

Off The Fringe

NEWS WITH A HOOK

Business briefs

IGM makes deal with World Woods

Lakeland, Fla.-based International Golf Maintenance reached a multi-year, multi-million dollar agreement with World Woods Corp. to provide maintenance services at its three courses. Brooksville, Fla.-based World Woods includes Pine Barrens, Rolling Oaks and the Short Course.

IGM also announced an agreement to oversee maintenance operations at Champions Golf Links in Sacramento, Calif.

Scotts reports record sales

Marysville, Ohio-based The Scotts Co. reported record net sales of \$1.65 billion for the fiscal year ended Sept. 30, an increase of 48 percent over last year's actual sales of \$1.11 billion and an increase of 11 percent on a pro forma basis. The pro forma figures include the results of recently acquired international and U.S. pesticides businesses as if Scotts had owned them throughout both periods.

For fiscal 1999, net income was \$63.2 million, or \$2.27 diluted earnings per share including a previously reported one-time benefit of 28 cents per share related to the timing of the Ortho acquisition.

In other company news, Scotts is expanding its technical services organization to provide customers with more resources for support, the company said.

Resource One born

Memphis, Tenn.-based Resource One is the name of a new marketing division of Cenex/Land O'Lakes Agronomy Co. that combines Terra Professional Products with Land O'Lakes East Turf & Ornamental Products. This follows the acquisition of Terra Distribution by Cenex/Land O'Lakes Agronomy Co. last summer.

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License to Kill Raccoons?

REAL-LIFE HUNT ON GOLF COURSE
MIRRORS REEL-LIFE GOPHER PROBE
FROM 'CADDYSHACK.' THANKFULLY,
NO ONE WAS HURT.

By James E. Guyette

The silver screen spirit of superintendent Carl Spackler lives on at a golf course in Hinckley, Ohio, where a real-life gun battle with rascally raccoons is drawing comparisons to Spackler's reel-life confrontations with galling gophers in the film "Caddyshack."

"They're like the Viet Cong . . . Varmint Cong," said Bill Murray's fictional character in the famous and funny 1980 flick.

"So . . . you've got to fall back on superior firepower and superior intelligence."

"Caddyshack" aside, Hinckley homeowners surrounding the Pine Hills GC are up in arms following a late-night raccoon hunt at the course. When the black-masked critters took to the fairways for evening grubs, the Pine Hills staff opted for a high-caliber control strategy — but a shot in the dark that went wide now threatens to blow up in club officials' faces. At presstime, the local police department, county prosecutor's office and the Ohio Division of Wildlife were all reviewing the case. While it's legal to discharge firearms in Hinckley, the near tragedy sparked concern.



Spackler lives?

ORION PICTURES

Twice in a month, police were called to the club to investigate shots fired, and during the second incident, investigators recovered a 1-ounce slug from a 12-gauge shotgun that shattered the window of a \$500,000 neighboring house. With a luxury home bordering a golf course, owner Jeff Radin says he expects a few golf balls to come hooking into the backyard — but it was a large piece of ammunition that nearly hit his wife and children who were relaxing inside, he said.

There are 80 to 100 houses near Pine Hills, and homeowner Thomas Yatsko said this type of unfriendly fire is more at home on the frozen tundra. "These are polar bear slugs. I don't know why they were using the weaponry they were using," he said.

Yatsko and Radin expressed concern the hunters were untrained marksmen and were firing weapons at night while using only flashlights to guide them.

"Who knows what they were blasting at?" Yatsko added. "They weren't real careful."

Pine Hills' reluctance to address these concerns remains a powder keg among newly re-acquainted neighbors, who are now trading tidbits of information. There could be future attempts at obtaining legislative relief through the township's government, neighbors said.

"This is a classic case of what *not* to do if you have a problem with a neighbor," Radin said of Pine Hills' response. "The lack of remorse is like throwing gasoline on a fire."

