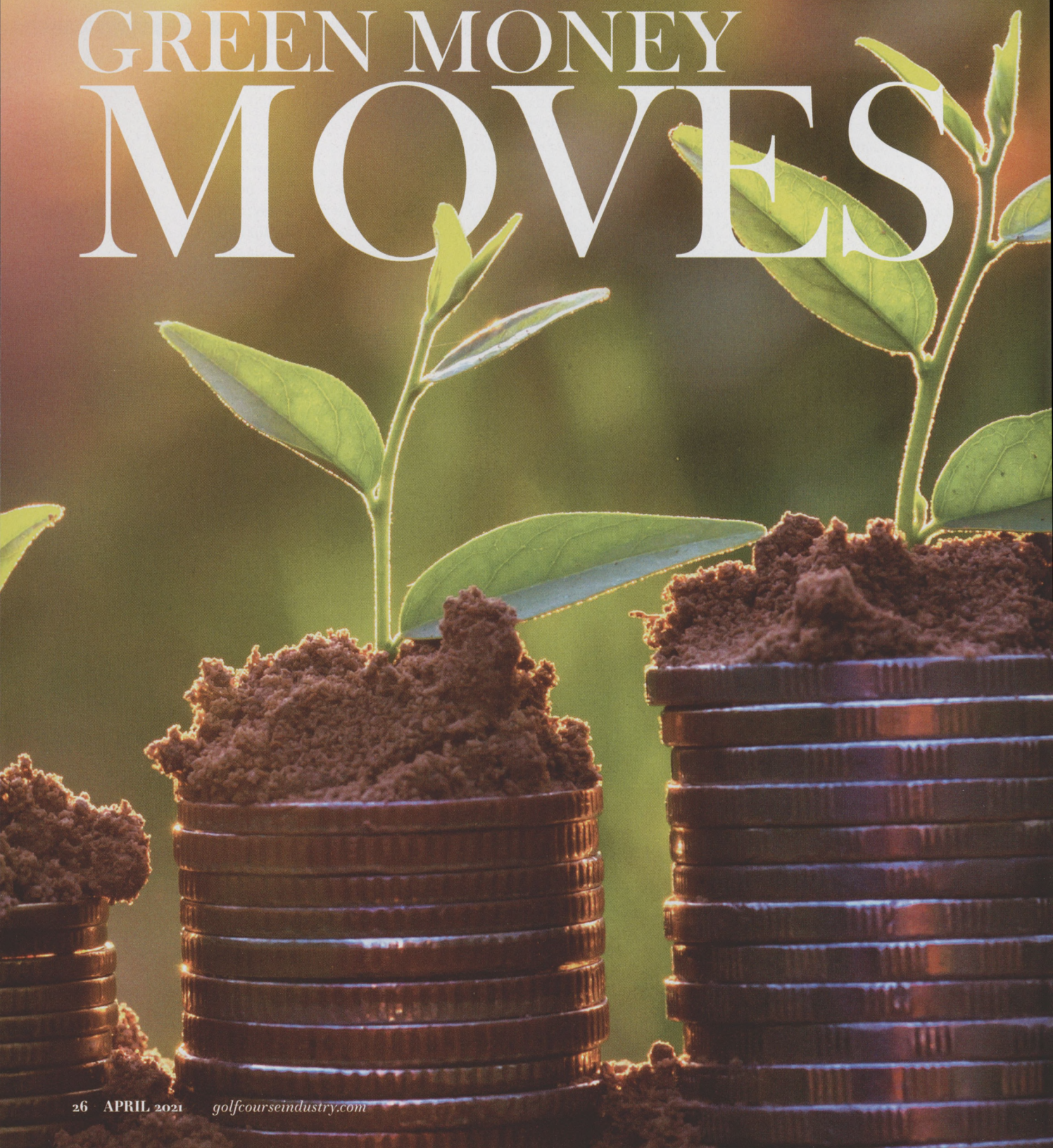
An intriguing sport of so much more than 18 holes, the environment establishes the natural grace of every round. Successfully navigating decades of growth, AI has the ideas and energy to encourage and support those who are ready. Coast to coast, and for every perceptive spirit, environmental stewardship can be a resounding strength of the game. **GCI**

Lee Carr is a Northeast Ohio-based writer and frequent Golf Course Industry contributor.



ENVIRONMENTAL SAVVY
MAINTENANCE

GREEN MONEY MOVES



Financing environmentally smart practices takes time, but it can pay dividends for your course.

By Lee Carr

How do you make eco-budget work enticing? Because it isn't. It takes planning, common sense and grit to help the environment and your course, but it's not as daunting as it seems. Plus, intrinsic bonus, the world—and your boss—will thank you.

Tim Hiers, director of golf course operations, works at an exclusive property in Florida with more than 17,000 acres dedicated to the care and conservation of endangered and threatened species. Think exotic okapi, bongos and dama gazelles. Hiers estimates that since 1970 the average maintenance budget for most golf courses has gone up by about 800 percent.

"Is there anybody smart enough to reduce their budget, without compromising quality, without reducing acreage of turf?" Hiers asks. Unlikely. So, Step 1 is to reduce maintained acreage.

Located in downtown Columbia, Missouri, by Faurot Field on Stadium Drive, Isaac Breuer, superintendent for the A. L. Gustin Golf Course at the University of Missouri, agrees. "We are easily saving \$300 to \$400 per acre per year in not mowing," he says. "That's mowing once a week, in the Transition Zone, April to November, factoring an hourly wage and fuel." The amount saved could increase if you include wear-and-tear on machines, watering, and the elimination of fertilizer or herbicide applications. Multiply that by a few acres and a few years and those savings become significant. A. L. Gustin was the first university course to be fully certified by Audubon International in 1997 and it has been ever since, with Breuer at the helm.

COURSE COMPREHENSION

Pollinator plots are one way to reduce maintained acreage and to add to the aesthetic and carrying capacity of a property. "I think there is room for a pollinator plot on every course in America,"

Breuer says. They don't need much area and directly benefit birds, bees and butterflies, with seed costs for half an acre approximately \$150. At A.L. Gustin, 20 to 25 native species are planted in each of five plots, including purple coneflowers, foxglove beardtongue, wild bergamot, butterfly milkweed and black-eyed susans. They are utterly gorgeous.

"If your new plantings affect less than one out of 100 shots, you're OK," Hiers says. "But they have to pass the aesthetic test, the functional test and the playability test. Native plants are not a panacea and most people fail physically or psychologically when they try to naturalize."

You have to pick the right plants at the right size, density and time of year, irrigate properly, and keep the weeds out. You have to be patient, too. Maturation takes three years.

Financing excellent environmental practices is a long-term investment and staff and owner support are important. Breuer's enthusiastic assistants, Nick Gilbert and Eric Acton, and the head pro, Jim Knoesel, all work together. "We talk through ideas," Breuer says. "This is what we are trying to do, will it work, and these are the costs. They have been 100 percent on board with everything." Knoesel helped with the 26 original bluebird houses on the 18-hole property, which also has four beehives that produce honey to be sold in the pro shop (with profits reinvested into maintaining healthy beehives). To date, more than 3,000 bluebirds have been fledged in 25-plus years.

Environmental savings grow when your staff truly knows the course. The



If your new plantings affect less than one out of 100 shots, you're OK. But they have to pass the aesthetic test, the functional test and the playability test. Native plants are not a panacea and most people fail physically or psychologically when they try to naturalize."

— Tim Hiers



People have a more favorable impression of golf courses if they know you're doing something for the environment."

– Isaac Breuer

greens are Cohansey creeping bentgrass and the rough is a tall fescue. The tees and fairways were switched from fescue to zoysiagrass. "It can be taken to the edge," Breuer says, "and our fairways are known for being firm and fast. Players appreciate that long roll."

Spraying on a curative instead of a preventative basis is another potential way to help the environment in the right situation. If you take this approach, you must pay close attention to conditions.

"We know if we're going to get dollar spot, it's going to show up at this place, on this marker green," Breuer says. When the staff see that, they can take care of it. Various models help to save a few applications each year and that adds up in supply costs and labor. "We

watch the weather to stay lean on fertilizer," Breuer says, "and that helps, too."

An observant staff saves money. "We talk about the environment all the time and not esoterically," Hiers says. "When you ask someone to do a job, tell them *why* we are doing it so everyone feels a part of *what* we are doing." Know your people, know your course and help your people know your course. Invest in the right people, retain them and when you don't know something, find an expert. Mistakes are costly.

EQUIPMENT MATTERS

Irrigation is a head-spinning topic when it comes to ways to save. Moisture meters, preferably in-ground, help take the guess work out of watering. Hand watering can often



Patience, please!

Even the slowest foursome is speedy compared to the three years it takes to establish a vivacious pollinator plot. As the old gardening adage goes, "The first year it sleeps, the second year it creeps and the third year it leaps." During the first year some flowers are growing roots up to 10 feet deep! Set realistic expectations during approval and planning. Place signs in the pro shop and near pollinator plots and native areas being established so everyone views the land with interest instead of judgment. It's going to be wonderful. Wait and see.

be more efficient. "A lot of sprinkler heads can be dug up and capped," Breuer says. That saves money every time you turn on the system.

A prescription irrigation system will initially cost more, "but save money and resources in the long run," Hiers says. Self-audit your irrigation system every year and get a professional audit done every three to four years. Water costs compound

quickly. Check every head, constantly service your pump station, and if possible, consider premium efficient motors.

"Ideally, the whole course can be watered in five hours or less," says Hiers, which makes it easier to use off peak rates. "Work your coverage from the perimeter in instead of the opposite. Think about a lower PSI system, which pulls fewer amps and creates heavier water droplets, so you lose less to misting. Heads distributing water with the right pressure at the correct angle help the environment and your budget.

Safe equipment for protecting the people, wildlife and land at your property shows you care and is definitively less expensive than lawsuits. Don't overlook the upkeep of your maintenance facility, where proper storage of chemicals is non-negotiable. Without a secure maintenance facility, your entire operation is at risk. Accident prevention saves money.

