

public-play courses; three 18-hole private courses and one 27-hole, soon-to-be 36-hole private course. All these are within a 13-mile radius of the city. Many golfers will travel 40 to 80 miles to play golf courses in smaller towns, Grass says. The Yellowstone Country Club, which is full according to Grass, is considered to be Hilands direct competitor for members.

"We're not hurting, but we're not full," he says. "If this was a public course, we wouldn't be as stable."

In the Chicago area, many courses are renovating and trying to keep up with the other courses in the area, according to Braunsky, who is the only full-time maintenance employee at Geneva and has as many as 14 seasonal workers.

"Golfers are staying closer to home, and we're an in-town club," he says.

On Tuesday nights, Geneva hosts an event where golfers play seven holes and socialize afterwards.

Like Geneva and Hilands, Downers Grove is in a competitive market. There are three executive courses and one par-3 course within a seven-mile radius, as well as 15 larger courses within a 10-mile radius – all of which are public.

"When you have that type of competition, you work harder to stand out," Bennett says. "If you don't have that competition, people come to you because they have no choice, and you don't want to do business like that."

A few ways Downers Grove tries to stand out is by setting up additional tees 150 to 175 yards from the green for kids and families. Bennett also is selling punch cards and buckets of balls at the range so people who buy in bulk receive a discount. He would rather do that than just slash prices. Green fees range from \$12.50 during the week to \$18.50 on weekends.

Negative perceptions

Nine-hole courses are not only having a difficult time growing their businesses compared to larger facilities, but they sometimes are viewed negatively by golfers because of their size.

"We hold our maintenance standards as high as any 18-hole course," Grass says. "The tide is changing. Seven or eight years ago, I served on a GCSAA committee and was 'the nine-hole guy.' I got ribbed and said, 'I'm nine-holes, and I'm OK with that.' Years ago, the perception was that a nine-hole course was a lesser cousin to an 18-hole golf course. But there are more nine-hole courses out here in Wyoming and Montana than 18-hole courses."



Hilands Golf Club isn't hurting, but it isn't full, according to Peter Grass, CGCS, who says that if the course was public, it wouldn't be as stable as it is. Photo: Hilands Golf Club

Grass says he has half the headaches with a nine-hole course compared to an 18-hole course.

"We do the same things on a nine-hole course that are done on an 18-hole course or larger, just less," he says. "The knowledge level is equal to that of superintendents on 18-hole courses. You still need the same skills whether you're caring for one hole or 27."

Naturally, the staff at Hilands is small. There are three full-time golf course maintenance employees: an equipment manager, assistant superintendent and Grass.

"I mow greens myself," Grass says. "I'm more hands-on. Half the time is administrative work, and the other half is out on the course. As the superintendent of a nine-hole course, you need to be a jack of all trades."

Pozen says course size all equals out.

"It's all a matter of scale," he says. "Nine-hole courses have less area. We have one fairway mower and one greens mower. But it's the same amount of hours and time as working on an 18-hole course."

Some golfers in the Chicago area have the perception that Downers Grove is an executive or par-3 course instead of the regulation nine-hole course that it is, Bennett says. That perception can be negative, but Bennett says he hasn't done much specifically to combat that perception. He says some locals still don't even know the 114-year-old course exists.

"We need to get people out here on the golf course so they can learn about its history and spread the word," he says. GCN



In the Chicago area, many golf courses are renovating to keep up with neighboring courses. The Geneva Golf Club is one of them. Photo: Geneva Golf Club

Rethinking greens to stay in the black

PROACTIVE COURSE RENOVATIONS AND REROUTING PROVIDE BETTER EXPERIENCES FOR GOLFERS AND AIM TO BOOST PROFITS

by
STEVE AND
SUZ TRUSTY

Golf courses are businesses. Despite the intangible benefits provided by the beautiful settings and the opportunities for exercise and relaxation, they're all about the bottom line. If there's no profit, there's no golf course. As with all other service providers, profit depends on pleasing customers. Remodeling and rerouting, handled well, can increase play and keep a course competitive within a market – in essence, using the greens to keep the course in the black.

