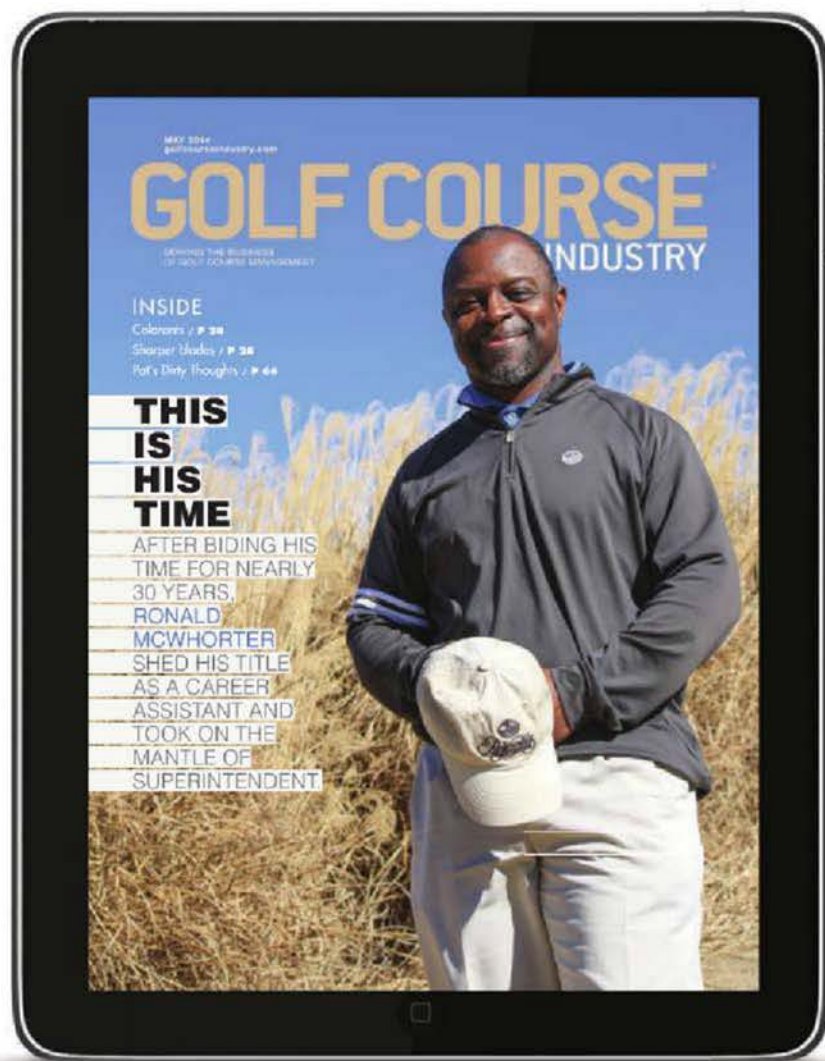


# Take Another Look.



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that then influences some growth metric.

But I am not convinced that colorants grow roots. There is more work to be done to better understand how the use of pigment colorants applied to a plant leaf surface influence all the ways a plant could respond.

**THE MAJORITY OF RESPONDENTS INDICATED THEY WILL CONTINUE TO USE COLORANTS AS A TURF MANAGEMENT TOOL. WHAT CAN WE EXPECT TO SEE IN THE COMING YEARS?**

We see today that colorants do have a place in the bigger picture of turfgrass management practices by golf course superintendents. Their current uses have expanded considerably in these recent years, largely driven by economic forces. Where there was once much skepticism and avoidance, there is now general acceptance of these pigment colorants as a result of early-adopters looking for new ways to not only solve turfgrass management problems, but to maintain and even enhance the game experience by their golfing clientele. I would say the place of colorants and how they may be used in more innovative ways will depend on where they fit as a component that superintendents use to create the kind of golf experience that draws greater participation and enjoyment of the game by future generations. **GCI**

(KAMINSKI continued from page 48)

down the street didn't lose turf and you did. They need to realize that there's a real difference between the creeping bentgrass greens on the neighboring course and the annual bluegrass on yours. They need to realize that the hybrid Bermudagrass they thought was a bulletproof choice on their greens may be challenged in a winter like this.

They need to know that it's not your fault that one of the greens on your course died while another didn't. They need to understand that variation in drainage or shade on golf course surfaces as well as microclimates from one green to the next can have a tremendous impact on plant health and survival.