Electric equipment can be more expensive but offers potential. If your course can be maintained earlier or more easily with quieter machines, that opens up your tee sheet and saves labor hours. Now you have cut your fuel budget, upped your efficiency, done something positive for the environment — and hydraulic leaks are impossible.

Technology can help you manage your property in a more environmentally friendly way, but if you don't master it, you're leaving money on the shelf. A drone that provides information you can't get by walking

the course is a great example. "Is the technology going to help you use your resources more efficiently?" Hiers says. "Make your operation safer? Improve the condition of the course? Help your employees?" Research your purchases so dollars saved can be used for environmental extras.

"I'm shocked at the number of courses that don't have covered booms on their spray vehicles," Hiers says. "The cover knocks the drift down by about 90 percent and provides a better distribution pattern." Booms cost about \$10,000 per machine but if you lease or buy new machines you can still use them. Take care of them and they'll work for 10 to 15 years. Use them and you ensure that applications are staying where they should while not interfering with birds, bees, wildlife and habitats.

"Smart people can be very emotional about trees," Hiers says. But if they're affecting the environmental health of your course, address them. There can be problems with roots, shade, air circulation and competition with turf for nutrients and water. Tree maintenance is cost effective and environmentally sound.

To do your best for the environment, "visit courses, continuously communicate with superintendents about their best ideas, go to pertinent seminars, and just don't stop," Hiers says.

"People have a more favorable impression of golf courses if they know you're doing something for the environment," adds Breuer, who gives tours, and lets children make and throw seed balls to create pollinator plots.

Encouraging everyone to be environmentally considerate might even make long-term eco-budget work enticing. **GCI**

Lee Carr is a Northeast Ohio-based writer and frequent Golf Course Industry contributor.



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A PRACTICAL BLUE SKY

By Lee Carr

Refresh your environmental initiatives with motivational ideas from the team at Cog Hill Golf & Country Club.

Chris Flick, director of grounds operations at Cog Hill Golf & Country Club in suburban Chicago, shares inspiring ecological practices that extend beyond turf. “I’m a firm believer that a golf course needs to be more than a golf course,” Flick says. At Cog Hill, community relationships are forging ahead and there is a culture for stewardship. While golf and the earth hold hands, fescue and bluegrass mix rough, and bentgrass tees, greens and fairways are maintained with immaculate care for public play.

Cog Hill has four courses, including Dubsdread, where the record is a 62 owned by Tiger Woods. This championship layout witnessed several BMW Championships and numerous other PGA Tour and USGA events, including the Western Open. The facility jives with a Toptracer Range, lessons, junior programs, family golf nights, and social events. A “Growing Green” section on the website details phenomenal environmental accomplishments.

How to start or continue the momentum at your course? Blue-sky happy thoughts work best.

THINKING ENVIRONMENTALLY

“It’s difficult at times to justify higher costs for an environmental project that the courses will be fine without,” Flick says, “but caring for the environment and the courses is a rewarding challenge.” People notice and appreciate environmental efforts, and tangible results attract customers and members,

create positive community attention and can interest seasonal workers.

“We advertise what we’re doing and use visual clues to get people involved,” Flick says. Celebrating Earth Day, creating opportunities for volunteer participation, property-wide recycling, communicating lower chemical/turf inputs and working the numbers helps people connect with an environmental



▲ Sustainability expert Angelica Carmen (middle photo) oversees Fairway Farms and Apiary at Cog Hill Golf & Country Club.

focus. Sharing positive numbers is the most black-and-white way to show the value of environmental efforts. Whether it's a related decrease in expenses, better water quality figures or increased bird egg counts, numbers make an impact.

Reading material can be a powerful ally, from environmental books for adults and kids sold in the pro shop to relevant articles left near the coffee machine. Biodegradable tees can be promoted. Share your environmental position on Twitter and social media, post information on the website, host school groups for science lessons, and "bring people on the property when it's not necessarily for golf," Flick says. "That's one of our big goals, to introduce people to what we're doing and show them how to help."

for a different kind of grass. Blue-sky thinking indeed.

Natural algal control will start this year at Cog Hill with barley straw and sterile grass carp helping filter the ponds. Irrigation inputs have been nearly halved through biostimulants and organic plant protectants, which work to provide strong and healthy plants, reduce transpiration and increase stress tolerance.

"The biggest thing we have done for water management is reduce our rough acreage," Flick says. The team also eliminated extra tees on two courses and worked with ownership to decrease spraying and watering.

"We've audited our systems to ensure that the water we do use is efficient and we hand water quite a bit," says Flick, noting how useful moisture meters are in ensuring only

necessary water is used.

Cog Hill is adding a bioswale near the maintenance facility to help filter and clean the rinsate from the equipment washing station. Partially funded by a grant from The FairWays Foundation, research was conducted involving which plants would be most effective while being functional and aesthetically pleasing. Rain barrels throughout the property are a simple idea. Water management takes constant thoughtfulness, and regular readings on property water sources will ensure the water is clean.

NATIVE AREAS

Transforming 100 acres of rough into native areas has changed more than mowing and irrigation. "It started by just letting it grow," Flick says. "This is an oak-heavy property and we're aiming for prairie restoration and oak-savannahs like there used to be." Reducing maintained acreage has also helped reduce synthetic inputs of pesticides, fungicides and fertilizers. There has been a special focus on fungicide reduction. Prescribed burning also helps build native areas and "we can do that on a small scale."

Cog Hill also participates in the Monarchs in the Rough program, starting with half an acre about





three years ago and propagating milkweed and nectar-producing flowers to more areas throughout the property. Pollinator habitats improve every year and larvae develop and colorfully fly away. Functionality is the focus and other forms of wildlife are showing up for the party.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

"What has impacted wildlife the most are the no-mow areas, just creating habitat and a food source for them," Flick says. "We have seen a huge increase," in variety and numbers. The influx contributes to a different feel on the course, adding to the game's joys (and ensuring errant shots aren't the only wild things).

"Working with a high school class, we constructed bluebird and bat houses," Flick says. "The houses feature engraved logos for both the high school and Cog Hill," and they're a visible source of pride. The students become curious and comfortable on site and the functionality of the



property grows. The bird houses are watched by a group of birding golfers who track nests and eggs.

Cog Hill sports more than a dozen beehives. Brush piles for birds, squirrels, rabbits and more only require stacking a few logs and branches. They provide shelter where there is little ground cover, and, opposed to burning, have the added benefit of releasing carbon into the air slowly as they decay.

FACILITIES AND GROUNDS

There is always room for improvement. The precision of GPS sprayers can be helpful in dispersing product at the rate and locations needed, and biodiesel offers potential. Recycled concrete aggregate can be used for cart path construction.

Cog Hill has a sustainability expert, Angelica Carmen, and her work is efficient, economical and essential

ENVIRONMENTAL SAVVY MAINTENANCE

to the ethos of Cog Hill. "She is focused on environmental initiatives and she makes sure they are implemented," Flick says. Carmen networks for research and to build relationships, considers all aspects of the property, creates exciting public initiatives and does hands-on work that otherwise may be impossible.

"My favorite project has been her construction of the farm. It's the perfect, tangible example of what I wanted for Cog Hill," Flick says. Fairway Farms and Apiary started with Flick's idea to "have a little vegetable garden." The farm hosts tours and provides up to 3,000 pounds of produce annually for the restaurant. A berry patch, a pumpkin patch and orchard trees are part of the 2021 expansion. "New employees are curious about what we're doing here and most want to get involved. The Farm is the keystone of our whole sustainability program," Flick says.

Everything starts small. Everything starts with the seed of an idea. "A golf course is far removed from being a natural landscape, but there are elements of it that can function like one," Flick says. Look up, enjoy the blue sky, and forge ahead. **GCI**

Working with local businesses

Near Cog Hill is a microbrewery, Pollyanna Brewing Company. As Fairway Farms & Apiary grows a variety of herbs and produces great honey, the two organizations worked together to create Dubs Delight. Named after Dubsdread, the facility's most famed course, the drink is a blonde ale produced with Asian Kapoor Tulsi Basil from the farm. The flavor was created to help raise

awareness for sustainability efforts and the two teams plan on partnering for a new brew each year. Working with local groups and companies amplifies your power for accomplishing and promoting environmental initiatives. Consider partnering with city services or a nearby nursery for compost, enlist volunteers on site and consider productive public events. We're in this together. Who's thirsty for more?





SO CLOSE TO THE NORTH CAROLINA COAST

Eagle Point Golf Club produces high-level conditions while serving as a buffer between developed and natural surroundings.

By **Guy Cipriano**

A street of homes, the Intracoastal Waterway, an estuary and an exclusive island separate Eagle Point Golf Club's more than 200 acres from the Atlantic Ocean. Besides the southeast corner of the grounds, where the ninth hole parallels the Intracoastal, Eagle Point is more akin to a rolling and selectively wooded inland championship golf course than a site one mile from an ocean.

While it can't be seen from the polished fairways and greens, the Atlantic factors into nearly every decision superintendent Sean Anderson and his team make. A Tom Fazio design, Eagle Point opened in 2000 and

returned Wilmington, North Carolina, to the national golf scene by hosting the PGA Tour's Wells Fargo Championship in 2017. Anderson arrived on New Year's Day 2019, as the club was in the final phases of repairing damage caused by Hurricane Florence.

Weather swings are a big part of the coastal golf story, a reality Anderson experienced during his 13 years as superintendent at Card Sound Golf Club in the Florida Keys. His first two years at Eagle Point included two storms requiring significant cleanup efforts: Hurricane Dorian in 2019 and Hurricane Isaias in 2020. How to limit damage caused by mega-storms and assessing course infrastruc-

ture in the back nine of its life cycle are critical parts of Anderson's long-term agenda.

"It has endured some pretty good hurricanes over the last couple of years," Anderson says. "We have had some pretty extensive tree and landscape damage. With this club being 20 years old and the weather-related issues we've had—and the irrigation system is 20 years old—I feel my responsibility and role with the club right now is to determine how we ensure the next 20 years of success."