The Crenshaw Cliffside Golf Course at Barton Creek Resort & Spa in Austin, Texas, the historic Green Lakes Golf Course at Green Lakes State Park in Fayetteville, N.Y., and the Bay Course at the Seaview Resort & Spa, A Marriott Resort in Galloway, N.J., are good examples of courses that are changing to stay ahead in competitive markets.

Making great better

The Crenshaw Cliffside Golf Course closed for renovation just when it was in the best condition it had been in during the past six years, says Ken Gorzycki, director of golf

course maintenance. However, it wasn't a difficult decision.

"We took an already great course (recipient of the Golf Digest 2006 Reader's Choice Best Course to Play in Austin) and made it better," he says. "It all stems around the quality level we expect for our clientele. Though we'd had no negative input from course users, we knew we could take the golfing experience to a higher level."

The renovation for the Ben Crenshaw and Bill Coore-designed, links-style course is a considerable one, yet it retains all the significant elements of the original design and beauty of the setting. And while the work requires a shut-down from June 12 to Sept. 15, the renovation is as practical as it is strategic.

The Tifdwarf Bermudagrass greens were 15 years old, and it was time to improve them from a variety standpoint, Gorzycki says.

"We selected Champion, which we have on two of the other three courses here, because it's given us the most consistently good putting surfaces for the longest time," he says. "Analysis of the greens showed the upper four to five inches had heavy organic buildup. Below that level, the sand was clean and still met USGA specs. We opted to strip off that contaminated layer, bring in clean greens mix compatible with the existing base, reshape the greens – basically matching their original contours with a few tweaks here and there – and sprig in the Champion."

The bunkers were renovated, too. The crew excavated the sand, removed the existing drainage, flushed out the outfall drain pipe, installed new French drains, reshaped them back to the original design and added new sand.

The Crenshaw Cliffside course was the resort's only track with only three sets of

tee boxes, Gorzycki says.

"We added about nine new tees to allow us to add the fourth tee – a forward men's tee between our current men's and ladies' tees," he says. "This change will speed up play and make it more enjoyable."

Additionally, one of the effluent storage ponds was relined.

The timing of the Crenshaw Cliffside renovation was critical. The course closed during a time of the summer when play is light and the Bermudagrass growing conditions are best.

"We allowed three weeks to prepare and sprig the greens, leaving seven to eight weeks for them to grow into full coverage, and another two or three weeks to get them groomed for play by Sept. 15," Gorzycki says. "The other work fits into that 10-week window."

The renovation, which costs an estimated \$550 million, has been going smoothly. Because it focuses on matching the original design, not much input was required from the architectural team. The main contractor, Golf Works, is based in Austin, and that helps from the logistical side. Gorzycki had worked previously with Golf Works at another course, and Golf Works has worked with Crenshaw in the past, creating a comfort zone on such a tightly scheduled project.

"Our superintendent and assistant have been overseeing the daily construction operations as well as keeping up the other maintenance," Gorzycki says. "I've also kept in close contact with them and the project manager. We're hitting our goal for excellence with the ability to retain that level consistently."

Solving a problem

The historic Green Lakes Golf Course was originally designed by Robert Trent Jones,

