

INSIDE: Industry professionals share their best recipes in the "Turfheads Guide to Grilling"

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GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY

SIXTH ANNUAL

TURFHEADS



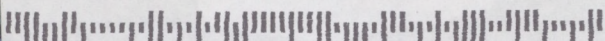
TAKE OVER

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THE FOLLOW UP

So, you are planning to attend a conference and show this winter. Before scheduling classes or meetings, think in reverse. Script your post-show plan and objectives first.

Struggling to do this? Perhaps you shouldn't be spending your — or the club's — time and money on registrations, memberships, flights, mileage, ground transportation, board (tip from a frequent traveler: go with a rental home or a condo over a hotel), food, drinks and forgotten toiletries.

Travel costs are inflating these days. Accounting departments possess reams of expense reports to prove it.

Those reports, though, can be justified by executing proper follow-up measures. The best conferences and shows lack definitive endings.

Think about a scholastic commencement. Is the occasion about what happened over the previous few years? Or is it about positioning yourself for the next few decades? Successful and motivated people waste nary a minute and never stop applying what they learn. They also think ahead — way ahead.

An idea introduced in a hallway conversation or educational session might not seem feasible next season. But what about three years from now? No detail is too small or too distant. Scribble it in the margins of a notebook or save it on a phone, tablet or computer file. Once or twice a year, study that notebook or file. Practical guidance ages well, so what you learned in 2022 will likely work in 2025.

Perhaps you heard a presentation or conversation about warm-season weed control while working at a cool-season course and thought, "Why should I care?" A few years from now, you might be looking for a change of scenery. Understanding different turf species and growing environments gives you a competitive advantage.

Above all else, golf is a people business. What good is solid turf if you can't attract people to experience it? And how do you produce solid turf without surrounding yourself with a dedicated team?

You'll meet dozens of fascinating and successful people at a conference or show. Listen and learn from their experiences. Thank them for their time at the end of a conversation — and thank them again a week or two after the event via a hand-written note (most recommended), email or text. Follow up on your conversation in the ensuing months and years.

Prolong relationships with suppliers, vendors and, yes, even editors you meet at an event. They see and hear plenty. Imagine being connected with thousands of courses instead of just one.

Suppliers and vendors are a huge part of what makes this industry special. Companies make significant investments in regional and national events. You likely have friendships and professional relationships because of something they have funded. Follow up with company representatives even if you don't have immediate or long-term purchasing needs. They know something that will help your course and, perhaps, career.

The issue you are enjoying, the sixth annual Turfheads Take Over, was built on relationships, many of which started at industry events. **Morris Johnson** visited our booth at the 2020 Golf Industry Show and explained the cycle of construction, storm recovery and maintenance experienced by his River Oaks Country Club team. We profiled that demanding cycle in our October 2020 issue and Johnson shares perspective from two decades leading the maintenance efforts of a high-profile club in this issue. **Richard Brown** and **Tyler Bloom** are busy fathers of young children who still found the time to contribute articles ... again. **Chad Allen**, another busy father, contributed his second and third *Golf Course Industry* articles this month. We met Allen hanging around before and after a Zoom conference for assistant superintendents hosted by Bloom earlier this year. He followed up with us a few weeks later and he now has a national platform to help his peers.

Johnson, Brown, Bloom and Allen are just four of the 15 industry professionals who contributed Turfheads Take Over articles in 2021 and they are among the hundreds of people we have encountered at industry events over the years. They followed up with us — and we followed up with them. The results are found on these pages. **GCI**



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James Karl Huntoon of Heritage Club, center, moderates a research panel at the Carolinas GCSA Conference and Show in Myrtle Beach.

ALMOST NORMAL

The Carolinas GCSA Conference and Show resembled a family reunion when it returned to Myrtle Beach after a virtual year.

By Matt LaWell

Walking out of the Myrtle Beach Convention Center last month, it was hard to think that everything about another Carolinas GCSA Conference and Show was anything other than perfect.

The weather was perfect, for a change, with highs approaching 70 and skies clear of rain. Every round of golf was perfect, no matter how any of us played. The conversations were perfect, too, because how could conversations not be perfect after nearly two years (and counting) of conversations only over the phone or on our screens?

Everything felt almost normal.

We are still in a global pandemic, of course, and we will be for a while, but we are, collectively, in a better place both physically and mentally than we were a year ago, when Myrtle Beach

did not fill up with superintendents, assistants, equipment managers, technicians, marketers, sales folks, researchers, professors, students and legends. We are out and about, catching up with old friends, meeting new friends, swapping stories, celebrating the best of us.

"What was really good," said **Charles Granger**, the chair of engineering technologies and golf and sports turf management, and a professor in golf and sports turf management at Horry Georgetown Technical College, "was that we finally got to do this again."

Granger was talking specifically about the Carolinas Student Turf Bowl — which his Fighting Mole Crickets rallied to win for the 10th time since 2000 — but he might as well have been talking about the whole week. Nearly 200 companies exhibited on the trade show floor, more than 360 folks participated in either the golf outing or the sporting clays competition, nearly 400 booths filled the convention center, and more than 1,400 seats were occupied at the various education sessions. The Carolinas GCSA provided those numbers but there is no need to take them with a grain of salt. They feel accurate. They reflect a week's worth of energy and enthusiasm.

For a change, we here at *Golf Course Industry* opted for a booth on the floor, which provided us with a central location for all those conversations rather than just wandering up and down aisles (though we did that, too). If you stopped by and talked with us, thank you, it was great to catch up. And if you didn't, how about next year?

Beyond the convention center and the variety of outside events, the city of Myrtle Beach felt pretty normal, too — offseason normal, at least. Across four days, the handful of breakfast spots where we munched omelettes and French toast were staffed and open, and our dinner spots were no more affected by supply chain shortages than anywhere else. (Running out





Corteva's Phil Bruner

of crab makes more sense, even with the Atlantic Ocean in view, when you consider costs have tripled over the last year.) Anecdotal evidence, to be sure, but still good indicators.

The best indicator, though, was the camaraderie of the week. Backs were clapped, photos were snapped, smiles were exchanged. What had we all missed over the last two years? Plenty, and this was the time for catching up. From the assistants' gathering on Sunday night all the way through trucks carting off booth displays on Wednesday afternoon — and the informal rounds and dinners that followed — it felt like old times.

The morning after he officially became the next Carolinas GCSA president, Callawassie Island director of agronomy **Billy Bagwell** summed up four days in just 25 words when he tweeted that "The @CarolinasGCSA is made up of many incredible people & we saw this week what happens when people work together to chase the same dream." Bagwell included a few photos with the tweet — one of him with Carolinas GCSA executive director **Tim Kreger**, Smithfields Country Club superintendent **Chuck Connolly** and Highlands Country Club superintendent **Brian Stiehler**; one of him with his wife, **Amanda**, and their sons, **Brantley** and **William**; and one of the Myrtle Beach skyline at sunset. But what sticks with me is a couple comments beneath that tweet.

"Congratulations Billy!" Carolina Golf Club superintendent **Matthew Wharton** responded. "So proud of you!"

"Always there for you!" Stiehler followed.

It takes seconds to send out a tweet, of course, but for Wharton and Stiehler, the two immediate past presidents of the Carolinas GCSA, to take that moment to support their friend, to build him up even more during a career high, is indicative of

the region and the industry.

It celebrates the best of us. It feels almost normal.

Matt LaWell is Golf Course Industry's managing editor.



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Literary lunches

At Royal Mayfair Golf Club, the crew is unexpectedly bonding through books, beverages and brilliant conversations. Assistant-in-training Neal Neigel shares how it all began and how it's going.

Interview by Lee Carr

Q: How did the book club get started?

A: Alberta (Canada) was experiencing a wave of COVID-19 that had us on lockdown. Several overwinter staff expressed an interest because reading would be a good reprieve from all of the Zoom meetings and group chats. A monthly meeting would be a social thing we could participate in remotely or in person, as restrictions allowed. We met in May, giving the seasonal staff time to settle in, and have been meeting on the last Friday of the month ever since.

Q: Are there participation guidelines?

A: We strongly encourage all participants to read the book but there are no requirements. We have had people with no knowledge of the book join our discussion, then read the book afterward, having been swayed by our opinions or compelling plot points. Reading is great and helps us get to know each other

even better. We haven't had any guests join us yet but we're open to that!

Q: How many people meet?

A: We've had as few as six during the shoulder season and as many as 14, for a book that garnered a lot of interest from people who previously hadn't participated in the book club. The Royal Mayfair turf department has around 30 staff in total, which includes a mix of seasonal and leadership staff, so attendance has been good.

Q: What is a typical meeting like?

A: We meet after our shift. There is

usually a theme for beverages and food, related to the story and inspired by the "Finer Things" club in the TV show "The Office". For example, a book with a winter setting had minty beverages and desserts; a book featuring a superfood salesperson and a "secret family recipe" called "Broc-o-Glop" was reflected with a vegetable spread and cranberry juice. We get creative with it. One person is in charge of directing conversation about the book and there are a lot of great resources online to help with how to do that. We start with what we like and what we don't about the novel, what the theme might be and what it meant to us, things like that.

Q: Has there been a favorite book?

A: Our books have been "Crow" by Amy Spurway, "Fifteen Dogs" by André Alexis, "Moon of the Crusted Snow" by Waubgeshig Rice, "Hench" by Natalie Zina Walschots, "The Midnight Bargain" by C. L. Polk and "Gutter Child" by Jael Richardson. All the books have been regarded well but there isn't a standout favorite given our very diverse opinions. That said, literary themes are often universal and, so far, our books have covered mortality, social justice, colonialism and racism. Who can't relate to these themes? Plot points aside, no one should be excluded from these conversations and fiction is a safe way to approach them.

Q: How are the books chosen?

A: Each month, people can suggest a book for the group to read the following month. We try to read contemporary Canadian authors but leave it open in regard to themes and genres. Everyone votes anonymously on the interest they have for reading a book from the list

Book club benefits

A book club can be great for helping staff members get to know each other and for engagement among full-time and seasonal employees (even during the off-season), and it can promote a healthy work-life balance. A variety of titles from sports biographies to literary classics to bestsellers means something is available for everyone. Books can be shared if individuals don't want to buy a copy, libraries often have "book club sets" that can be borrowed, and interest in the social camaraderie and conversation, though ideal, doesn't require a close reading. Check if anyone on your crew is interested in taking the initiative to start a book club and you might be surprised.



(from “not interested at all” to “very interested”) and the book with the most interest is selected.

Q: How is the club doing?

A: With autumn and a diminishing seasonal staff, we have seen a slight decrease in participation. Several staff that have returned to school have asked to be kept informed of the book we are currently reading as well as the date of the meeting so that they can continue to participate as schedules allow.

Q: Is there anything else you want to share?

A: We were surprised at the amount of interest the book club had! We were fully prepared for it to be just the three of us that originally had the idea of reading a book each month without much fanfare. We hope this inspires others to start their own book clubs ... the interest is probably there!

INDUSTRY buzz

Marion Hollins, a golf industry trailblazer and one of the first female golf course architects, was named an Honorary Member of the American Society of Golf Course Architects. Honorary Membership is a rare designation seldom given to anyone besides ASGCA Donald Ross Award recipients. A 2021 World Golf Hall of Fame honoree, Hollins entered golf course development in 1923 when she and others created the Women’s National Golf & Tennis Club in Glen Head, New York. The following year she approached developer **Samuel Morse** with a concept for an elite private club in Pebble Beach, California. Morse reserved 150 acres and put Hollins in charge of what became Cypress Point Club. ... The ASGCA also added **Gary Browning**, **Kipp Schulties** and **Joel Weiman** as new members. ... North Carolina State University’s Turfgrass Breeding and Genetics program, under the direction of **Dr. Susana Milla-Lewis**, released Lobo Zoysiagrass — experimental name XZ 14069. Lobo Zoysia will be exclusively licensed through Sod Solutions for commercial production and marketing. ... **Kendall Murphy** was recently hired as the first director of diversity, equity and inclusion for Troon. A former PGA career consultant, PGA pro and assistant college golf coach, Murphy is the co-founder and co-chair of the Black PGA Professionals Caucus and currently serves on the PGA National Education Committee.

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AMAZED AND ENTHUSED

An assistant superintendent recaps his experience at the 2021 Green Start Academy and urges his peers to aggressively pursue opportunities the industry presents.

By Chad Allen

Imagine a place where knowledge and ideas flow freely. A place where you get to connect with industry leaders and consultants willing to grow you as a person and professional. Imagine it's not just you there, but also 49 other high-achieving assistant superintendents similarly encouraged and excited about this opportunity. Then, have all this facilitated at one of the most iconic golf facilities in the world. Sounds impossible, doesn't it?

Well, I'm here to tell you I have lived this dream. The event is called Green Start Academy and it's held at the famed Pinehurst Resort. I recently completed the 2021 edition of the event and I can say, without a doubt, it represented the greatest professional development experience of my career.

Bayer Turf and Ornamental, Rain Bird and John Deere brought together superintendents, general managers, COOs and leading consultants to provide attendees with insight to stabilize and improve their business acumen. The group sharing insight with us included:

- **John Cunningham**, Grandfather Golf and Country Club
- **Bob Farren**, Pinehurst Resort
- **Matt Fauerbach**, Indigo Golf Partners
- **Pat Finlen**, Winchester Country Club
- **Shelia Finney**, GCSAA
- **Lukus Harvey**, Atlanta Athletic Club

- **Robert Hertzling**, Lakeside Golf Club
- **John Jeffreys**, Pinehurst Resort
- **Dan Meersman**, Philadelphia Cricket Club
- **Seth Miller**, Troon Country Club
- **Carol Rau**, PHR Career Expert
- **Stephen Tucker**, Four Seasons Orlando

The industry leaders discussed a variety of topics, including budgeting basics, getting the best from your team, cultivating business relationships, what they wish they had known when working as assistant superintendents, how to maximize a GCSAA membership, the digital transformation of the industry, the next five to 10 years in the business, and the importance of diversity and inclusion. A full day was devoted to career advancement led by Rau.

Presenters profoundly changed my life with insights and information they freely provided during discussion panels and individual breakout sessions. Breakout sessions featured mentor/mentee groups consisting of four or five assistant superintendents and a mentor. The small-group discussions developed into one of my favorite parts of the event. We were able to break down topics on a micro level and dive into the details of how and why these ideas and concepts worked.

My goals entering Green Start Academy consisted of increasing my networking footprint and obtaining greater insight on how top-level general managers and

COOs construct and implement budgets. Tucker served as my mentor for the event and he has been amazing. He presented the "Basics of Building a Budget and Managing Large Equipment Purchase Deal" lectures that included some of the most beneficial information I received.

Having the ability to pick my mentor's brain has already paid dividends. I told him I need to become more familiar with budgeting and how to construct a budget, and he encouraged me to format a budget and send it over to him so he could look it over. The feedback I have already received from him is priceless. His business acumen is impressive and his ability to explain and relate it to what turf managers do is incredible. Here's the best part: I can get this type of connection with any of the mentors/presenters who participated in the conference. They freely gave all of us their contact information, sometimes even their personal phone number.

As if things couldn't get any better, the whole experience was hosted at Pinehurst Resort. We stayed at the Holly Inn and were shuttled to the Carolina Hotel for our meetings and meals. The Pinehurst staff is first class. The level of hospitality and service is unmatched in any experience I have ever had. They treat everyone with respect and grace. You can see the passion and pride each employee takes in being part of this iconic destination. I don't think I ever met a group of nicer people. The food was amazing. The Holly Inn and Carolina Hotel were amazing.



The staff was amazing. The seminars, mentors and break-out groups were amazing.

You would think, "This can't get any better, right?" Well, all attendees were given the opportunity to play The Cradle, the resort's 9-hole short course. We broke down into our mentor/mentee groups and played these exhilarating holes. I think this is where the personal relationships really started to take shape. In this industry, we tend to be a quiet bunch of people. Introverts dominate, especially at the assistant superintendent position.

Sometimes we are tight-lipped and afraid to step out of our comfort zones, but something magical happens when you play golf. Those tight lips start to loosen, shoulders start to drop, scowls turn to smiles and laughter begins to permeate the air. Golf can be a great lubricator into the world of communication. Add that to the fact that this round of golf was being played at Pinehurst and you now have an unmatched melting pot of excitement and enthusiasm.

We were only there for a few days, but the relationships that were forged will last a lifetime. Before Green Start Academy, I sometimes felt like I was on an island. My passion for turf and the turf industry grows every day, and

while I have people in my life who have this same passion, I sometimes feel like my drive is on a different level. I now know that I am not on an island, but part of a community of eager, driven, motivated assistant superintendents who have just as much passion and commitment to the turf industry as I do. This would have never been possible without my experience at the Green Start Academy.

