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L-93	6.7	6.9	6.9
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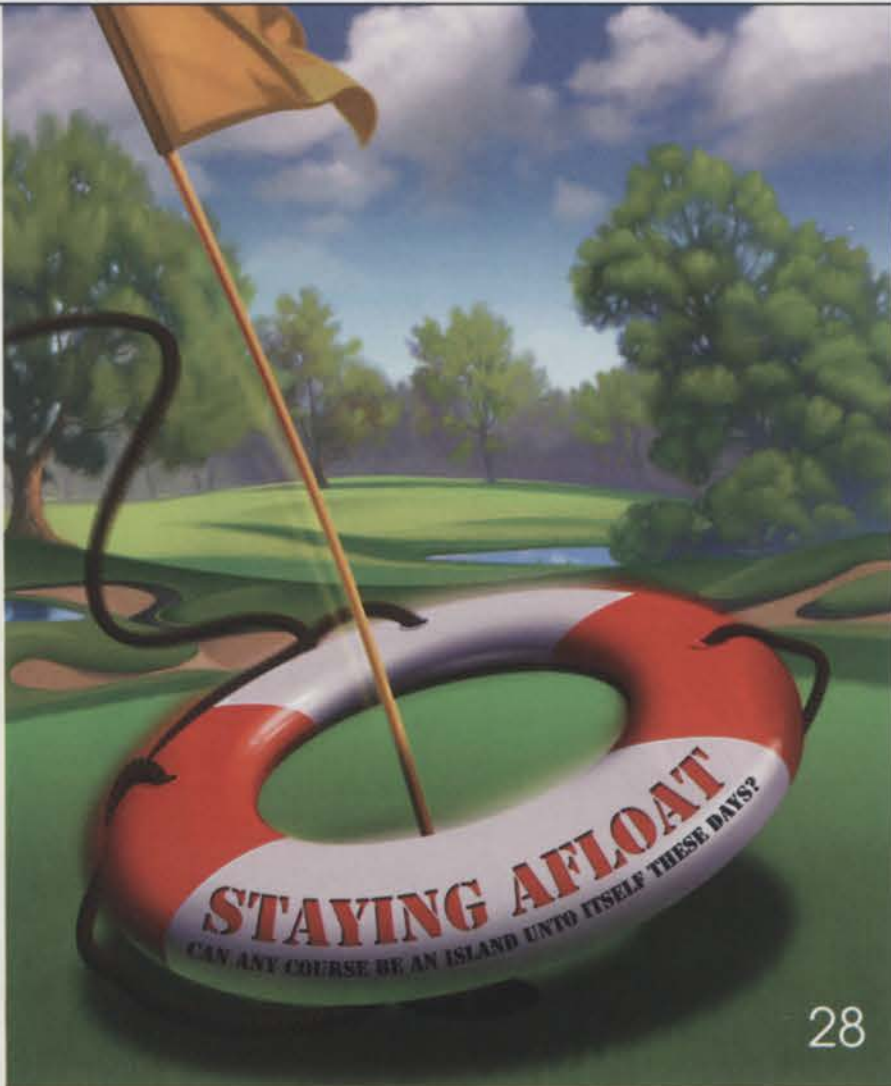
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EDITORIAL MISSION STATEMENT:

Golf Course News reports on and analyzes the business of maintaining golf courses, as well as the broader business of golf course management. This includes three main areas: agronomy, business management and career development as it relates to golf course superintendents and those managers responsible for maintaining a golf course as an important asset. *Golf Course News* shows superintendents what's possible, helps them understand why it's important and tells them how to take the next step.