They need to understand that preventive maintenance practices help to reduce

improve irrigation scheduling. They can perform preventive maintenance, such as cleaning out controllers, exercising gate valves, tightening grounding clamps, replacing and leveling valve boxes, and cleaning and painting the pump house and pump station.

Above all else, patience is necessary to provide these services. Troubleshooting a strict sequence and customer service as the irrigation technician is always out among the members and players making repairs.

Of course, being mechanical oriented and not being afraid to get dirty doesn't hurt, either. Wire tracking and fault finding is a necessary skill, but unfortunately it is one only perfected with experience. With new technologies – such as integrated decoder type systems and the use of HDPE pipe – more skills and training are needed because these systems use more sophisticated equipment.

Most superintendents determine the watering schedule and have the irrigation central control system in their office. However, in some cases, the irrigation technician may be watering or implementing the schedule. Usually the technician maintains the irrigation system central controller database. As we have discussed in this space before, it is es-

sential to have an accurate database. The irrigation technician is best positioned to ensure that the correct sprinkler, nozzle and arc that they have serviced in the field are reflected in the database. By performing audits, they can also use the data collected to fine tune precipitation rates and runtimes.

Unfortunately, good irrigation technicians are hard to find and they are beginning to earn higher salaries. There is no real training program other than experience. Much like a spray technician, if you can identify someone on your staff with the right skillset you can train them on irrigation repair and send them to electrical troubleshooting or auditing classes.

Irrigation technicians can be well worth the cost especially if you have an aging irrigation system that has continual problems as they are less expensive than a new system.

If you have the budget to hire or the available staff, an irrigation technician will improve the operation and lengthen the life of your irrigation system. It should also provide for better playing conditions as the irrigation system will cause less issues on the course and have improved uniformity when compared to an irrigation system only maintained and/or repaired when necessary. **GCI**

the possibility of these dramatic events, but that even the best laid plans are sometimes not enough.

Hopefully one thing that will come out of a winter like this one is that clubs will start to realize the potential negative impacts of a harsh winter (similar to harsh summer) and allow for modifications. These may include converting from annual bluegrass to creeping bentgrass or installing internal drainage to improve water movement. Each case is different and the only person who knows what best for the course is the individual superintendent managing the course.

The bottom line is that the members and golfers out there need to realize a few things.

- The death experienced this winter was unavoidable
- Recovery is going to cost money and take time
- Reconditioned greens will struggle this year, especially in the summer
- The superintendent's recommendations to improve the overall growing conditions of the turf (e.g., internal drainage, tree removal, etc.) should be taken into serious consideration

Although the golfers will likely feel angry and upset about the conditions and/or delays in course opening, I can assure you that the superintendent and their staff will be feeling 10 times the pressure and stress. Believe me, they hate losing turf more than you. **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](mailto: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.

### UNIQUE WORK BENCHES

A listing on Craigslist for two brand new metal workbenches (\$1,500 total) were a great find by the maintenance staff at the Waynesborough Country Club in Paoli, Pa. Each one measures 120 x 39 x 40 inches with 20 drawers each, where the top three drawers (sliding on ball bearings with a 60-pound weight limit) measure 30 inches deep, 15½ inches wide, and 4 inches high. The bottom drawers are 11½ inches high with the same depth and width, but equipped with an 80-pound weight limit. With four drawers per column each is separately lockable. Each drawer has a 52-font, laminated ID label. One workbench has a 2-inch thick solid wood top (\$500) and the other has a ½-inch thick metal top – both acquired locally – with three quad electric outlets above each workbench. Ben Kovacs, golf course superintendent, Derek Mohler, senior assistant golf course superintendent, and Joe Brown, equipment manager, make a great team.



### SPRINKLER HEAD LEVELING TOOL

A simple but very effective way to level sprinkler heads is accomplished by using a 4 x 4 x ¼ inch piece of aluminum angle bar at \$36 acquired from a local metal supply shop. The two Vise-Grip pliers (\$19.95 each) clamps the top of the sprinkler head to the aluminum bar after it is placed at the desired finish turf height. Once the soil is backfilled and tamped to within 6 inches below grade, where the sprinkler head and swing do not move, then both pair of pliers and the aluminum bar are removed prior to completing the backfilling and sod installation. The aluminum is obviously lightweight and fits easily in the bed of a turf vehicle. Robert H. Gamble, superintendent, and George Tuccanardi, irrigation technician, developed this great inexpensive idea at The Pearl Golf Links in Calabash, N.C.