If you are an assistant looking to take your career to the next level, Green Start Academy is for you. This program will help separate you from the crowd and give you the tools and avenues needed to expand your turf career. Nothing is handed to you. You are still responsible for these connections and must reach out to those you meet. But if you are up to the challenge and are ready to take the next step, applying for Green Start Academy is the right choice.

Be Bold. Be intentional. Don't wait for opportunities to come to you. Differentiate yourself from the masses and go to the opportunities. I promise, the payoff is well worth the time.

Chad Allen is an assistant superintendent at The Club at Chatham Hills in Westfield, Indiana. His Turfheads Take Over article is on page 34.



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NOTE BOOK

COURSE NEWS



El Caballero Country Club

El Caballero Country Club in Tarzana, California, recently celebrated its official relaunch following a three-year, \$10 million renovation guided by **Rees Jones**. The course has been lengthened to 7,019 yards, with all turfgrass replaced with a drought-tolerant hybrid Bermudagrass blend. Along with native landscaping, the new course design will use 35 percent less water and save more than 35 million gallons per year.

The **Olympic Club's** board of directors approved plans to enhance golf facilities in collaboration with golf course architect **Gil Hanse**. Construction is expected to begin in the second half of 2022. The plans include improvements to short-game practice facilities, a San Francisco-themed Lombard Putting Course and restoration of the Lake Course.

Tripp Davis and Associates is nearing completion of its redesign work at **BraeBurn Country Club** in Houston, with a planned reopening of the front nine this month. Davis and his team have rebuilt and reshaped all the greens, rebuilt and shifted tees, and rebuilt bunkers in a more classic style. New Northbridge Bermudagrass was also installed along with a new irrigation system and upgraded drainage.

TPC Louisiana, host of the PGA Tour's Zurich Classic of New Orleans, reopened after damage from Hurricane Ida forced the club to close on Aug. 31. The Category 4 hurricane resulted in the toppling and snapping of hundreds of trees, including a 105-foot Bald Cypress tree in the 11th fairway that stood 90 yards in front of the green.

Troon added a quartet of properties to its management portfolio in November: **Bay Creek**, which sits on the Chesapeake Bay and includes both **Arnold Palmer** and **Jack Nicklaus** signature courses; the **Tom Vardon**- and **Charles Ramsdell**-designed **Eau Claire Golf & Country Club** in Altoona, Wisconsin; **Bowie Golf Club**, a municipal course in Bowie, Maryland; and **Seminole Legacy Golf Club** in Tallahassee, Florida, which hosted a 2021 NCAA men's regional championship and recently wrapped up a \$10 million renovation, all inked deals with the course management company.

Royal Golf de Marrakech, the second-oldest course in Morocco, and the **Joe Lee**-designed **Big Canoe GC** in the north Georgia mountains both recently completed bunker projects with **Capillary Bunkers**. Over in England, **Skylark Golf & Country Club** in Hampshire opted for **EcoBunkers** for their bunker overhaul.

Tartan Talks No. 65

Dana Fry embraces a day of the week others loathe.

"The love I have for building golf courses has never changed, and it's to the point of an obsession," he says. "I have never had a job in my life. I hear people say they look forward the weekends. I have always looked forward to Monday mornings because I love being on the road and building golf courses."



▲ Fry

Fry, a partner in Fry/Straka Global Golf Design, joined the Tartan Talks podcast to describe 38 of years of being immersed in golf course construction in the United States and beyond. Like many things involving Fry, the conversation took numerous passionate and creative turns. From stories about working with **Andy Banfield, Tom Fazio, Mike Strantz, Dr. Michael Hurdzan, Jason Straka** and others to candor about the competitive pressures of trying to land new course opportunities overseas, Fry seemingly has a lesson from nearly every situation a modern golf course architect might encounter. On the podcast, he also goes inside his firm's multi-year work at Union League National, a gargantuan 27-hole project in southern New Jersey featured as part of *Golf Course Industry's* November cover package. "We were fortunate to get a job of this scope and magnitude," Fry says.

Available on the Superintendent Radio Network page of Apple Podcasts, Spotify and wherever else you listen to podcasts — as well as on the *Golf Course Industry* website at <https://www.golfcourseindustry.com/videos/category/superintendent-radio-network/> — the conversation makes for engaging winter listening and is the ideal way to end the fifth full season of Tartan Talks.



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Jessica Lenihan

FARM MANAGER, GREEN VALLEY TURF

Jessica Lenihan is a unique figure in the turf industry: an assistant superintendent with no desire to take on a head superintendent's role.

At the start of 2021, Lenihan was an assistant at Hayden Lake Country Club, a private facility in Hayden Lake, Idaho, just across the Washington border from Spokane.

Shortly before speaking with **Rick Woelfel** on the Wonderful Women of Golf podcast, she made a career change, taking a position at Green Valley Turf in Platteville, Colorado, where she maintains bentgrass on the company's turf farm.

"The main reason they brought somebody in from golf is they're expanding their bentgrass from 10 acres up to 50," she says. "The guys that run everything over here came from sports turf, so they're really knowledgeable in (bluegrass), but they don't really have a strong bent background. So, they wanted someone from golf to come in and kind of take care of all that."

While Lenihan rarely plays golf, she grew up around the game. Her father ran outside operations at The Coeur d'Alene Resort in Idaho and she took a summer job there as a teenager. After six seasons, she moved to Hayden Lake as an assistant superintendent. Over the course of a decade, her responsibilities grew to the point where she managed a crew that swelled to 25 during the peak season. But she never aspired to head her own turf department. "Honestly, having everything fall down on you just wasn't something that ever thrilled me," she says.

Lenihan recalls something she was told by **Jeremiah Farmer**, her boss at Hayden Lake.

"He told me a longtime ago, 'The least favorite part of my job is all the stuff you have to deal with. Your greens committee meetings, your phone calls with vendors,'" she says. "He spent so much more time in the office when what he really loved doing was being out on the golf course. That was an adjustment I really just did not feel like I was wanting to make or had any desire to make."

"I've been approached several times for different sales positions and it's the same thing. I can't give up the golf course. I can't give up those 5 a.m. sunrises. Having all that (responsibility) fall on your shoulders was something that I had the ability to turn off as an assistant when I went home. I don't think, as the head guy in charge, you can do that."

Lenihan spoke to the idea that assistants should want to take on a head superintendent's responsibilities.

"It's like, if you're not first, you're last; if you're not the head guy, you're somehow failing

at your career," she says. "If you find yourself in a good position, where you're working for the right club, you're working for the right people, you've got a good life synergy with your staff, then I don't think you should be considered a career failure or you're not living up to your potential when it's like, 'I found a spot where I'm really successful, I enjoy it. Why would I want to give that up?'"

Some head superintendents encourage their assistants to move on after a certain amount of time. Lenihan says the dynamic varies from one club to another.

"There are some places you can go in for a few years and you can learn a lot, but it might be that you kind of expend yourself in that spot and you don't feel like you're really challenged anymore, so it is time to move on. So, it really varies by property. But I have always just hated all the material out there with assistants that is kind of pushing you into that next role."

Lenihan was part of the corps of female volunteers at the U.S. Women's Open at the Olympic Club in June. She found it a memorable experience despite some initial reservations.

"I've always kind of hated the whole 'women in turf' thing, like making it a thing. I just am of the opinion that I want to go to work to keep my job. I don't necessarily feel like it needs to be a big deal. But this was a totally eye-opening, crazy bonding experience that I just did not really expect. I definitely created some lifelong friends from a week of just being able to hang out and share experiences in the industry with other women who do the same thing that you do." **GCI**



"It's like, if you're not first, you're last; if you're not the head guy, you're somehow failing at your career."



**SUPERINTENDENT
RADIO NETWORK**

To hear the full interview, visit the Superintendent Radio Network page on the *Golf Course Industry* website, Apple Podcasts and Spotify.



TURFHEADS GUIDE TO GRILLING


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TURFHEADS GUIDE TO GRILLING

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Cooking has always been a task I've enjoyed my entire life. It has been a way to relax when I was a superintendent and now, traveling for work, a way to enjoy a fresh home-cooked meal. My mother taught home economics in a local high school, so I guess the trait is in my blood.

Whether in the kitchen or grilling outdoors, cooking is a way for family, friends or people in general to come together. During the pandemic, I was off the road a good deal of the time and was able to bond with my family over mealtime. I feel like from social media posts and other forms of communication that everyone else was participating in some similar form of activity. Hence, the birth of the Turfheads Grilling campaign with our good friends at *Golf Course Industry*. We have had many entries and banter back and forth during our yearlong campaign. I'm looking forward to trying some of these great recipes over the coming months.

As we come through the interruptions of the pandemic and life returns to a new normal, we hope that you join us and use grilling as a way to come together with family and friends.

Sam Green
President, AQUA-AID Solutions



Don Bloom

Durand Eastman Golf Course

Wings

INGREDIENTS

For the wings

- 4 pounds wings cut into drumettes and flats
- 1 tablespoon aluminum free baking powder (NOT baking soda)
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons garlic powder
- Pinch of cracked pepper

For the Buffalo sauce

- ¼ cup unsalted butter
- ½ cup Frank's Original Red Hot Sauce
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar

INSTRUCTIONS

- Smoke at 375 for 35 minutes (flip halfway through).
- Optional sprinkle with Traeger chicken rub.
- Shake in sauce and return to smoker for 15 minutes.



Ryan Cummings
Elcona Country Club

Smoked German rouladen

INGREDIENTS

- 1½-pound thin round steak, sliced into ½-inch slices
- 5 to 7 kosher dill pickles, cut into thin strips
- 2 onions, cut into slices
- 5 to 7 pieces thick cut bacon
- Salt and pepper
- 2 cans tomato soup

INSTRUCTIONS

- Lay strips of round steak flat on a cutting board. Place one pickle slice, a bit of bacon and a bit onion on each steak strip. Roll the strips and hold together with toothpicks.

- Prepare a smoker with hickory material and preheat to 180 degrees.
- Place rouladen on smoker grates and smoke for 30 minutes.
- Remove from grill and increase heat to 325.
- Add rouladen to a Dutch oven that contains the tomato soup mixed with one can of water.
- Place Dutch oven on smoker and cook for 90 minutes.
- Serve over traditional spaetzle or German noodles.



Darren Davis
Olde Florida Golf Club

Mangrove snapper

INGREDIENTS

For the fish and sides

- Mangrove snapper
- Extra virgin olive oil
- Salt and fresh ground pepper
- Finely chopped fresh garlic
- Asparagus
- Jasmine rice

For the lemon butter caper sauce

- 1 stick of unsalted butter
- Zest and juice from 1 lemon
- 2 to 3 tablespoons drained capers

INSTRUCTIONS

- Grill fish on the Big Green Egg with plate setter and indirect.
- Marinate fish in extra-virgin olive oil, light salt, fresh ground pepper and finely chopped fresh garlic.
- Flip the fish once after it turns from translucent to white at approximately 250 for 5 minutes.
- Grill for another 5 minutes until the fish is flaky.



Matt Giese
Syngenta

Smoked deviled eggs

INGREDIENTS

- 7 hard boiled eggs, cooked, cooled and peeled
- 3 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 1 teaspoon mustard (brown or spicy preferred)
- 1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar
- 1 to 1½ teaspoons tarragon vinegar to taste
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- Salt and pepper to taste

Instructions

- Set smoker to 180 and allow to reach target temperature.
- Place peeled eggs directly on the grill grate for 30 minutes.
- Remove eggs and allow to cool.
- Slice eggs lengthwise and gently remove yolks into mixing bowl.
- Add mayonnaise, mustard and vinegars. Salt and pepper to taste. Mix well until smooth.
- Place mixture into halved egg whites. Sprinkle with paprika.
- Serve immediately or chill until ready to serve.

Dr. Brandon Horvath

University of
Tennessee

Chicken ballotine

INGREDIENTS

- 1 whole chicken, deboned
- Favorite seasoning rub (I use a customized version of the Meat Church rubs)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Butcher's twine
- 1 pound Italian sausage (pick your heat)
- 4 large handfuls of spinach
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup low moisture mozzarella cheese



THE
THERMAREDS GUIDE TO
GRILLING

INSTRUCTIONS

- Debone whole chicken using Jacques Pepin's technique
- Pour $\frac{1}{2}$ olive oil over skin side of chicken and sprinkle seasoning rub onto skin.
- Pour remaining olive oil over meat and sprinkle with seasoning rub.
- Place chicken in refrigerator while you prepare stuffing.
- Brown Italian sausage over medium heat until it's nearly cooked through.
- On top of the simmering sausage, place 4 to 5 large handfuls of fresh spinach and stir, allowing them to wilt and soak up rendered pork fat from the sausage.
- Remove chicken from refrigerator, and with the legs away from you, open chicken up so meat is exposed and facing up.
- Spoon completed stuffing onto the chicken, taking care to drain using a slotted spoon or similar.
- Spread stuffing out over chicken, pushing some into the cavity of the legs, and leaving about a 1-inch border free of stuffing around the outside of the chicken.
- Carefully fold chicken over so as to roll stuffing inside, and push together so it resembles a normal whole bone-in chicken. Carefully roll over, so open seam is now on the bottom. Reach hands under and make sure seam has remained closed.
- Using butcher's twine, tie a slip knot onto one of the ankle joints at the bottom of the leg. Pull out a length of twine, and make series of underhand loops, sliding each under the chicken and pulling tight, but leaving some room for chicken to expand. After 4 to 5 loops, run twine down the centerline of the chicken underneath, drawing it tight and tying it to the remainder of the twine on the ankle joint. Trim ends.
- Place chicken in a smoker/pellet grill on high smoke (225) for 30 to 45 minutes, then turn heat up to 400 until center reads 165 using a meat thermometer.
- Remove chicken and rest for 20 to 25 minutes.
- Remove twine, cut chicken into $\frac{3}{4}$ - to 1-inch slices and serve.



James Jackson
Vereens Turf Products

PB&J wings

INGREDIENTS

- 24 wings
- 3 tablespoons creamy peanut butter
- 2 tablespoons Jalapeño jelly
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1½ tablespoons of Thai chili sauce
- 1 tablespoon of honey
- 3 cloves minced garlic
- 1 quart peanut oil
- 1 tablespoon butter unsalted

INSTRUCTIONS

- Set smoker to 275.
- Once heated, smoke for 1 to 1½ hours or internal temp 165.
- When done, have oil heated to fry wings to make crispy for about 2 minutes.
- Mix all other ingredients in a small pot and simmer about 3 to 4 minutes.
- Add wings in large bowl and coat wings



Ana Martinez
CMF Global

Guatemalan-style grilled pig

INGREDIENTS

- Half Pig
- Garlic
- Thyme
- Bay leaf
- Lemon
- Butter/pig fat
- Salt
- Pepper
- Water
- Dark beer
- Oregano

INSTRUCTIONS

- Preheat the grill (cover) at 350 to 400.
- Prepare a dressing with the pig fat (or butter if you can't find pig fat).
- With garlic, thyme, bay leaf, oregano, salt and pepper, cover the pig with a silicon brush.
- Put your pig on the grill, meat side first.
- Cook for 3 hours, turning the pig every 45 minutes.
- Brush the pig every 20 minutes with dressing.
- Pour the beer over the pig after two hours. This helps the meat become more tender.



Rick Tegtmeier

Des Moines Golf & Country Club

Canadian bacon at home

INGREDIENTS

For the Brine

- 1 gallon water
- 6.4 ounces salt (I use 1¼ cups of the Diamond Crystal brand Kosher salt)
- 40 grams/3 tablespoons pink salt (6.25 percent sodium nitrite curing salt)
- ½ cup maple syrup
- ½ cup sugar
- 8 garlic cloves, peeled and rough chopped
- 4 fresh or dried bay leaves
- 1 tablespoon dried thyme or a generous handful of fresh thyme
- 1 tablespoon whole black peppercorn
- Juice of 2 lemons

For the Canadian Bacon

- 8- to 10-pound pork loin

INSTRUCTIONS

- Combine all the brine ingredients in a large, non-reactive pot. Stirring occasionally, heat the brine over medium heat until the salt and sugar are fully dissolved. Let the brine cool, then pop it in the fridge to chill.
- While brine is chilling, trim the pork loin of any excess fat and slice in half to form two 4- to 5-pound cylinders. Put each piece of pork loin in a heavy-duty, gallon-size freezer bag. Divide the brine and the aromatics evenly between the bags, squeeze out excess air and seal the bags well.
- Brine the pork in the refrigerator for 3 to 4 days, flipping the pork periodically to ensure an even brine.
- Rinse and dry the pork, then allow to dry to form a pellicle.
- Hot smoke the pork at 200 until the internal temperature of the pork reaches 150 degrees.



