

Off The Fringe

You Go, Cobb

Patricia A. Cobb, a long-time extension entomologist at Auburn University, is the first woman in 26 years and the second woman ever to receive USGA's 2001 Green Section Award.

The annual award recognizes persons for distinguished contributions to golf through work with turfgrass and is selected by a panel of experts in the field. Fanny-Fern Davis, the acting national director of USGA's Green Section from 1943 through 1945, was the first woman to win the award in 1975.

Cobb, who resides in Opelika, Ala, will receive her award at the GCSAA Conference and Show in Dallas this month.

"I wanted to be an entomologist since I was 8 years old, and getting to be an entomologist and working with the golf industry has been the cake," Cobb said. "Getting this award is the icing on the cake."

During her 21-year tenure as an extension entomologist at Auburn, Cobb has specialized in turfgrass integrated pest management, management of soil insect pests, and IPM for landscape and woody ornamentals.

While at Auburn, Cobb conducted more than 175 field trials and demonstrations that enabled her to make reliable insecticide recommendations and to develop new IPM strategies. These programs resulted in substantially reduced costs and pesticide use, as well as increased environmental awareness.

Harp Plays Own Tune

By James E. Guyette

Mark Harp plays his own tune, stringing a series of superintendent and golf course construction/consulting gigs into a fascinating world of international adventure.

"You don't know where that boy is going to go next," says the top authority on these types of matters, Harp's stateside mother.

That "boy" is a 48-year-old Vietnam combat veteran who recently finished a three-year tour with the U.S. Marine Corps on the island of Okinawa, where he was the superintendent/construction consultant. Prior to that, Harp worked for the U.S. Army at Camp Zama, Japan, where he was the designer/builder for a USGA greens renovation project. Previous superintendent jobs had him working in Guam, Hong Kong, mainland China, Japan and other faraway lands in need of his maintenance/construction/design expertise. Turkey may be his next stop.

"I know several different languages, not fluently, but enough to get by," Harp says.

"It's a trade-off," he says of seeking the security of a full-time position in the United States vs. striking out on



Superintendent Mark Harp enjoys the nomad lifestyle and working in faraway lands.

his own in foreign lands. "I'm exposed to different cultures, and I learn different construction techniques. I know how to operate every piece of equipment on a golf course."

What are his secrets for staying out of overseas trouble?

"Don't trifle with the locals," he warns, telling of watching a truckload of 40 Chinese men "trussed-up like hogs" and carted off for execution. "Avoid romancing the natives and 'don't stick out like a sore thumb.'"

These roving positions pay well, ranging from slightly above average to double what a stateside superintendent makes. (The pay grade can be on the lower side, however, when he accepts positions at military courses.)

His most recent assignment in Okinawa taught him the glory of Korai, a Japanese "greens-grade" zoysiagrass that is native to Korea.

"It has my utmost respect," Harp says. "It's a good grass to play golf on."

Its use on the military course on Okinawa caught the eye of Lt. General Frank Libutti, the commanding general of the Marine Corps Forces Pacific, who had nothing but high praise for the greens and the course.

Oregon Golf Legend Dies

Norman Joseph "The Chief" Whitworth died Dec. 6 from heart failure. Whitworth was born in St. Ignatius, Mont., on Jan. 5, 1938. He began Norm Whitworth Turf Products in 1970, and was the Northwest representative for Turf-Seed and Tee-2-Green, selling perennial ryegrass, fine fescue, Kentucky bluegrass, creeping bentgrass and wildflower.

In 1975, Whitworth helped start the annual Oregon golf tournament to raise funds for The Musser International Turfgrass Foundation. A 17-handicapper, golf was an important part of his life. Friends and associates remember his wit and golf tips, in addition to being a part of every golf association in the Northwest.