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## DIRTY THOUGHTS

When the TV show “Dirty Jobs” first hit the airwaves in 2005, I was mildly amused by the idea of this actor guy who subjected himself to performing nasty tasks like hog castration, snake sexing and bird vomit inspection. We yukked it up along with Mike Rowe and his crew as they got very, very dirty and we learned about the weirder side of America’s lesser-known workplaces.

But, along the way, the stinky and gooey parts of more than 300 different filthy jobs began to take a backseat to another aspect of the show: getting to know typical Americans who work hard behind the scenes and do important things that benefit others.

Sound familiar?

Over the years I became a regular viewer of “Dirty Jobs,” but I also became a fan of Mike Rowe himself. Here’s a guy who faked his way into an opera singing job 20+ years ago and since then has become an iconic TV host, voiceover king, corporate spokesman for Ford, CAT and others, big fan of the Green Industry and, more recently, an advocate for the idea that not everyone needs a college degree and that labor – hard work using one’s own hands – is a rewarding and valuable thing.

In short, I think Mike Rowe is far more in touch with the pulse of America than any member of Congress or big city mayor. I also like the fact that he’s apolitical. It’s not about politics... it’s about common sense. You can learn a lot of great stuff about his foundation and what he’s trying to accomplish here: [www.profoundlydisconnected.com](http://www.profoundlydisconnected.com).

I decided I had to talk about Rowe this month after a simple Facebook post he wrote last month pretty much

blew my mind because it perfectly captured the whole Millennial angst problem but it also speaks volumes about America today. A young person wrote him for career advice and he responded... well, read it for yourself. Here’s a shortened version. You can find the whole thing on his site:

*Hey Mike!*

*I’ve spent this last year trying to figure out the right career for myself and I still can’t figure out what to do. I have always been a hands-on kind of guy and a go-getter. I could never be an office worker. I need change, excitement, and adventure in my life, but where the pay is steady. I grew up in construction and my first job was a restoration project. I love everything outdoors. I play music for extra money. I like trying pretty much everything, but get bored very easily. I want a career that will always keep me happy, but can allow me to have a family and get some time to travel. I figure if anyone knows jobs it’s you so I was wondering your thoughts on this if you ever get the time! Thank you!*

Rowe responds:

*“Consider your own words. You don’t want a career - you want the “right” career. You need “excitement” and “adventure,” but not at the expense of stability. You want lots of “change” and the “freedom to travel,” but you need the certainty of “steady pay.” You talk about being “easily bored” as though boredom is out of your control. It isn’t. Boredom is a choice. Like tardiness. Or interrupting. It’s one thing to “love the outdoors,” but you take it a step further. You vow to “never” take an office job. You talk about the needs of your family, even though that family doesn’t exist. And finally,*

*you say the career you describe must “always” make you “happy.”*

*“Stop looking for the “right” career, and start looking for a job. Any job. Forget about what you like. Focus on what’s available. Get yourself hired. Show up early. Stay late. Volunteer for the scut work. Become indispensable. You can always quit later, and be no worse off than you are today. But don’t waste another year looking for a career that doesn’t exist. And most of all, stop worrying about your happiness. Happiness does not come from a job. It comes from knowing what you truly value, and behaving in a way that’s consistent with those beliefs.*

*“Many people today resent the suggestion that they’re in charge of the way they feel. But trust me, Parker. Those people are mistaken. That was a big lesson from Dirty Jobs, and I learned it several hundred times before it stuck. What you do, who you’re with, and how you feel about the world around you, is completely up to you.”*

This is remarkable advice on a bunch of levels. First, it’s a nice slap upside the head to a generation of young workers who aren’t particularly interested in working. Second, it reminds us that the simplest things matter most: I’ll take someone who’s hard-working and reliable over someone who crushed their ACT or interned someplace fancy anytime. Finally, he really nails it by stating flatly that happiness doesn’t flow from your title... it comes from walking the talk.

This country needs way less Kim Kardashian and way more Mike Rowe. Let’s never forget there is honor and great reward in simple hard work. And let’s teach our kids that lesson, too. **GCI**

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