Russ Warner
Golf Course Industry

Spatchcock chicken

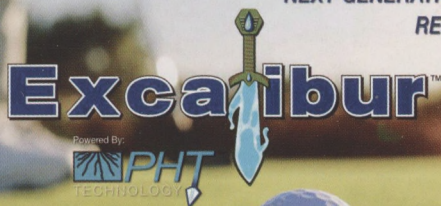
INGREDIENTS

- 1 (3-to-4 pound) whole chicken
- Your favorite chicken rub or seasoning (I use Killer Hogs AP rub)
- Olive oil for binder

INSTRUCTIONS

- Cut out the backbone of the chicken with some kitchen shears and open it up like a book. This allows for the entire chicken to heat up fast and cook evenly throughout.
- Spatchcock the chicken the night before, pat it dry and put it in the fridge overnight to completely dry out.
- Rub the chicken down with olive oil.
- Coat all sides and apply rub.
- Preheat smoker or grill to 425; the higher temperature helps get the skin extra crispy.
- Place the chicken on the grates, skin side up.
- Cook for 45 to 60 minutes or until the internal temperature in the breast reaches 165 degrees.
- Remove the chicken from the grill and let rest for 10 to 15 minutes before cutting and serving.

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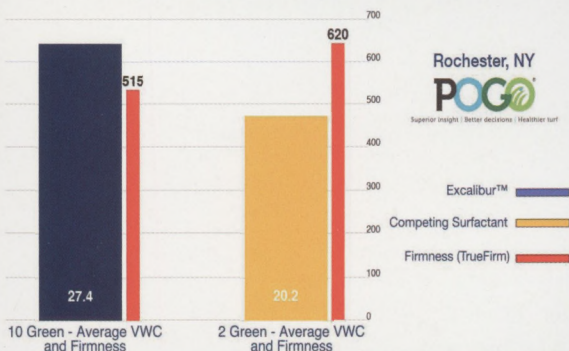


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TUNE IN TO GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY'S PODCAST SERIES

**TARTAN
TALKS**

Guests from the American Society of Golf Course Architects discuss their career paths, current and past work, design trends, and how they work with superintendents and operators to improve the functionality, playability and marketability of golf courses.

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GOLF COURSE
beyond
the page

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

GOLF COURSE
**OFF
THE
COURSE**

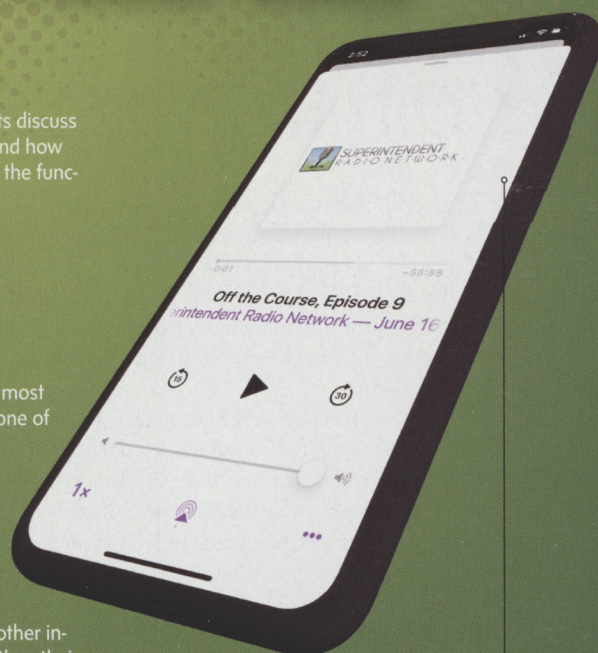
Candid conversations with superintendents, directors and other industry professionals about anything and everything other than their work. Episodes focus on physical and mental health, outside interests, family, and the constant pursuit of life-work balance among other topics.

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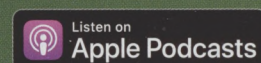


GOLF COURSE
**GREENS WITH
ENVY**

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.



AVAILABLE ON:





BE A BETTER COMMUNICATOR

Superintendents are some of the most knowledgeable and articulate folks on any golf club or facility's staff. They're a fount of information about agronomic issues, and if you'll give them half a chance, you'll realize their knowledge isn't limited to growing and maintaining grass.

So why does the word "communications" befuddle and frustrate so many of them?

Why do some feel that they have so little to say, or even feel threatened when the communications spotlight shines on them? Do they worry that one of their golfers will criticize their efforts? Or challenge their capabilities? Whatever the reason, it's important for superintendents to remember that effective, insightful and timely communications are as much a part of their jobs as mud on their boots.

Here are a handful of tips that will make even the most reluctant superintendent a more confident and effective communicator:

You're the expert — show it. Take an hour before year's end to plan a 2022 editorial calendar of timely and relevant articles that can be distributed (electronically or in print) by your club or facility's communications point person or posted on the course's website. One article per month is a good target to shoot for, and they don't need to be more than 300 to 400 words.

Choose any subject you think golfers need to know more about or would find interesting. Not sure what subjects to include? Ask a few players with whom you have a relationship. A few

possibilities: changes they will notice in course conditions in the weeks to come, the different types of grasses used on the course and the steps your team takes to keep them healthy, and what golfers can do to contribute to healthy and sustainable course conditions. While you're at it, get creative with easy-to-shoot-and-edit video.

Build your research library.

As a natural researcher, digging for information comes easily. As you're building out your editorial calendar, also consider a handful of topics that are of interest and for which you want to deepen your knowledge. These should be areas that represent agronomic trends, such as efficient labor utilization, low-water-use grasses and bunker reduction.

Create electronic folders where you can add and store information as you come across it. Now, when you're ready to write about a subject for one of your monthly articles, you're already on your way. And when management asks about a particular course of action related to one of these subjects, you can quickly prepare a memo or presentation with the industry's latest thinking and insights.

Listen up! The best communicators are also the best listeners. Listen to what your golfers are saying about course conditions and where they would like to see changes. You might be surprised how

fascinating many golfers find your insights and the extent of your knowledge. Maybe you overhear a group of golfers talking about a thin area on the eighth green or a coyote they saw crossing No. 17. Those are opportunities to talk about remedial actions you're taking to restore the green or to discuss the range of animals that call your course home. And when you hear television broadcasters mention an agronomic or maintenance challenge a course may be having, that's your cue to let your players know that you're on top of the issue at their course.

Be a teacher. Most golfers do not understand the dynamics involved with golf course care and upkeep.

For example, most favor trees and the shade they provide, but they're probably not aware of the damaging effects of shade on healthy turf. Most golfers want to avoid pesticides, but they probably don't know how diligently you and your team use certain practices. Explain your efficient use of water. Help your golfers understand how carefully you monitor water consumption, explain your environmental stewardship commitment and educate them on the benefits that open green spaces such as golf courses provide their community.

When you stop and think about it, you really do have a lot to talk about, and no one is more qualified than you to lead the conversation. **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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2021 GRAINY AWARDS

In keeping with the other major award shows this year, we're presenting the 2021 Grainys on a Zoom call. Feel free to change your background, let your dog bark and pop open a cold one as we recall another strange year of notable moments, epic successes and box office flops. Please unmute your microphone for the 2021 Grainy Awards.

BEST ACTION DRAMA U.S. OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP AT TORREY PINES

For the first time in at least the last decade, this championship was properly about the golf course — its excellent setup and its playable conditions. A thrilling final round showcased the pressure of the National Open, not a manmade, agronomical screwup. It certainly helped that an excellent drama unfolded over the final nine holes, making the 2021 U.S. Open among the most memorable in years. The only regrettable moment was the delayed-reaction, mistimed fighter jet sendoff for former USGA CEO **Mike Davis**. Do we know who approved this stellar use of taxpayer dollars? Perhaps Mike himself?

BEST TECHNICAL EFFECTS MONEY GAME

With the explosion of legalized gambling and the PGA Tour's totally unsurprising embrace of gaming, the technology employed for viewing golf is going to need an overhaul. The three-second broadcast delay allows ample time for on-course techies and texters to hedge



their bets before any viewers at home watch the putt drop. Televised golf is going to need a thorough review — or a new watchdog, preferably one with sharp teeth — before long.

BEST REMAKE LEFTY PULLS DOWN ANOTHER MAJOR

A win for the ages ... and the aged. On the famously tough Ocean Course at Kiawah, **Phil Mickelson** turned back the calendar and a very competitive field to emerge victorious from the (literal) crowd and win the 2021 PGA Championship and his sixth major. And speaking of Phil ...

BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR IN TWO ROLES AT THE SAME TIME PHIL TAKES ON THE CHAMPIONS TOUR

Since jumping on the old-guys tour last fall, Phil has won four times, including his first two times teeing it up. So, he can beat the seniors *and* he can beat the youngsters. When is he going to lace up for the Race to Dubai? Does he think LPGA

stands for the Lefty Professional Golf Association? Watch out, AJGA! And fasten your broadcast chair seatbelt, **Jim Nantz**.



BEST VISUAL EFFECTS THE GREENKEEPER AT ROYAL ST. GEORGE'S

Paul Larsen, the keeper of the green at Royal St. George's in southeastern England, stole the show at the 2021 Open Championship. The course, the coif and the untied Converse ("Cons") were sights to behold and quick-



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

ly endeared him to the viewing public. You remember Paul. So, real quick and don't cheat: Who won the Open Championship?

ANIMATED SHORT FILM BATTLE OF THE BS

The off-screen and on-screen ongoing Bryson vs. Brooks brouhaha took on a life of its own and reached a frenzied crescendo right before the fall's Ryder Cup. The brawny villain took on the mad scientist repeatedly with photo bombs, social media jabs and Twitter fights. The media certainly ate it up and kept the flames fanned. But did the public care? And did it



help or hurt how each man-child played? Whether it was real or forced, their handshake when the Ryder Cup was over couldn't have come soon enough.

WORST FILM EDITING TERPS BECOMES TWERPS

The USGA program formerly known as TERP — Turfgrass and Environmental Research Program — was rebranded the Mike Davis Program for Advancing Golf Course Manage-



ment in honor of the retiring USGA CEO. Advancing? Lest we forget, Mike "managed" the setups at Pebble Beach (2010), Merion (2013), Pinehurst (2014), Chambers Bay (2015) and Shinnecock (2018) in less than stellar fashion. For my money, the honor should have gone to the late **Jim Snow**, the longtime national director of the USGA's Green Section, who truly was a champion of research and the environment. Or how about one of the many other researchers, scientists or environmentalists who, through tireless turfgrass research, has improved our game?

BEST REMAKES A STAR IS BORN

Like film editing, golf course restoration is a fine art.

Andrew Green's "remakes" of the classics — Inverness Club, Oak Hill Country Club, Congressional Country Club and Scioto Country Club — are sequels worthy of Grainy

Committee acknowledgment.

BEST DRAMA TO COME ANOTHER TIGER COMEBACK?

Following February's horrific car accident, which left the iconic **Tiger Woods** in no shape to walk let alone play golf, we're getting hints of his rehabilitation progress. It certainly wouldn't be the first time he's been counted out only to shock and surprise the golf world. Don't bet against him (and I'm sure you can already get odds somewhere in Vegas). We're looking forward to this sequel almost as much as Season 3 of "Ted Lasso."

LIVE ACTION SHORT FILM GCSAA TAKES DOWN USGA

Hats off to CEO **Rhett Evans**, president **Mark F. Jordan** and the board of the GCSAA for standing up to the **Darth Vader** that is the USGA, which attempted to take on

superintendent job placement as part of the Green Section's "services." Fast action by the GCSAA mobilized the forces and shut down this attempted money-grab before it ever left the launch pad.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD THE GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENT

Because the last year or so seemed like a lifetime to all of you "non-essential" workers who kept courses open, gave the activity-starved public something to do and somewhere to go, and helped make golf cool (or at least profitable) again. All this while continuing to battle labor shortages, inflation, supply chain woes and national health issues, and dealing with the never-ending oversupply of ball marks and player demands. "Supporting" actors, indeed. Without your support, golf would have faded away like **Rupert Grint**. **GC**



LOOKING BACK AT 2021

It's been a strange year, this 2021. It started off with hopes of rolling back the pandemic and returning to normal. It has ended with accepting that we will have to live with this thing and make the best of it, despite the presence of looming risk. As usual, the golf world provided an opportunity to escape to some extent. I used to travel 150 days a year. It was closer to 30 this year, but that did not prevent me from experiencing some memorable things.

AN INCREDIBLE YEAR FOR WOMEN'S GOLF

Over a three-month, mid-season stretch, I realized the most compelling golf I was watching was women's golf. It started with the drama of **Yuka Saso's** narrow victory in the U.S. Women's Open at San Francisco's Olympic Club Lake Course — where the maintenance staff was bolstered by nearly 30 female volunteers. **Annika Sorenstam's** runaway win at the U.S. Senior Women's Open at Brooklawn Country Club in Fairfield, Connecticut, was inspiring to watch. **Nelly Korda** sealed her yearlong dominance with an Olympic gold medal at Kasumigaseki Country Club East Course outside Tokyo.

Then came the AIG Women's Open at Carnoustie, Scotland, won by **Anna Nordqvist**. Finally, there was the tension and excitement — or disappointment, depending on your point of view — of the Europeans eking out a Solheim Cup win at Inverness Club in Toledo, Ohio. In terms of personality, quality of courses and competitiveness of events, the women beat out the men in 2021 by a wide margin.

THE COURSE MOST IN NEED OF RESCUE/RESTORATION

Lost in the publicity buzz of major restorations at well-known courses is the experience of everyday golfers on publicly accessible courses that desperately need upkeep and TLC. That's what came to mind during a quick, non-playing stroll across wind-swept Timber Point Golf Course along Long Island's South Shore. This 1927 design by **Charles H. Alison** featured a string of holes along Great South Bay, none more dramatic than the par-3 Gibraltar hole, which is now the fifth hole on the Blue Nine.

The once-private course is now in the hands of the Suffolk County Parks Department and was compromised by the addition of a third nine in the 1960s, then subjected to heavy use, structural neglect, and the relentless impact of tidal intrusion and rising water levels. A number of industry luminaries have quietly explored rescue measures, only to be frustrated by county politics. Help is needed badly. And soon.

EXPERIENCED SUPERINTENDENTS

I am continually impressed by the professionalism and commitment of superintendents everywhere I go and when I call for help or technical advice. At the risk of leaving names out, I have learned a lot this year in the company of such turfgrass sages as **Peter Bly** of Brooklawn Country Club; **Phil Cuffare** of Oakland Hills Country Club; **Ian Daniels** at Teugega Country Club; **Scott Dodson**, CGCS, at Park Country Club in Buffalo; **Jeff Goren**, CGCS, of Mirabel, Golf Club; **Keith Kresina** of

The Golf Club; **Shaun Mitchell** at Whitinsville Country Club; **Pat Sisk** at Longmeadow Country Club; **Paul Stead** at Kennett Square Golf & Country Club; and the *real* Minnesota twins, **Chris Tritabaugh** at Hazeltine National Golf Club and **Jeff Johnson** at Minikahda Club.

A LETTER

I get a lot of emails and a growing number of Twitter and LinkedIn messages. I don't, however, get many actual letters. But the neatly typed one I got from a superintendent recently really moved me. As with so many course managers these days, it involved an underfunded, underpriced, quality facility mismanaged by a board that could not commit to a vision. Decision-makers were torn among those who could afford anything, those who did not care, and those who were financially stressed out and barely hanging on. This split was reflected in the golf course, which combined an all-too-familiar combination of old-world charm, benign neglect and near felonious assault.

As with every club I have encountered, it's a matter of money, or at least convincing those who have it to part with a little more lest the facility continues its gradual slide into oblivion. The writer has my full support and knows it, though it isn't enough without a turnaround in board intentions. It's the superintendent and their understaffed crew who will keep the club in a patina of serviceable shape without the golfers really knowing about it. It's the kind of letter that could have explained the status of several thousand colleagues. **GCI**

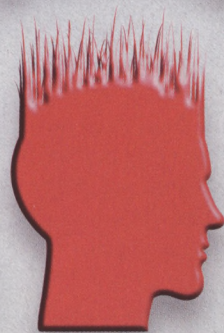


BRADLEY S. KLEIN, PH.D. (political science), former PGA Tour caddie, is a veteran golf journalist, book author (*"Discovering Donald Ross,"* among others) and golf course consultant. Follow him on Twitter (@BradleySKlein).

GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY

TURFHEADS

TAKE OVER



ISSUE

Harrell's
Growing a Better World®

YOU CAN BE IN TOTAL CONTROL

By Raymond Snyder, Ph.D.

Use of controlled-release nutrients has increased significantly during the past decade. The desire for maximum control of nutrient release, reduced availability of labor, greater emphasis on environmental stewardship, and in some regions, increased regulatory restrictions on soluble nutrient inputs, has resulted in greater demand for controlled-release nutrients. Turf and landscape managers have also become very innovative in how this technology can be utilized by strategically applying the numerous controlled-release nutrient sources and longevities to maximize plant response and health throughout the growing season, in all types of climatic environments.

