

Tony Gustaitis
- CGCS -

Anthony Gustaitis



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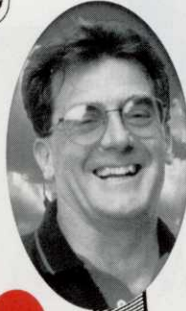
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Tim Moraghan is principal of Aspire Golf Consulting in Long Valley, N.J. He can be reached at tmoraghan11@comcast.net or 908-635-7978.

AROUND THE WORLD GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP

Tom Trammell, director of agronomy for the Doral Golf Resort and Spa put on a thicker jacket as we prepared to tour TPC Blue Monster at Doral (Fla.) in advance of his fourth World Golf Championship.

Q What is special for you about The World Golf Championship?

A It's as close to a major championship as I can have. The event hosts 75 of the world's top players representing each major golf tour from around the world. It's perhaps the strongest field in golf and we treat it as such.

Q Tell me about the agronomic issues that concern you the week before the championship?

A The weather has been the biggest obstacle. The cold temperatures have lingered for several weeks and affected the health and growth response of our hybrid Bermuda turfgrass putting greens and fairways. The turf is weak from the last six months of unusual weather. During the summer we encountered 50 inches of rain and constant cloud cover. Less sun and more moisture leads to thin and weak turfgrass with little recovery potential.

In addition, due to our national economic picture, the resort opened more opportunities for play by members, resort guests and outside play, which has increased the traffic, fairway divoting and ball marks on the putting greens. Not wanting to disrupt guest play, our agronomic cultural work was decreased. The lack of routine cultural programs to strengthen the turf for winter play has set us back.

Q Describe what you and your team are currently doing to enhance your playing surfaces?

A I always look back before moving forward in this business. Entering last year's event we were dry and it

showed during the telecast. Our first goal was to modify and enhance the irrigation system by increasing water availability through additional quick couplers coursewide. We now have access to irrigation for any droughty location, which allows for uniform playing conditions. We hand irrigate to be more precise.

For the onset of the colder weather we accomplished the following for the putting greens:

- Increased our foliar fertility on a weekly schedule and applied when we felt the plant would actively take in the nutrients. Without the required cultural work we are dealing with an increase in organic matter and a weakened plant.
- Ceased all Primo applications seeing we had a natural growth regulation with the cold.
- Increased the height-of-cut for our greens and all turf, installed solid rollers and monitored player/cart traffic. Semi-dormant turfgrass – whether cool or warm season varieties – will suffer in heavily trafficked areas.
- We stopped using walk mowers and used triplex units during the coldest period.
- Instituted weekly needle-tining, especially on the putting green perimeters and clean-up pass to reduce compaction.
- Reviewed the shade impacts from surrounding trees and removed any offenders.

Q With an event as challenging as this, I know green speed will be an issue. What are you doing to meet PGA Tour requirements while the weather remains cold?

A We have met their advance week specifications, but will need to gain some more speed quickly while play is still going strong. What we have done is:

- Use a combination of light groom-

ing with the groomers set slightly below bed-knife height, followed by light topdressing using the bagged sand, which is very dry and can be easily worked into the turfgrass canopy.

- Incorporate light brushing of the green surface as well as vertical mowing up and back along the same pass before moving to the next cutting pass. This “back-track” vertical mowing allows us to stand up our TifEagle and remove more leaf blade without lowering height-of-cut too soon. We drop the height on a regular schedule beginning the weekend prior to the event.
- Return to Primo applications at a reduced rate on a shorter schedule.
- Monitor irrigation and traffic.
- Monitor the weather forecast to avoid doing any cultural practice, which will damage turfgrass and impact resort play after the event has concluded.

Q Any additional tournament advice to offer?

A With the enormity of the championship we must coordinate our staff and be sure all assignments, times and concerns are met and accomplished on schedule without too many questions.