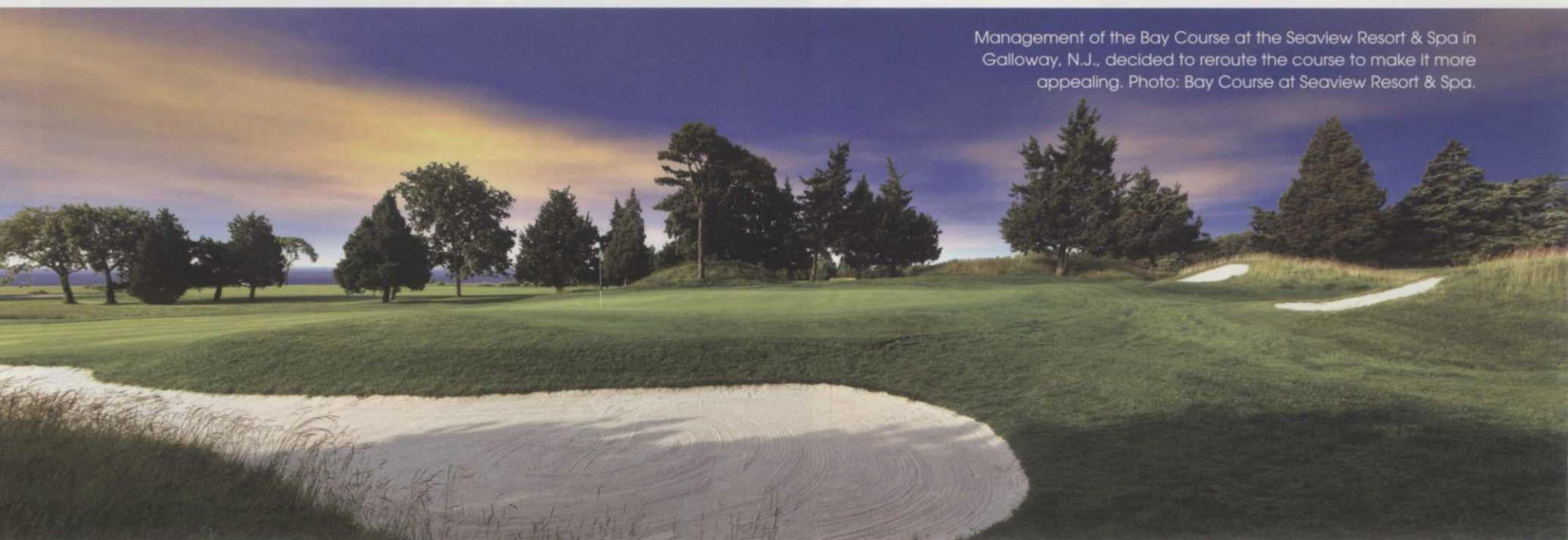
Why remodel?

The six most common factors leading to a remodeling program are:

1. Replacing old, worn-out components
2. Correcting hard-to-maintain areas
3. Making adjustments to improve weak holes
4. Improving aesthetics
5. Restoring historic value
6. Making the course as good as it can be

Source: American Society of Golf Course Architects

Management of the Bay Course at the Seaview Resort & Spa in Galloway, N.J., decided to reroute the course to make it more appealing. Photo: Bay Course at Seaview Resort & Spa.



Sr., in 1936. Known for its routing over a rolling landscape, it has been considered one of upstate New York's most popular courses. However, the par-5 12th hole always slowed play and backed up golfers.

"Golf course superintendent Dean Burton had identified its impact on slowing play long before we were able to schedule its renovation," says Brian Burnett, project manager for the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historical Preservation. "Golfers had to play over a large bunker to reach a raised green that sloped steeply on both sides. A shot missed to the left of the green would get lost in the tall grass and trees. A shot missed right would bounce dramatically to the right or get lost in a waste area between the No. 12 green and No. 13 tee. It was as much about searching for balls as playing them."

The green had been relocated in the 1950s and was one of two that weren't part of the original course design. Architect Barry Jordan, owner of Jordan Golf Design based in Manlius, N.Y., was consulted to help fix the problem.

"My goal was to improve playability while creating a better blend with the original holes," Jordan says. "We considered returning the green to its original position, but it just didn't make sense."

"The present green location was workable, and the green itself is in good shape," he adds. "I recommended keeping it intact and renovating everything directly around it, including the adjacent 13th-hole tee

boxes. Now, several deep bunkers frame the hole and contain shots that previously would have been lost. And because it's a par 5, it's now more enticing to try to reach the green in two shots."

Much of Jordan's original sketch was retained in his final design. By shifting the front bunker to the right side of the hole, an alley to the green was created on the left side. Playability and strategy were considerably enhanced without diminishing the challenges. The reconstruction also included the rerouting of the cart path and correcting drainage that comes off the hillside. Jordan created a tight drawing and then popped it up in a 3-D model that contained all of the elevations, which helped save money during the construction.