A FORMAL INTRODUCTION

Controlled-release fertilizers are the ultimate “Enhanced Efficiency Fertilizers.” Enhanced efficiency fertilizers (EEF) are defined as “Fertilizer products with characteristics that allow increased plant uptake and reduced nutrient losses to the environment, when compared to an appropriate reference product.” More specifically, a controlled-release fertilizer is “a slow-release fertilizer that is engineered to provide nutrients over time, at a predictable rate, under specified conditions.” The ability of controlled-release fertilizer to “provide nutrients over time, at a predictable rate, under specified conditions” is the true differentiator in comparison to other EEF’s such as sulfur-coated urea, reacted-urea and stabilized urea sources.

HOW DO CONTROLLED-RELEASE TECHNOLOGIES WORK? IT’S ACTUALLY VERY SIMPLE AND FREE

Controlled-release fertilizers work by utilizing the processes of osmosis and diffusion available to all of us, at no charge! Once the minimum thresholds for moisture and temperature are met, plant nutrients begin the process of releasing as water is attract-

ed to the high concentration of nutrients inside the fertilizer prill. That water moves through the semi-permeable coating (osmosis), then as the plant nutrient core solubilizes, that nutrient solution has the inherent desire to move from the area of high concentration inside the fertilizer prill to the lower concentration the soil solution (diffusion). This process can be described as “osmotic diffusion.” Do you make your own hot tea? If so, you have observed this naturally occurring process right before your very eyes! Next time you make a cup of tea in a clear glass, watch as the water moves inside the tea bag (area of higher concentration), then slowly reverses once the tea is solubilized, and seeps out of the bag and back into the water (area of lower concentration). Envision the color change was plant nutrients diffusing back into the soil solution ready and available for plant uptake.

NOT SUGAR COATING IT

A major factor associated with the consistency, dependability and predictability of controlled-release nutrient sources is a highly durable protective coating. Without a durable protective coating, these plant nutrient sources become really expensive soluble nutrient sources. Vetting and selection of monomer sources by manufacturers is important in ensuring that a durable polymer coating is protecting the plant nutrient substrate. Ideally, the combination of monomers should react to create a homogenous, thin yet durable coating around the plant nutrient core. Finally, the manufacturing process should be optimized to produce consistency from batch to batch, thereby imparting maximum predictability of each controlled-release type.

SO PREDICTABLE

As previously noted, the predictable release rate of controlled-release fertilizers is a defining and differentiating feature relative

to other plant nutrient sources. Harnessing the predictable power of controlled-release fertilizers is easily accomplished using nutrient release modeling software that predicts nutrient release rates based on; historical weather data of a specific geographic location, selected controlled-release source, application date and application rate. A highly predictable nutrient release rate can then be tailored to one's specific needs by modifying the controlled-release source variant, application date and application rate. Some nutrient modeling software versions can easily predict nutrient release from overlapping fertilizer applications by combining the respective release characteristics of each application, thereby, providing a complete, season-long prediction of plant nutrient release.

KEEPING IT CLEAN

Controlled-release fertilizers have demonstrated exceptional environmental performance. Evaluation under both laboratory and field settings have concluded that controlled-release fertilizers can greatly reduce the loss of plant nutrients in the environment by minimizing nitrogen leaching, volatilization and N₂O emissions relative to soluble nitrogen sources. It therefore is not surprising that controlled-released fertilizers are at times recommended by local municipalities in efforts to preserve local ecosystems when they are deemed vulnerable to non-point nutrient exposure.

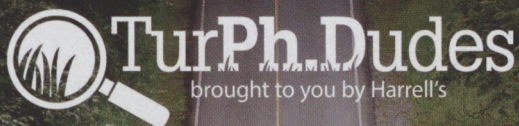
For more information about POLYON® Controlled-Release Fertilizer contact your sales representative www.polyon.com. Follow our TurPh.Dudes podcast to stay informed of current industry topics. TurPh.Dudes is available in iTunes or Google Play.



SIXTH ANNUAL

TURFHEADS
TAKE OVER
/ISSUE

Our success depends on your success.
We're committed to going the extra mile
to ensure you come out on top.



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—Dr. Jeff Atkinson, Harrell's Director of Agronomy

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How do you know when it's time?

Morris Johnson describes what he has learned in two decades leading the maintenance of a high-end club and what factors go into a decision to retire from a desirable job.

Retiring from where you have enjoyed working for 20 years is a roller coaster of emotions. I have had just two jobs in the last 32 years. You're passing 30 greens and 35 people onto somebody else to care of.

It's very bittersweet. There are a lot of things I'm looking forward to. Obviously, not worrying about the weather 24/7 is big. Whether I'm on property or at a national conference, if No. 12 green dies, it's my responsibility. Not having

that living, breathing entity always under your responsibility will be a refreshing change.

So many people in other jobs can leave their job for two weeks and not give it a second thought when they are away. That's not the case as a golf course superintendent. But it's going to be different no longer working at one of the top clubs in the country and being away from the prestige and honor of being at a club like River Oaks Country Club.

A friend of mine told me a great

thing: every job has bad days. You know you're fortunate when the good days always outnumber the bad. When the bad days start to become more numerous, to the point where they are almost driving even with your good days, that's a wakeup call. I'm not one to sit still, but I was ready for another challenge.

We have had such non-stop construction, at a 200 mph pace for seven of the last nine years, and then we went straight into maintenance mode, which was very refreshing.

Morris Johnson is retiring as the director of golf course operations at River Oaks Country Club in Houston, Texas, at the end of 2021. He begins a new role as national sales director for Bunker Solution in January.

But I almost miss the challenge of something other than the day-to-day maintenance. When an opportunity came along with **Kevin Clark** at Bunkers Solution, it just opened my eyes that maybe I'm ready for a new chapter and a new challenge.

THE JOB HAS CHANGED

River Oaks Country Club has been phenomenal. The pressures and the expectations, particularly at a club like this — and any super-high-end club — never cease, which is good. That's how it should be at this type of club. But it's going to be nice to step away from that pressure.

I would tell somebody not to make any spur-of-the-moment decisions with their career. It was a very methodical decision and not just from a long-term standpoint. I just turned 60 and I still have a lot of fire in my belly. If you're financially able, you can say you're done and keep your eyes open for the next opportunity that might fit your interests. I'm a huge proponent of what I'm going to be doing next because I know it will help superintendents.

If your greens are good and everything else is good, the thing superintendents get the most complaints about are bunkers. How complaints changed was huge throughout my career. The content of complaint dictates where you are and how the membership perceives the golf course. If the complaints go from plugged lies in the bunkers or the greens are soft to there's not enough definition or there are a lot of ball marks, that's a great signal that everything else is great because they aren't finding anything else to complain about.

I have done literally hundreds of presentations in 20 years of green committees to hundreds of committee members. Our general manager, **Joe Bendy**, has been fair, firm and demanding. It just makes you a better manager. He always has your back. At the end of each meeting,

we would sit down for five minutes and discuss what had just transpired and we'd often say, "If that's all they are complaining about, that means everything is pretty damn good." It's the content of the complaint that has changed over the years.

KNOWING WHEN TO MOVE ON

Another reason for my decision to retire is that it seems like each subsequent year a higher percentage of the job keeps swaying more to the administrative and the not being on the golf course parts of the job. Most



At a club of this stature, you never say no. You say, "I'll look into it. We'll see what we can do about it. Let me research what the options are and I'll get back to you." But you never say no. Somebody will say, "This bunker sand stinks. Let's change it." Tell them, "We'll look into it, and we'll see what else is out there."

I think that flexibility of not saying no and telling people you'll look into something has helped with longevity. If you say, "No" or "That isn't going to work," you can piss off that member and five years down the road they might become club president. You're then looking for work. You should always treat every member with respect. You should treat each member like they are the club president. That has really helped over the years.

superintendents get into the business because they love being on the golf course and they like being outdoors, and they like the growing of the grass and everything that entails. It's probably 70-30, where you are now doing more non-agronomic tasks. It's becoming more administrative—HR, people managing, budgeting, accounting and all that.

The upswing of golf also factored into my decision. Kevin is busier than busy. It just seems like the right timing, with golf being really, really good right now.

I have seen superintendents who have probably stayed longer than they should and then they are asked to leave. You have been somewhere 20 years and get some younger members on the board, have one



slight hiccup on the golf course and they think it might be time for a change. It's nothing personal, it's just the nature of the business. I think the average tenure of a Florida superintendent is six or seven years. A good friend of mine worked in Naples, Florida, and there are a lot of golf courses down there. If there's one hiccup it can be, "OK, let's go get the superintendent from across the street." Twenty years at any club is amazing and I just wanted to make sure that it ended on my terms.

When you talk about the pros and cons, definitely one of the cons in leaving is that you have so many great relationships. That's a tribute to the type of club this is. In my last article for our newsletter, I wrote: *It's rare for a golf course superintendent to be at a club for such a long period of time, much less 20 years. But most important through my tenure was how I truly felt that I was part of a large extended family as an employee.*

The way the membership treats all the staff here is why there's just no turnover. When the members take care of the staff like they do at River Oaks, that makes all the difference of the world. We have two guys on our staff who are getting their 40-year pins, a bunch of them

are getting there 30-year pins, I have been here 20 years, our superintendent, **Junior Schuette**, has been here 23 and one of our foremen has been here 38. That's just not isolated to our department. That's club wide. Our doorman is the first face anybody sees at the club. He has been employed at the club for 60 years. That's what stands out certainly with this club and I'm going to miss that.

PARTING THOUGHTS AND THE NEXT CHAPTER

I think the best advice I can give a young superintendent was the advice that was given to me. I was actually the golf course superintendent at a small club in Rockport, Texas. The first assistant superintendent position came open at Houston Country Club and **Bill Coore** said, "Morris, if you ever want to get into an upper-echelon club, you need to leave Rockport and take that assistant's job."

So many young people are excited to get a superintendent job no matter where that is vs. looking at the long-term scope of how the golf world looks at résumés. You can be the most talented superintendent in the world at a small club or a talented assistant at a big club and a high-end

job comes up, they're going to go with the first assistant at the high-end club because of the experience and exposure that they have had at a high-end club. That's just the nature of the beast.

There are some talented superintendents who could be fabulous managing a golf course, but they will never get a second look because they are associated with that mid-tier club. As a young superintendent, strive to work yourself up. Although it might feel like a step backward or a slower process to get to your end goal, pay your dues and work at a very reputable club.

When I made the decision to retire on July 1, it was tough. There were some tears shed. Now that it's getting close, it's getting real. I enjoy the routine of coming to the office, having coffee, lining the crew up and spending time on the golf course. Knowing those days are coming to an end and that little morning routine that you have enjoyed over the years is almost over is very eye-opening. I'm going to miss that aspect of it immensely. Our department has such a family feel. We have all become very close over the years. We have little turnover, so we have been together for a long, long time.

It's going to be very interesting after 32 years of walking the aisle of the national conference to be on the vendor side. That's going to be very weird. I think the next step is going to be a lot of fun. It's something that makes me feel good because I know the superintendents will be the winner down the road with that process of having clean sand, reduced plugged lies and fewer complaints.

There's no substitute for experience. Finding that right niche after being a superintendent is the hardest thing. There are a lot of things out there in golf world, particularly after the uptick from COVID-19, and that might open up opportunities for people who might be in the same shoes. **GCI**

The conundrum of golf course maintenance

Does it pay to be a superintendent? **Billy Lewis** takes a candid look at the financial realities facing talented people who pursue a career in the industry.

It is a known fact that successful golf course superintendents could have flourished in many other professions had they chosen to. Managing staff, understanding soil science, preparing budgets, selling a bill of goods to a committee, representing the profession with class and, most important, satisfying their customers are all qualities found in the most important people in the world. I have always said that every successful golf course superintendent, no matter where they are employed, is an underachiever. I honestly believe that.

My example of that person is **Steve Wright**, who left our presence in 2019 due to unforeseen health challenges. Steve had reached the pinnacle of his career when he took the position as director of agronomy at the historic Pine Tree Club in Boynton Beach, Florida. While there may be more prestigious jobs in the golf industry, you cannot climb the mountain much higher. I think Steve could have been the CEO of a Fortune 500 company, senior partner at a legal firm, or the top salesperson for any product or company that he believed in. However, like most of us, he simply loved agronomy, the outdoors and people. There are many other professions, but the core essentials for success are always present in a quality golf course superintendent. Steve possessed those skills and they took him to the top.

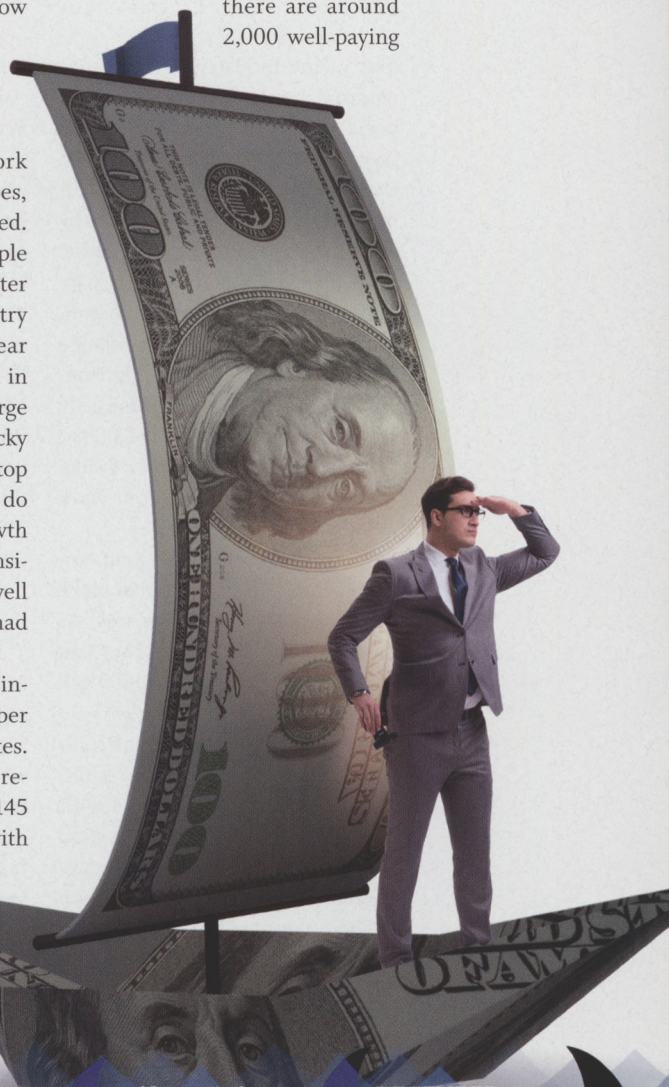
That is what has led me to pon-

der the conundrum of golf course agronomy. Although Steve reached the top of his profession, there are so many other fine individuals across the country who are producing impressive results without the same resources that some of us afford. Many are working diligently at clubs in hopes of springboarding to a better position. Of course, we all know how limited those better jobs are. That's why so many people leave the industry and why I recommend individuals start a well-planned business and work as hard as a superintendent does, and you will undoubtedly succeed. I aggressively advise young people to re-educate and achieve a better opportunity than the turf industry affords because \$100,000 a year will not take you far today. And in 10 years you will not be living large at that income level if you are lucky enough to ever see it. While the top 10 percent of superintendents do well, the rest have seen little growth in wages and huge leaps in responsibility. And many of those doing well could have done even better had they chased a better dream.

There is a bit of conflicting information about the total number of golf courses in the United States. The National Golf Foundation reports the United States has 14,145 golf facilities, including 10,437 with 18 or more holes. Because of multi-

course facilities, the number of businesses hiring head turf managers is lower than the above number.

If 20 percent of facilities with 18 or more holes pay above average considering the cost-of-living index for that region—I doubt it is 20 percent with consideration of the COL index—that means there are around 2,000 well-paying



Billy Lewis is the director of agronomy at Dormie Club in West End, North Carolina. This is his second Golf Course Industry contribution.



jobs in the industry in the entire country. Because there has never been a complete and accurate industrywide wage assessment, I estimate the average pay for those top-20-percent jobs is \$200,000 annually and that is because of geographic locations like the New York City Metropolitan area that pay better. But once you remove those salaries from the number of head opportunities, I estimate the average annually salary to be no more than \$50,000 to \$60,000. That's a medium of \$25 to \$30 an hour — provided your work week is 40 hours.

A dozer operator or a good carpenter in North Carolina can make \$35 an hour and get overtime. At the end of their workday, they can forget about it all ... *and* not work weekends. Those professions do not prepare a budget, manage staff, know chemical and fertilizer rates, hire and fire employees, deal with climate-related failure, mentor staff, and answer phone calls seven days a week. They also surely see more of their family. Quite a contrast. The superintendent position also requires a college degree and up to a decade of making less than super-

intendent wages.