Proximity to the ocean affects Eagle Point in non-weather ways. Little Creek and Middle Sound Estuary border the course and provide separation between inland development

—most of which has occurred within the past 20 years—and the ocean. Further protection for runoff from impervious surfaces comes in the form of a human-created pond surrounding the 9-hole par-3 course. A pump system recycling water from low to high areas and into Fazio-designed water features add another buffer between developed and environmentally sensitive areas. Moving more than 2 million cubic yards of dirt during construction produced uncharacteristic topography for a Lowcountry setting.

Eagle Point has evolved from a club with significant spring and fall play into a summer haven for golf enthusiasts and beachgoers. The evolution of



This golf property is very scenic and there are numerous spots on this property where you just step back and you're like, 'Wow, this is a nice office to work in.'

member usage altered the agronomics and greens were converted from bentgrass to G12 Bermudagrass following the 2017 Wells Fargo. The 150 acres of maintained turf also includes 60 acres of TifSport Bermudagrass fairways, approaches and tees on the championship and par-3 courses.

The club has invested in tools to help its turf team maintain the abundance of short grass. Eagle Point was an early adopter of GPS-guided spraying technology, becoming one of the first Southeast facilities to incorporate the Toro Multi Pro GeoLink GPS Sprayer into its agronomic programs. The Multi Pro with GeoLink proved successful at treating the TifSport surfaces without overlapping or encroaching into sensitive areas for multiple years before Anderson's arrival. Having a course already mapped and extensive digital spray records available via the GeoLink system allowed Anderson to immediately make confident decisions while learning a new property that must coexist with natural surroundings.

"They were early adopters and we have continued that trend," Anderson says. "We're not overlapping and we're getting that pinpoint accuracy. You can define all your areas. If you're doing fairway applications, then you're just spraying the fairways and there's a reduction from not overspraying in non-targeted areas. You're not spraying 10 feet into your roughs."

Quantifying input reductions is tricky, because Anderson has never treated Eagle Point's fairways, approaches and tees with a conventional sprayer. Like most courses, Eagle Point close-

ly managed labor during the early stages of the pandemic, so Anderson used the Multi Pro on greens instead of a walk-behind sprayer for a period last spring.

"There were so many unknowns and just organizing and coordinating tasks was a little bit challenging," he says. "We would go in and use the GPS sprayer on greens. We got comfortable with it and we did find we were about 10 percent less on square footage using our GPS sprayer because we weren't spraying into collars."

Eagle Point's use of emerging technology extends into its mowing program. The club's fleet includes six Toro Reelmaster 5010-H fairway mowers, which utilize a 24.8 hp diesel engine operating in conjunction with a self-recharging 48-volt battery pack. The mower features a hybrid system, called PowerMatch, designed to coordinate the power generated with the required cutting conditions. Eagle Point also has five Greensmaster TriFlex 3320 mowers, which are used for maintaining approaches, verticutting and occasionally mowing greens.

"I have tried to adopt those types of mowers anywhere I can," Anderson says. "The main reason is the hydraulic leaks with the older technology. You get scarred up pretty good when you get a nice hydraulic leak. We're trying to eliminate all the hydraulic leak points, which is huge for a presentation and aesthetic standpoint on a golf course."

Less hydraulics and noise are making an already peaceful place even more serene. Asked where he goes to absorb Eagle Point scenes, Anderson initially refers to the wooded southwest edge of the property. But selecting just one peaceful spot at Eagle Point is like forcing a healthy eater to declare a favorite vegetable. "This golf property is very scenic and there are numerous spots on this property where you just step back and you're like, 'Wow, this is a nice office to work in,'" Anderson says.

The office supports pleasant visitors. Marshes and waterways

as neighbors lead to interactions with myriad wildlife, ranging from blue herons to snapping turtles. The course's name—and Bald Eagle Lane address—are fitting, because eagles are spotted above the grounds.

Eagle Point's footprint includes 14 acres of native areas consisting of muhly grass, spartina patens and cordgrass. The native areas contrast the Bermudagrass hues and monochromes of 25 acres of tidy pine straw.

A western Washington native whose career has included stops in Colorado, Germany, New York and Florida, Anderson is relishing the blend of high-level maintenance and escapism Eagle Point provides.

"It's a coastal property and you have a couple of holes on the marshes where you get that typical Lowcountry feel," Anderson says. "But when you get to the middle and other parts of the golf course, you almost feel like you're more in Atlanta, Georgia, with the undulation and elevation. It's got a uniqueness to it."





ENVIRONMENTALISM BY NATURE

The political math alone tells you to be mindful of long-term sustainability on the golf course. Since only one out of 12 in the population play golf, the other 11 have no experience or understanding of what is involved out there. That means public opinion looks askance at what you are doing. And should it ever come to a jury trial in which the golf course is up for scrutiny in a civil case, the odds are against you finding a favorable judgment.

That might seem a harsh way of putting it. But the point is that part of what it takes today to be a golf course superintendent is to educate the public. Far too few everyday citizens have much idea of the environmental benefits of a well-managed golf course. Indeed, not enough golfers take the time to appreciate how their game contributes to the well-being of ecological systems — everything from flora, fauna and hydrology to ambient cooling and flood control.

You don't have to be Rachel Carson, who published her landmark book "Silent Spring" in 1962, to make a difference. Small steps, aimed locally and designed to inform specific groups, can help considerably in getting the word out that your property is a net benefit to the community's well-being.

Zach Bauer, in his third year as superintendent at Valley Country Club in the Denver suburb of Centennial, recently worked with the club's membership director, Steve O'Brien, to hold a bird box building program for members. Actually, it was for their kids and grandkids, which made it even more fun. O'Brien drilled and cut the pieces for the bird boxes so that the participating youth could

have a relatively easy time assembling them.

Six kids and 11 parents and grandparents participated, with each of the youth getting to work on a bird box as well as receiving a pair of binoculars, a bag of bird seed and a Valley CC bird watching club certificate. Afterwards, Bauer took the kids out for a little bird watching expedition. The Audubon Sanctuary-certified golf course provides a welcoming habitat for birds, both nesting and migratory. Among the more frequently sighted birds are robins, magpies, Western blue birds, mallards and bufflehead ducks.

Turning the golf course into a learning experience for kids is the goal of the First Green program. Started by superintendents in 1997, it is now run by the GCSAA and includes K-12 students, though the majority of the attendees are fifth-, sixth- and seventh-graders. In the program's last full pre-COVID-19 year, 41 half-day field trips engaged 2,000 students in various studies of golf course ecology. The hope is to have the program introduce them to both golf and practical science. Even if they don't become junior golfers, students will at least have early exposure to the benefits of the golf course as a working landscape.

Another good way to make wildlife habitats known is simply through signage. If kept simple and uncluttered, such indicators can be informative as well as provide a bit of safety margin by way of subtly warning golfers to stay away from sensitive areas.

Increasingly, we're seeing superintendents turn unplayed areas into lesser-maintained plots,

whether for wildflower ground, bird habitat or native rough. The key is knowing which stretches of the layout are beyond the reach of most play. GPS tracking can be an essential device in developing verifiable boundaries for these out-of-play areas.

Cart-borne GPS units are readily available, but it's more accurate and nuanced in detail to rely on small digital tracking devices the size of a USB thumb drive. These are worn by golfers to track movement during a round and help superintendents establish areas that are really those out-of-the-way areas.

None of this will reach wider public awareness without a determined effort to get the public informed and involved. Reach out to local garden clubs, hiking groups, birding clubs and land trust associations, for example, and develop times when you can give guided tours of the golf course. Work closely with municipal authorities in developing relationships so they are familiar with your property and learn to appreciate it not simply as a taxable asset but also as a wildlife refuge and stormwater management zone. Share the growing literature documenting the positive community value of having a golf course as a water filtration system and greenspace.

As a superintendent your job is focused on a well-defined property. Increasingly these days, however, stewardship of that land means communicating its value to outside parties. It also means anticipating potential friction by educating people in advance of a (potential) conflict as to the real value provided by the land you oversee. **GCI**



BRADLEY S. KLEIN, PH.D. (political science), former PGA Tour caddie, is a veteran golf journalist, book author ("Discovering Donald Ross," among others) and golf course consultant. Follow him on Twitter (@BradleySKlein).

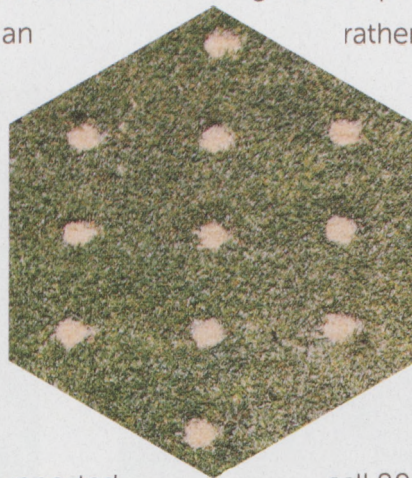
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Q&A WITH THE EXPERT



Q&A WITH LANE TREDWAY

Technical Services Manager for Syngenta

1 What is unique about Action brand fungicides?

Action™ brand fungicides, including Secure® Action, Daconil® Action and Heritage® Action, boost turf's natural defenses to certain diseases and abiotic stresses like heat and drought. The "Action" indicates the addition of *acibenzolar-S-methyl*, which has a unique mode of action to trigger this increased protection and is the only active ingredient that belongs to FRAC Group P1.

2 How do Action brand fungicides work?

They enhance the plant's defense against disease through a process called Systemic Acquired Resistance (SAR). This sends a signal throughout the plant to increase production of enzymes (PR proteins) that actively defend against invading pathogens. Through this process, Action products improve turf's protection against several important diseases including anthracnose, dollar spot, *Pythium* blight and bacterial wilt.