Three different contractors worked on the project, which cost about \$70,000. Acts II Construction (Gouverneur, N.Y.) cleared trees and rough graded the site. Daly Landscape (Kirkville, N.Y.) handled the finish grading, constructed the five new bunkers and installed drain lines. Bushnell Nurseries (Bridgeport, N.Y.) installed a drain inlet and discharge piping, installed almost 50,000 square feet of sod and constructed 335 linear feet of new asphalt cart path. The sod came from Sky High Turf Farms (Chittenango, N.Y.). A bluegrass blend was used for the fairways and rough areas, and bentgrass was used for the apron on the No. 12 green and the new tee boxes on the 13th hole.

"Working with multiple contractors was



Much of architect Barry Jordan's original redesign of Green Lakes Golf Course was retained in his final design. Photo: Jordan Golf Design

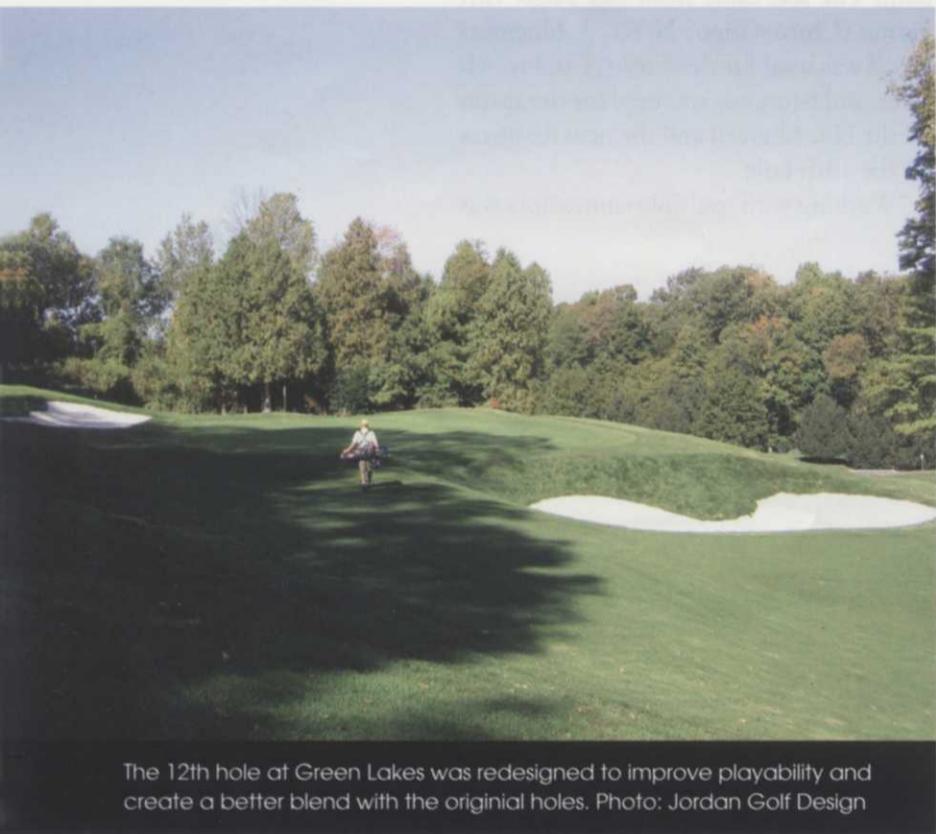
Renovation insight

Several publications from The American Society of Golf Course Architects provide valuable insight to the remodeling process. Especially beneficial are golf course component life span information ("Golf Course Items Expected Life Cycle") and the remodeling Q&A ("The Golf Course Remodeling Process - Questions & Answers"). ASGCA provides these and other informative documents free-of-charge by mail or e-mail. Call 262-786-5960 or e-mail info@asgca.org.

more difficult, but with costs a major factor and a narrow time frame to complete the project (June through August 2005) prior to installation of an irrigation system in the fall of 2005, it was the most workable alternative," Burnett says. "Barry Jordan and his project manager, Kurt Hackwelder, stayed on top of things from the design perspective. And Dean Burton and his staff were incredible, assisting in all aspects of the project. Working together, we made it happen on time with spectacular results."

