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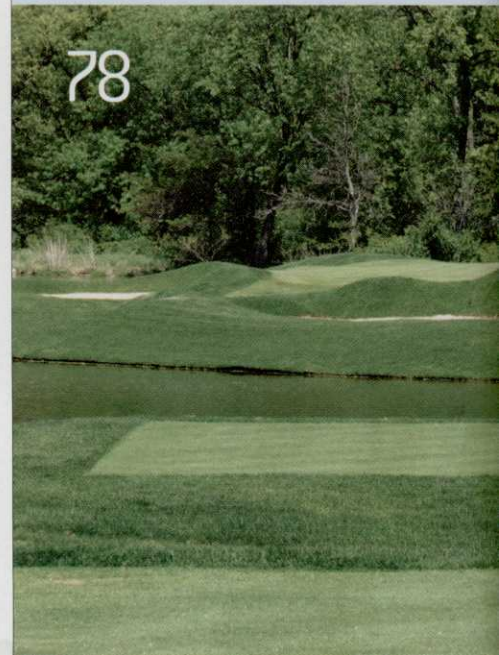
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Twenty-two acres of tent space were created for Ryder Cup corporate events, merchandise, concessions and media coverage.

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A look at Valhalla Golf Club's efforts to prepare for the tournament.

ONLINE POLL

How important is diversity in the industry? Visit the GCI home page to cast your vote.

AIR IT OUT

Voice your opinion about a topic or bring attention to something you believe deserves it. Visit our message board at www.golfcourseindustry.com/messageboard and speak your mind.



GCI PODCAST

John Walsh, editor of GCI, interviews Roots' Scott Inman about biologicals and overall turfgrass health. Visit our home page and click on the podcast icon to listen.

EDITORIAL MISSION STATEMENT:

Golf Course Industry 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 Industry* shows superintendents what's possible, helps them understand why it's important and tells them how to take the next step.



John Walsh
Editor

A SILVER LINING

I got the call in the middle of last month. Boy was Morris Johnson excited. The director of golf course operations at River Oaks Country Club in Houston rarely gets worked up about new golf course maintenance products, but this was an exception.

River Oaks is in the midst of a course renovation, and Johnson was elated about the installation of a new bunker liner – the likes of which he and his colleagues in Texas haven't seen before. Reportedly, the liner lasts longer than the others on the market and seals better, keeping the sand cleaner longer.

As an editor, I'm lucky enough to tour the manufacturing facilities of many suppliers that serve the industry and learn about a plethora of advancements in technologies that help superintendents do their jobs better and more efficiently. It's amazing to see all the brainpower, planning and execution that go into the development of various high-quality products, from equipment to pesticides to irrigation systems.

However, editors are less likely to hear about an innovative product that's the brainchild of a superintendent. That's what's so interesting about Kevin Clark, the guy who ignited Johnson's excitement.

Clark, an assistant superintendent at Lantana Golf Club in Texas, is proof that necessity is the mother of invention. Lantana is a Jay and Carter Morrish design that features high, steep-sloped bunkers. The natural and synthetic liners in the bunkers (halfway through construction, the team switched from natural liners to synthetic ones) lasted only 18 months before they disintegrated into dust in the sand. It required 200 man-hours to pump water out of all the bunkers and return them to playable condition.

The Lantana crew tried every bunker liner – even various combinations – on the market and weren't happy with any of them because none provided a long-term solution. Clark wanted to seal the bunker and keep the sand from contamination for a long time. With a little luck and a little skill, Clark came up with a better idea.

A box was sprayed with the Rhino liner material used on truck beds, and he filled it with dirt and kept it outside the office for a while to see how the liner material would wear. It seemed to work, so eventually the Rhino liner material was sprayed on top of geotextile material in a bunker to see how it would hold up in a golf application. There was just one problem: The surface was too slippery, and the sand wouldn't stick to the steep faces. To solve the problem, Clark glued polypropylene fibers, similar to artificial turf, on top of the Rhino liner material. It worked. Clark invented a bunker liner to fit the needs of Lantana.

The liner eliminates the need for gravel, Clark says. It was such a good idea, 12 other courses in Texas used the liner in test bunkers, and River Oaks is installing it in all its bunkers.

Clark has one patent on the bunker liner and another one pending. He's also in the midst of sealing a deal with a distributor that has a 14-state territory. Word is spreading in Texas and beyond. Clark received a call from someone in Charlotte, N.C., and architects are telling people on the East Coast.

