

# Off The Fringe

NEWS WITH A HOOK

## Business briefs

### **Bayer says purchase will affect profit margins**

Reuters said a spokesman for Bayer AG confirmed a report citing CEO Manfred Schneider as saying margins would fall in the first year after its purchase of Aventis CropScience unit. The executive also stated margins would return to current levels in the third year after the purchase. Bayer is in exclusive negotiations with Aventis SA to purchase its CropScience unit for around \$6 billion, including debt.

### **Eco Soil reorganizing**

Rancho Bernardo, Calif.-based Eco Soil Systems said in a letter to shareholders that it has engaged an investment banker to help it reorganize its core business. The company also said it's seeking to sell non-core assets and use proceeds from any sales to pay down debt and improve its working capital position.

### **Pursell opens Pursell Farms**

Pursell Technologies officially opened Pursell Farms, its new 3,000-acre corporate headquarters, in July in Sylacauga, Ala. The headquarters includes demonstration sites, research stations and a guest lodge. During the grand opening, ground was broke on the construction of FarmLinks, a championship 18-hole research and demonstration golf course that will be the focal point of the complex. FarmLinks will also include a prototype learning facility for kids called The First Tee at Pursell Farms.

### **Lesco income down for first half**

Cleveland-based Lesco reports that it achieved record sales of \$164.1 million for the quarter ended June 30, an increase of 3.7 percent over \$158.3 million in the 2000 second

*Briefs continue on page 16*

## Worth the Trouble?

### SUPERINTENDENTS WEIGH PROS, CONS OF RECEIVING GOLF CAR CASH

By Frank H. Andorka Jr.,  
Managing Editor

**S**hould superintendents push for a share of the golf car revenue that traditionally goes to golf professionals? The answer depends on what extra headaches they're willing to endure.

According to the National Golf Foundation's 1999 U.S. Golf Facility Compensation Study, 17.1 percent of golf professionals receive a percentage of the money as compensation, while less than 1 percent of superintendents do.

Ensuring the golf car fleet is in working order is a 24/7 job, said Dennis Watkins, superintendent at Lords Valley CC in Newfoundland, Pa. Superintendents who receive revenues from golf car rentals are often asked to take on the additional responsibility of servicing them, he added.

"You'd have to pay me big bucks for that aggravation," Watkins said. "Extra work is involved, often during the season. You have to have a daylight-to-dark commitment."

On the other hand, if superintendents don't mind the additional maintenance responsibilities, golf car revenues can add substantially to their compensation packages. In



DIGITALSTOCK

**Golf car rentals can bring superintendents additional revenue, but they come with added responsibility.**

George Manuel's case, the extra money he received at Pine Forest CC in Houston was between \$14,000 and \$16,000 annually, representing 2 percent of golf car fees. Manuel, now superintendent at River Oaks CC in Houston, said he enjoyed the extra revenue and the added responsibility.

"I liked having responsibility for the golf car fleet, but you have to hire a good technician to oversee daily maintenance because it's too much for your regular mechanic to do," Manuel said. "I felt I could keep the cars better maintained than they would be otherwise because I controlled the service, and my standards are pretty high."

Parin Schmidt, superintendent at Naperbrook GC in Naperville, Ill.,

said he received a small percentage of car revenue from Monday morning outings when he was superintendent at Stonebridge CC in Aurora, Ill.

"I controlled the decision about when golf cars were allowed on the course," Schmidt said. "I also took the heat if a member didn't like [my decision]."

He currently maintains more than 80 cars without receiving any additional money.

If you take on the additional responsibility, you should create a separate car division within the maintenance department, complete with a full-time mechanic, part-time mechanic and staff to wash cars, said Walter Montross, superintendent at Westwood CC in Vienna, Va. His course's pro receives the car revenue and is responsible for the maintenance.

Montross says he's weighed the pros and cons about getting into the golf car business when his course invited him to become the general manager, which would have included the responsibility. After careful deliberation, he decided against taking the job because it would have distracted him from what he enjoys most.

"The additional revenue isn't worth it," he said. "If I wanted to take it on, I would become a general manager instead of doing what I love — being a superintendent."

## Gripping About 'Get A Grip!'

**T**hat goofy little booklet that GCSAA sent in mass quantities to superintendents to distribute to golfers has gone over like a Buffalo Bills performance in the Super Bowl.

It's a dog.