Meanwhile, club staffers declined to

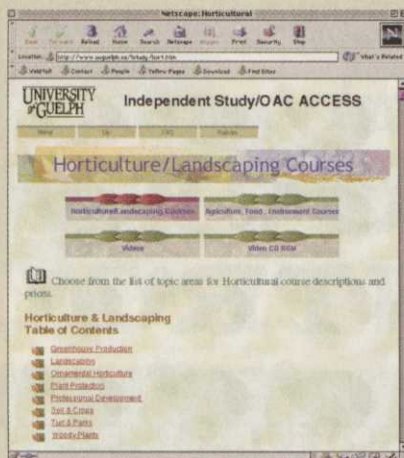
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Scanning the Web

(**** – Bookmark it and return frequently; * – Look at only if absolutely necessary)

Excuse me if I seem a little blurry-eyed. All this studying about turfgrass and golf course maintenance has left me little time for sleep. But if you think you don't have time to learn the latest information in turfgrass maintenance, think again. Here are some distance learning sites that are worth your while:

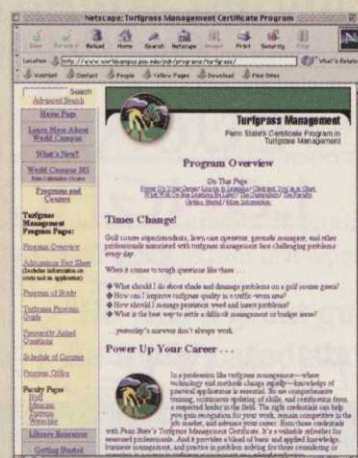
▶ ****<http://www.worldcampus.psu.edu/pub/programs/turfgrass/> – Of all the sites I studied, this had the most complete course offering in turfgrass maintenance, along with other courses specifically aimed at superintendents. Best of all – the courses offered at this site can be accessed online, so you can learn at your own pace and own schedule. Its user-friendly format even gives tips on how to learn online. It's the complete package.



▶ ***<http://www.uoguelph.ca/istudy/hort.htm> – At the University of Guelph (located in Guelph, Ontario, in Canada), traditional correspondence courses are the rule. The programs in golf course maintenance range from environmental management to design, with a host of turf management issues in between. Information is a little harder to find on this site, but it also offers a general professional development division to help you enhance your overall management prowess.

***<http://www.gactr.uga.edu/dl.html> – The University of Georgia's Center for Continuing Education offers a full correspondence course in turfgrass management. The result is a five-year certification in the area, renewable every five years through re-examination. The course covers a variety of subjects across the turf maintenance discipline. It's a survey course designed to help superintendents stay current in the field.

Scanning the Web is compiled by Frank H. Andorka Jr., Golfdom's associate editor, who constantly thirsts for further education. You can contribute to that effort by contacting him at fandorka@advanstar.com to teach him about future column suggestions or sites you think he should visit.



License to Kill

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provide details of the incident and would not discuss the hunters or their experience.

"I'm not going to discuss it," said Brian Vickers, the Pine Hills superintendent, who notes the grub control program has ceased fire.

Golf pro Steve Brzytwa, the club's spokesman for the controversy, called for the investigation to be dropped.

"This is old news as far as I'm concerned," he said, and claimed that using large-caliber firearms to remove raccoons is an accepted practice for golf course maintenance.

"Things like this can potentially happen anywhere," Brzytwa added, noting that "this thing has been turned over to the attorneys and the insurance company."

Radin says he contacted employees from about 15 golf courses in locations similar to Hinckley's rural environment, and none said they used firearms to remove raccoons and varmints. Jeff Bollig, spokesman for GCSAA, would not comment on whether it was an accepted practice or not.

Clarification on Seed Testing

Our recent article on seed certification ("Testing Debate Continues," Sept. 1999) spurred a critical response from Terry Hollifield, executive director of the Georgia Crop Improvement Program. He was particularly concerned with this statement: "In Florida, for example, where the certification program fell by the wayside, inferior quality seed prompted some turf managers to file lawsuits against seed companies after it was allegedly determined that a few Florida seed producers had sold turfgrass seed using fraudulent certification tags from Georgia."

Hollifield challenged that assertion, which was sourced to John Mascaro of TurfTec International, so we checked back with Mascaro to clarify and confirm his comments. Mascaro said his original comments to our writer were not about seed certification, but about similar problems that Florida had experienced with "live vegetative turfgrass material in the form of sprigs and sod," including several where Georgia tags were placed on the shipment.

Mascaro continued: "I acknowledge that there were numerous problems in the past, but I believe that the Georgia certification program was never to blame. In fact, because of the past problems (with the Florida sod program), I always recommend that all my customers purchase sod from Georgia because of its outstanding certification and quality control."

Golfdom apologizes for this reporting error.