We have provided all employees with their own schedules of tasks and daily events, as well as when to arrive, eat and leave the golf course.

We request all employees wear flat shoes to reduce abrasion to the turfgrass during the colder weather.

We do not allow any cellular phone conversations during work unless it's to contact a member of the management team. All necessary phone numbers are provided on the schedule sheet.

Last but not least, as each person exits the golf course at day's end they are required to check that no flagstick or tee marker remains on the golf course lest it becomes a unique souvenir. **GCI**

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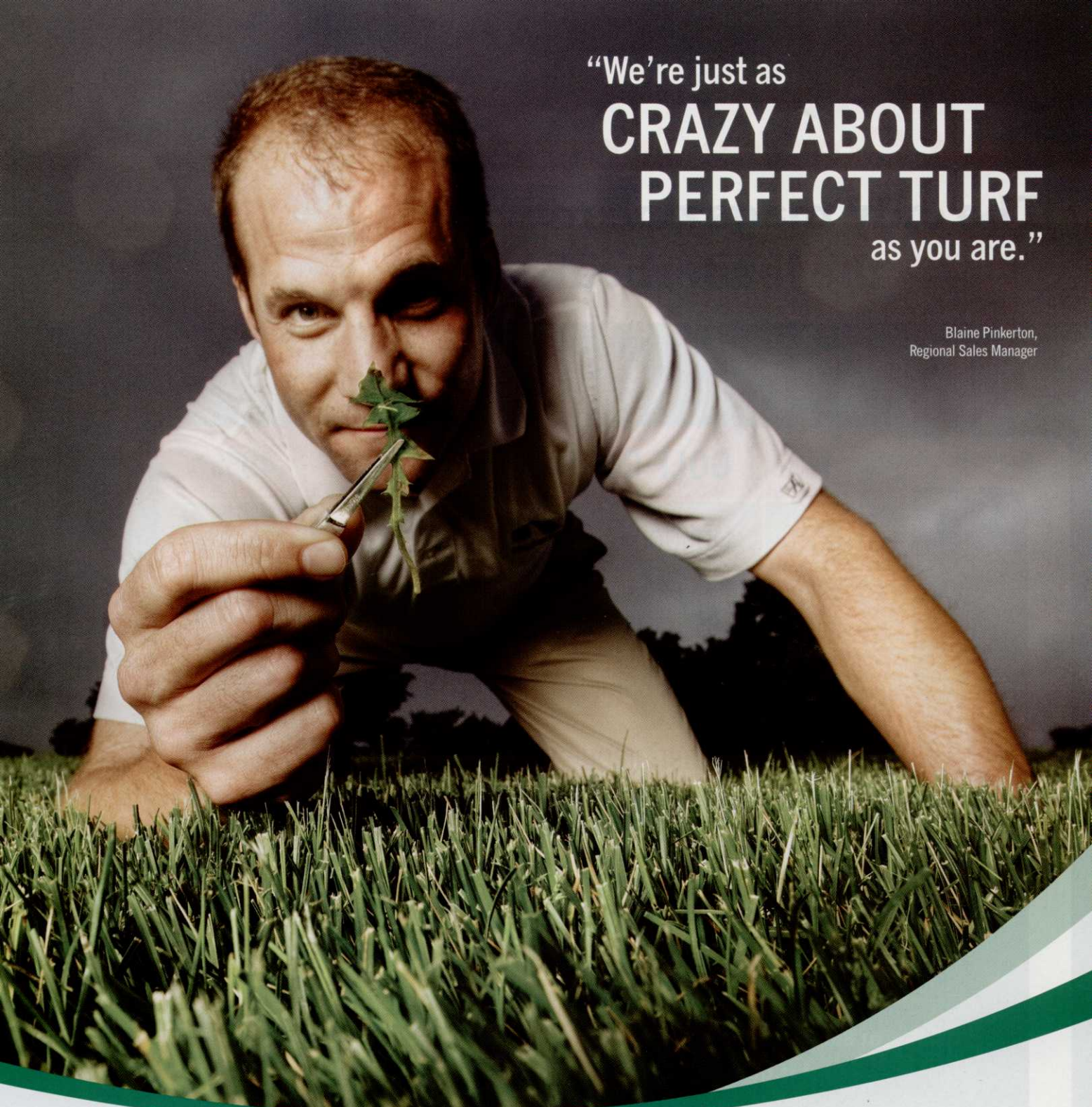
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Monroe Miller is a retired golf course superintendent. He spent 36 years as superintendent at Blackhawk Country Club in Madison, Wis. Miller can be reached at groots@charter.net.