The average superintendent salary reported by the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America of \$97,354 is skewed. I don't feel it includes enough responses. However, a superintendent in Los Angeles making \$350,000 a year could be equivalent to a somebody in the Carolinas making \$175,000 if you consider the COL index. Those big-city wages skew the national average for golf course superintendents and are extremely limited. Many courses also are not managed by GCSAA members, so they don't report wages and a good percent of GCSAA members don't report wages either.

Making a great living as a superintendent is more of a mirage than an oasis. Eventually, there will be a shortage of quality individuals, which could help wages, but it needs to happen soon. While inflation is skyrocketing and other wages are making huge gains, many superintendents are not seeing a change in wages.

Now the establishment says, "Son, you need to be better than average and then you can make the

big money like us!" I have been told that many times. I say, "Son, the opportunity for me to make those wages requires that I be in the top 20 percent of my profession." What are my real chances? The average wages for an ordinary superintendent at a resort course bringing in \$3 million to \$4 million a year in revenue should be \$100,000. The minimum salary for any golf course that is not just a field of greens should be \$75,000. There are around 2,000 opportunities in the United States that allow us to make that kind of money, but we expect young people to pay for college, work 10 years on staff and hope like hell they even get a head position. They then must do an excellent job like many young people here in the Pinehurst area and hope like hell one of those big jobs falls in their lap. It is an exercise in futility for most.

The process to reach that goal is to work 12 out of every 14 days and wait patiently. The next well-paying opening will get 400 résumés and may be filled before the posting ink dries through networking.

Where do we find help for this issue? Where are our advocates for our profession? If we only acknowledge the big boys of the industry, how does the little man, the farm team player, survive long enough to fill those better jobs as people retire?

Twenty years ago, we somehow achieved a milestone when it was acknowledged that the golf course superintendent was the most important person at a golf facility. Twenty years later, we are still making the same money and have been basically left behind as I have seen that accomplishment trend the other way. I spend a lot of time mentoring young superintendents these days and my best advice is to run like hell.

We must stand up and make a change in our future or we will forever spend our lives at the maintenance shed. **GCI**



Why?

What drives somebody to wake up every morning and head out to the course? **Zachary LaPorte** pondered that same question and arrived at a satisfying answer.

Being a golf course superintendent is frustrating, full of ups and downs, disappointments, brief moments of glory and lots of stress. I believe that we are the only ones who truly understand this.

It is very difficult to explain to anyone who isn't in our profession the trials and tribulations that we go through every day. Maintaining a golf course must look so easy from the outside. Why else would everyone comment on and criticize our work, and give "helpful advice?" Only we understand what it's like to have everything perfect with all cylinders firing—and, at the same time, waiting

for it all to fall apart. In our world, when it's all looking right, we're waiting for the wrong.

How many professions are there where perfection is both unobtainable and expected? Even if you do approach perfection, it won't last. Something will come along and screw everything up. Maybe a hurricane or some other natural disaster comes through, a disease or an insect infestation, the maintenance barn catches fire, the pumps fail, the water is turned off, chemicals are taken off the market, 20 kids decide to cosplay Fortnite on your greens, etc. No matter how good you are, something is going to happen to make your life hell for a while.

So why do we do it? What is

it that keeps us working in this profession? Surely there must be less stressful and more fulfilling jobs out there. Right?

I am a big fan of reading books on personal development and leadership, and I came across a book by Simon Sinek called "Start With Why." It was a good read, but I have to admit I initially didn't really understand what he was trying to convey. But I had a good think on the matter and started asking myself, "So why do you do it, Zach? Why do you put up with all the crap and keep on keepin' on?"

At first, I came up with the usual answers we all cite: the outdoors, Mother Nature, fresh air and a distaste for being trapped in an office all day — although, funny enough, now that I am a superintendent, I spend a good chunk of my day in the office doing paperwork and reports. And then there's always *passion*, the inspired pursuit of the perfect playing surface. "It's all about the grass, man, golfers be damned."

Those "why" thoughts are all true to some extent, but the more I thought about it and tried to be real with myself, I realized that's not really why I do it. And I bet

there are a lot of you out there just like me.

Think about it. What is it we do for a living?

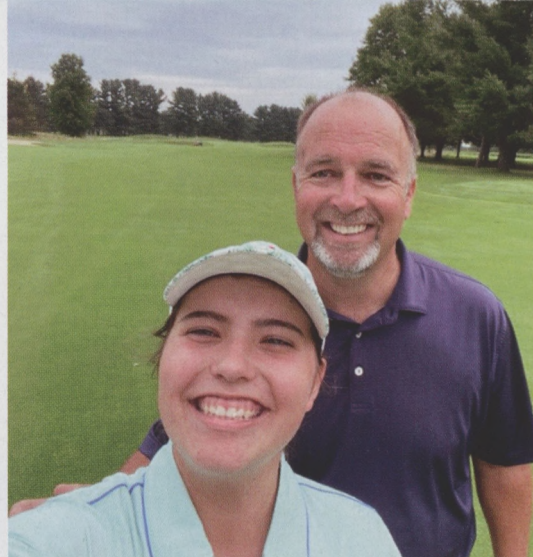
We prepare a large piece of land for people to come and play a sport and have an enjoyable, excellent and fabulous time doing it. Their great golfing experience comes from our extensive experience preparing the playing surfaces. So, after a lot of thought, I concluded that seeing someone play the course and really enjoying themselves because of something that our team did is my "why." It's all about hospitality and fun.

That's how I deal with the stress, the ups and downs and the nonstop problems. When I see people smiling, or when I receive positive feedback from members and guests, it makes me happy.

That's it. There's really no other important reason.

I am here to provide a service. That service is an experience, just like a meal out at a restaurant or a couple hours at a laser tag arena. The ultimate goal is that the customer enjoys their visit. That is why our goals and objectives as a company and maintenance team should always align with the "why." **GCI**

Zachary LaPorte has worked in the industry for more than 25 years and is currently resort superintendent at Desert Springs Resort in Almeria, Spain. This is his first Golf Course Industry contribution.



Be the first impression

Kennedy Ellis reminds superintendents and managers to remember they were once industry newbies and why providing guidance to today's young turf enthusiasts can produce immeasurable benefits to the profession.

If you're a superintendent or manager, always assume you're the first impression. Whether it's an email, a direct message, a phone call or a verbal conversation, always assume you're the first contact.

The industry is struggling to find new people, GOOD people, who will find a passion and make this a career. The solution could be as simple as you.

We all remember our first contacts in the industry. They were the people who completely changed our lives. Did they know it at the time? How do you know that you're a student's first impression? You don't! Always assume you're the first impression.

This industry is very small. You don't know when you'll have someone approach you about your career and their interest. What will you do?

If that student takes an interest in your work, pass along your contact information, show them how to mow a green, arrange a meeting with them or offer advice, support and encouragement. Even if you can't help, tell them, "Keep me updated on your journey," at the very least.

You'd be surprised how far a five-minute conversation can take you and that student. We don't know where the next graduating class will be in 10, 20 or 30 years. You want to be remembered for good reasons, right?

Encourage and help that student. They will always remember you when they're applying to schools, internships and jobs.

The industry only has two degrees of separation. Why not be the person they recommend to their fellow classmates or

industry friends? It might help you land an employee, intern or student.

That student will always thank you. They will call you when they have landed a job or internship or have successfully accomplished something meaningful.

They will seek you out at a conference or a virtual lecture. One day they might introduce more students to you.

Turn on your camera and interact with others during virtual lectures. There might be a student on the other end who could gain a contact from you.

Comment on a student's Twitter post. You don't know how much that means to them. The latest generation of students are very familiar with social media. It's second nature. Social media is how students interact with prospective schools or employers. Respond

and give them the time of day.

Be the person who they come to when they have a problem. If you can't fix it, you know someone who can.

ALWAYS take a student seriously and talk to them today. If they come to you today, positively respond. Take that time to listen and treat them like a professional, because they will be professionals, too, one day.

Most students know what they want or plan to do. Don't wait for them to prove themselves before you listen. Make eye contact. Remember their name.

Look at a student's potential and not just the résumé. Be amazed by their achievements. In 20 years, they will come up to you and say, "Thank you" and "Remember me?"

You remember your first impressions. Now is your time

Kennedy Ellis is a freshman at Olivet College, where she studies sustainable agriculture and plays on the women's golf team. She is planning on pursuing a career in turfgrass management. This is her first Golf Course Industry contribution.

to be the first impression.

When they get a microphone or are put in your position, you will be the person they want to thank and resemble when it's their turn to be the first impression.

Most of my interactions have been positive and have left me wanting to pursue this industry more.

I've only had a few people brush me off, but had those been my first contacts, I would've never found my passion for this industry. Don't be that person.

Age means nothing. Treat everybody as a professional. If the student is being professional, you should too.

Don't just look at age and credentials. Look at their potential and where they might be in one, two or three decades.

I have accomplished everything I have because of the kindness and encouragement from those who have supported me. My accomplishments wouldn't exist without those people.

DO NOT EVER be the person to dismiss someone for their age or lack of credentials. You can always get credentials, but you can't teach passion.

Don't run irrigation on someone's passion. See someone's passion or potential. Grab onto them and don't let them

down. Take them under your wing. That student will be the new face of the industry. One day you can retire and say that the industry is in good hands.

How many of you would be where you're at today if your first impressions weren't positive? How many of you would've had the confidence or support needed to get your education and/or your experience in the career you have today?

It took me SIX WEEKS to find the courage to reach out to the first person I ever spoke to in the industry. I thought I wasn't worthy enough to ever get a response. They proved me wrong. But what if they didn't

respond at all?

More than a year later, I have the strongest professional connection with that person. This person has by far been one of my biggest supporters and has helped me to gain the confidence to accomplish as much as I have today.

Because of my first few impressions, I have completely changed my academic and professional goals so I can continue to work with and for them.

I will always be very grateful to those professionals and leaders in the industry. I look up to them and will be sure to give the same first impression when it's my turn. **GCI**

Constructing something valuable

Yes, there's a committee your association might not have that can benefit the entire organization. **Richard Brown** reveals a way to boost assistant superintendent engagement.

Preface: When I joined the Carolinas GCSA assistants committee, it was already in place. We had our annual meeting and golf championship, the @Carolinas_ASST Twitter account was operational, and there were other little things being done throughout the year for assistants. I was fortunate enough to follow behind a lot of good leaders who had already done a good bit of the work. However, I've learned a lot of valuable lessons throughout my time on the committee that I'd like to share that I believe can help other associations with their own committee.

OK, I get it. Every association has enough committees. But do you have a committee that serves, highlights and promotes the assistant superintendents within your association? The good news about starting an assistants committee is that it becomes your assistants' committee. It's

the only committee created for assistants by assistants.

Here's some advice on how you can start your own

1. SPEAK TO THE HIGHER-UPS

Whether it's an executive director, board of directors, or both, go to them first. Tell them your plan, your vision, and what you want this committee to be and

what purpose it can serve. Everything that happens within the committee should run through the higher-ups. Eventually, you'll gain their trust and backing, and you'll have a little more freedom. Until then, be sure to get the OK from the top.

2. BUILD YOUR TEAM

Find your group of assistants

to form the committee. This is pretty simple and shouldn't be too difficult. But there are a few things to consider when doing this. First, find assistants who really want to be involved and who want to serve the committee, the organization and the assistants within it. Depending on the size of the association, you can have nominations or elections, or have the higher-ups appoint assistants fit to serve. It's important to have a variety of individuals from different types and levels of golf courses. But you should also keep in mind what serving may

Richard Brown is the senior assistant superintendent at Orangeburg Country Club in Orangeburg, South Carolina. This is his fourth Golf Course Industry contribution.

entail. There's a good chance at some point the committee might be asked to travel for meetings, industry education and other events, so make sure chosen assistants work a club that will allow a little time off when needed.

3. MEET WITH YOUR TEAM

This will prove to be one of the tougher tasks you'll run into. Finding the time to put your work, home and other responsibilities aside is hard enough for one person, let alone for multiple individuals. As difficult as it may be to plan these meetings, they are essential to not only starting your committee but also keeping it running. In-person meetings are best, but they will also have the greatest chance of missing members. Zoom calls, over-the-phone conference calls, email threads and group chats will also play a big role in communication within the committee.

4. DETERMINE GOALS

What purpose do you want the committee to serve? What goals do you have? A couple things to aim for that have proven beneficial for us:

Annual assistants meeting and golf championship. Everyone loves a good round of golf. This is a great opportunity to get the assistants throughout the association together for fellowship and a little friendly competition. Included in that competition is a little incentive. The winning assistant earns a spot on that year's Virgina Cup team, an annual competition involving the Carolinas GCSA and Virginia GCSA. We also have education and food at these meetings, so everyone leaves with something good.

Annual assistants social event



at our conference and show.

Our newest event added to the schedule is a social at our annual conference and show. We wanted to have an event for assistants attending the conference and show that they could call their own. It's a good way to start the conference and show with a bang. We secured a sponsor and attendees can focus on networking and having a good time. We invite our board of directors, Twitter superstars and as many vendors as we can. Having the ability for assistants to meet these people has proved to be mutually beneficial for both parties. Plus, who doesn't enjoy some food and beverages while talking turf?

Assistant-specific education throughout the year. Whether it's at your local show, meeting or any other gathering with education, it's important to include at least one or two assistant-specific classes. Everyone knows continuing education is good for your career, but when you target it specifically for assistants it makes them feel included and really catered to. When we plan edu-

cation, we almost always focus on it being career-based. There's plenty of turf-related education where you can brush up on fungicides, fertilizers, mowing heights, diseases, weed control and other technical topics. But assistants always seem to want to learn additional ways to boost their respective careers and get to the next level. This includes résumé and interview tips, communication and management advice, and even roundtable discussions with superintendents offering thoughts on how to advance in the industry.

5. SOCIAL MEDIA

Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and even TikTok play big roles in promoting the committee. Most industry professionals have one of these platforms, if not all of them, on their phones and other devices. And the platforms are being checked almost daily. They can serve many purposes for your committee. For starters, they can be used to communicate what's going on within the committee, including upcoming education and meetings, future plans, and decisions being made. Secondly,

you can use social media to highlight and profile assistants throughout the association. Finally, use social media to boost the profile of assistants within your chapter via likes, retweets, shares and stories. They're all great ways to promote assistants.

6. KEEP PUSHING

There will come a time when things might be in a lull and it feels like there isn't anything happening or nothing new is coming down the pipeline. Keep the faith and continue to push toward the goal. When this happens, reach out to the committee. Ask for new ideas. If anyone has fresh ideas or new concepts to implement, act on them. This will help revitalize the spirits of the committee and keep the momentum of the committee going.

Starting or even revamping your assistants committee may seem like a daunting task. But with the proper support, a good group of assistants and a little work, you'll be on your way to having a great committee that can serve everybody in your association in the present and the future. **GCI**



Boots on the ground

An old-school flier provided the course where **Will Laine** works with a group of young and energetic crew members this summer — and might have even helped spark a turf career.

As everyone knows, this has been a very difficult year to find labor for golf course maintenance operations. We decided to get a little creative with our recruitment strategies this past spring at the Country Club of Asheville in the western North Carolina mountains. Instead of posting on a job board or a recruitment website, we reached out to local high schools.

I contacted five different high schools in Buncombe County and spoke directly with different guidance counselors. All of them were very helpful with recruiting students to join our team. I created a flier that was specifically geared toward students, highlighting the perks of working in golf

course maintenance for the summer — including working outside, flexible hours, free lunches, golfing privileges and joining a fun team in an exciting work environment. Each school I contacted posted the flier in the school, with a few of them forwarding it to their golf coaches and teams to help spread the word. Some posted it in online job boards for their students.

I'll be honest, I had no idea how this strategy may play out. But within a few days my inbox started flooding with emails from interested students. By the end of the week, I had more than a dozen interviews scheduled. By the middle of May, we had hired eight high school students to join our team. As schools started finishing ex-



ams, these new hires started showing up to work bright-eyed and bushy-tailed.

It was like a breath of fresh air having these kids join our staff. They were eager to learn, and

they all got along with each other and worked well with the existing staff. Within the first month, we had them trained on how to walk mow, rake bunkers, weed eat, fill divots, move tee markers, Buffalo blow, roll, and edge heads and valve boxes. Having these young, energetic high schoolers complete the more labor-intensive job assignments allowed our full-time staff to focus on mowing with the heavier machinery.

It was awesome having these young men work with us, but we all knew it wouldn't last forever. As summer came winding down, they started going back to school and reality started setting in. A few of them were interested in working weekends throughout the school year, which has helped tremendously throughout the fall golf season. Those who didn't want to work during the school year asked if they could come back

and work next summer.