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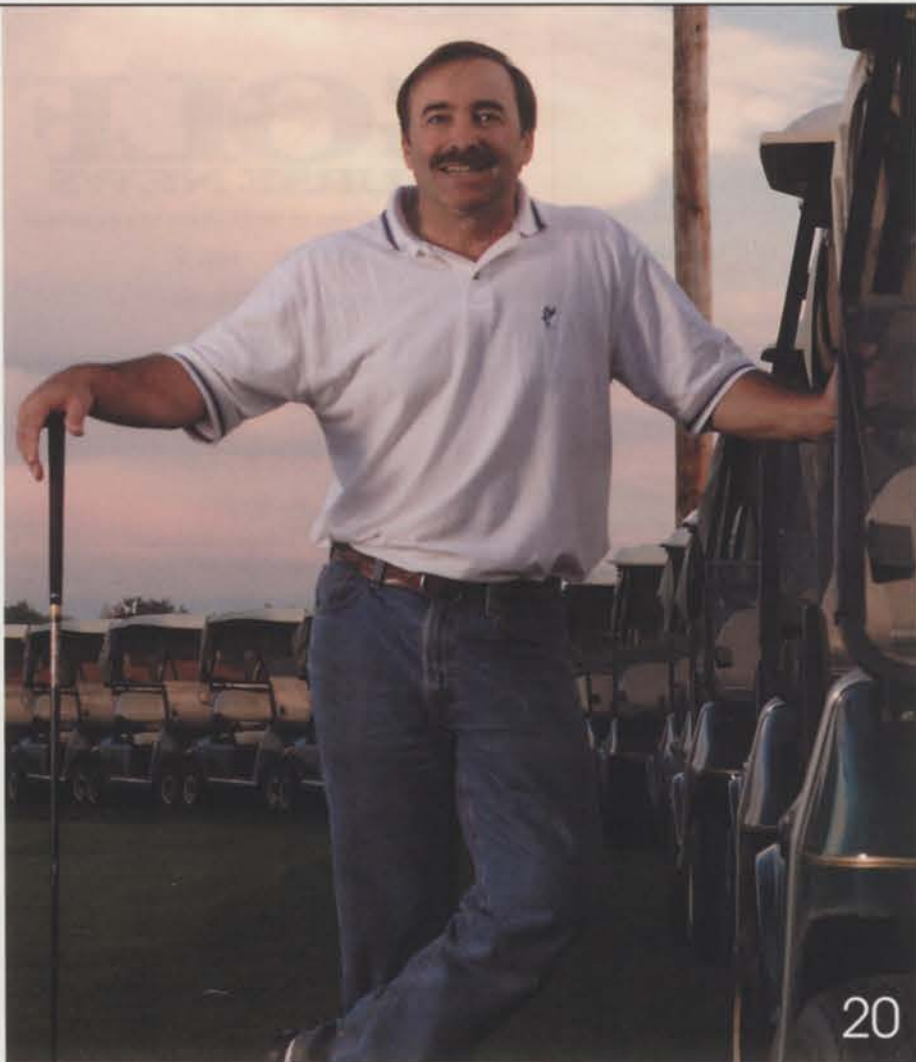
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John Walsh
Editor

Rising to the top

I don't need to remind readers of this magazine how difficult it can be working in this industry. Just like any other business, it has its pros and cons.

Among those difficulties, assistant golf course superintendents are focused on one biggie: breaking into the world of head golf course superintendents. By all accounts, "going to the next level" is infinitely more difficult than it was 20 years ago. With as many as 1,500 bright young students graduating from turf schools coupled with the decline of new golf course openings, there are more graduates than jobs. It's survival of the fittest, and it's clear the industry will weed out those who can't handle the stress and rigors of the job. Will you be one of those?

Last month, at the inaugural Green Start Academy hosted by Bayer Environmental Science and John Deere Golf & Turf, an assistant superintendent told the group that of the eight people who graduated with him from a turfgrass program in Iowa several years ago, he was the only one left in the business. The reason for this instant attrition might be opportunity, desire and commitment, or both, but it's a clear indicator things have changed.

Time management and education are key elements to an assistant's ascension. They can advance by using what they have and what's available to them, including: becoming actively involved in GCSA chapters; seeking mentors other than a boss; taking people- and financial-management classes to become more well rounded; learning about warm-season turfgrass if one's in the North and vice versa; and attending the Golf Industry Show.

The self-improvement list is endless, but the bottom line is that assistants need to think about the big picture and long term. They need to implement a strategy to get them where they want to be in 10 or 15 years.

Money and patience also are key elements assistants need to consider. Bruce Williams, CGCS, director of golf courses and grounds at the Los Angeles Country Club, tells assistants not to focus too much on money, but rather who they work for – namely higher-profile superintendents at well-known clubs. Money shouldn't be the driving factor – experience should. Money will follow the experience. Ken Mangum, CGCS, director of golf courses and grounds at the Atlanta Athletic Club,

says that when looking through assistants' resumes, he looks first and foremost at who they've worked for.

As with anyone who wants to advance in a profession, determining one's weaknesses and improving those is a must. In this industry, those tend to be effective communications, people management, staff motivation, financial management and even developing an agronomic support system (because nobody knows it all). Successful superintendents have mastered these aspects of the business.

Another element of professional advancement is adhering to proper business etiquette. It might seem trivial, but attention to detail goes a long way.

Assistants can take or leave this advice, but it's hard to ignore the wisdom of Williams, who has reached the pinnacle of the profession. He says the key to becoming a successful, well-respected head superintendent is to bridge the gap between the background and knowledge of turfgrass science to management and leadership. Being able to train people and supervise them is paramount to running a successful golf course maintenance staff.

Assistants need to hone their business skills and focus on aspects of the business such as management, budgets, payroll and strategic planning. The quicker they learn these aspects of the business, the better off they'll be, because when they get hired as a superintendent, they'll be expected to operate effectively in those areas.

