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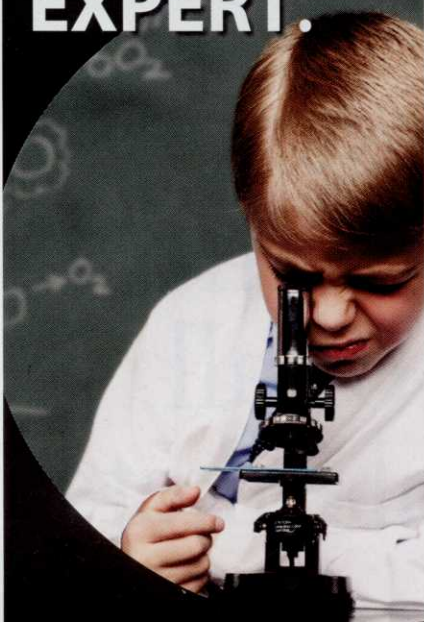
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COURSE CONSTRUCTION



Despite a down economy, if a restoration or renovation project makes sense, all parties involved will know it.

neighborhood adjacent to the clubhouse and obtained entitlements for 114 units. The revenue from residential sales will fund a new golf course, clubhouse, tennis facility, pools, parking and maintenance building.

**WHAT IS THE ROI?**

What is a remodeling's return on investment (ROI)? Is it existing member/customer retention or new member/customer attraction? "It's really both," Weed says. "Retained members and customers will start spending more. It is important to remain competitive and most clubs are struggling to retain players. Members are more apt to ask business-like questions about the vitality of a club today before joining."

Both retention and attraction are important for private clubs, Vogt says. "We have found in survey after survey that members who are 'Very Satisfied' are much more likely to remain loyal and support club activities," he says. "New and enhanced components that membership supports are important for the vitality of any club. Worn or non-functional assets often cost more to keep in service and diminish the pride and value in membership.

"Most club members are intuitive business people that understand investments in assets should be scheduled and accomplished to keep recurring operating expenses to a minimum and keep important assets fresh," he adds.

The new practice range at Houston's Champions Club – developed by former 1956

Masters and PGA Championship winner Jack Burke – is an excellent example. Architect Mike Nuzzo designed the range and some new tees a couple of years ago.

"The club has one of the largest numbers of single-digit handicap players in the country," Nuzzo says. "Ranges were not as popular when the original one was built back in the 1960s. The new Champions range helped the club keep many of its members and hopefully attract some new ones."

How can private and public clubs measure ROI? The best measure, Weed says, should be increases in golf-related revenue compared to the cost of capital improvement.

For public courses with the potential for healthy tee sheets, remodeling areas so golfers can get around the course quicker should translate to a larger bottom line, Lohmann says.

Most private clubs value assets the same way a business would view them and accept the cost of maintenance and upkeep, Vogt says. "However, savvy managers and superintendents assemble an asset-replacement plan and fund the plan throughout the life of the new asset," he adds. "When the asset begins to approach its useful life a replacement is fully funded. ROI at clubs can be difficult to quantify. However, a full and active membership is always the sign of a club that's being managed successfully."

When selling the idea of a remodel to a board or owner, Vogt says, managers and superintendents should focus on the plan as a

NUZZO COURSE DESIGN





business decision that should be treated as such. The club's financial package needs to make sense. The club's architect should have demonstrated an ability to build projects that are successful both commercially and creatively.

"A project or capital expense is often a weighty decision for a board to consider especially if a membership vote is required," Vogt says. "A full survey probing the membership is always a great first step and should be at the core. A complete study of the proposed plan should be in hand to communicate a thorough knowledge of outcomes, savings and membership benefits. If membership, board and management at a club have mutual trust in the process and ability to accomplish a large-scale project or renovation, the project is more likely to be approved with appropriate funding.

"In regards to an ownership course, the basic premise is the same, but unfortunately owners in most cases need to fund capital out of operation revenue, a difficult proposition in this economy," he adds. "Commercial loans are difficult to acquire for golf at this time."

Despite a down economy, if a project makes sense, all parties will know it. Weed says the best projects are not "sales jobs" at all. "You present objective facts about the course's problems first, the design team's track record second, and the expected benefits third. The answer falls out the bottom." **GCI**

*Peter Blais is a North Yarmouth, Maine-based freelance writer.*

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**Jeffrey D. Brauer** is a licensed golf course architect and president of GolfScapes, a golf course design firm in Arlington, Texas. Brauer, a past president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects, can be reached at [jeff@jeffreydbrauer.com](mailto:jeff@jeffreydbrauer.com).

## BUNKER...R...R TUNING

In school, the three “R’s” were reading, righting and ‘rithmatic.

In 2010, for courses in the survival mode, and considering bunker renovations, the three “R’s” mean remove, reduce and redesign for maintenance.