The booklets, entitled *Get a Grip!*, were mailed to GCSAA members in July with memorandums from GCSAA president Tommy Witt. The booklet contains excerpts from the book of the same name by John M. Capozzi, a successful businessman. It's filled with cartoons, quotes and jokes from golfers, actors, etc. We and others didn't find it humorous.

In his memorandum, Witt asked superintendents to distribute the magazines to "maximize the exposure for



**GCSAA's latest public relations initiative drew howls of protest from the rank-and-file.**

GCSAA

# Quotable

**"Our objective is to keep this golf course current. Beginning in 1934 and throughout their tenure, Cliff Roberts and Bob Jones made improvements to complement the changing state of the game. We have continued this philosophy."**

— Hootie Johnson, Augusta National GC chairman, on the course's renovation headed by Tom Fazio. Augusta will be extended to 7,270 yards from 6,985 yards. (*The Wire*)

**"This is the only golf course in the world that combats things yearly. I'm not sure longer is the answer."**

— PGA golfer Hal Sutton on the Augusta renovation. (*The Augusta Chronicle*)

**"They look like bloody huge flying goldfish!"**

— Visiting Scotsman Dave Samuels, superintendent at The Belfry, describing the yellow orioles flitting about during a round of golf before the John Deere Classic in Moline, Ill.

our profession." He said the booklets were part of GCSAA's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration. But many superintendents are griping about *Get A Grip!*

One superintendent told us the booklets were a bunch of "unsolicited crap" and an "embarrassment." That superintendent said he received about 500 copies to distribute.

The booklet sparked a debate on one of the GCSAA online forums. One superintendent said *Get a Grip!* represents a bad public relations job for superintendents.

Witt vowed in a posting that GCSAA didn't spend a penny on the project. He also said the booklet was supposed to — but didn't — provide examples of how superintendents contribute to the golfing experience.

Maybe GCSAA should follow up the booklet mailing with an aspirin mailing to superintendents.

Extra strength.

## Off The Fringe

### Business briefs

*Briefs continued from page 14*

quarter. But net income for the quarter was \$7.5 million, lower than the record \$10 million reported in the second quarter of 2000.

Sales for the six months ended June 30 were \$254.9 million, down from \$257.2 million from the first half last year. Net income for the 2001 first half was \$1.9 million, compared with \$8.8 million for the same period last year. Lesco said first-half sales were impacted by adverse weather and difficult economic conditions.

#### Toro launches PartsViewer

The Toro Co. is now providing customers with round-the-clock access to parts information with the launch of its Toro Master PartsViewer on the Internet at [www.toro.com](http://www.toro.com). The Toro Master PartsViewer includes replacement parts lists and illustrations for equipment dating back to 1960.

#### Roundup sales set record

St. Louis-based Monsanto Co. said net sales were flat at \$2 billion for the second quarter of 2001, but global sales of Roundup herbicide increased 4 percent and set a quarterly record.

#### ASIC honors Ewing

Ewing Irrigation Products was the recent recipient of the American Society of Irrigation Consultants' Roy Williams Award, named in member of the co-founder and first president of the society.

## September In Turfgrass Trends:

**EVALUATING NTEP:** NTEP is a great tool in helping superintendents choose the appropriate variety for their courses. But is it as simple as choosing a variety from the top of the Grand Mean column to construct a blend? Doug Breede, a noted plant breeder, explains what some of the NTEP rating values really mean.

**GENETIC FINGERPRINTING:** Genetic fingerprinting of turfgrass varieties helps

plant breeders develop more sophisticated varieties. Louisiana State University researcher Ida Wenefrida explains the latest exciting discoveries that her university has made as it has fine-tuned the art of turfgrass fingerprinting.

**LABOR AND FATE:** Are today's students receiving the proper vocational training they need to meet future labor needs? Turfgrass Trends Managing Editor Curt Harler weighs in.

## This I Know Is True

*Editor's note: They write like poets, but David and Faye Pulley, the authors of this poem, are actually in the golf course maintenance industry. David is superintendent of Pine Valley CC in Wilmington, N.C. The Pulleys originally posted the poem on a GCSAA online forum last summer. We liked it so much we asked David if we could print it. Watch out, Robert Frost!*

MIKE KLEMM

Nematodes, fairy rings, hot spots and some weeds,  
Add a few hundred mole crickets out to do their nasty deeds.  
Drought in June, rain in July, is it always 90 degrees?  
Oh yeah — when am I going to get around to building new ladies' tees?