Much of the onus to grow professionally is put on assistants; however, head superintendents need to create an environment in which professional development is expected and encouraged. As a superintendent, are you doing all you can to prepare your assistants for the next level? Would your assistant be able to take over the reigns if something happened to you?

Assistants should heed advice from the likes of Williams and Mangum because they're successful. Williams says there's room at the top for people who do exceptional work and go above and beyond what's expected of them. It's a bumpy road to the top of the industry, but it can be smoother. Williams and Mangum made it to the top, will you? GCN

John Walsh

We would like to hear from you. Please post any comments you have about this column on our message board, which is at www.golfcoursenews.com/messageboard.



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Editorial Offices:

GIE Media, Inc.
4012 Bridge Ave.
Cleveland, OH 44113
Phone: (216) 961-4130
Fax: (216) 961-0364

John Walsh
Editor
jwalsh@gie.net

Heather Wood
Web editor
hwood@gie.net

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Terry Buchen, CGCS, MG
terrybuchen@earthlink.net

Pat Jones
psjhawk@cox.net

Kevin Ross, CGCS
kjross@vail.net

David Wolff
dgwolff@charter.net

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

Terry Buchen, CGCS, MG
Golf Agronomy International

Raymond Davies, CGCS
CourseCo

Kevin Downing, CGCS
BallenIsles Country Club

Tim Hiers, CGCS
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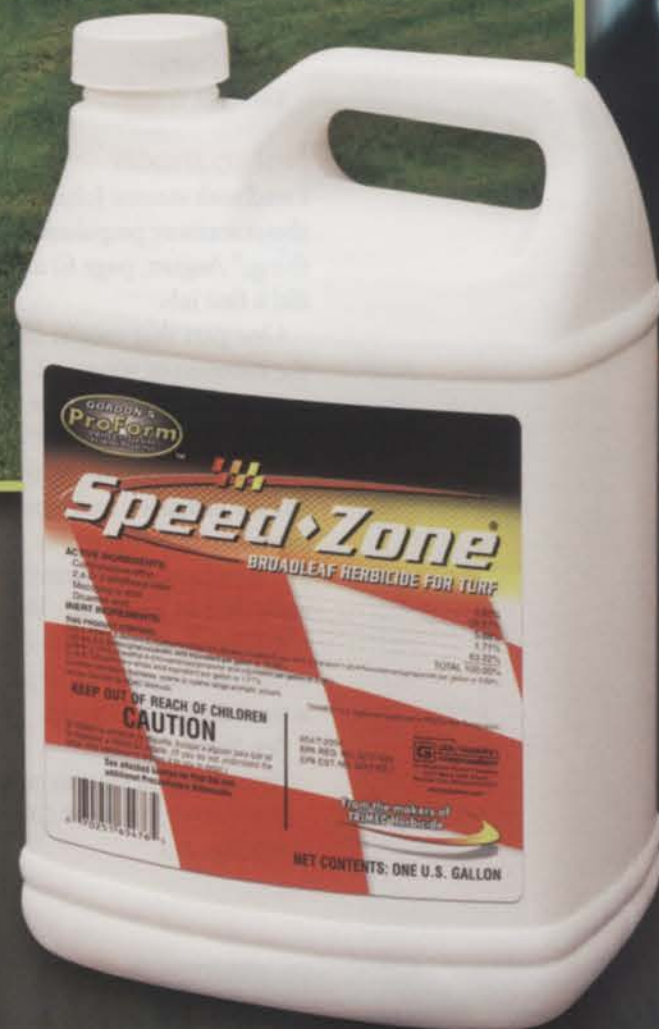
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Don't forget us

I enjoyed reading John Walsh's article "College curriculum shift means interests vary" in the July issue (page 10). The article reinforced the need for change in college turf programs. But he only concentrated on the perceived big schools.

In 1998 SUNY-Delhi initiated its revamped bachelor's degree program that reflects the importance of the business management aspect of the golf course profession. We were the second college in the country – Kansas State was the first – to do so. This was a radical move, but, thanks to the recommendations of a panel of New York golf course superintendents, it became a reality.

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Dominic J. Morales
Professor and dean
Applied sciences and recreation
division
SUNY-Delhi
Delhi, N.Y.

Not so much

I read with interest John Walsh's editorial about seashore paspalum ("The next big thing," August, page 6) and thought he did a fine job.

One part that caught my interest was the mention of water use. He attributed someone saying water use on paspalum could be as much as 50 percent less than Bermudagrass. While seashore paspalum has an extensive root system, I haven't experienced or been able to verify anyone that has demonstrated a 50-percent reduction in water use. When the grass is managed properly, you can experience reductions as much as 20 percent, which is statistically significant.