The most rewarding moment of the summer happened when a young man approached me before his last day and asked me how he could turn this into a career. I was honored to tell him about my journey and how I paved my way into the industry. I told him about some of the turf schools in the state and some of the scholarship opportunities available. He even borrowed a few turf management books I had in the office. This brief interaction made all those hours of training worth it.

This past summer at the Country Club of Asheville was very rewarding for me as a supervisor. With the current labor shortage, it is harder than ever to find dependable staff who show up with a positive attitude and take pride in their work.

There have been a lot of negative statements about this generation of teenagers and their work ethic — they won't get off their phones, they're spoiled, they won't show up on time and they just don't want to work. But I can proudly say from my experience that those things are not true, and that the future is very bright! **GCI**



Golf course architect: Friend or Foe?

Chad Allen describes the importance of thanking, respecting and understanding the people who designed your golf course.

I think we have all been there. Early morning on the golf course, the sun crests over the horizon and the light filters through the trees to show a sight many don't ever get to experience — those “magic hour” moments.

We pull out our phones and feverishly start snapping pics from different angles and vantage points. We run to our chosen social media platform and wax poetic, posting phrases such as “Blessed to be here,” “This is what it's all about” and “The crew is killing it.” Before you let that feeling slip away, there is someone else we need to be thanking: the golf course architect.

I know what you are saying, “All they do is design the dang thing. It's up to us to grow it in and maintain it to its present condition.” On some level this is true, and I don't want to take away anything from what our staff does on a day-to-day basis. What I'm trying to say is some-

times the golf course architect gets low billing in this whole scenario.

I'm lucky enough to work on a **Pete Dye** design and it is amazing. The contouring and the angles in which Pete routed The Club at Chatham Hills are breathtaking. You know as well as I do that most people who play golf these days only care about one thing: *How fast are the greens today?* It's sad to think that these individuals are missing out on what's really important about golf. The rolling hills, the different angles you are given when attacking the green in relation to your tee shot, the placement of hazards and the shadows they cast to give the illusion of depth and size. All these elements converge to form the golfing experience.

Alister MacKenzie said, “Any architect worth his weight in salt would know that beauty is more important than strategy.” I'm just as guilty as the next guy and

I get wrapped up in the green speeds as well. As I mature as a turf professional, I try to make it a point to educate myself on what golf course architecture really is and how it relates to my position. Whether it's the Golden Age greats with their template holes or the modern-day giants with their minimalist designs, these courses were designed to challenge golfers and expand all their senses.

You might be thinking these designs are impossible to maintain with our budget and some features are too extreme. I get it. Pete designed The Club at Chatham Hills with more than 190 bunkers. It can be a struggle to maintain these bunkers, but we strive to keep them in top condition so we can match up with how they were originally designed to play. We task ourselves with high expectations, because we see the beauty that others do not. Thanks to the golf course architects, we get to have those

“magic hour” moments daily and it pushes us to be better. I say all this knowing that the labor market is thin and finding employees is the most challenging thing we do.

I don't want you to get the wrong idea. Sometimes change is necessary and hard decisions must be made. I don't fault or judge others for those choices, but if you have the knowledge and history of what made your course special, it may open the doors for alternate decisions. If possible, dive into the history of your course and find out what makes your course design important to your membership and ownership and focus on that.

When you show personal interest and reflect the interests of others, people are more apt to listen to what you want to accomplish. You may end up opening their minds — and their pocketbook — a little bit further. It doesn't matter if it's a Golden Age gem designed by **A.W. Tillinghast** or a run-of-the-mill course designed by **Rosco P. Coltrane**, all golf courses have a history and there is value in that history.

That's the difference between a good and a great turf professional. The good look at the course, accept it at face value, and never develop a curiosity for its history or design. The great look at the course as a challenge, embrace and study those obstacles, and highlight those attributes that make it unique.

Golf course architecture is as fundamentally important as the grass that is growing on it. When you do get those “magic hour” moments, remember there was someone else standing there having those same feelings long before we took over. Our friend, the golf course architect. **GCI**

Chad Allen is an assistant superintendent at The Club at Chatham Hills in Westfield, Indiana. This is his third Golf Course Industry contribution.



Strategic swales

Sometimes it helps to think of a golf course as more than playing surfaces. Architect **Tim Gerrish** explores how assessing stormwater treatment capabilities can make the game better for players, surrounding communities and wildlife.

Renovating bunkers, creating alternate lines of play and recontouring green surfaces are part of the foundations of golf course architecture. Play corridors that have been designed to give intelligent purpose to striking the ball can go beyond typical features. There are many factors that go into the design of a golf course that involve shaping the land. Let's explore one underutilized area at many golf courses: stormwater treatment.

Shaping the land for golf was my original passion. It is what gets me excited when developing grading plans. Contouring the ground expands the types of shots played and entices players to be creative with ball striking. Not all golf shots need

to be heroic. Sand bunkers do a wonderful job of visually establishing lines of play, but there are plenty of renowned golf courses with other features that determine golf angles. Just look at the famous 13th hole at Augusta National Golf Club.

Over the years, I have had the opportunity to work on a wide variety of projects. Last century, when I worked for Cornish, Silva and Mungeam, we focused probably 60 to 70 percent of our time on new courses with the remainder on renovations or restorations. Restorations primarily focused on golf features and occasionally strayed outside the existing hole corridors when there was evidence. New course work mostly started with a canvas of forested or "landfill" land-

scapes. We routed courses to best utilize the topography for golf holes, minimizing adjustments to elevations. In New England, adjusting elevations often means blasting. The only place that worked effectively was Black Rock Country Club in Hingham, Massachusetts.

New courses required the understanding of stormwater and we took advantage of that knowledge by redefining watersheds so that stormwater was collected and used for irrigation. There are some courses, like The Golf Club at Oxford Greens in Oxford, Connecticut, that would not have had a sustainable water supply if these efforts would not have been made.

Recently, my projects have taken a slightly different look

at stormwater. Now the focus is on water quality. To do this, I am creating swales or, one of my favorite terms, ditches to move water through pond shelves, forebays and soil filters. The key is to blend these manmade features with the golf course proper so they not only improve water quality, but also have a positive aesthetic impact and even become strategic elements.

The scope of a project more than 10 years in the making at Pine Orchard Yacht & Country Club in Branford, Connecticut, included rebuilding the first fairway, second tees, ninth tees and fairway, plus removing phragmites. Raising the fairways and improving the soil structure has eliminated the full moon flooding. When

Tim Gerrish is a Rhode Island-based golf course architect and landscape architect with more than 20 years of experience as a project architect. Follow him on Twitter @GerrishRLA. This is his third Golf Course Industry contribution.

the next major storm comes crashing into Branford and neighboring New Haven, any flood water will now quickly drain away and prevent long-term standing water. With the 10-foot-tall phragmites removed, vistas were opened between holes and created the much-desired long views.

Sometimes lost is the value of the engineering metrics that defined the tidal flows, storm elevations and flood storage volumes I had to meet with regrading the hole corridors. (Thanks to BSC Group, a Boston-based multidisciplinary consulting firm, for those metrics.) A significant hole corridor adjustment was the re-alignment of the tidal creek across the first hole. Prior to the work, the creek had little effect on how the hole played for longer and more accomplished players. They blasted their tee shots to the soft but at least playable fairway. However, the creek had a detrimental effect on seniors, ladies and less accomplished players who often found their tee shots rolling in the water if they did not lay up. Can you imagine laying up

almost 100 percent of the time on the opening tee shot, thus forcing the hole to become a par 5 because the approach shot was now out of range? This was not a strategic choice.

Shifting the creek alignment farther down the hole as part of the marsh regrading allowed for the shorter hitter to hit a full tee shot to the left fairway. Giving the creek a sinuous flow and splitting the fairway 65 percent left side no carry and 35 percent right side all carry gave the longer players something to ponder. Depending on the wind direction and strength, the average player now has a choice to try and carry the creek, playing up the tight right side alley or playing more left and bringing the newly expanded left greenside bunker into play.

Further up the New England coast, in Bristol, Rhode Island, is a tight, very rudimentary course called Bristol Golf Club. Bristol is a course that an editorial in *The New York Times* called the "Worst Course in America." After my initial walk, hired as part of a team to improve water quality and habitat,

I would agree. The second hole tee shot played with a major electrical transmission line 50 yards in front of the tee. The soil conditions were so wet I am still surprised that the majority of the site was not delineated as wetlands. Stormwater passes through the course from the neighboring industrial park and junkyard and is further enhanced by more Canadian geese than actually reside in Canada.

I looked at this project as an opportunity to not only improve the water quality and expand the wildlife habitat as the grant funding required, but also to save a golf course that, with some changes in tee location and a couple new greens, could be a great beginner's course. Working with Wright-Pierce and Save the Bay, among other groups, I created a ditch that connects to special aquatic areas so stormwater traveled through pockets of native vegetation. US Pitchcare completely understood the concept, leaving found boulders and rock in place to provide additional erosion control and pockets for the water to settle. This is out of the ordinary for most golf course contractors as we often want to create maintainable turf.

Working within the modest budget placed limits on earthwork and expanded work areas. The site's topography, or lack thereof, could only be enhanced with the material created in the stormwater excavation. Even the soil filter media was used for

the tee and green rootzone to simplify the project. There was no existing soil suitable for a rootzone! So far, these ditches have done their job at consolidating stormwater from the playing areas, and even drying the surrounding soil.

The most manmade pond I've seen in many years was also transformed by adding two wet shelves with upland islands. These islands have hosted some small birds and they were planted with geese-limiting vegetation. Even geese don't like thorns! To further limit geese, the wall-to-wall mowed rough is being transformed into out of play — even for a beginner's course — native rough. Some areas will be mowed a couple times a year. Others will be transformed slowly, with successional vegetation, back to an eventual forest.

Phase 2 just finished and continued the water quality work and included a new green for that famous second hole. This green will have some contours that will mimic some of the stormwater swales and even define the surface into separate plateaus. You can't take the architecture out of the project!

There are many aspects to golf course architecture that are unique to the profession. Redesigning bunkers is one. However, when an architect can resolve flooding, remove invasive species and create habitat for native species among other green infrastructure measures, and blend it thoughtfully with the demand of golf playability and maintenance, everyone wins. Given the apparent changes to our climate, these combined projects will only be more important going forward. **GCI**





Just do it!

Sue de Zwart journeyed across the Atlantic during the 1990s. She returned home understanding the importance of volunteering and mentorship to turf industry success.

I will never forget the day **Ted Horton** at The Pebble Beach Company interviewed me. I had flown over to the United States from South Africa in 1996 to train to be a golf course superintendent.

I realized that I needed to do every task on a golf course myself in order to be a good leader back home. After two long interviews trying to convince Ted that I could do this, I flew off to Canada in pursuit of a work permit. If only I had known **Mike O'Keeffe** at Ohio State University back then! After three weeks, I finally got my work permit. **Eric Johnson**, then the superintendent at Spyglass Hill, needed to put this girl to the test.

I learned to load trucks with a backhoe, communicate in basic Spanish, operate a chainsaw and seed the roughs with the hit crew for my first month. I remember feeling so privileged to drag a hose pipe around for overtime. This was the only time I was allowed on the course itself. I then spent time working through the various pieces of equipment and absolutely loved

it. Ted assigned me the task to do the legwork for the Audubon registration for Spyglass Hill. This is a great task for a student!

I was then moved to Pebble Beach, where I continued to learn about turf maintenance. **Chris Dalhamer** kindly allowed me to help him with the daily admin that punching assistants do. **Mark Michaud** loaned me books from his extensive turf library. **Jack Holt** sat patiently explaining turf nutrition. I used my time wisely as I knew I needed to learn as much as I possibly could in a short period of time.

The AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am was the most incredible experience. The challenge of producing the ultimate playing surface along with this vibe was insane. I met celebrities for the first time — **Kevin Costner**, for one, while we mowed the 18th green. There was a four-ball from South Africa playing the AT&T. Little did I know **Mr. Johann Rupert**, the owner of Leopard Creek, would be my next boss.

I then had the opportunity to work my first Masters in 1997. This

is where I met new mentors **Marsh Benson** and **Brad Owen** — thank you, both. I will be eternally grateful for wisdom and grits (with Brad at 4 a.m. at Waffle House). I remember arriving six weeks prior to the tournament and Brad asking me what he should do with me. I asked to be treated as one of the guys and never looked back.

I have been so blessed by the incredible people in the golf industry over the years. I want to encourage every girl out there to work hard and earn your place in this industry. My journey of being a superintendent at Leopard Creek for eight years, founding Talking Turf in 2006 and providing education to superintendents, distributing the Syngenta turf range to Southern Africa, maintaining sports fields and doing what I love with an incredible team would not have been possible without many hours of volunteering and awesome mentors along the way.

Thank you to every person I have had the privilege of working with thus far. I look forward to many more terrific years. **GCI**

Sue de Zwart is the owner and founder of Talking Turf and the former golf course superintendent at highly regarded Leopard Creek Country Club in South Africa. This is her first Golf Course Industry contribution.



Back to the Future, Part Deux

A golf course, clubhouse, pro shop and athletic fields. **Charlie Fultz** added a title in 2021 and learned plenty about managing people and himself.

A year ago, I wrote about my return to the golf world after a 13-year absence titled “Back to the future,” which *Golf Course Industry* graciously printed in the Turfheads Take Over issue. Heck, I was even asked to be on a podcast, which was a true career highlight. Right after I sent that article, I acquired yet another title with the city of Harrisonburg: interim general manager of Heritage Oaks Golf Course.

In mid-September, the acting general manager at Heritage Oaks put in her notice. She was a great woman to work with, amazing with numbers but limited in her golf knowledge. She’d be the first to tell you so. She worked HARD at learning the ins and outs of golf. So, opportunity presented itself once again, but fate played a cruel trick.

I caught COVID-19.

Besides being a turf guy, I’m also a drummer and have played for more than 40 years. You can even find a few of my former band’s originals on Spotify and, yes, that’s me

playing the kit. At a gig on Sept. 28, the entire band and at least 15 other people picked up COVID. To top it off, I also gave it to my 17-year-old son. I spent 14 days quarantined at home, and six of those days I was as sick as ever.

But while at home, I asked for a Zoom meeting with the parks and recreation director and assistant director. I laid out how I felt I could help the course with my 20-plus years of golf knowledge, my food and beverage background, and my willingness to take on another department. Upon my return, I was handed the keys and asked to take it on.

Before I talk about being a superintendent/general manager/athletic fields manager, I wanted to say I received some real good advice from **Kevin Clunis**, a superintendent/general manager in Luck, Wisconsin, on a Turfnet post. I had posted about my new multifaceted role and asked for some advice from those doing both. Kevin said to make sure I had the right people in the pro shop who could handle the day to day as well as the staff there and in golf maintenance, and to be willing to delegate to those people. Best advice I could have gotten. I took it to heart.

Upon taking on the general manager role, I gave control of the pro shop staff to our acting clubhouse manager and let our golf pro handle outings and tournaments. I also asked our pro to do what he does better than most: interact with the golfers, be the people person he is and be the face of our course. It’s worked very, very well. Both guys handled their areas and it allowed me to continue to focus on golf maintenance and keep my eyes on our athletic fields as well.

I also had to allow the staff of each department the ability to take some leadership and trust them. I’m lucky to have a 30-plus-year fields maintenance worker to handle what I want done on fields and a golf course maintenance crew that has at least seven years in golf maintenance work. Laying out what we need to do on a daily and weekly basis — as well as coordinating events on both the fields and golf course — has become easier as we are all actively communicating with each other.

My day complements my ADHD beautifully. I always start in golf maintenance around 5:30 a.m. I get my eyes on the course, check out what’s going on disease-wise, moisture-wise and health-wise. I generally finish my rounds, make

Charlie Fultz is (deep breath) the golf course superintendent and interim general manager at Heritage Oaks Golf Course in Harrisonburg, Virginia, and the turf manager for the city of Harrisonburg. This is his second Turfheads Take Over story.

my mental notes and make my way to the pro shop—where the GM's office is—and begin checking emails and handling any tasks I have there around 9 a.m. I'm there usually an hour or so before I make my way to the athletic fields in the city. I wish the fields were closer to each other, but they aren't. Some fields I don't need my eyes on each day, but with all these duties I am also growing in the new football field for the city, so I have to see it almost daily. It's a #bluemuda field. I make it a point to see it often and I mow it twice a week. I see all 10 of our fields at least once or twice a week, so my work truck stays busy.

After seeing fields and getting some lunch—most of the time eating it in my truck—I get back to

the golf course between 12:30 and 1:00 p.m. I check back in with the golf maintenance crew to see if we have any issues (LDS most of the time) and then I take a second spin to see where things are. Follow-ups with the crew set up our plans for the next day and I usually end my day back in the pro shop handling the rest of my GM duties. Wash, rinse, repeat.

I'm proud to say that our fields are some of the best around, our golf course is getting rave reviews for both playability and how the general public is handled inside. The perception of all departments has dramatically improved. I take pride in those facts. But it is a lot.