Until the early 2000’s, the business model for new courses was one of high aesthetics to attract golfers. Even “practical” designers who usually considered maintenance aspects of design followed the trend, especially in creating numerous and highly sloping flash bunkers. I always believed that eventually, impossible-to-maintain features would be modified. “Eventually” came earlier than expected. As Bob Dylan sang, “The times, they are a changing,” and I have been involved in several bunker re-designs to improve maintenance, including some of my own courses.

In some cases, I’m asked only to “bless” already planned changes, to save money. I get more involved deeply in most cases, and a golf course architect’s input provides real value in looking at play, design, aesthetic and maintenance aspects of bunkers characteristics – which helps every bunker renovated – and the overall bunker scheme – to turn out the best it can be.

If your original architect is available, I recommend using them. They are more than willing to help you adapt to current needs. Both your needs and their ideas on bunker design have changed over time, and they may welcome the chance for a design mulligan!”

Typically, courses are looking at removing bunkers, size reductions to remaining bunkers, and tuning bunkers shapes and slopes for easier maintenance.

### BUNKER REMOVAL

Most courses can remove several

bunkers without grave effect. This varies from course to course, but there are often obsolete, with difficult maintenance or extended travel time, serving the same function as adjacent bunkers, or that slow play, that quickly become likely candidates. Bunkers that are multifunctional, providing hazard, framing, visual effect, or safety tend to be kept.

### SIZE REDUCTIONS

Smaller bunkers obviously reduce construction cost and future maintenance. I often recommend building

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“I always believed that eventually, **impossible-to-maintain features would be modified.** ‘Eventually’ came earlier than expected.”

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small lips across narrow points of sand bunkers and converting the first lobe – or two – to grass. This can help speed up play, and very often, golfers only see the higher, back portions of the bunker anyway, so the visual effect isn’t compromised.

Where liners are used, I look to reduce overall bunker size to reduce hand raking. For power raked bunkers, I redesign sand lobes to their minimum turning diameter, usually about 16 to 18 feet depending on the slope. (*While intended to reduce maintenance, I find that many modern bunkers are “oversized” visually and the downsizing helps the visual appeal of many greens.*)

Similarly, I “tune” the size and shape of the grass noses. Current mowers can handle 18-foot diameter noses.

Some superintendents prefer to mow “down and back up” without turning, and there, I reduce noses to just under two mower widths.

### RENOVATIONS

Slopes and drainage are integral to bunkers. I make sure that no drainage runs into bunker slopes. Some bunkers have that problem designed in, and others “acquire it” as mowers wear down their top edges, which allows water in, and a few inches of fill is all it takes to help the bunker. I also recommend a complete herringbone system as most bunkers have far too little tile in them.

Rains wash sand down steep slopes, and the trend is to flatten internal bunker slopes, while keeping enough

upslope to make the bunker visible. Maximum slope varies with sand characteristics and climate – in dry climates and with angular sands, 25 percent slopes may be appropriate, while in rainy areas, bunker slopes may be flattened to 10-15 percent maximum.

I also make sure green side bunkers are 6 to 8 feet from the green edge to be in play while allowing riding mowers to turn. It’s common for them to separate from the green over time, while others migrate inward.

ASGCA member Daniel J. Schlegel, did all of the above when one of his clients proposed a simple sand replacement for the bunker on their first hole.

He recognized that the existing bunker could be reduced in size, and the frontal opening widened, making it more suitable for an opening hole. His resulting re-designs reduced flash and washing, total size, and improved sand and drainage. **GCI**



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# Get ready for GIS 2011

Sneak peak product previews and our insiders' guides on what to expect this year in Orlando.

It's been quite a year since the 2010 Golf Industry Show in San Diego.

Crazy, unpredictable weather, a struggling economy, stagnant rounds, uncertain futures – it can make even the most optimistic turf pro scratch his head and update his resume.

Luckily, the annual Golf Industry Show is a great way to not only reconnect with your colleagues, but also to get a sense of the hot-button issues turf professionals like yourself will be facing in the coming year and the direction the industry is going, both in the near- and long-term.

On the next few pages GCI provides you a sneak peak of some of the new products the industry's leading manufacturers and suppliers will be debuting and featuring

this year in Orlando. Make sure you stop by their booths and let them know you saw their products first in this issue of Golf Course Industry.

Also, GCI insiders Monroe Miller, Tim Moraghan and Brian Vinchesi provide you with their thoughts on what to expect at this year's big industry show.

And back by popular demand, GCI's crew of columnists and personalities will be holding office hours during the show. So stop by Booth #901 and say hello. And make sure you check your email during the show for GCI's latest dispatches and videos from the show floor.