ONE MORE TIME AT THE SHOW

I was oblivious to the occasional showers everybody else seemed to be grousing about at the Golf Industry Show this year. I had my umbrella.

It would have taken a lot more than unusual weather in San Diego to spoil what was an unexpected and wonderful invitation to attend the GCSAA conference and show. GCI editor Mike Zawacki invited me to go as part of the team. All they asked was for me to help work the booth during trade show hours on Tuesday and Wednesday. Who could turn down such an offer?

Working in the GCI booth was hardly "working." It was more like visiting, something I have done a lot of in my life. Advertisers came by, superintendents stopped and media people in general wanted to talk. Everyone wanted to see Pat Jones. The booth was a beehive of activity.

Although I may have been visiting, the editorial staff was on the go, making the most of the shortened trade show hours. Like superintendents, the chance to see a lot of people in one place in a short period of time is one you cannot pass up. A time or two I was in a panic when I was the only one manning the shop!

The two-day show format seemed to be well received, especially since the show had little or no competition from lectures and seminars or other meetings. It was pretty busy most of the time, pleasing the exhibitors greatly. The narrower aisles and seemingly diminished length of the show area at least gave the impression more people were there despite attendance being down about a thousand attendees from last year's show in New Orleans (down about 6 percent).

I used my free time to attend, for a few minutes at least, seminars and sessions. They were up to the standards of GCSAA education, which the association does very well. It will be interesting to see how many attended the paid seminars; the luncheon crowd was decidedly smaller than in previous years, leading me to conclude there were fewer people in the seminars. I heard great reviews of the Frank Rossi/Roch Gaussoin seminar "Golf Turf PTI," modeled after the ESPN show. These two

veterans put a lot of creativity into this seminar and their audience loved it.

That makes sense since we're certain fewer made the trip to GIS than in recent years. Attendance reflects the tough times golf finds itself in these days. I was proud of my successor at Blackhawk Country Club; he and the assistant were able to stay a full week, take full-day seminars and max out on the experience in every way. They did it for a total for the two of them of \$1,200! They roomed with one and sometimes two colleagues at Humphrey's Half Moon Inn (\$139 each night), rode the shuttle bus, used airline tickets purchased with points from the club's business credit card, and bought groceries for some meals in their room. They had a great and productive conference and show without breaking the bank or having to miss it entirely. It wouldn't suit everyone, but they were unfazed.

I'm a rubbernecker from way back, and I'll admit I missed seeing any real celebrities, especially since Judy Rankin wasn't able to receive her Old Tom Morris award in person. However, Greg Norman made a brief appearance and I was able, through some luck, to get him to autograph my copy of his book "My Story," from 1983 (1st edition). As for the keynote speakers, Chris Gardner's story was fine, but Brian Little's presentation didn't do much for me.

The Celebrate GCSAA event was too long, and I had to leave the day of the Green Section Program – it is usually excellent. I had a great visit with Charlie Tadge and Cliff Wagoner, two venerable past presidents, and our Wisconsin hospitality event was tops, even if the music was too loud. The Tin Fish Restaurant still serves good food at a fair price, and the area around the convention center was still neat, clean, safe and convenient (none of which New Orleans could claim).

All in all, it was an experience just about like it was at all the other shows I have attended – nothing short of terrific.