Correction: It's a TON.

I'm 51 now and I feel this sched-

ule more days than not. I'm happy to say that the city is currently preparing to find my replacement for the fields supervisor position, who will report directly to me. That'll allow me to focus more on the golf course but still have an eye on the fields. It'll also take away the interim tag and make me the full-time superintendent and general manager of the course.

Oh, and if you're interested in the fields position, drop me a line. I know the head guy. I hear he's a bit of an ass, but overall a pretty good guy to work for. He's an aging, bald-headed, die-hard KISS fan—who, by the way, are on their End of the Road tour, capping off an almost 50-year run as the hottest band in the world. I've seen them 13 times. Did I mention I had ADHD? **GCI**

It's all about customer service

What can be learned from a semi-retired CEO who works part-time as a cart attendant? **Rich Obertots** reveals successful tactics from one job around a golf course that can apply to many others.

Always be mindful that cart attendants are an important “sprocket” among the numerous gears that turn as part of a synchronized crew at a golf facility. The cart crew is not an autonomous group. They are integral to all operations and they must be mindful that it's all about synchronization with leadership and management, the maintenance crew, the pro shop, the golf course superintendent, the range crew, the starters, the

rangers, the beverage cart, the snack shack, the golf simulators, the restaurant, the hotel and conference center, and every other crew operating to serve and astonish golfers and others on the property.

CART ATTENDANT OR CUSTOMER ATTENDANT?

The cart attendant is the first point of contact—the point person. The first impression golfers make will set the tone and resonate for those coming

to visit your facility to play golf or engage in other activities at the property.

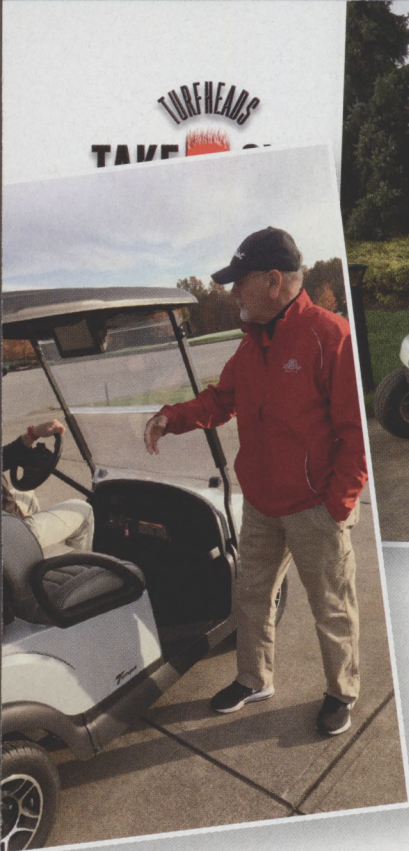
They are a specialist and perform specialized duties that require skill and mental sharpness. However, they must not adopt an “It's not my job.” attitude. The job title is cart attendant but at the core they are a CUSTOMER ATTENDANT!

The ideal manner to define a customer is an individual (or organization) essential for a golf facility to exist. There

are two categories. Ultimate Customers, who are “end users” like golfers, and Transactional Customers, who are fellow workers in all areas along with suppliers and vendors. Employees must aspire to not only astonish golfers, but to also be aware of the wide array of individuals and organizations essential for a golf facility to exist.

When circumstances present themselves or when problems happen—when other crews

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need some help or especially when golfers or others on the grounds need some assistance — then a cart attendant must get to it as rapidly as they can to bring the situa-

tion to an individual or individuals formally responsible and accountable for what needs to be done.

A big part of the job is problem solving and critical thinking. They are encouraged to do just that by representing the course and all the other operations in proximity of the golfing operations.

Among the most important skills they will bring to work is that of anticipation. Aspire to be ever mindful to remain situationally aware and anticipate problems, especially those involving pace of play. During

down times, they should find things to do, cleaning, organizing and filling gaps others may have missed. This time is not meant for browsing the Internet or playing on a phone. Like all employees, a cart attendant should earn their pay every minute of every day. That is honorable.

New cart attendants can benefit from making time on their own to observe and interact with multi-season cart crew members to learn from their wisdom. The day will come — promise — when they will be grateful for making this time investment.

WHO PAYS THE CHECK?

Always remember who pays an employee's check. Ultimate Golfers, the golfers and others who engage throughout the property, fall into this category. Yes, somebody associated with the facility's leadership signs the check but the funds to make this possible originate from Ultimate Customers.

Remember that the club has made a check possible and those of hundreds of others because it created Ultimate Customers through leadership and initiatives. Had people not devoted energy, taken huge risks and worked countless long hours, nothing would be possible — or continue to be possible. The club continues to devote vast

amounts of time, thought, money and energy to keep the operation going. Understand this and honor this.

Recognize that what goes on is not perfect — it is ever-evolving and dynamic. Employees must do their part to develop, innovate and implement systems, processes and protocols to improve. Make sure contributions are made to the evolution and legacy of the operation. It is an opportunity now to bring to this new skill sets, personality, energy and creativity.

Employees are now part of this important community and regional legacy. Wouldn't you agree that they have a duty and responsibility to perpetuate the facility?

Take the work and the job seriously because competition for golfers will only increase. When they are astonished — and when an employee is highly professional in performing their important cart attendant duties — their trust and loyalty is amplified. In turn, customers will promote your facility to their peers.

A cart attendant can enrich the experience of anybody who visits your facility. Take pride in this. This is honorable work. Aspire to be a high performer in your duties as they are crucial in this ecosystem at your club and in this great game of golf. Always keep in mind.

It's not rocket science ... it's sprocket science! **GCI**

More customer service pointers

We try to drive our carts to arriving customers. Although Kensington Golf Club is a public course, we are trying to create a country club experience. I have found that golfers, especially those in my age range, appreciate the cart at their vehicle as they arrive. I actually try to get to them — park the cart behind their car and be heading away just as they open their door. I look back and say, "Welcome to Kensington," then show them the location of the pro shop and inform them of the course conditions. "The course is in awesome shape! I played it two days ago. The fairways are pretty dry, you'll get good run, the greens are receptive and there are no restrictions. You're only going to need one ball today — yes, one ball — because you are going to be on your game! Now go out there, believe that, and enjoy your round!"

I try to make it positive and energized. I change it up as much as I can and I try to give each golfer or group some positive words of encouragement.

I so love it when a golfer comes back and says, "Holy cow! I usually lose a bunch of balls here. Today, you were right — one ball!" Does not happen often ... but it has!

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Hitting **life's** curveballs

Buffalo Bisons head groundskeeper **Kelly Rensel** reflects on a year filled with change — and relays how you can channel change in your own life into a superpower.

Change is never fun. Change is never easy. But change is necessary.

Change can only make us better and challenge us to grow. Whether we are prepared for the change because we wanted it or it completely blindsided us with a pink slip, having a plan for change can make it easier. Change can also reset our focus and get a fresh perspective on what we are working toward. The age-old question, “Where do you see yourself in five years?” might be a tired saying but it can help you navigate the planning process if and/or when change does occur. It can

jump-start the planning process before it even happens.

When devising your plan after change occurs, setting goals can help you stay on task and stay motivated. Making smaller goals and keeping them attainable will help focus on completing the bigger goals over time. Completing short-term goals should advance you toward your long-term goals.

Over the last 14 years, major change was an almost-every-other-year occurrence for me. After my first year as an intern with the Mahoning Valley Scrappers in 2008, I realized what I wanted to do: drag an infield and make grass as green

as possible. After that season, I started to immerse myself and study as much as I could about turfgrass management. (And, for the record, I majored in sport administration.) Quickly realizing there is more than one type of turfgrass, my plan was to change where I worked ... and change as often as possible. Acquiring experience in this industry is very hands-on driven and it takes a ton of time to learn the craft, so moving around the country experiencing different grass types in different climates was one of my goals.

Moving from state to state and job to job, I would set new

goals and have a “good look in the mirror” about how each new position could change me for better or worse. How is this new opportunity making me better? What areas do I need to improve on? How is this advancing my growth as a leader? When I get to the next opportunity, where will I be in five years? Those were some of the questions I would ask myself when moving on to the next job.

The unplanned change is impossible to set goals for and be prepared for. Usually, it comes as a gut punch — a pink slip or a furlough. Like many sports turf managers in 2020, I was furloughed. It was tough to not have a bit of a chip on my shoulder and get upset. I had to take that negative energy and channel it toward something productive. Thankfully, the Sports Turf Managers Association opened some online education webinars through their vendors and partners. Taking time to re-educate myself through those educational resources helped me deal with the change.

Change is always tough. Staying calm, staying cool and staying organized can help. Setting goals for the now and for the future can get you where you want to go. Setting goals also helps elevate the stress of change and puts the focus on improvement. Try to find the good if the change is negative and use that time for improvement.

Change always brings new challenges. I hope the goals you set and the plan you build can help make the progress toward completing those goals attainable. **GCI**

Kelly Rensel, CSFM, is the head groundskeeper for the Buffalo Bisons, the Triple-A affiliate of the Toronto Blue Jays. This is his first Golf Course Industry contribution.

With a little help from our friends

In the Birthplace of Vermont, **Bob Hingston** relies on a rotation of regulars who chip in and help make John P. Larkin Country Club hum.

John P. Larkin Country Club is a small nine-hole course located on the Connecticut River bordering New Hampshire. Our budget is tight and we pretty much run the club with eight total employees, both inside and out. We rely on many of our members volunteering in a variety of capacities.

This was a challenging year in many ways. We had some equipment issues and our amazing volunteer mechanics, **Don “Grizzy” Griswold** and **Doug “Double D” Daniels**, kept us afloat. Two gentlemen from a neighboring course in New Hampshire, **Andy** and **Tom Fowler** continue to support us, lending equipment, technical knowledge and a helping hand in many projects.

We did extensive work on two of our greens and those projects both presented their own challenges thanks to location, tree canopies that limited light to the green, drainage issues and poor subsoil composition. We dug out subsoil and re-sodded one of the greens. So far, that project has come along great. We hope it will winter well and give us much improvement in 2022.

With a smaller and smaller crew over the course of the summer, we relied on 20 of our members showing up to volun-

teer when we aerated our greens in early September. They were put into shifts and helped with removing cores, spreading top-dress sand and brushing in the holes. It was a great team effort, our greens bounced back and our members got a real appreciation of the work it takes to fully aerate our 10 greens.

As the summer wore on and some of our equipment broke down, we had had five members who stepped up and helped with mowing — three of them bringing their own mowers. Members have also helped out with raking bunkers, weed whacking, fixing divots on tee boxes and whatever else is needed.

Our group of dedicated members who volunteer are what really keeps JPLCC viable. It is a challenge coordinating them on the days they are available, and what is really the best timing for mowing and other jobs. Some needed to learn that we do “technical mowing” rather than just mowing up and down like they do in their yards. Some of their lines aren’t the straightest maybe but, certainly, you have to be grateful for the help.

How about **John Smith**, who was willing to leave his home at 4:50 a.m. and head to Maine, a two-and-a-half hour trip, to pick up sod in his own truck, then drive back and work until



almost dark laying the sod down on the green? Another member, **Cody LaFlamme**, left his job early at a neighboring course to help direct the sod installation. And the whole **Abernethy** family chipped in again and again: **Noah**, just 17, works on the crew, his dad, **Dave**, volunteered for any on-course job starting as early as 5 a.m., and his mom, **Julie**, joined fellow member **Sue Southworth** in working on flower beds.

Jim Kennison, an old friend from my athletic director and coaching days — who, like me, is “retired” but mows fairways for The Quechee Club — came over to mow fairways for me when I was working alone and had a high school match one afternoon. He got done with his job at Quechee, drove to Windsor and mowed for three-plus hours.

His daughter and son-in-law live near the course and his son-in-law belongs to JPLCC! How cool is that? He wouldn’t take a dime!

One more highlight: **Grady Gilman**, who worked for us three summers, graduated from college with a degree in meteorology and was waiting to take a position in Pennsylvania on July 1, came in on weekends and helped mow greens for us for a couple of tournaments! Again, getting up early to be there at 5 a.m. and never taking a dime! Amazing folks we have here. It really is how we make things work. We are blessed.

We held a member appreciation and volunteer day near the end of the season, with a nine-hole scramble, much food and beverage, and some of our locals playing music to enjoy. Small-town America at its best. **GCI**

Bob Hingston is the interim superintendent of John P. Larkin Country Club in Windsor, Vermont. A former high school athletics director, he still tends to the course most days. This is his first Golf Course Industry contribution.



We bought a **golf course**

Stacey Sumners and her family have discovered many things about turf, business, life, people and themselves since acquiring a 107-acre Michigan property.

In the movie “We Bought a Zoo”, the handsome **Matt Damon** plays **Benjamin Mee**, who purchased a dilapidated zoo and prepared to reopen it for the public. It’s a great family movie and loosely based on a true story.

In our own true-life story, we bought a shuttered golf course in southwestern Michigan. Similar to Mr. Mee, this was a

family decision with all family members committed, all family resources committed and many dark moments to question the sensibility of this decision.

In 2016, a local 18-hole public course was closed with no care to the 107 acres. As my husband and I drove by the property in 2017, we watched the weeds take over the greens, the fairways turn into a hayfield

and large tumbleweeds form in the bunkers. My husband, **Jaime**, and I began the process to acquire the property and prepare it for reopening. Time was of the essence, with turf loss taking place as the greens, tees and fairways sat dormant.

What was on our family résumé that would make us qualified to run and operate a golf course? Nothing. Similar

to the role portrayed by Matt Damon, there were times of financial failure, questions of rationale and near ruin, with enough moments of forward progress to continue.

What possesses a family to make this decision? A strong dose of hard work — and in our case, a pinch of agronomy knowledge, a bit of ignorance, a measure of *naïveté*, and a strong

Stacey Sumners is a graduate of Michigan State University and Thomas M. Cooley Law School. Her family, which includes her husband, Jaime, and their sons, Jack and Carson, own Spruce Ridge Golf Course in Dowagiac, Michigan. Jaime is a conservation officer and grow-in superintendent. Jack and Carson are currently in college with plans to serve their country in the military and/or federal agencies.



TURFHEADS TAKE OVER



amount of commitment.

What has been our journey during the first four years of operation at Spruce Ridge Golf Course? During our first season, only the back nine holes were opened, as those greens fared better in the time of no care. Of course, there were many days of empty tee sheets, when play was consistent with the conditions of the course. In Season 2, all 18 holes were open but with temporary holes on the front nine's sandier greens that still looked more like a bunker than a green. Again, there were many days of empty tee sheets. In Season 3, all 18 holes were open with no temporary greens, but those sandier greens still did not have full coverage and big holes were placed on a third of the holes. Fortunately, play increased as putting became more bearable. In Season 4, the big hole cups were removed and all greens were putt-able, with the tee sheet reflecting the conditions of play.

The community responded favorably to the course being purchased for golf and not being shuttered completely, but that did not translate to customers walking in the door and the cash register ringing. Even though the rate was driving range prices — as we were realistic that the golfers would be unsatisfied putting — the customers did not walk in the door.

Lessons learned so far:

1. THIS IS NOT GLAMOUROUS WORK.

My husband and I have a

running joke when we are doing the dirtiest of work, where we say to each other, "Isn't it glamorous owning a golf course?" Whether it is trash duty, tree removal in the winter, snaking out a toilet, stump removal, filling the porta potty with toilet paper, cart path cleanup, aerating, seeding, fertilizing, spraying, picking up pinecones, picking up sticks or washing carts, there is always work to do. And, as a mom-and-pop organization, sometimes there is nobody to assign the job to except yourself.

2. THE CUSTOMER IS ALWAYS RIGHT, BUT NOT EVERYONE IS YOUR CUSTOMER.

A family friend reminded us of this at the start of our business. It applies during a moment from our fourth season, when a customer asked for a refund when it was 80 degrees and sunny at 4 p.m., which was denied. Of course, the customer threatened to never return to golf at the property ...

3. THICK SKIN IS REQUIRED.

The pin placement is off. The greens are too slow. The greens are too fast. Fairways are too narrow. There are too many trees. There's not enough shade. The par 3s are too long. The course is too short. Need better signage.

Then you get that one Google review that you MUST post in the maintenance barn to let the crew know that their hard efforts are noticed: "Used to play our league here. I'd heard that it closed but then was part of a scramble that was played at Spruce. The challenge here is risk vs. reward.

The course isn't terribly long but demands that you be straight. For longer hitters the Par 4's are drivable for the most part. However, if you aren't straight, you can go from a birdie or par chance to a double in a single shot. Lots of breaks you really have to read. Despite being at the end of 12 scorching days, the course was not burned out in the least. Very well kept and maintained. If you're in the area and want to play a great round of Michigan golf, I'd definitely recommend Spruce Ridge."