Clark's bunker liner has been successful enough that he'll be leaving Lantana at the end of this month to sell his product full time, something he never thought he'd be doing at this stage of his career.

It sounds like Clark's product will be good for the industry and great for him. And I'm sure Johnson won't be the only superintendent excited about the bunker liner, which just might bring a smile to your face – if it hasn't already – when you discuss the topic next time. **GCI**

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



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Calling the shots

Great column in the May issue ("Where the power should be," page 8). I believe I'm one of the fortunate ones in the industry. My position was made possible by Senior Tour star Jim Colbert. Nine years ago at the first board meeting of our club, which opened in 2000, a discussion broke out about establishing a green committee. Within seconds, Colbert interrupted the discussion and asked if anyone had a better background in turfgrass than me. It was an intense moment: I didn't know anyone in the meeting or what to expect, but that was it. It's never been brought up again, and I haven't had a green meeting in nine years. I'm trusted to call all the shots – that includes mowing, heights of cut, topdressing time table, aerification schedule, set up, etc. Colbert has a great respect for our profession. The funny thing is, because I call the shots, I work 10 times harder to provide superior conditions because the course is a reflection of me – not any committee.

David W. Gourlay, CGCS, CCM
Chief operating officer
Colbert Hills Golf Course
Manhattan, Kan.

Our Disneyland

I still enjoy reading Pat Jones. He's one of the true good guys of this crazy turf industry. And yes, I agree with him that Augusta is still our industry Disneyland ("The truth about Augusta," <http://www.golfcourseindustry.com/news/news.asp?ID=4097>). Of course, my friend Steve Flesch, who I watched grow up playing my courses, had his own version of the Matterhorn.

Jerry Coldiron, CGCS
International sales representative
Hector Turf
Boca Raton, Fla.

Job restlessness

I enjoyed Pat Jones' column "Reinventing yourself" (on page 88 of the April issue). It sounds a lot like the WSTC's process mapping scheme I talk about in my presentations at various state conferences, but it holds true.

The column was even more intriguing because it hit me where I was about five months ago as a superintendent. I made that same list of good and bad about my former golf course, and I wasn't happy. My time with my kids was pathetic because I was always tired and worn down from my golf course management schedule. No

weekends off, no holidays off, just the whole rat race of being a superintendent. Sixteen years of it, and I realized as much as I loved being on a course, I hated being a superintendent at a place that didn't respect my contributions – hence my change in careers. It's amazing to see my kids in the mornings (which I never got to do before) and to be home most nights without going back to check irrigation or sprays. It's also amazing to work a "real" schedule with weekends off. So that's how the real world works outside of the turf world.

Thanks for reaffirming why I made my change. I hope others take your column to heart.
Charlie Fultz
Mid-Atlantic technical representative
Grigg Bros.
New Market, Va.

Political banter

Regarding Mark Jarrell's letter to the editor in the May issue ("How will you vote," page 10) ... he claims he's an independent voter who's not pushing a Democratic agenda, but I doubt his independent status. Jarrell says how much better the checks-and-balances system would work if both parties had adequate representation. So, in his world, things would be fine if we did away with elections.

As for the many years of unchallenged Republican rule (2001 through 2006), the minority party is supposed to challenge the ruling party. The Democrats were so successful at it, they're back in power.

I wonder if Jarrell will be as concerned with the unchallenged control of government if the Democrats take the White House, while retaining control of the Senate and the House. I suspect this bogus concern will quickly become a nonissue with Democrats and Jarrell.

Jarrell wants us to look at the economy, housing and the cost of goods but not the Bush-lowered tax rates. Doing so, we should conclude the only salvation for our country is to put a government-loving Democrat in the White House. Gas costs more than \$4 a gallon, the housing market crashed, the cost of food is skyrocketing, and Democrats have managed to do all this in just two years of controlling the Senate and House.

I've thought long and hard about it and concluded it's not in my best interest to have a Democrat in the White House.

Dennis E. Bishop
Ontario, Calif.



TO THE EDITOR

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Darren Harris, a former assistant at Lakewood Country Club in Dallas, is the new superintendent at Canyon West Golf and Sports Club in Weatherford, Texas. He can be reached at dwhrturf@yahoo.com or 214-683-1453.

BETTER TIME MANAGEMENT

Everyone talks about time management, but who really takes it to heart? Amid your daily duties as an assistant, managing your time will do wonders now, and hopefully create good habits in the future.