Action products have many other physiological benefits that help to create a healthier, more vigorous turf. First, they enable the plant to better regulate their stomata,

preventing uncontrolled water loss during periods of hot and dry weather. They also increase the production of proteins like dehydrins and heat shock proteins that protect plant cells from heat and drought stress. And finally, they increase production of enzymes involved in photosynthesis (RUBISCO and ATP synthase) to generate more energy for protection and recovery from the many stresses imposed on golf course turfgrasses including from aeration.

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Study conducted at North Carolina State. Shows recovery after aerification.

3 How can superintendents get the most out of Action products?

Action products show the greatest benefit when used preventatively, prior to the onset of disease pressure or stress. The physiological benefits of Action persist for two to three weeks, so regular applications throughout the season are recommended to maintain maximum benefit.

With three options to choose from – Daconil Action, Secure Action and Heritage Action – superintendents can incor-

porate Action products into their green, tee and fairway programs throughout the season. Agronomic Programs from Syngenta (GreenCastOnline.com/Programs) provide our best recommendations for how to use these fungicides most effectively based on extensive field research from across the country.

4 Can Action products be tank-mixed with other products?

Action products can be applied alone or as part of a

variety of tank mixtures. For example, **Appear® II** fungicide is frequently mixed with either **Daconil Action** or **Secure Action**. These are great combinations for broad-spectrum control of foliar diseases on warm- or cool-season grasses. The phosphonate fungicide and pigment delivered by **Appear II** provides additional protection against diseases and abiotic stresses through their unique modes of action.

Heritage Action, meanwhile, is often tank-mixed with **Divanem®** nematicide for management of plant-parasitic nematodes and the fungal pathogens that are enhanced by nematode feeding. Compared to **Divanem** alone, the addition

of **Heritage Action** consistently improves turf quality, root growth and recovery from nematode injury.

Finally, **Action products can be mixed together with excellent results**. For example, tank mixtures of **Heritage Action** with either **Daconil Action** or **Secure Action** have further increased drought tolerance when compared to a single **Action** product. Superintendents should consider these mixtures prior to periods of extreme stress, such as aerification, tournaments or weather anomalies.

5 What benefits can superintendents expect to see?

Golf course superintendents

have observed many practical benefits from incorporating **Action** products into their programs. Improved control of difficult diseases like anthracnose, dollar spot and **Pythium** blight is often the most obvious benefit. When combined with proper cultural practices, **Action** products can help superintendents achieve higher-quality turf through periods of stress and enhance recovery after the stress subsides.

During the summer, many superintendents have observed reduced irrigation requirements and reduced afternoon wilting in cool-season grasses, helping to conserve water and reduce labor inputs. In warm-season grasses, programs

including **Action** products have been shown to speed up recovery following aerification and also improve root growth in areas with high nematode populations.

For more information about the **Action** products from Syngenta, visit **ConditionPerformRecover.com/Action**.

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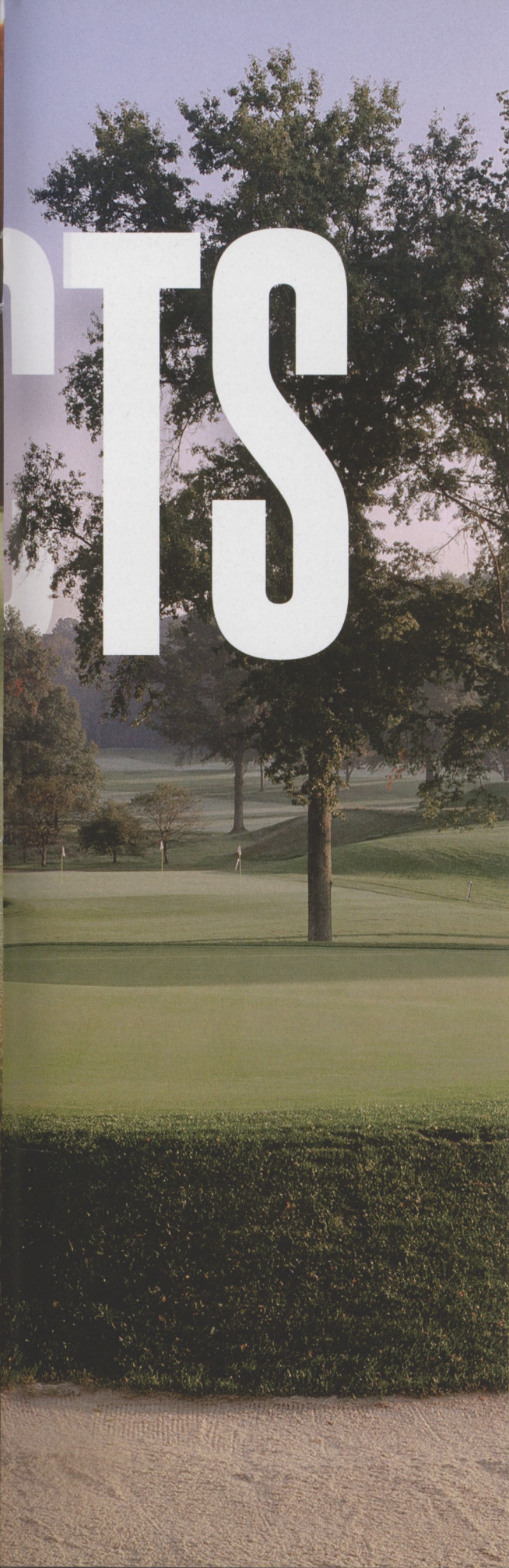


PITTSBURGH-STYLE

PROJECT

Golden Age roots and modern relationships played big parts in the most recent golf course transformations at two enduring clubs.

By **Guy Cipriano**



Chartiers Country Club and Fox Chapel Golf Club are separated by less than 20 miles of river-hugging Pittsburgh roads. The route between the clubs includes views of a modern and compact skyline contrasting perceptions outsiders might harbor of the city. Nothing smolders above homes and businesses. The intersection of the rivers brings as many recreational as commerce opportunities.

Longtime members of both clubs spin stories of the days when steel and banking executives left work at noon, completed 18 holes before rush hour and stuck around for a card game ... or three. The routine was repeated weekday after weekday.

The golf they played was good. Designed by Scottish pro-turned-architect Willie Park Jr., the 18-hole course at Chartiers debuted in 1925, the same year Fox Chapel unveiled a layout created by Long Island civil engineer-turned-golf course architect Seth Raynor.

Over time, the courses changed. Over time, Pittsburgh changed, too. Good luck—at least in pre-pandemic times—finding middle-aged members who make weekday time for 18 and cards. Health and technology now shape an economy once reliant on manufacturing.

Chartiers and Fox Chapel reside in different parts of town and neither club views the other as a competitor. Allegheny County (population: 1.2 million) is big enough to support 18 private golf courses.

Clubs like Chartiers and Fox Chapel endure because they adapt. During the year of ultimate adaptation, both clubs executed golf course projects inspired by their original architects. The work reunited old friends and injected throwback charm into parts of both golf courses, especially bunkers.

As different individuals enjoy golf courses on weekday afternoons and the region continues distancing itself from steel, iron and coal, pieces of the past can be revived and modernized with determined people guiding decisions. Members of Chartiers and Fox Chapel will play pleasant rounds on enhanced courses in 2021 and beyond.

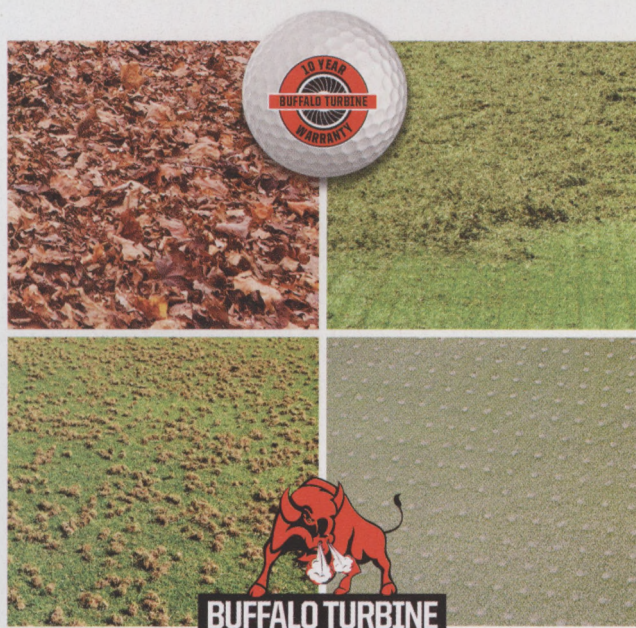
DIGGING REUNION

Every Golden Age course possesses a course enhancement history. Until the 1980s, Chartiers didn't possess a glamorous work-log. In short, green chairs and other influencers made decisions on whims. Two holes in particular, Nos. 2 and 3, according to two-term club president Ron Moehler, experienced

bunker roulette because of personal preferences.

The club's proximity to downtown Pittsburgh—just seven miles west of the city's center—and affable membership ensured the haphazard approach didn't affect immediate finances or overall operations. A group of forward-thinking members, including Moehler, who has spent

◀ Fox Chapel Golf Club has recently restored its Seth Raynor-designed golf course.



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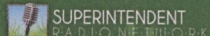
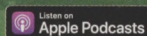
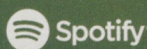
OFF THE COURSE

Candid conversations with superintendents, directors and other industry professionals about anything and everything other than their work. Episodes focus on physical and mental health, outside interests, family, and the constant pursuit of life-work balance among other topics.

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nearly 20 years as the club's green committee chair, wanted to inject formality into course enhancements. The club pursued a master plan created by architect Arthur Hills with Aspen Corporation serving as the contractor. Hills, who was also working at nearby Oakmont Country Club, spent plenty of time at Chartiers and received assistance from a young associate named Steve Forrest. The team Aspen dispatched to Pittsburgh included former Glade Springs (West Virginia) Resort grounds director Ronnie Adkins.

Members approved the master plan in 1991, the club supported abundant golf in the 1990s, and the Hills and Aspen teams continued finding ample work following the project. Chartiers then hired a young superintendent in 2010 who started observing what happens a few decades following a renovation. "Our bunkers had become our weakest link," Bob Davis says. "Playability out of the bunkers was good my first six or seven years, but then they just started to decline."