Simple and effective

Although not a renovation, the driving force behind rerouting the Bay Course was to create inventory where there was demand, according to Steve Schaller, director



The 12th hole at Green Lakes was redesigned to improve playability and create a better blend with the original holes. Photo: Jordan Golf Design



The 15-year-old greens on the Crenshaw Cliffside Golf Course at Barton Creek were changed from Tifdwarf Bermudagrass to Champion. Photo: Barton Creek Resort & Spa.

of golf for Seaview Resort & Spa.

"When there is more inventory (golf course availability) than users, golf course owners need to analyze why and determine what can be done to make their course more appealing," Schaller says. "We were after the delight factor."

The Bay Course is one of two courses on the property and is the host of the 2006 ShopRite LPGA Classic. Donald Ross designed the links-style course about 1914. The strategic rerouting restores Ross' original plan.

The rerouting didn't entail moving any greens or tees. There was no earth-moving or shaping or restructuring of the holes. It was basically a renumbering of holes nine through 17. It also eliminated back-to-back par threes and ends both nines on a par 5. The signature hole (previously the 13th and now the 17th) is a typical Donald Ross elevated green that's strategically bunkered to provide a challenge in the final stages of play.

The 10th hole was previously the 17th hole. The rerouting now puts the 10th tee near the first tee at the midpoint of the course. Golfers have an easy option to start from the front nine or the back nine if they wish to play only nine holes, according to Schaller.

"The new location is much more convenient for golf outings and tournament play with double tee starts," he says. "Before the rerouting, the LPGA contestants, officials and volunteers were shuttled about three-fourths of a mile to the second starting tee.

It also separated the area logistically for spectators and the media. This routing is easier to maneuver, speeds the pace of play and enhances the overall experience. Logistically, it improves the flow, allowing our staff to serve outing and tournament participants more efficiently."

The rerouting is part of recognizing who the customers are to accommodate their needs and wants Schaller says.

"We're not sure why the routing was changed from the original, but this reroute was a matter of adapting to a changing customer base and doing it ahead of the curve," he says. "There are so many cultural changes that affect the golfing community, and resort courses fill a special niche. People want to attend their meetings and play golf, join the family at the beach or take golf lessons, play volleyball or go to the spa. The options are great, and people want to experience as much as possible."

The cost to reroute the course was minimal - about \$5,000 - just a few basics such as renumbering the tee markers and reprinting the scorecards, according to Schaller. For golf course superintendent Mark Beumont, the change simply required rerouting of the maintenance sequence to get the course ready for players.

The rewards, in terms of efficiency, playability and golfer appreciation, are well worth the effort, Schaller says. GCN

Steve and Suz Trusty are freelance writers based in Council Bluffs, Iowa. They can be reached at suz@trusty.bz.

Phosphorus movement and uptake in Bermudagrass putting greens

Research at Auburn University was initiated to determine the effect of P rate and P placement on P uptake, extractable soil P, and turf performance in two hybrid Bermudagrass (cv TifEagle) putting greens. The study found:

- In both years of the study, Mehlich extractable soil test results indicate, according to those recommendations (P at 130 lb P₂O₅ acre⁻¹), additional P fertilizer was needed three to five months after the initial P application.
- Application of P in excess of recommendations (195 and 260 lb P₂O₅ acre⁻¹) didn't appear to be prone to downward movement (0-12 inch sampling) within the one-year evaluation.
- Shoot density, dry weight of roots (0- to 3-inch depth), clipping yield, and P

uptake by Bermudagrass all increased as P rate increased, typically up to a P fertilization rate of 195 lb P₂O₅ acre⁻¹.