Sprayer went down, fairway mower is dead and the budget's due this week,  
Where's all that water coming from? Oh no, I've got a leak!  
Men's Golf Association called today, would like for me to speak,  
The rough's so tall, the golfers fuss 'cause they're playing hide and seek.

My wife just called, her car broke down, better pick her up *right* now,  
Oh yeah, the secretary wants the bills, she's about to have a cow.  
Lightning hit the transformer again, I heard it go kapow,  
Haven't done the newsletter yet,  
No, sir, I haven't forgotten how.

Hurricane? Tropical storm? There are how many off the coast?  
Say what, the aerifier blew a seal just when I need it most.  
Some kids took a cart to 17 and turned that green to toast,  
And "Talking It Over" is warming up — man, I need to make a post.

Another summer's almost gone, and I guess I'll make it through,  
Just when I think it's all too much, I walk out in the morning dew.  
Sniff the air, here comes the sun, watch the sky turn blue,  
There's nowhere else I'd rather be — this I know is true.



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## Off The Fringe

### ArborLinks – A Tree of Environmental Knowledge

The ArborLinks Home Course, set to open next summer, is taking shape. Many holes of the championship golf course, located at the Arbor Day Farm in Nebraska City, Neb., have been shaped by builder Landscapes Unlimited, which is operating the course in conjunction with the National Arbor Day Foundation.

The course, billed as a national model of environmental quality, is under design by the Palmer Course Design Co. The project's goal is "to enhance and expand responsible and sustainable environmental stewardship in the golf community."

"It's critical that the design, construction, conservation and research methods utilized during the course's creation are well documented and used as a model for future golf design and construction," according to the National Arbor Day Foundation.

John Rosenow, president of the organization, says a properly constructed and maintained golf course can improve water quality and enhance biodiversity, as well as prevent soil erosion. "This environmentally friendly course will combine model demonstrations of conservation practices and other environmental themes," he adds.

### Putting the pieces together

It takes more than just grass, sand and holes to make a golf masterpiece. Only a fairway- and green-minded Frank Lloyd Wright can make all the pieces fit together perfectly. Who is **your** favorite course architect?

Donald Ross . . . . .	21%	Jack Nicklaus . . . . .	6%
Arnold Palmer . . . . .	13%	Michael Hurdzan . . . . .	5%
Tom Fazio . . . . .	12%	Robert Trent Jones Jr. . . . .	3%
Robert Trent Jones Sr. . . . .	11%	Rees Jones . . . . .	2%
Alister MacKenzie . . . . .	9%	Don't know/	
Pete Dye . . . . .	8%	No answer . . . . .	8%

SOURCE: GCSAA; ILLUSTRATION: DAN BEEDY



## Scanning the Web

### Frank Andorka reviews [putting-greens.com](http://putting-greens.com)

(All sites are preceded by <http://> unless otherwise noted)

[www.putting-greens.com](http://www.putting-greens.com) — It's amazing how easy taking care of putting greens sounds when you visit this site, which hawks a manual written by Leo Maleson called *Beginner's Guide to Backyard Golf Putting Greens* for \$20. Since Maleson wants you to buy the book, he doesn't reveal any tips on the site.

Maleson does reveal a sense of humor with his response to a question about how much time it takes to tend a green. He shows two charts detailing the number of minutes it takes to tend to a backyard green (the second chart is done tongue-in-cheek). I'd love to hear superintendents evaluate his time predictions.

Industry companies in the business like

Maleson's idea because the site is full of links to companies such as Jacklin Seed and mower companies. It appears that they have sponsored Maleson's site in order to reach consumers. The site also contains discussion groups for people who have already built greens in their backyards.

One former superintendent has already parlayed his knowledge into a successful business (which you can examine at [www.backyardputtinggreens.com](http://www.backyardputtinggreens.com)). Tom Herrick created this business after a career in golf course maintenance. Although he installs synthetic putting greens, he says his customers are more comfortable when they deal with someone who knows the real turf business.



**Editor's Note:** The Florida GCSA launched a new Web site in August. To find news about what's going on in course maintenance in Florida, visit [www.floridagcsa.com](http://www.floridagcsa.com) or contact *Golfdom's* own Joel Jackson at [flgm@aol.com](mailto:flgm@aol.com).

Managing editor Frank H. Andorka Jr. compiles *Scanning the Web* and will leave the tending of putting greens to the experts. You can reach him at [fan-dorka@advanstar.com](mailto:fan-dorka@advanstar.com) with future column suggestions or sites you think he should visit.