Tim Hiers, CGCS
Director, golf course operations
The Old Collier Golf Club
Naples, Fla.

All in the family

I'm responding to Pat Jones' article about families in the golf course maintenance business ("It's a family affair," July, page 58). There are many of us that come from a long line of golf course people.

My grandfather, a farmer, owned a horse-drawn sickle bar and mowed all the bunker banks (and there were many) on the nine-hole Franklin County Country Club in Washington, Mo. I helped rake the same banks when I worked for my dad, Vertus Mitchell, who was superintendent at the same club. He served as superintendent there for more than 30 years before relocating to the 27-hole Forest Park Golf Course in St. Louis. Eventually, he retired from the Glen Echo Country Club in St. Louis. He spent more than 50 years as a superintendent.

I worked for my dad for five years in all capacities – the fifth year as his assistant before moving to Alton (Ill.) Municipal Golf Course. I've been a golf course superintendent for 50 years – plus five years as a worker and assistant – in Illinois, Missouri, Ohio and West Virginia.

My oldest son, Robert V. Mitchell, Jr., worked for me and his grandfather while he was finishing his degree and before taking the superintendent job at Southmoor Golf Course in Maxville, Mo. Following that stint, he moved to Lockhaven Country Club in Alton, Ill., then to French Lick Springs Country Club in Indiana, and then to a couple of courses in Texas before returning to tend to courses in Indiana.

There are four generations of golf course superintendents and golf course maintenance people in the Mitchell Clan.

Bob Mitchell
Former executive director of golf
and grounds
The Greenbrier Resort
White Sulphur Springs, W.Va.

Correction

Photo credit for the Tom Doak photos in the September issue were omitted. Credit goes to Bob Giglione.

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SALES OFFICES

GIE Media, Inc.
6138 Riverview Road
Peninsula, OH 44264
Phone: (800) 456-0707
Fax: (330) 657-2828

Kevin Gilbride
Publisher

Phone: (330) 657-2889
kgilbride@giemedia.com

Scott McCafferty
Account manager, West Coast
Phone: (310) 546-9611
smccafferty@giemedia.com

Russell Warner
Account manager
Phone: (330) 657-2854
rwarner@giemedia.com

Bonnie Vellikonya
Classified sales
Phone: (330) 657-2472
bvelikonya@giemedia.com

Marie Spencer
Marketing manager
Phone: (330) 657-2859
mspencer@giemedia.com

Debbie Kean
Manager, books
Phone: (216) 961-4130
dkean@giemedia.com

Maria Miller
Conferences manager
Phone: (216) 961-4130
mmiller@giemedia.com

GRAPHICS / PRODUCTION

Andrea Vagas, Art director
Mark Rook, Creative director
Helen Duerr, Production director
Lori Skala, Production coordinator

CORPORATE STAFF

Richard Foster, Chairman and c.e.o.
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Dan Moreland, Executive vice president
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Industry advocates fear possible MSMA ban

by Heather Wood

Visit the Golf Course News Web site, www.golfcoursenews.com, for daily news updates about golf course developments and renovations, people, suppliers, associations and industry events.



Some in the industry are speaking out against the Environmental Protection Agency's intention to cancel the reregistration of an older herbicide, saying there would be no alternative for the removal of some weeds if that happens.

The EPA released a reregistration eligibility decision about organic arsenical herbicides, which includes the herbicide monosodium methanearsonate. There are about 90 end-use products that contain MSMA, according to the EPA. It's most commonly used on turf and cotton crops.

MSMA is used to combat dallisgrass and other members of the paspalum family, as well as to eradicate crabgrass. It's primarily used in the southern

United States.

The evaluation of the chemicals was mandated as part of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act, which calls for all products with active ingredients registered before Nov. 1, 1984, to be studied. Thus MSMA, which originated in the 1960s, qualifies for the evaluation.

"This process, called reregistration, considers the human health and ecological effects of pesticides and results in actions to reduce risks that are of concern," says Ernesta Jones, an EPA spokeswoman.

The RED states MSMA can transform into an inorganic arsenical, which is more toxic to humans than organic arsenicals, and the amount of the inorganic arsenical found in Florida groundwater that was tested exceeds the level

the EPA finds acceptable. The EPA report also states more than 90 percent of Florida's groundwater is used for drinking water.

The EPA's process provides a 60-day public comment period before a final decision is made. The document was released Aug. 5, and all responses were being accepted until Oct. 10.

The industry responds

Some industry advocates say they find holes in the study and are hoping the EPA will reverse its decision. Tim Murphy, a turfgrass weed scientist at the University of Georgia, co-authored a letter to the EPA with seven other professors from the southeastern United States outlining the reasons they disagree with the EPA's assessment.

"Practically speaking, it's not clear to

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