Members peppered Davis with questions about the bunkers during an annual meeting in late 2019. The club opened its Rolodex to find a solution. Davis, who now holds the title of COO/director of golf course operations, called Forrest, now a principal of Hills • Forrest • Smith Golf Course Architects, to create a bunker enhancement plan. Forrest presented a plan to club leaders in January 2020. "I remember asking him, 'What are some characteristics of Willie Park golf courses?'" Davis says. "And

Steve really came up with a concept that blew us away."

Still, no renovation comes easy. COVID-19 resulted in Pennsylvania closing golf courses until May. Part of the membership displayed initial pandemic-related financial concerns. An experienced leader and friend of golf course maintenance urged anybody willing to listen why Chartiers needed to move the project forward. "Quite frankly," Davis says, "this project doesn't happen without Mr. Moehler."

Chartiers has never faced a dire situation. But anybody who studies the Pittsburgh-area golf scene can easily recite names of private clubs shuttered in the last decade. The region's successful clubs find ways to repair infrastructure and add amenities.

"I can equate a golf course to a major college football program," Moehler says. "Football is the revenue driver at a major college athletic department. Golf is the major revenue driver at a club. We can't underestimate keeping our facilities nice."

Once Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf permitted courses to reopen, filled tees, fairways and greens became the norm. By mid-June, the membership approved Forrest's plan, which involved giving 60 bunkers a throwback appearance with steep fescue faces, flat bottoms and angular designs, and modifying multiple greens.

"The primary goal is to give them a strong classic look," Forrest says. "I can't say specifically they are true Willie Park bunkers. But it's like a classic car restoration. You know the features and you



Expansive role

Bob Davis read a 2016 article authored by legendary superintendent Paul R. Latshaw in this magazine urging superintendents to consider bigger roles at their respective clubs and it inspired him to eventually think beyond his responsibilities as superintendent at Chartiers Country Club.

The club promoted Davis to a newly created COO/director of golf course operations position in February 2017, giving him oversight of the club's indoor and outdoor assets as well as department managers and their respective employees.

"Like anything you do, there was initially fear of the unknown," Davis says. "But superintendents are very smart people. They are used to putting out fires, they are used to managing and dealing with situations as they arise. If you apply that to anything you do, you're going to continue to have success."

The multi-faceted role hasn't forced Davis to stray from golf course maintenance. He estimates he still spends around 80 percent of his spring, summer and early fall time on the golf course. His focus shifts to administrative tasks such as club budgeting, payroll and benefits during the cool-weather months.

Delegating turf-related managerial duties to close confidants allows Davis to bounce between departments. When Davis moved into a broader club management position, he promoted assistant Bryan Flaherty to golf course superintendent. When Flaherty left Chartiers for the top turf job at South Hills Country Club, Davis hired Ben Hewitt as superintendent.

"With having a guy like Ben, my goal is, 'Here are the car keys,'" Davis says. "He is as responsible for any of the decisions that we make on the golf course as I am."

Davis arrived at Chartiers from Oakmont Country Club in August 2010 and worked solely as superintendent until his promotion. His knowledge of the property and the club's people helped Hewitt transition to his first superintendent job after nine years at Fox Chapel Golf Club.

"When I first started, I think I would have been lost — as is anybody who starts a new superintendent's job — because you are kind of thrown into the fire," Hewitt says. "But Bob was here and around any time I had questions or needed anything."

Hewitt hasn't yet reached the point where he's asking Davis about the administrative parts of his job. The daily maintenance of a course completing a renovation, especially one with packed tee sheets, keeps him plenty occupied. "In terms of the business of the club, we haven't gotten that deep into it," Hewitt says. "But I'm curious about it and I'd love to know more about it."

Colleagues with visions of expanded roles frequently approach Davis about his experiences handling turf- and club-centric duties. Upfront conversations with club leaders about the job description have allowed Davis to flourish at Chartiers.

"It's important that you lay out the expectations of what your role is going to be," he says. "My role is not the same general manager position as the traditional general manager's position. It's very important all those things are identified to be successful."

— Guy Cipriano

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take the features and apply them to today's standards."

Worked commenced Sept. 8 when a familiar company arrived in Pittsburgh. The course remained open as workers from that company shuffled between holes.

"Everything moves faster today," says Adkins, now the vice president of Aspen Corporation. "The biggest change has been in equipment. We have power tilts in mini excavators. That just wasn't available in 1991. You're moving a lot of materials around the golf course and we're using flotation tires and flotation equipment today. That wasn't something that was available then either. The process has become much more efficient. That means we're on less footprint of the golf course."

Golf course architecture has also changed in the last 30 years. Names such as Willie Park Jr. didn't mean much when the Hills and Aspen teams first worked at Chartiers. Now when members gaze toward the 18th from the elegant Tudor-style clubhouse, they see 11 bunkers inspired by a Golden Age architect whose work has become more recognizable. "There's definitely more of an appreciation for the old style of architecture now," Forrest says.

Having the same architecture firm, contractor and club leader involved in projects executed 30 years apart rarely happens in golf course construction. Such a confluence seems fitting considering Pittsburgh's reputation as a place where three rivers meet.

"He was running equipment then," says Moehler, staring at Adkins during a conversation in one of the club's renovated grill rooms. "Now he's in the CEO suite and shows up in \$200 Cole Haans! It's been good circling back and dealing with the same people. It's been a real fun experience."

A RAYNOR READY TO ROAR

Jason Hurwitz started maintaining golf courses in the late 1990s. He received his first hourly position at Sand Ridge Club in Cleveland's east suburbs before the course opened for play. Fazio Design served as the architect and Tom Marzolf represented the firm in numerous site visits.

Hurwitz landed his first post-college job at Oakmont and ascended



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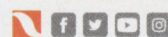


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to a top assistant superintendent position. Fazio Design tweaked the course in preparation for the 2007 U.S. Open. Marzolf again represented the firm in numerous site visits.

Less than a year before Oakmont was set to host the U.S. Open, Hurwitz received a too-good-to-refuse offer to become the superintendent at nearby Fox Chapel Golf Club. Hurwitz had been eyeing Fox Chapel, so he became acquainted with a few members of the Seth Raynor Society during the group's 2006 visit to western Pennsylvania.

Fox Chapel was one of Raynor's final projects before he died in 1926. Hurwitz studied Raynor's work and Fox Chapel's history in case the club wanted to return to its Raynor roots. More than a decade later, a



Inside a Biarritz

Seth Raynor took a few template concepts to extremes at Fox Chapel Golf Club, including the Biarritz on the penultimate hole. The 17th is the longest par 3 on the course, playing over 220 yards from the white tees. It culminates with an elongated green featuring a deep swale.

How deep is the swale? During a round last fall, I hit a fairway wood into the eye of the Biarritz. I'm 6-foot-1, yet I needed to stand on my toes to see the back pin before attempting a lag putt. I later asked superintendent Jason Hurwitz about the size of the swale, implying it must be at least my height. I was wrong. "It's 'only' 4 feet deep," Hurwitz told me.

"I would challenge anybody to find a 4-foot slope on a green," he added. "You're not going to find many of them and that's why I think it feels deeper than it actually is. It's such an abstract feature you find on a putting green."

While in the swale, I thought more about how long it takes to mow the green than I did about the break and speed required to two putt. The green measures slightly under 22,000 square feet, according to Hurwitz, and plans based on historical photos exist to expand the front by 1,700 square feet, which will make the green larger than a half-acre. Walk mowing the surface with a single cut requires two employees working in tandem for about 40 minutes.

Hurwitz's team has placed the hole inside the swale just twice in his 14 years at Fox Chapel, including once for a turf team outing. "It was very fun to play down there," he said.

— Guy Cipriano

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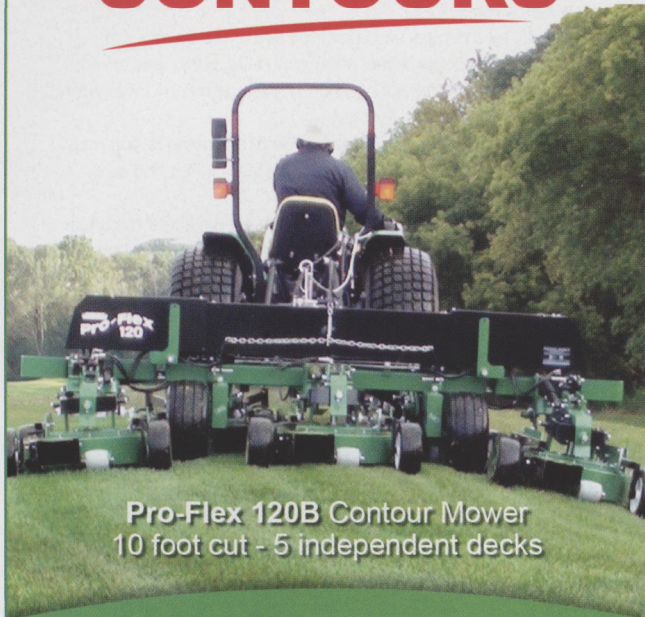
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SPOTLIGHT

A desire to improve the functionality, aesthetics and playability of bunkers led to a renovation at Chartiers Country Club.



formal restoration movement emerged within the club, resulting in Hurwitz spending time with a familiar architect. Marzolf led the anticipated restoration for Fazio Design and he temporarily moved to western Pennsylvania last spring and summer to oversee the project.

The club asked Marzolf to begin concocting a master plan for bunker improvements in 2014. The plan expanded into restoring audacious Raynor features such as the "Lion's Mouth" bunker protecting the punch-bowl-style ninth green and 10 fairway bunkers impacting tee-shot strategy on No. 16.

"Jason had researched a lot of this history already and he helped educate and teach me about the course," Marzolf says "He would pull out the photos and say, 'Hey, look at this, look at the way it was, look at what we could have here.' Jason and I basically did this design together. He

deserves a lot of the credit for this golf course, because he studied it, researched it and had a lot of this stuff figured out. He embraced this idea."