As long as the sun is up, there must be something to do, some say. But starting a fairway drainage project at two o'clock in the afternoon doesn't make sense. I'm not saying we should take it easy, but we should work hard at the course and be done with it. We work long hours, and some say we're paying our dues. But who are we paying?

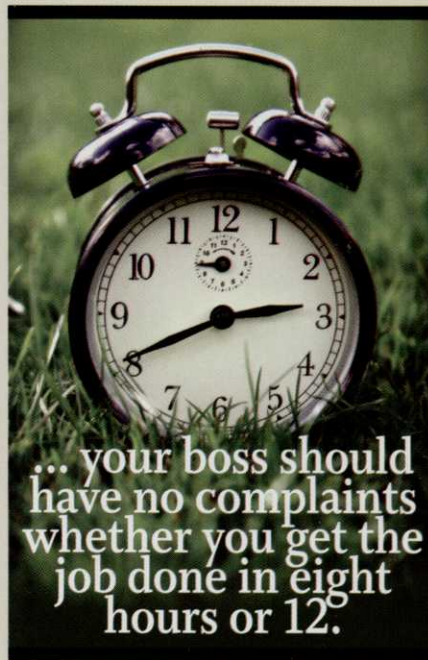
Employers don't base their hiring decision on how many hours you work per day. And if you work hard and are efficient with your time, your boss should have no complaints whether you get the job done in eight hours or 12. There's no need to hang around waiting for something to do, just for the sake of saying you worked 10 hours one day. There are more important things to deal with.

I have a wife and beautiful baby boy at home who mean more to me than anything. My goal is to get my job done and get home – plain and simple. Sometimes it's not as early as I'd like, but sometimes it is, and I'm rewarded with being able to play with my son before he goes to bed. We must prioritize the important projects and duties and attack them as time allows. Planning is your biggest ally in proper time management.

For me, planning starts the day before. Although this might not work for everyone, it works well for me. I learned this habit from my former superintendent, who wrote everything down and always planned the following day. I try my best to be back at the office 30 minutes before the crew clocks out. This provides me enough time to evaluate the day's achievements and decide what needs to be accomplished tomorrow. I'm also around the shop for employees who might have questions, and

to verify completed and incomplete tasks.

I'll record that day's activities in a log and write the first jobs of the next day on the board for the morning. I'll also write tomorrow's plans on a notepad on my desk and anything else I need to remember for the morning. Then I'll answer phone calls, check the shop, check the yard and head home. I try my best not stay 30 minutes later than when the crew clocks out. This varies depending on irrigation scheduling needs and special situations – but the point is I try.



The next morning, I try to arrive 30 minutes before the crew to check what's planned for the day. Sometimes it's a little later, but try to stick to my schedule. This time gives me the opportunity to review the plans for the day, make adjustments and get revved up for the day. I don't like being there right at starting time and jumping into everything immediately. This gives me a cushion to get ahead.

Once the crew arrives, we have a staff meeting and head out on the course. Usu-

ally, I'll lag behind for 10 or 15 minutes to assign second jobs. Depending on the size of the crew, I use a spread sheet to write down first, second and third job assignments to carry with me so I can address a crew member on the course if a job needs special instructions.

Before lunch, I try to come in 20 to 30 minutes early to check the board, assign any remaining jobs and make and send necessary phone calls and e-mails. It's all based on 30-minute intervals. Giving yourself breathing room always helps.

This sounds a lot like what a superintendent should be doing. But the job of an assistant, in its simplest form, is to assist the superintendent. We all should be doing these types of jobs and setting good habits for ourselves. Doing so now will only benefit you in the future.

It's easy to translate more of the assistant and second assistant roles. Starting your own records and logs will help you organize items in the future and give you a quick reference for spreader settings, fertilizer applications, etc. I write important information and notes in a simple weekly planner that lasts all year. There's not enough space for everything, but the small size allows me to carry it with me at all times. I also use the spreadsheet – clipped to my steering wheel – for notes, irrigation problems and areas that need attention. If anyone is interested in a copy, e-mail me, and I'll send it to you.

When the staff needs to know how we set our topdresser last time we aerified, or at which rate we sprayed the greens during the last application, I just pull out my little notebook and look. I have about eight books I look back on constantly for application timing, what worked and what didn't. You can keep records of projects, spray calibrations or anything you feel might help you later on.

I've always been an avid notetaker but just recently started reading my old notes. Hindsight is 20/20. Why not help yourself by planning and managing your time better? It will help you become a better superintendent when the time comes. **GCI**