So lace up a comfortable pair of shoes and pack your mouse ears. We'll see you in Orlando. – *The Editors*



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# Tim Moraghan previews the 2011 GIS

## What to expect from this year's GIS?

There will still be an air of caution among all GCS's. This will be a combination of poor budgets, lousy weather and an industry which continues to slide in the economic arena we are currently in. Though the market is finishing on an upward trend clubs are still failing and the daily grind of trying to cut back and still provide a high level of conditioning will frustrate the GCS. Many will be deciding on whether or not to continue in this profession which those outside the ropes do not understand. Plus the older the GCS becomes the harder it is to compete whether due to age or cost of employment.



Moraghan

Weather. No GCSAA CEO. Loss of turfgrass, budgets and the scarcity of quality jobs. Throw into this mix the reduction and lack of quality water sources. Maybe even Tiger Woods and how Élin was player of the year based on her wedge game, or at least the leader on the money list.

## Top topics of conversation when the attendees leave?

A renewed sense of camaraderie based on the fact that we are all in the same boat and a unified attempt to make golf affordable through stable conditioning, better on-course management and the newest, cost-saving pieces of equipment. Also, I expect there will be some buzz about the improved weather forecasting equipment for the golf course and more education opportunities for the non-agronomic members of the club.

- Exploration of new job opportunities overseas
- Reasons for a shrinking job market within the US
- Opportunities to grow the game for young, old men and women
- Increase networking opportunities
- Improve your abilities to meet the challenge of an ever decreasing quality job market
- As always, new and improved agronomics for better turfgrass

## What are the top topics of conversation among the attendees when they enter?

## What attendees will be expecting to accomplish form this year's GIS?

## GIS trends – good or bad?

The loss of the CMAA and its membership. For years the GCSAA toted the joining of forces between themselves, the PGA and now the CMAA. By losing the CMAA in the midst of a general decline in golf participation will eventually hurt and set back the team aspect among golf's professional bodies to assist in rejuvenating this game. – *Tim Moraghan is the author of GCI's "Outside The Ropes" column.*

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**Looking Ahead to 2011 GIS**

Over the years, I have observed golf course superintendents are pretty much an optimistic group with a low tolerance of gloom and doom; I would put myself in that group, too.

Nonetheless, I suspect 2011 GIS attendance will be lower again. Golf courses are still struggling, and younger families are, too. What in past years has been a great opportunity for a pre- or post-conference family vacation will be less so this year. The Disney theme parks are a huge draw, but economic considerations will prevail.

And many companies are experiencing tough times; leading to what could be a somewhat reduced roster of exhibitors. Those with only a tangential application to golf turf will be completely gone.

Even though the show may be smaller, attendees will leave delighted with the experience and grateful for the opportunity to be there. The seminars will be well attended and the overall educational opportunities simply cannot be found in one place anywhere else.

There is a chance some superintendents will shorten their stay by a day or two to save money; to compensate; their schedules will be packed to the maximum. Everyone will be looking for and listening to ways to reduce their costs even more, through conversations with colleagues, manufacturers and suppliers.



Miller

Since my first conference and show in 1973 until couple of years ago, the GIS experienced significant growth; it has more or less followed our national economic growth. Since we are a depressed national economy these days, it is no surprise our attendance is also down. No doubt other conferences in other professions have experienced the same. But for those of us who are fortunate enough to attend, it will be an awesome few days, both as a practical matter and as an inspiration. —Monroe S. Miller is a columnist and frequent contributor to GCI.



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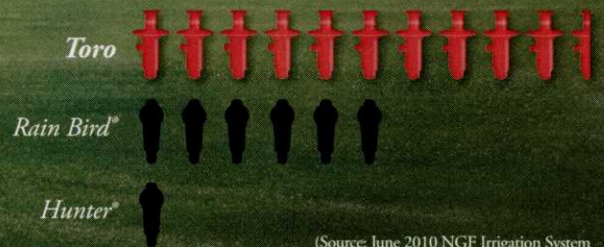
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# Irrigation and GIS

Irrigation at GIS this year is not expected to have the buzz that happened in 2010 when there was the introduction of new control systems.

There are however some major enhancements to several manufacturers sprinklers that will be showcased. These include a second part/full sprinkler on the market and several variations of "attached decoders."

Since golf irrigation sales are not very brisk in many parts of the country, the research and development has decreased for most manufacturers and they are concentrating on fine tuning and enhancing current product offerings. Look for more companies selling moisture sensing solutions and some talk about their usefulness and effectiveness among attendees. Many superintendents

will be looking at what they can do to upgrade their irrigation systems and to make them more water efficient and versatile without spending lots of dollars. How to get projects such as irrigation off of hold will also be a subject of discussion.



Vinchesi

Those superintendents and owners stopping to look at equipment will be more serious than in the past, as they try to do more with less. Expect to see less local distributor personnel in the major manufacturer's booths, but their will still be plenty of sales people to answer your irrigation questions.

– Brian Vinchesi is GCI's irrigation columnist.



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