

Off The Fringe

Business briefs

FWS's proposed regulation addresses geese problem

Superintendents with geese problems on their golf courses will be glad to hear the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has proposed new regulations to give state wildlife agencies permission to reduce flocks of Canada geese that nest year-round. That means superintendents could, by year's end, eliminate geese on their courses. In making the proposal, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service decided the Canadian geese problem can be best addressed at the state level. "We're committed to providing state wildlife management agencies with as much flexibility as possible to address the issue," a spokesman said.

Bayer must divest Fipronil

While the European Union has given conditional approval to Bayer AG's acquisition of Aventis CropScience AG, the new company must divest itself of Aventis' best-selling insecticide, Fipronil. The new company, called Bayer CropScience, may license the product back for regions outside of Europe and the United States, however.

Guerra leaves AGC

In the wake of its merger with National Golf Properties, American Golf Corp. no longer has two CEOs. Co-CEO Joe Guerra has left the company to pursue other interests, according to AGC. Guerra was with AGC for 15 years. AGC's other co-CEO, David Pillsbury, is now president of the company.

National Golf also announced that James M. Stanich resigned as president, but will remain as a member of the board of directors.

New CEO plots LESCO's future

Less than a week after being named CEO of *Briefs continue on page 16*

Book 'Em, Dougo

SLEUTHING DISTRIBUTOR HELPS BUST GOLF COURSE VANDAL

By Larry Aylward, Editor

Doug Hill is general manager of Turfgrass South, an independent distributor in Florence, Ky. But Hill also possesses the sleuthing savvy of Lieutenant "Whadya Pay for Those Shoes?" Columbo.

In April, Hill helped bust a man who vandalized the Fort Mitchell (Ky.) CC, near Florence and about 10 minutes from Cincinnati. On March 22, the 25-year-old numbskull drove his Ford Explorer onto one of the course's bentgrass fairways and did an estimated \$1,300 in damage. The man also wrecked his vehicle, which came back to haunt him. Its fender and fog light were left behind amid the golf course damage.

On March 31, Hill, a member of the Fort Mitchell CC and also its past president, was leaving a restaurant with his son after having brunch. On the way out, they bumped into another member of the course, who tipped them off about a vehicle parked nearby with a missing fender and fog light. Hill and his son drove past the car. Even after nine days, there was still bentgrass sod hanging from the vehicle's axle. Hill's teenage son knew the man who owned the vehicle.



Doug Hill says he recognized the chunks of turf hanging from the damaged vehicle were bentgrass.

Hill called the club's president and told him about the vehicle. He picked up the president, and they drove back to where the vehicle was parked and took digital photos of its front end. Then they e-mailed the photos to Fort Mitchell's chief of police.

Two days later, the police busted the vandal, who admitted his stupid stunt. "It was *so* satisfying to catch him," Hill says.

So satisfying because Hill knows how much superintendents despise vandals.

"Superintendents are my customers," Hill says. "You can see the stress on their faces when you talk about vandalism. Superintendents will be happy to learn that one of these guys got caught. You never read about these guys getting caught."

Here's to Doug "Sherlock" Hill for helping to do the catching.

Business briefs

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Lesco, Michael DiMino laid out his management team's vision of the company's future.

In a presentation to shareholders and the investment community in April, he described Lesco's new direction as a "back to basics," and called on a return to the philosophy of company founders Jim FitzGibbon and Bob Burkhart. DiMino said LESCO is on the road to a profitable 2002.

Syngenta still on track

Syngenta AG blamed adverse currency movements and continuing tough markets for first-quarter sales dip of 3.7 percent compared to last year. Although the company does not expect a sales boost soon, it says it's still on track to reach its goals of a slight improvement in margins in 2002.

Second course coming to Russia

Golf is coming to St. Petersburg, Russia, thanks in part to Illinois-based architect Dick Nugent and his firm Nugent Golf Associates, who will design and construct a 45-hole golf facility there. It's only the second golf course to be built in Russia — the only other course is the Moscow Golf and CC.

St. Petersburg is the most western and second largest city in Russia. It's probably the largest city in the world without a golf course, according to Nugent Golf Associates.

Rutgers explores transformation technology

An agreement between Rutgers and Japan Tobacco will enable Rutgers to develop and commercialize improved turfgrass varieties by using a pioneering plant transformation technology, announced William Meyer, head of the turfgrass breeding program at Rutgers. The new technology was developed by Japan Tobacco and modified for use in turfgrass by Barbara Zilinskas, a plant scientist at the Center for Turfgrass Science and the Biotechnology Center for Agriculture and the Environment at Rutgers.

"Long term, we believe that transformation technology will enable us to solve some unsolved pest and disease problems," Meyer said.

Steiniger, the 'Super Superintendent,' dies at 96

Eberhard "Eb" Steiniger, known as the dean of superintendents, died in his sleep April 13. He was 96.

Steiniger, who retired from Pine Valley (N.J.) GC in 1980 after more than 50 years, was also known in circles as the "Super Superintendent." The recipient of many awards, including GCSAA's Distinguished Service Award and USGA's Green Section Award, Steiniger was GCSAA's oldest member.

Golfdom recognized Steiniger as one of its "Titans of Our Industry" in 2001. Steiniger told *Golfdom* his secret to success was to treat members with the utmost respect. "I treated all members as if they were my bosses, no matter what they asked," he said.

If you would like to make a donation in honor of Steiniger's name, contact St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Laurel Springs, N.J., at 856-783-1839.

Quotable

"Golf has helped me raise my family, put a roof over my head, food on the table and allowed me to meet some wonderful people."

— *Palmer Maples on being the first superintendent inducted into the Georgia Golf Hall of Fame (Augusta Chronicle)*

"We're a dying breed to have stayed at one course for as long as we have. But it's nice to be able to plant a tree and see how big it has grown seven years later."

— *Charlie Hadwick, long-time superintendent of The Country Club of Lincoln (Neb.), on longevity in the industry*

"God bless the muni golfer. God bless the hack, the chop, the scrape. God bless Joey Threerjerk over there, trying to hit a seven-iron with one foot on a sprinkler that won't shut off and the other on his bag of Cheetos that he's keeping from the pigeons. . . . Mostly, God bless the USGA for finally bringing the U.S. Open to the people, to a real muni, golf's chopphalla — Bethpage Black."

— *Rick Reilly from a recent Sports Illustrated column*