Marzolf received inspiration for what he describes as a "rectangular" and "rigid" bunker style by studying Raynor's work with C.B. Macdonald at Chicago Golf Club. Marzolf and Hurwitz collaborated on establishing the required fairway and mowing lines to solve the geometric riddle of restoring Raynor. Steep greenside bunkers dot the course, but their severity has been reduced thanks to constructive dialogue between Marzolf and Hurwitz. Prior to the restoration, many bunker faces had slopes approaching and even exceeding 35 degrees. Old photographs and modern maintenance realities influenced the decision to design bunkers with 25 to 28 degrees of slope, Marzolf says.

Fox Chapel has 97 bunkers



end of the year. A crew from NMP Golf Construction returned to western Pennsylvania last March, but COVID-19 stalled work until May. Dry summer weather helped regain lost construction days due to COVID-19, although it forced Hurwitz's team to hustle to irrigate newly installed sod amid heavy member usage. Disrupting play on the fewest possible number of holes remained a priority throughout the restoration.

Even with the spring delay, NMP Construction completed its work ahead of schedule, Hurwitz says. The frantic stretch ended with an October aerification that Hurwitz considered "a nice change of pace" for his team. As grueling as it all seemed, combining with Marzolf to restore the work of a celebrated architect offered a once-in-a-career opportunity. But perhaps the biggest challenge he faced involved imparting that vision on an exhausted crew.

and completing one round of fly mowing before the restoration required 14 employees spending nearly an entire day on the assignment, according to Hurwitz. That volume of labor meant Hurwitz's team mowed bunker faces just once every two or three weeks. Rotary mowers can now be used to maintain bunker faces.

"It's a better quality of cut and just a quicker all-around operation," Hurwitz says. "We are mowing bunker faces once a week, which helps with density. They are tighter, they are healthier and there's a lot less opportunity for shots to get hung up on faces."

The restored bunkers experienced significant activity in 2020 as Fox Chapel surpassed 17,000 rounds — average annual rounds had hovered just below 15,000 — despite the late start to the Pennsylvania golf season. Construction started in fall 2019, with work on a pair of holes, Nos. 9 and 10, nearly completed by the

"I have a desire — and maybe it's a bad habit — to try to be perfect when I can with the golf course," Hurwitz says. "Seeing those features that used to be on the ground — and being motivated by how good and how much better the course could be — was motivation enough for me. I'm passionate about construction and restoration. You marry those two and that's all the motivation I need."

"How do you relay that to your team? You just set a good example. You show up to work excited, explain what you're doing, what the contractor is doing and why they are doing it, and remain upbeat, and that's contagious." GCI

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Meet me in the middle

With a little understanding and constructive dialogue, that tough customer can be transformed into your department's biggest advocate.

By **Brent Downs**

"Can you meet me halfway, right on the borderline..."

—Black Eyed Peas

I am in the process of doing my morning course check ride and I hear him first and see him second. We will call him "Harry." Harry is the unofficial "vocal leader" — you can read into that whatever you would like — of one of the larger regular groups that play at Otter Creek.

Harry: "Hey, supe. Can you speed these up a bit? I left a couple putts short."

Me: "Huh? They read a 15 on the Brentmeter." (smirks)

Harry: "Hey, I had a little trouble holding the back of three green? You do

something there?"

Me: "No. But I heard the 19 wood you hit it into it doesn't spin as much ..." (winks)


Harry: (laughing) "Very funny, Brent. You doing all right? Place is great, by the way."

Me: "Thanks, Harry. Yes, we're hanging in there. Still a few things to work on, but we're doing well. Have a great round. Remember to tip your director." (laughing)

These exchanges with Harry have become a morning ritual for me and something I look forward to every

day. We both have very dry senses of humor, so it has become par for the course (pun intended). It was not always this way, though.

When I came to Otter Creek almost three years ago, I brought superintendent experience from two other clubs, a priority list and an order of things I wanted to improve. Harry had his own ideas and he wasn't shy about sharing them. Harry is a blunt and direct person with strong convictions about how things should be done. There is nothing wrong with that because it gets things accomplished. However, put that in



a blender with my personality, which is headstrong, independent and proud of my previous experience, and you don't have to be Einstein to figure out where the early stages of that relationship went. The issues we disagreed on are not important. What is important is that it deteriorated to a point where if I knew he and his group were on one section of the course, I would make it a point to work on another.

One evening during our "replay of the day conversations," I was venting to my wife some of my frustrations and instead of sympathy I was met with ...

Sara: "Brent, is he right on any of the items he brings up?"

Me: "Umm, well, maybe, I guess, if you want to get really technical ..."

Sara: "You're trailing off. And that sounded suspiciously like yes with a bunch of mumbling. You have made your whole career and reputation based on doing the correct things and using your knowledge and experience to the benefit of whomever you work for. When another golfer tries to do the same thing, you completely disregard it?!"

Shade. At this point I have two options:

Left brain: "Dude, it is time to get off the Titanic ..."

Right brain: "If Wile E. Coyote just uses a bigger stick of dynamite, he might catch the Road Runner ..."

Luckily, the left brain won out. Sara was right, as wives tend to be. I thought about this over the next couple days and I arranged a writing meeting with Harry. I am not going to tell you that meeting was all roses, because we are both still opinionated people with strong ideas. What changed in this meeting was the compromise. I began to realize Harry and his group just wanted to be heard. They did not need their entire list. They just wanted to have a say in a place they are very fond of and play daily. And who can blame them? Isn't that why we all do what we do?

The other thing to come out of this meeting was the fact that Harry is extremely reasonable when explanations are given about why we as a maintenance department have the priorities we have. When I walked him through the explanations, he was incredibly understanding, reasonable and quite knowledgeable.

As the relationship and my experience at Otter Creek evolved, it actually changed from Harry being the first person I would avoid to the first person I came to when I wanted an unfiltered view of how the course was doing and what the patrons generally thought. It is not going to be perfect every day. It never is. I am a superintendent, after all. Ha! But I always got a vivid picture of where we stood and an opportunity to pass along some of the things we were working on, and nothing that came of that was EVER a bad thing. So, what can you learn from my experience?

1. Seek out different areas of feedback. I typically do not attempt to locate the most negative respondents and get them "on my side." I will certainly let them air their grievances, but I have discovered it can be an exercise in futility attempting to please everyone. You will find this in almost anything. Ten percent of people on each extreme are just going to be extreme. Some people are not happy unless they are complaining. My advice is to completely tune that

out. There are also people who are always gushing about the condition of the course no matter what you do. Tune that out, too. That is not helpful. You are looking for the 80 percent in the middle. After I got through my initial avoidance issues with Harry, he became one of my best sources of feedback.

2. Make the first move. Sometimes you need be the one to step out on the limb. You work for your clientele. You need to be the one to make the first move and if it doesn't work out, then it doesn't work out. But at least you know, and you don't have to wonder anymore.

3. Meet me in the middle, as the article is titled. There are always places you can agree and disagree with reasonable individuals. But there are always plateaus of compromise that can be achieved while still accomplishing the things you prioritize. Most people are reasonable when given an explanation, but every relationship involves give and take.

Take these lessons that I learned the hard way and apply them to their own situation. You might be surprised to find who is a bigger advocate for what you are trying to accomplish than you thought.

EPILOGUE

I would like to thank Harry, the inspiration for this article. As fate would have it, 2020 marked Harry's last season at Otter Creek. After years of promises to his wife, Harry is retiring to Oregon to chase golf balls there. So allow me to say: Thank you, Harry. Thank you for your loyalty to Otter Creek. Thank you for being understanding enough to find a place where we can agree (Washington, D.C.: are you listening?). You will be missed, especially by me. Good luck, Harry! Happy retirement! **GCI**

Brent Downs is the director of agronomy at Otter Creek Golf Course in Columbus, Indiana, and a frequent Golf Course Industry contributor.

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.

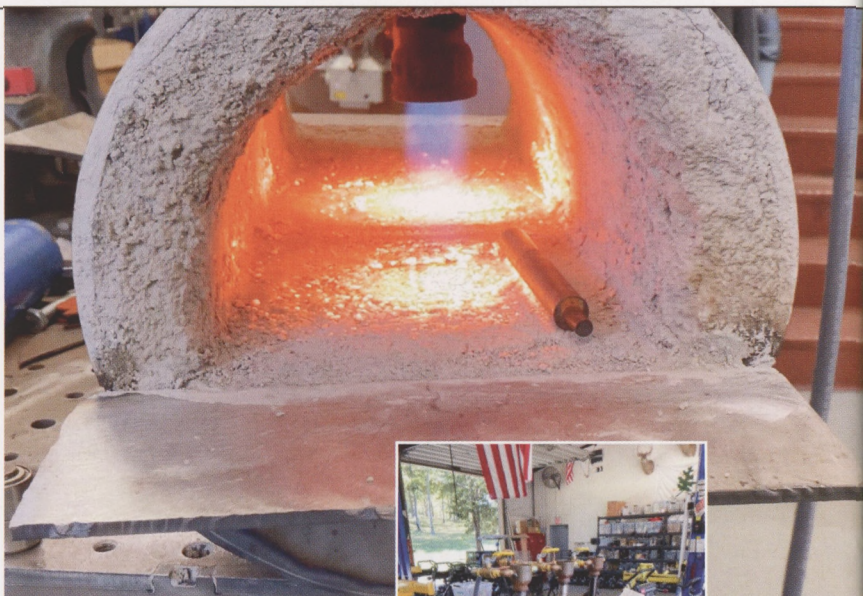
BLOWER AUXILIARY FUEL TANK

An additional 5-gallon plastic fuel tank and two metal holding straps recycled from a former Buffalo Blower were added to this 2014 Toro Pro Force Debris Blower. A Y-shaped brass fuel line hose barb was used to connect the dual fuel lines. A plastic fuel line shutoff valve was slightly opened to drain both tanks at the same time, as the auxiliary tank is gravity-fed and the OEM tank is a siphon-type. The electric motor/pulley used to move the blower nozzle from side to side was repositioned because it was in the way of the auxiliary fuel tank — as a new custom-made steel bracket was designed and built in-house. This idea eliminated the use of portable gas cans being carried in the tow vehicle. It took about eight total hours and about \$50 for materials. Brian Bressler, equipment/shop manager at the Medinah Country Club in suburban Chicago, came up with this excellent idea. Director of grounds Steven M. Cook, CGCS, MG, is renovating the No. 3 course for the 2026 Presidents Cup.