- The method of P application (band or broadcast) rarely affected extractable soil P, and the only agronomic factor that was affected was P uptake by Bermudagrass. In that case, Bermudagrass growing in plots which received banded P had greater uptake of P than Bermudagrass growing in pots with broadcast P.
- Phosphorus fertilization of sand-based greens shouldn't be neglected, and slightly higher rates (or more frequent application) than that recommended by current AL soil-test recommendations might be warranted. Additional research is needed in this area to make sure long-term environmental impacts via P accumulation don't develop.

by Elizabeth A. Guertal, Auburn University



The method of phosphorus application rarely affected extractable soil phosphorus.

Saturated hydraulic conductivity of coarse-textured, root-zone mixes

To be qualified as a USGA green, construction requires total porosity (P_t), air-filled porosity (P_a) and saturated hydraulic conductivity (K_{sat}) of the sand mix meet specific values. Reports indicate that K_{sat} of the same material measured by different technicians and laboratories resulted in large variations that limit the utility of the data. The objective of this study was to develop a procedure for measuring K_{sat} of coarse-textured rooting mixes.

A new permeameter was developed. The saturation tank and permeameter was combined into a single system, hence, the soil column could be kept submerged in water at all times to avoid air re-entry into the sample.

Soil-moisture-density curves of sand and sand mixes showed the optimum sand mix moisture content for packing the sample was between 0.06 and 0.07 g g⁻¹. Research also indicated if peat moss is used as an amendment, the application rate shouldn't be more than 0.02 g g⁻¹ of sand.

When packing the soil column, the three-

layer approach, as described in the Proctor's test, was adopted and modified for column construction.

Both K_{sat} and bulk density of soil columns constructed by one-, two-, and three-layer approaches were evaluated statistically. Results indicated that the two- and three-layer approaches could generate adequate firmness comparable to a severely compacted putting green and provide consistent and uniform soil columns for K_{sat} measurement. For practical purposes, the two-layer approach was suggested for soil column construction to save time and labor.

No differences were found in bulk density and K_{sat} between sand columns packed by 1.32- or 3.02-kg hammers. Because a larger soil sample (76 mm in diameter) was suggested for measuring K_{sat}, the 3.02-kg hammer should be used in packing soil columns.

The developed procedure was tested by laypersons using the same sand mix and the results showed only about 10 percent differences in K_{sat} compared to K_{sat} measured by technicians. GCN

by She-Kong Chong, Anquan Zhang, Richard Boniak, Yanhe Huang, and C.-H. Ok, University of Southern Illinois



The saturation tank and permeameter was combined into a single system.

For more research information, visit the U.S. Golf Association's Turfgrass and Environmental Research Online (<http://usgatero.msu.edu>).





Terry Buchen, CGCS, MG, is president of Golf Agronomy International. He's a 35-year member of the GCSAA and can be reached at terrybuchen@earthlink.net.

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

travels with TERRY

Fan stand

The Four Seasons Resort and Club, Dallas at Las Colinas hosts the EDS Byron Nelson Championship on the PGA Tour on its TPC and Cottonwood Valley courses annually. Like many courses in the transition zone that have bentgrass/*Poa annua* greens, greens fans are used to help provide a minimum wind speed of 3 mph to help cool the canopy.

Bryant Jennings, assistant equipment mechanic, built a metal stand to hold and store the greens fans during the winter and roll them onto trailers that transport them to and from each green.

The 4-foot-by-4-foot square stands are mounted on caster wheels. They're built using 1.5-inch square tubing for the outside frame; a 3-inch-diameter pipe that's 2-feet long; 4-inch, U-shaped channel iron to support the pipe; and 1-inch angle iron for additional support. With all of the components welded together, the fan mounting bracket slides into place.

The total cost to build the stand, including materials and labor, was less than \$100.

Other members of the Four Seasons team include Scott E. Miller, CGCS, director of golf and landscape operations; Russell Wilson, Cottonwood Valley superintendent; Lance M. Bailey, TPC assistant superintendent; Drew Fleming, manager in training; and Chu H. Kang, transportation manager.