I hated to leave and head home, but I had some great memories and a new Jacobsen hat to wear for the rest of the winter. **GCI**

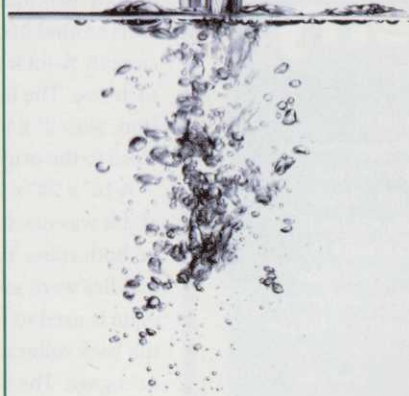
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Terry Buchen, CGCS, MG, is president of Golf Agronomy International. He's a 41-year, life member of the GCSAA. He can be reached at 757-561-7777 or terrybuchen@earthlink.net.



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.

IMPROVED REEL SETUP & LIFT TABLE

Eric Kulaas, equipment manager at the Renaissance Vinoy Resort & Golf Club in St. Petersburg, Fla., replaced the facility's Golf Lift Model GL-TL's original aluminum diamond-plate table top which got dirty quickly, was difficult to clean and hindered moving the reels around because they didn't roll smoothly, with a smooth ¼-inch thick metal top to the same 54" x 84-inch size. The bottom framework is 1 ½" x 3/16" angle iron, with 2" x ¼" flat stock cross bracing, which is fairly close to the original layout, but is built stronger.

A 16" x 24" x 1" removable surface plate was added and it was machined near perfect level to 0.002 inches on both sides. Two removable, drilled and tapped handles were added to make it portable. The surface plate is used to make sure reels are perfectly level, with the back roller and the front roller adjusted with an Accugage. The new table, like the original table, has four nuts welded to it to attach it to the lift frame. The underside of the table was painted with primer, a vise was installed on the back left corner for working on rollers, a thick rubber mat was placed on the shop floor



for more comfort while standing and the ramp was left as-is.

The vise cost about \$200, the angle iron and top plate were about \$400 and the smooth surface plate was about \$150. It took about four days to build.

FLYING DROP SEEDER

Bruce Leonard, equipment manager, at The Silverleaf Club in Scottsdale, Ariz., has modified a Gandy 10' wide drop seeder used for winter overseeding the Bermudagrass around the edge of the fairways/roughs, which are bordered by native desert. Since the overall width of the seeder is 12' and the cart paths are only 8' wide with native desert areas containing rocks, cacti and small animals on both sides, Leonard started off with an AerWay Aerifier hydraulic lift kit wheels and axles that raises the Gandy 13" off of the ground to "make it fly" over the desert areas. Leonard built a frame on the Gandy from the following: a 4" x 2" box tube, ½" thick plate steel, 3" x ½" box tube and ¼" metal corner braces. The AerWay lift kit uses two heavy-duty axles, 18" x 8 ½" wheels and tires and one hydraulic piston and hose. None of the framework was welded onto the seed hopper so that it was not damaged.

All of the materials were already in stock and it took about eight hours to build the framework. **GCI**



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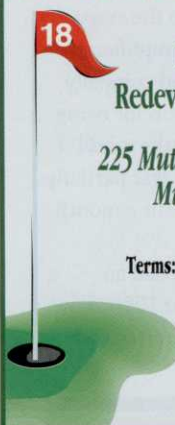
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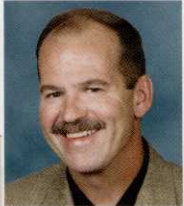
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Pat Jones is editorial director and publisher of Golf Course Industry. He can be reached at pjones@gie.net or 330-523-5384.

HUH?

It's really hard for me to find much to complain about these days. Love my new job. Spring has arrived after another brutal Cleveland winter. Tiger is (mostly) out of the tabloids and back on the golf course. Life is pretty good.