NEARLY UNBREAKABLE FAIRWAY AERIFIER TINES

Heavy clay soils with rocks have been breaking fairway aerifier tines at the Noyac Golf Club in Sag Harbor, New York. Superintendent Brian Goleski and equipment manager J.R. Wilson solved this situation by designing and building an iron forge to manufacture nearly unbreakable solid fairway aerifier tines. The forge was built from a large recycled metal pipe acquired for free, where Rutland Fire Bricks were laid on the bottom floor on top of firewall insulation. Chamber Safe Cement was applied by mixing and hand-troweling it over the insulation. Three vertical pipes, each with their own orifice and hand valve, that control how much heat is generated from the propane tank heat source, were welded on top of the pipe. A metal table was welded into place onto one end. $\frac{1}{16}$ -inch diameter cold rolled steel is heated until it is “cherry red” and non-magnetic, which is then hardened with 30 weight oil to quench the hot tine to solidify the hardening. Each tine is cut to 10-inch lengths from each 12-foot-long rod. Total cost was about \$200 and labor time was about a day, and the newly built aerifier tines last three times longer.



Terry Buchen, CGCS, MG, is president of Golf Agronomy International. He's a 51-year, life member of the GCSAA. He can be reached at 757-561-7777 or terrybuchen@earthlink.net.



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A conversation that expands the scope of a story from the most recent issue of *Golf Course Industry*, including a chat with one of our columnists on their latest work

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**OFF
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Candid conversations with superintendents, directors and other industry professionals about anything and everything other than their work. Episodes focus on physical and mental health, outside interests, family, and the constant pursuit of life-work balance among other topics.

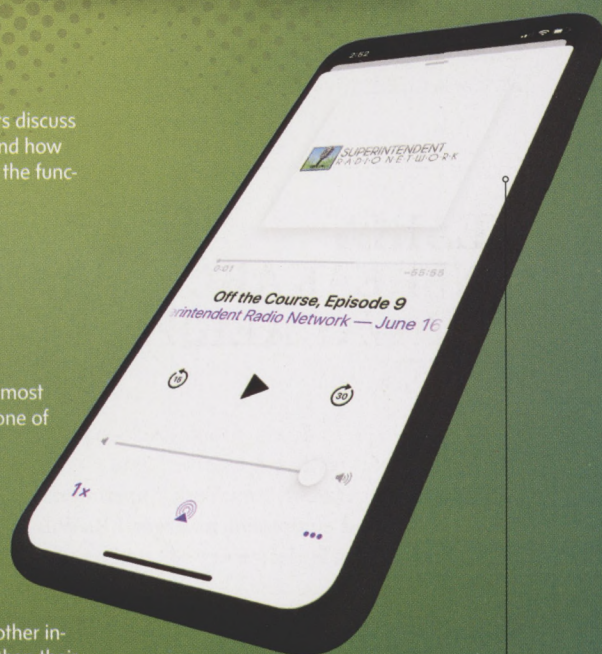
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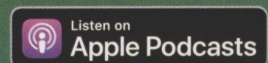
GOLF COURSE

**GREENS WITH
ENVY**

Editors Guy Cipriano and Matt LaWell discuss the many (many, many, many) courses they've visited during the last month. Guy brings the decades of play and maintenance; Matt brings the fresh perspective of a hack golfer who appreciates the beauty of courses and the work required.



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TRIIPLE PLAY

■ **Editor's Note:** BASF and Golf Course Industry are working together to tell the story of how three new products are coming to life for the golf market. This is the first part of a three-part series.

A product launch is nothing new for Jeff Vannoy. But three in one year? "It's no small feat," he says. Vannoy's job as a senior product manager at BASF involves overseeing the expanding golf course portfolio. Two years after the successful introduction of Maxtima® fungicide and Navicon® Intrinsic® brand fungicide into the golf market, the innovation engine keeps running at BASF. In short, this will be a busy year for Vannoy and the BASF team.

Busy represents an industry-wide theme. Steady demand on golf courses means superintendents are seeking innovative solutions to control disease, pests and weeds. Developing those solutions requires listening to the needs of the people responsible for producing pleasing playing conditions. That listening led to BASF developing Maxtima fungicide and Navicon Intrinsic brand fungicide, a pair of DMI fungicides effectively and safely used to control myriad disease during unforgiving parts of the growing season.



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COURSEPOWER

"Golf course superintendents have always been interested and willing to invest in new technology to take care of their key course assets such as greens, fairways, tees, etc.," Vannoy says. "They are also very discerning in asking the right questions from manufacturers and university researchers to clearly understand if the new product is truly innovative."

"In the case of Maxtima fungicide and Navicon Intrinsic brand fungicide, the research was clearly unprecedented and the ability to use a DMI during hot, humid periods on cool-season turf is something totally new for the industry. One thing is for sure, golf course superintendents are never fooled by pseudo-innovations that simply copy what's already readily available on the market."

The trio of new products BASF plans to introduce this year includes an insecticide, herbicide and fungicide. Conceptualization for the products started four years ago. BASF has multiple teams of scientists and business professionals collaborating on the product launch - more than 200 BASF professionals are involved in the process, according to Vannoy. "There are a lot of hurdles to get over to get a new product concept approved and invested in," Vannoy says. Development time varies depending on whether a product is an entirely new active ingredient or a new formulation for an existing active ingredient.

"The golf market is a huge focus for BASF and is seen as a critical business unit within North America," Vannoy adds. "We are making plans and investments to have an increasingly broader portfolio as time moves on. We will always have best-in-class fungicides, but we want to be well-rounded, and a larger part of every golf course superintendent's toolbox of pesticide needs."

BASF will enter a new realm later this year when it launches its first insecticide into the golf market. Alucion™ 35 WG insecticide is a dual mode-of-action insecticide and is formulated to offer broad-spectrum control of surface-feeding insects.

"As we looked into developing a new

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DIAGNOSTIC

Something new on the screen, too

BASF isn't just launching three new products in 2021. The company also has a new digital platform designed to help superintendents. Let senior product manager Jeff Vannoy explain.

"BASF is in a very heavy investment phase into digital golf agronomy," he says. "We just launched our new platform that is called the CoursePower Diagnostic. It's an agronomic platform that provides superintendents the expertise of our sales and technical professionals in tailoring recommendations to the specific course. This will be ever-evolving and it's going to change how we provide recommendations to customers."

Visit betterturf.basf.us/course-power-diagnostic.html to learn more about CoursePower Diagnostic and complete your course profile.

product, it was clear that there were good options on the market for controlling grubs," Vannoy says. "However, there are many other insects that a golf course faces in a given year. We have designed Alucion 35 WG insecticide to fit into some of these other areas of need."

Ant control, for example, is one of those needs.

"A recent trend the past four to six years in golf has been the onslaught of nuisance ants on greens," Vannoy says. "The issue is not damage. It's rather the playability that can be affected by the mini ant mounds they build. BASF's new Alucion™ 35 WG insecticide technology will address this in a powerful new way. That's just one of many examples of how we come to work each day to help solve some of the superintendents' problems."

BASF is also launching Finale® XL T&O herbicide in 2021, expanding a weed control portfolio already consisting of staples such as Drive® XLR8 herbicide, Tower® herbicide and Pylex® herbicide.

And yes, a new fungicide is part of BASF's 2021 plans. Encartis™ fungicide

will build heavily on Emerald® fungicide, a proven dollar spot control tool. In addition to Maxtima fungicide and Navicon Intrinsic brand fungicide, Vannoy has also been involved with the launches of Lexicon® Intrinsic® brand fungicide and Xzemplar® fungicide in his 19 years with BASF. The exhilaration of giving customers new options to solve potential problems never subsides.

"The BASF golf team is a dedicated group of very experienced scientists and business professionals that know the golf industry front and back," Vannoy says. "What's neat is to see folks working together for a similar cause of helping to make the life of a golf course superintendent better in some way. Even though it's a ton of work in launch year, it's very rewarding to know that the customer you're serving is going to benefit. There are multiple project teams within BASF that make a new launch happen. I work with some very smart and educated folks who enjoy what they do as much as I do." ■

■ • BASF

We create chemistry

Always read and follow label directions.

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MORAGHAN *continued from 18*

Again, I'm not advocating for a ban on ratings, even though some courses elect not to participate. (Funny how it's the ones that don't have to worry, right?) But what is important is the effect that ratings — making them, not making them, dropping down or climbing — have on the superintendent. Because if the raters aren't savvy enough to appreciate a course's agronomic ups and downs, what about an entire membership?

"Clubs allegedly don't care about rankings — until their position drops," is what a superintendent at a top-100 club told me. I'm not at all surprised to hear that some clubs create "secret" committees to review a course purely for the sake of doing better in the ratings. For some courses,

doing better means hiring a course architect and undergoing a renovation — if not a total rebuild.

If not making the ratings or dropping in them puts your job in jeopardy, we've got a problem. Maybe you haven't explained to your membership that those greens they love weren't built to be superfast.

You probably know better than anyone just how "good" the course you tend to really is: You don't want to go bursting their bubble, but there are only so many Oakmonts and Los Angeles Country Club Norths. And very few daily-fee courses like Bethpage Black or Pebble Beach.

The same 100 to 200 courses are going to consistently make the ratings because they deserve to. Those same courses

are also going to be in great condition most of the time because they hire the most qualified people they can find and give them the resources they request. Which isn't a knock on you or what you do: It's reality, but you're sure to have to deal with golfers who can't accept that where they play is perfectly nice and fun, just not rated "great."