Mower transport made easy

One alternative to using greens-mower transport trailers is to build greens-mower platforms on the back of golf carts that have been transformed into maintenance vehicles. This idea was conceived when seasonal employees at the Athens (Ga.) Country Club had trouble backing greens-mower trailers without jackknifing them.

The greens-mower platforms are bolted to the rear of golf carts. They're made in-house using 1.5-inch-by- $\frac{3}{16}$ -inch flat bar steel; 1.5-inch-by-1.5-inch-by- $\frac{3}{16}$ -inch angle iron; 1-inch-by-1-inch-by- $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch square tubing; $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch-by-22-inch-by-34-inch smooth expanded metal; and 1-inch, diamond-shaped mesh screen material that's all welded and bolted together.

The horizontal square tubing bracket keeps the greens mower from moving side to side during transit, and the transport wheel axles slide just above them and are used as a guide when loading and unloading. The metal transport brackets that swivel up and down are bolted to the flat-bar steel supporting brackets, which each have notches that slip over the mower transport wheel axles, keeping the mower in place while in transit. The metal mesh screen flooring is secured with two flat-steel brackets to help distribute the mower's weight.

Maintenance workers back the platform into a hillside or mound for easy loading and unloading. Workers also carry a round, 30-gallon plastic container to hold grass clippings. The container also holds the grass catcher while in transit. The metal leaf rake is used for hand-raking bunkers and general cleanup.

The materials and labor costs were less than \$150 for each platform.

At the Athens Country Club, Dowse B. "Buzz" Howell is the director of golf course and grounds; James Drinkard is the superintendent; Dennis Flanagan is the head service technician; and Bill Hurt and Chris Thorton are the co-assistant superintendents who conceived the idea. GCN

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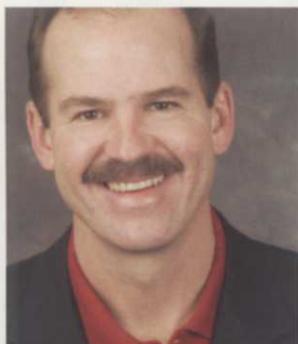
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Pat Jones is president of Flagstick LLC, a consulting firm that provides sales and marketing intelligence to green-industry businesses. He can be reached at psjhawk@cox.net or 440-478-4763.

I doubt it

For years, I've been telling people, "Golf course superintendents are like folks from Missouri – they always say 'show me.'"

Got a new biostimulant potion? Show me the research. A new piece of equipment? Show me a demo. Some "revolutionary" new technique? Show me who else has tried it.

Well, I'm not from Missouri, and I don't grow grass for a living, but 20 years of hanging out with you guys – plus the inherent cynicism that comes with being a journalist – also has made me a pretty tough sell for most things. The words, "I doubt it," often pop into my head or jump out of my piehole.

I'm particularly skeptical when a headline in the morning paper or on CNN screams a "new study" shows some particular substance we eat, drink or come in contact with regularly will probably kill us.

Sometimes it's bizarre ("New study links Buicks and hyperactivity"). Sometimes it's an incredibly obvious waste of taxpayer's grant money ("Research shows teenagers likely to experiment with sex"). It always reminds me of the old Chevy Chase gag on "Saturday Night Live's" Weekend Update segment where he says, "Scientists today announced that saliva causes cancer ... but only when swallowed in small amounts over a long period of time."

We can thank the marvelous field of epidemiology for most of these horror stories. Epidemiology is basically bookmaking for human health. For example, if you eat tofu exclusively at every meal, every day, the odds are you'll live 3.2 years longer than average. (I just made that up ... tofu really sucks ... don't eat it.)

Living your life based on this type of "science" is like throwing five bucks into a Final Four pool at work, only the odds are usually fuzzier than the 50-to-1 you might get if you pick Gonzaga to win it all. Also, I know if I place a bet with my bookie and win, he'll pay me. If I lose, I pay him. Epidemiologists bet with our tax money and get paid for it whether they're right or wrong.