No, this wasn't written by a family member or friend, nor was it paid for, nor was it solicited. If it was appropriate to send "xoxoxo" as a reply, I would have done that. For a Google review to discuss strategy at your course and acknowledge what Mother Nature brings at you, it just reminds you there are golfers who do notice and will provide an unsolicited positive and realistic review.

4. YOU NEED A SUPPORTIVE GOLF COMMUNITY.

We learned early on that golf course owners and superintendents are supportive. That was surprising. Whether it was words of encouragement from local golf course operators, cart loans from a competing golf course, equipment or instrument loans from a competing golf course, an offer to sell us a piece of equipment that we desperately needed, we have been pleasantly surprised to find that the golf course community is inclusive.

5. YOU NEED TO PLAY YOUR OWN COURSE ... AND OTHER COURSES.

Play your own course, whether to interact with your customer base, or see the golf course from an angle other than from atop a mower, tractor or truckster, or from behind the

push mower, drop spreader, seeder or line trimmer. But also play other courses. My husband and I continue to play the outings we played prior to owning a course. It is easy to get caught up in what is not getting done, still growing in, or still repairing at your own course, as it is your job to be critical as you work to improve the course. But when you play another course, you can see that we all have our challenges — as you observe a hydraulic leak on a green, a fallen tree limb or cart breakdowns. It's a great reminder that we are all struggling with managing a natural habitat, dealing with equipment failure and meeting golfers' expectations on a budget.

6. DON'T GIVE UP. In four years of ownership, we have survived temporary closure due to COVID-19, tax appeal, cart lease dispute, neighbor boundary dispute, theft, trespass, equipment breakdown, irrigation leak, lack of employees and more. BUT ... it is rewarding work. Whether growing grass — or, as we said at the start, killing less grass — watching animals claim your property as their habitat, or enjoying the sunrises and sunsets, there truly is no better office than a 107-acre playground.

As the late businessman and owner of the NFL's Chargers Alex Spanos said, "The best way to learn is by doing. The only way to build a strong work ethic is getting your hands dirty." In doing this unglamorous work, we have managed to return a golf course to a playable surface, we have gained friendships with customers, employees and sales representatives, and we have even had some good times in the process.

We bought a golf course? Yes, we bought a golf course! GCI



Hire somebody to help with hiring?

Tyler Bloom sees and hears plenty about attracting and retaining employees. He makes the case for why it's OK — and likely advantageous — to rethink the toughest task facing your facility.

If my operating model was based on charging for every time I heard, "I can't find anyone, no one wants to work," I'd be a billionaire — and I'm just 18 months into owning my own business.

Accusation audit No. 1: I'm not a human resource expert, so take my suggestions as solely observational, "learned on the job" and at times impractical. However, when traveling the country over the course of the last 18 months and consulting with facilities in both remote and urban settings, I observe and tell the story as I see it.

There's unprecedented demand with more than 10.4 million open jobs

and only 75 unemployed people for every 100 open positions. Experts expect this will be a three- to five-year crisis. Remote work and gig-based work is challenging the norms for how people interpret the style of work.

People, including myself, have rethought their career trajectories, priorities and the lifestyle they want to live. Changing compensation, benefits, work environments and scheduling to be more attractive and accommodating as an "employer of choice" has brought about much needed improvement in the golf industry. General managers, golf professionals, superintendents and chefs

are all trying to make the best of the situation, but many are flat-out tired and frustrated.

The frustration over candidates not responding to texts, emails or phone calls, along with the no-call, no-show for interviews, has plagued nearly every business in America. For your own mental sanity, this is the norm, not the exception.

I heard it best from one superintendent: "Sometimes it is just easier dealing with the shortage than prioritizing the time to handle a hiring process or training." As we looked for common trends and themes in our consultations and search processes,

Tyler Bloom is a workforce and leadership consultant and founder of Tyler Bloom Consulting, a business he launched in 2020 after 17 years working in daily golf course maintenance. Follow him on Twitter @tbloom_golf or at <https://tylerbloom.online/>. This is his third Turfheads Take Over contribution.

we came to a conclusion that Father Time is often the root of the recruiting and hiring process, or lack thereof. The demands of organizations from the top down has inhibited clubs to properly market openings, source people and, at times, follow through on a hiring process.

You shouldn't feel busy, buried and behind, or guilty over how you spend your time. Often, we are so busy dealing with responsibilities beyond the call of duty that a follow-up phone call, email or text message to that candidate is down the priority list. People become disengaged, and you're back to square one and restarting the entire process. Hiring managers are justifiably beaten down over the situation and tired of spinning on the hamster wheel.

Consideration for designating and delegating to a talent acquisition specialist, recruiting firm, staffing agency or appointing someone on the team to coordinate sourcing, interviewing, hiring and onboarding is difficult when the cost of business in other areas continues to compete with the cost for talent.

With that being said, what's the story on the other side of the pillow, to paraphrase the late **Stuart Scott**? It's easy to follow the narrative that nobody wants to work anymore. There are plenty of people hungry for work. They're eager and energetic and they want to find a way to get back on their feet after 18 months of uncertainty. As one gentleman said to us during an initial phone screening, "I just want to get back to work so I can feel like a man again."

We have to recognize what people who are going through the job-seeking process are enduring. Some are on pins and needles waiting for work, any kind of work. Many have multiple irons in the fire looking for any kind of work imaginable, even if that is in a field they have no transferable skills.

In fairness, I am guilty of making similar sentiments on numerous

occasions! For argument's sake, the average time to hire general labor is 42 days, according to the Society of Human Resources. You are fighting against Father Time in an industry heavily reliant on volume of applicants in a short hiring season. The surefire way is to increase your marketing and outreach efforts.

It is not inconceivable to begin your hiring process for 2022 right now and consider bringing in people who are laid off from their existing seasonal position. Recruiting and hiring needs to be a 12-month process, and I foresee more businesses adapting to larger full-time teams during the winter months and sharing responsibilities throughout the club.

TAKE CARE OF YOUR PEOPLE

There's a bigger picture here to consider beyond just losing potential employees—your existing employees. They need to be seen as human beings, individuals looking to put in an honest day's work for an honest day's pay. We need to consider that they are overworked, tired and stressed, too.

There is a consistent effort towards creating a sustainable work-life balance by many businesses. Instituting a cap of 50 hours a week for managers, shifting work-week schedules to include two days off, increasing PTO during non-peak months, providing wellness benefits for employees and offering accessibility to better health care options are measures worth considering.

Check in with your people. A disengaged workforce will lead to greater turnover, so it is pivotal at this time to keep the environment warm, welcoming and fun. Reengage with your core staff about the successes, tribulations and adversity overcome in 2021.

YOUR CALL TO ACTION

Becoming aware of your time is your first step, and prioritizing action is the second. Communicate your needs up the chain. You need to multiply time through delegation, automation or

elimination.

Developing a talent management team that will include hiring managers, assistant managers, human resources, recruiters or external sources. AutoZone, for example, is currently offering anyone in North America that refers a qualified candidate with a CDL license a \$5,000 referral fee if the individual stays on for 90 days. Is it so bogus to think the club industry should be doing the same to passive candidates?

The utilization of automated applicant tracking systems can not only distribute jobs to your big job boards, but also send automated emails, interview schedules, assessments and questionnaires to identify the right person for your team. These also help hiring managers and teams stay focused and accountable.

Managing and coordinating an entire search process from establishing job description and requirements, to posting, scheduling interviews, utilizing personality assessments to screen, phone screen and even schedule the final interview is a full-time job.

Thinking you can go at this alone is unrealistic. Minimizing the gaps and time between each step can be done by eliminating the work for yourself or assistant managers. **Michael Campbell**, director of grounds at Montclair Golf Club in Montclair, New Jersey, took that advice in late 2021 and secured a talent acquisition manager for the grounds team. Michael's team can now focus its time in the field and leave the expert to do her job.

There are many virtual assistants on freelance sites such as Fiverr, Upwork and others who have human resource specialists looking for temporary assignments. Contracting recruitment is no different than outsourcing aeration, soil testing and disease testing, and it can be done within a reasonable budget.

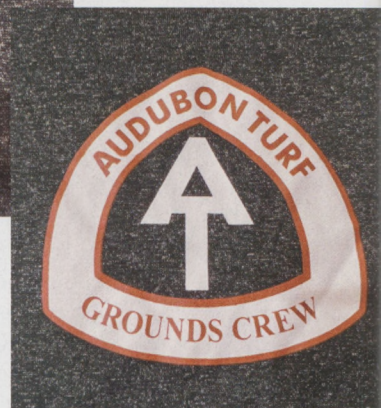
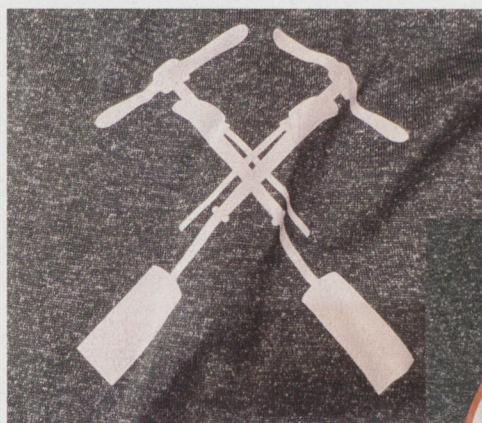
Hire the experts, so you can focus your time on what you do best in the field, in the boardroom and, most important, as a family person. **GCI**

TRAVELS WITH TERRY

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

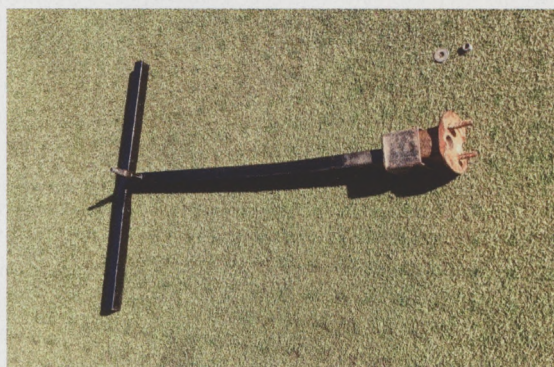
DUAL GOLF MAINTENANCE LOGOS

Like most clubs, Audubon Country Club in Louisville, Kentucky, has a very distinctive logo. The greens and grounds department also created their own two distinct logos. The entire staff wears T-shirts, golf shirts, jackets, hats and other apparel provided by the club. The Audubon Turf logo is placed on the front of clothing and hats and the Two Crossed Cup Cutters logo is placed on sleeves of T-shirts and golf shirts only. A local sporting goods store provides the clothing and they combined with another local company to install the logos. Creating apparel with the logos only adds a few dollars to the cost depending on the size. Superintendent **Chris Knockwafel**, assistant superintendents **Paul Hauck** and **Dylan Panther**, equipment manager **Dalton Wilson** and the rest of the staff wear their logoed clothes proudly. The response from the greens and grounds committee, membership and management has been very positive.



DUAL PURPOSE VALVE KEY

Audubon Country Club also has two different types of irrigation shutoff valves: a 2-square-inch nut mainline gate valve and a round brass hand isolation valve. This mainline gate valve key, modified in-house, was shortened from 6 feet to about 30 inches in height so it would easily fit in the bed of a turf vehicle. A recycled 2-inch square nut, from a discarded mainline valve, was modified by welding on two prongs ($\frac{1}{4}$ inch by $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches) that fit into the openings on the round brass hand isolation valve — which fits onto a threaded bolt welded just below the handle when not in use, which is held in place with a nut and washer. Now only one valve key is required to open and close both types of valves. All the parts were in inventory and it took about 30 minutes to modify it. Superintendent **Chris Knockwafel**, assistant superintendents **Paul Hauck** and **Dylan Panther**, and equipment manager **Dalton Wilson** are a formidable team. **Lester George** is the club's renovation architect.



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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CHRISTMAS WISH(ES)

It has been 30 years since comedian **Steve Martin** graced the stage on “Saturday Night Live” and delivered his famous “A Holiday Wish” monologue. If you do not recall the performance, it started with, “If I had one wish that I could wish this holiday season, it would be that all the children of the world ... join hands and sing together in the spirit of harmony and peace.”

He then adds that if he could have a second wish, he would keep the children as wish No. 1, as harmony and peace do take priority this time of year, but wish No. 2 would be for unlimited wealth. He proceeds to add a third and fourth wish, both selfishly motivated, before wrapping up after he has reprioritized the order to where the children of the world now sit last.

So, I started thinking ... If I had one wish this holiday season, what would I wish for? I don’t think anybody would be surprised if I used my wish to restore my wife’s health. The past year-plus has been a physical and emotional toll on us both, but thankfully the prayers and support of the professional turfgrass community helped pull us through.

The professional turfgrass community, that is where I will use my wish! If I had one wish this holiday season to give back and repay my sisters and brothers in turf, I would wish for everyone’s turf in the coming year to experience deep rooting, uniform density and superior plant health.

But is that enough? Maybe I should include a clause that puts an end to droughts, floods and other extreme weather. We all would receive timely rainfall when needed and everyone could

put the hoses away for the year.

But wait, what about everyone’s labor issues? It would be shortsighted if I didn’t wish for your budgets be flush with funds to adequately support the labor line item and, more important, that there be folks willing and able to work applying to your posts.

And since everyone else is getting a raise, I could wish you all receive a tidy bonus and salary increase like our good friend **Dr. Klein** referenced last month.

Then again, there is the issue with golfer etiquette. Maybe I should wish for all the golfers in the coming year to repair their ball marks, rake their footprints, fill and replace their divots, and obey all posted golf car policies. Actually, that is what folks would call a Christmas Miracle.

When you really stop and think about it, there is a lot that could be wished for to make our lives easier. But if things were easy, would the job be as fulfilling and rewarding? One thing that makes greenkeeping such an amazing profession is the ability to work hand in hand with nature, nurturing a multi-faceted living, breathing piece of land.

We are agronomists, meteorologists, pathologists, soil scientists, engineers, accountants, human resource managers and more. Our portfolio encompasses a vast array of skills that most working-class people do not possess.

We are faced with a myriad of daily circumstances requir-

ing us to handle decisions impacting our facilities and the enjoyment of millions of people around the globe. It may very well be that this decision-making is the ultimate hook to being a greenkeeper, as it ensures each day is different. Yes, there can be times during a season where the maintenance can seem mundane, but those periods are typically short-lived as something unique happens all the time.

Maybe my wish would be best used if I wished for more folks to recognize what an awesome profession greenkeeping can be, and they entered into the workforce? Wouldn’t that be nice if our university turfgrass programs returned to pre-recession levels?

Maybe it would help if all of us made it clear to everyone what an awesome job being a golf course superintendent is and stopped complaining on social media. I understand you are frustrated at the lack of etiquette on the part of golfers, or the lack of appreciation shown to you and your team at times. But we are the bona fide leaders in a multi-pronged service industry. Whether you care for a premium private facility or maintain a 9-hole course in rural America, you provide a service to millions of people. They get outside, breathe fresh air, take in the scenery and get some exercise.

As crazy as we all believe society is today, I shudder to think what society might be like without us. **GCI**



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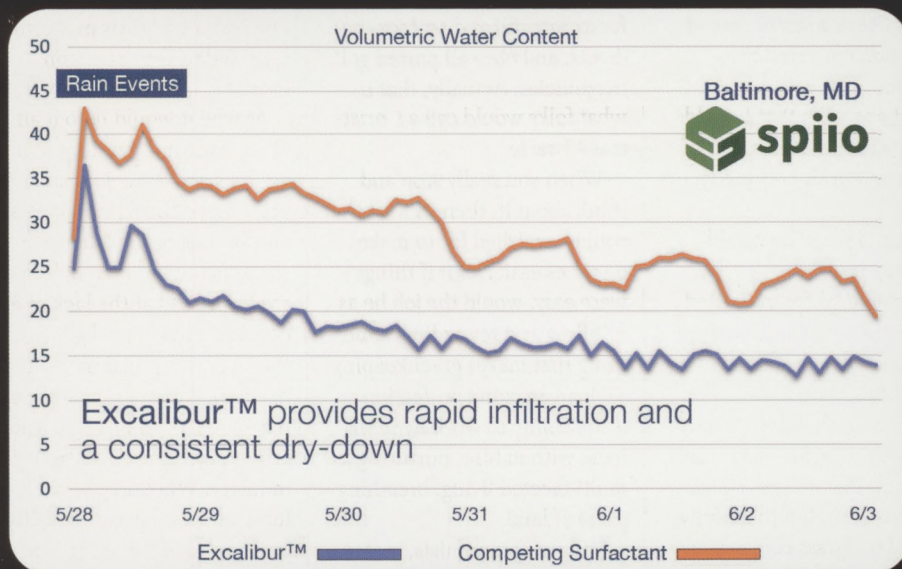
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