Yet, I can always find something to whine about. In this case, it's the whining in my head.

I am one of millions of Americans who have this lovely condition called tinnitus. It's basically persistent ringing in the ears. It's hardly a major medical problem. But, it's a slightly maddening annoyance that's permanent and untreatable.

My doctor – who happens to be the top hearing guy at the Cleveland Clinic – says that tinnitus is usually a symptom of damage to the tiny nerves in your ears that normally sense high-frequency sound. It expresses itself in a variety of ways. For some, it comes and goes. For others, it's 24/7. Sometimes it sounds like a “whooshing” noise or bells ringing or a siren blaring.

For me, it sounds a little like that continuous tone you used to get on your old TV when a channel was off the air. *Beeeeeeeeeeeeeep!* Only I can't turn the channel. It literally never stops. And, to top that off, it's increasingly difficult to hear people in crowded rooms. I spent the entire GIS show cupping my ear and saying, “Huh?” I felt like Gabby Hayes or some other old fart in a black-and-white Western, constantly saying “Speak up, sonny, I'm a might deaf.”

Apparently, I have either my grandfather or Pete Townshend to blame for this malady. The most common cause of tinnitus is long-term exposure to machinery, guns or explosives or really loud music. It can also be associated with hereditary hearing loss. The doc quizzed me extensively about all that stuff and, since I'm too much of a wuss to have been in the military and I'm

too lazy to operate heavy equipment, he figured it might either run in my family (Granddad was deaf as a stump) or that I'd murdered my eardrums at just one seriously loud concert.

I protested that I really had never been much for head-banging heavy metal or the like ... but then I remembered going to a Who concert around 1990. I sat pretty close to the stage – and a massive wall of amplifiers – as Townshend, Daltry and company lived up to their reputation for being the loudest rock band in the world. I vaguely remember that I was partially deaf in my left ear for about a month afterwards. Oops.

Ironically, Townshend had announced right before that 1990 show that he had developed tinnitus and

1. Always wear good ear protection when mowing, running heavy equipment, operating hand-helds or grinding;

2. See tip No. 1.

The fact is hearing damage might be the top on-the-job health hazards for superintendents and golf course workers. I've met plenty of guys with back injuries, interesting scars from exhaust pipe burns, persistent poison ivy and various crushed digits from lifts that didn't quite work properly. Jeez, nearly every good mechanic I know is missing at least part of a finger. Having half a pinky is the rough equivalent of a master's degree in the school of reel sharpening.

But, if you total up all of those injuries, I'll bet it wouldn't come close

I felt like Gabby Hayes or some other old fart in a black-and-white Western, constantly saying “Speak up, sonny, I'm a might deaf.”

wouldn't be able to play as loud any more. Lying lymie bastard.

You can Google tinnitus and find a zillion miracle cures ranging from herbal crap like ginko biloba to hypnosis and white noise generators. When I mentioned this to my doctor and asked him what I should try, he just smiled the wise and weary smile of someone who'd been asked the same question thousands of time and said, “Try getting used to it.”

So, I'm getting used to it. But that doesn't mean that I'm happy about it. And, I sure as hell don't want you to have the same problem.

I asked my world-class physician for a list of tips that I could pass along to help safeguard you and your employees on the job. Here's his highly scientific advice:

to the number of folks wearing hearing aids or who – like me – strain to hear what their buddy is saying in a crowded bar.

I wonder how many young guys are sitting there reading this right now thinking, “It can't happen to me... I'm not gonna be some old, deaf dude.” *Au contraire, mon frère.* It can happen and it very likely will unless you follow the sage advice my doctor passed along. The short version is, no matter how young you are, don't mess with loud.

By the way, after I'd received my auditory death sentence from my doc, I asked him if he ever treated people from the landscaping or golf business for the same problem. He flashed that same sleepy half smile and said, “All the time.”

At least I think that's what he said. **GCI**

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