It's my humble opinion many epidemiologists follow this tried-and-true scientific protocol: Decide what attention-getting notion you want to prove, and then figure out a way to maybe prove it. Next, publish the results in some obscure academic jour-

nal and hire a really good public relations agent to get you on TV and, of course, promote your new book.

Completely cynical? Yes. Completely wrong? I doubt it.

One month, coffee is horrible for you. The next, it's a lifesaver. Ditto for red wine, apple juice, PVC pipes, cell phones, eggs, estrogen, ethanol, chocolate, red meat, aspirin, Advil, etc. And now, when technology allows Dr. Dogooder of Whatsamatta U. to detect these nasty things within our bodies in parts per trillion, the number of "Scare the crap out of people" reports increases daily.

That said, here are a few things I doubt automatically when I read or hear about them:

Cancer clusters: Serious scientists – including those from the National Cancer Institute – have long dismissed the idea that isolated environmental factors cause acute outbursts of disease. Five cases of leukemia in the same zip code? It couldn't just be chance, so it must be the local paint factory. Unfortunately, victims often need something or someone to blame besides genetics or sheer bad luck. It's always easier – and often more lucrative for the lawyers – to point a finger at an industry.

Food safety: Thanks to the scare-mongers, there are people who worry about the microscopic contents of every bite they eat. Gosh, does this steak have cattle hormones in it? Could this tomato have been genetically modified? Here's a fact: We have the safest food supply in the world. Go to Ghana or Bangladesh if you really want "organic" products.

Global warming: Anything that gets Al Gore so excited automatically makes my B.S. meter jump off the scale.

Child abductions/abuse: Do you really believe there's been an "epidemic" of child abductions and child abuse during the past two decades, or do you agree that we've just gotten a lot better at reporting and record-keeping?

Internet identity theft: If you're really old like me, you probably remember when you used to leave a "carbon" copy of credit card receipts (with the complete numbers and signatures) sitting on a table at a restaurant.

Think that was less risky than buying something on a Web site with your Amex?

Bird flu: I'm dating myself, but I remember the "Swine flu" scare in the '70s. You younger folks might recall the SARS flap a couple of years ago. Potential epidemics sell newspapers and generate research grants. Period.

Pesticides: OK, you knew I was going to get to this eventually. During 20 years of working in this business, I'm not sure I've read even one "science-based" article about pesticides in a mainstream publication that was completely accurate. No matter how discredited, the same bad arguments and lousy studies surface every time a reporter decides to do a piece about pesticides used on lawns or golf courses.

With a few exceptions (John Stossel of ABC News, writer Michael Fumento, etc.), journalists are happy to do a quick Google search, grab some fiction from the Beyond Pesticides Web site or some other activist group and repeat the same junk that's been plaguing us for years.

Will reporters ever be more accurate when it comes to pesticides? I doubt it. It's easier to scare the daylight out of people than to do the research and tell the truth. I don't think the media are

antipesticide, they're mostly just lazy.

Being skeptical about the "latest research" about anything from global warming to bird flu to pesticide exposure is healthy. Every one of these studies is funded, conducted and promoted by someone with an agenda. Sometimes it's to receive more grant money for the next big study. Other times (such as with pesticides), the agenda is to force their views on the general public without regard to the science that supports the safety of the products. Activists honestly believe extremism – and even disinformation – in pursuit of their goals is no vice. That's morally reprehensible.

It's possible GCN might receive tons of letters and e-mails saying I'm right about skepticism. It's also possible you might write to say you disagree with me and tell me I'm just a grumpy, cynical old bastard and I'm wrong. But, you know what ... I doubt it. GCN

BEING SKEPTICAL ABOUT THE "LATEST RESEARCH" ABOUT ANYTHING FROM GLOBAL WARMING TO THE BIRD FLU TO PESTICIDE EXPOSURE IS HEALTHY.

Don't forget to check out Pat's Digital Coffee Shop column that appears twice a month in GCN's weekly e-newsletter. To subscribe to the newsletter, visit the GCN home page and click on the "news" drop-down menu.