Augusta National isn't a perennial top-5 course because the grass is so green and the sand so white. You and I know that. Do your members?

Probably the worst thing about aesthetics as a ratings category is what it does to those courses that aren't the obvious top 100 or so, but are really close. With so many great courses, when it comes to deciding between one or

another, if just a handful of raters hit that one after it rained or too early or late in the season, something as insignificant as slower-than-normal greens could make the difference. Often, it's just hundredths-of-a-point that separate No. 100 from No. 101 in the rankings.

Ratings are here to stay. There's nothing wrong with them, they make for good reading and endless arguments. If your course is one that already makes the rating grade or aspires to, congratulations and good for you. My only advice to you is this: Don't do anything to the course for the sake of ratings that will eventually hurt the experience of your members.

The raters don't pay your salary. **GCI**

COURSE NEWS

The Lower Course at **Baltusrol Golf Club** in Springfield, New Jersey, will reopen to members in May following a year-long restoration led by architect Gil Hanse. Every hole on the A.W. Tillinghast-designed Lower Course was affected, with attention given to widening and twisting fairways, removing trees, and returning greens to their original scale and size. On some holes, fairway bunkers that had been removed over the years were returned, while other bunkers were eliminated to bring back the ground game that Tillinghast favored.

Kenwood Country Club in Cincinnati, Ohio, is planning a June reopening for its Kendale Course, a Golden Age layout where Ohio-based Fry/Straka Global Golf Course Design worked closely with superintendent Kent Turner to renovate a 1930 Bill Diddel design. Architect Jason Straka expanded all 18 putting surfaces to their original dimensions, after first using LIDAR technology to map the original contours. Straka and crews from

Wadsworth Construction also rebuilt and restored all 77 bunkers based on Diddel's original plans.

Escalante Golf revealed its course enhancement plans for **The International**, a 36-hole private facility in suburban Boston the company purchased earlier this year. A Tripp Davis-guided renovation on the Tom Fazio-designed Oaks Course will begin this year. Bill Coore and Ben Crenshaw will then lead a redesign of the Geoffrey Cornish-designed Pines Course beginning after the 2022 season.

Pebble Beach Company will unveil its revamped short and new putting courses this month. Created in partnership with Tiger Woods and his TGR Design firm, **The Hay** includes a replica of Pebble Beach Golf Links' seventh hole and yardages on the other eight holes correspond with



▲ Baltusrol Golf Club will reopen its A.W. Tillinghast-designed Lower Course to members next month after a year-long, Gil Hanse-led restoration.

significant years in Pebble Beach history.

Architect Chris Wilczynski has been selected to design and oversee the renovation of the bunkers on the Hills and Dales Courses at **Community Golf Club**, a municipal facility owned by the city of Dayton, Ohio. Wilczynski plans to execute the bunker renovation project in the late summer and early autumn months of 2021.



THERE IS ALWAYS A WAY: ONE YEAR LATER

The world as we knew it changed one year ago. COVID-19 landed and we were transported into a brave new world. A world full of unknowns, virtual meetings and real expectations. *Golf Course Industry* editor-in-chief Guy Cipriano and I had a phone conversation about the challenges our beloved industry was facing in March 2020 and from that conversation came the article *There is Always a Way*. One year later, we are making progress, but the question remains: Is there really always a way?

First, let's revisit the key points of the article. The crux of things was some old rural wisdom supplied by my grandfather Ira G. Williams, who often said, "When times are tough, there is always a way. It may be difficult and it may seem unlikely or even impossible, but there is always a way."

THIS THING IS A MARATHON

I never imagined we would still be pressed a year later. But I did think we would be forever changed. The first sentence from the original article was, "There are seasons in our lives and careers that seem to define us." Last year did that in many ways and, yes, we are making progress in this brave new world.

We all started making adjustments, beginning in small triage ways (pool noodles in the cups), then in practical season-long ways (let's adjust aerations and fertilizer to save money but accommodate more play). We signed up for a 40-yard dash and found ourselves running a trail marathon. One year later I would

expand controlling your emotions into managing your emotional health.

We are still in uncharted territory and the journey is a long one (the feelings of loss and lack are real), but success starts with being at your personal best mentally, physically and spiritually, and making good decisions that align with the long-term realities of your situation. The difference in the duration and difficulty of completing anything this epic (pandemics are pretty epic) will cause some to lose heart, but preparation and perseverance will keep you going. Superintendents are experts at both.

LEARNING THE BIG LESSONS AND EMBRACING CHANGE

Last year I wrote about the need to blend tradition with innovation to make the changes necessary to be successful in this world. Identifying the core needs and resources required to keep your operation in the black financially and growing has been the game changer. The superintendents that quickly adapted their people and programs found the golf gold mine in 2020.

I have heard many stories of success from battle-tested superintendents. We all learned what essential maintenance looked like. We saw what a pandemic and fear can do to your staff, members and the world as we knew it. In 2020, golf as a game was reborn and superintendents reinvented themselves as flexible, fierce managers of the complexities that impact the game.

Throughout all sectors of golf, we saw people rally around the game and its many benefits. This was made possible by the synergy created when there is a shared vision. There was a way through this and it was unlikely, but history will show the resiliency of superintendents to make golf safe, profitable and sustainable sparked a fire that started a golf revival.

THE WILL TO SUCCEED

Last year was tough. The losses were real. There were also personal stories of triumph and perseverance in the face of great obstacles. I set out to do more than survive in 2020. I wanted to thrive and I wanted others to thrive. That was the whole purpose behind the original article. I connected more deeply to my network and I challenged myself to give a better effort to the things and people that mattered to me. I did not allow myself the easy out of making excuses for a lesser effort or result. It was not easy, but each day gave me blessings that became the fuel for success. I thought even if I have just one more day, let's make the most of it.

I was not alone. Superintendents across the country embraced the personal will to succeed and then found new skills to make things happen. In the words of Marcus Aurelius, "You have power over your mind — not outside events. Realize this and you will find strength." We have found strength, we have found faith and, yes, we have found a way. We must carry on. **GCI**



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GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY



TURF TALK!

I want to thank all my friends, peers, and colleagues across the country and around the world for their love and support of Mrs. Greenkeeper as she battled breast cancer the past six months. Never in our wildest dreams would I expect her to receive cards, letters, flowers and goodies from so many wonderful people and places!

With chemotherapy in the rearview mirror, I have stepped away to tend to her as she recovers from surgery. I asked my cousin to assist and fill in for me this month. Problem is that my cousin is not a writer, so we decided this might be a good time to have folks call in and she could answer their questions. Let's see how it went.

COUSIN GREENKEEPER: Thanks for calling in to Turf Talk. How can I help?

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT: Cousin Greenkeeper, the members at our course will not repair ball marks and pitch marks. What advice can you give to help us convey the importance of repairing ball marks to help keep the greens the best they can be?

COUSIN GREENKEEPER: Well, that is a tough one. You see, ball marks and pitch marks have existed since the game's origin. If Old Tom Morris was not able to get folks to repair pitch marks shortly after he invented topdressing, is it any wonder we still battle this problem in the 21st century? I once wanted to blame the PGA Tour because golfers watch professional golf telecasts and emulate what they see. When was the last time you witnessed a professional repairing a pitch mark on television? It may have been Greg Norman during The PLAYERS Championship in 1994. Heck, there are a lot of golfers today who think Greg Norman is just some shirtless Instagram guy.

Speaking of Instagram, did you see the video Ian Poulter posted

where he praised Brandon Richey and the team at Lake Nona and called the golfers lazy for refusing to repair their pitch marks? Perhaps the use of social media might prove to be a way to swing the pendulum back the other direction on the ball mark/pitch mark issue. Next caller.

GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENT: Cousin Greenkeeper, I am afraid to return rakes to the golf course once the pandemic is over. I am afraid golfers will refuse to use them now that they have become accustomed to not having to smooth their own footprints. Any advice?

COUSIN GREENKEEPER: This is an interesting question because I know some facilities have already returned rakes to the course and others have not. Who would have guessed Pine Valley was so far ahead of pandemic times by not having rakes on their course all these years? I think a full season of golf without rakes has accelerated play, sped up maintenance except for morning prep and perhaps allowed folks to temper their expectations when it comes to bunkers.

Oh, who am I kidding! Golfers do not rake bunkers properly because the last time they saw a bunker being raked on television was the 1988 B.C. Open. That's right, the PGA Tour used to have an event in Endicott, New York, sponsored by a comic strip. You see, a comic strip was something that appeared in newspapers. Never mind. Next caller.

GENERAL MANAGER: Cousin

Greenkeeper, we would like our superintendent to improve their communication skills. What advice do you have to help our superintendent better explain what they do, and why, to our members and guests?

COUSIN GREENKEEPER: This is an excellent question, and it pleases me to know as a general manager you support your superintendent and embrace the need for them to communicate openly and honestly with your membership. There are many tools to help superintendents and their agronomy teams tell their stories and highlight the work they are accomplishing.

The internet provides multiple platforms for creating blog pages, plus there are numerous social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to name only a few. These outlets provide ways to share pictures, videos and more to help better showcase what the teams are doing on the golf course and why, plus the impact to playing conditions and more.

Also, there are several leaders in the professional turfgrass community who are great examples and can help your superintendent and their assistants get started. Just look at the past winners of the *Golf Course Industry TweetUp Awards* to see the who's who of turfgrass social media rock stars.

In fact, the most recent winners were just announced the other day. Hats off to everyone for being wonderful examples to your peers. That is all the time we have for now. Thanks for calling. **GCI**



MATTHEW WHARTON, CGCS, MG, is the superintendent at Carolina Golf Club in Charlotte, North Carolina and past president of the Carolinas GCSA. Follow him on Twitter @CGCGreenkeeper.

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*Densicor recently received federal registration and will be available for purchase this summer.

**Dollar spot, brown patch, anthracnose, gray leaf spot and snow mold were the five most common diseases according to a national survey among golf course superintendents.

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