

Off The Fringe

Business briefs

Florida GCSA helps broker deal for Nemacur

The Florida GCSA helped broker a deal between the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Bayer Environmental Science that will allow for a five-year phase-out period for Nemacur nematocide, which Florida superintendents have relied on to control nematodes.

In March, Bayer requested that EPA cancel all uses of fenamiphos, the active ingredient in its nematocide Nemacur, effective May 31, 2005. The company said the action was due to the "escalating costs of defending fenamiphos relative to its limited use." The product was used for turf mostly on golf courses in Florida and a few other southern states.

The revised agreement between Bayer and the EPA allows for the use and formulation for use of Nemacur through May 31, 2007. However, pursuant to the original agreement, use on hydrologic soil group A — soil groups that are excessively drained and have predominately sand or loamy sand with water tables less than 50 feet deep — will be canceled effective May 31, 2005.

"This is a great success for Bayer and our customers who rely on Nemacur," said Mike Daly, Bayer's turf and ornamental brand manager. "The extended phase out allows superintendents to use the trusted nematode control product while we work to develop better alternatives. And we could not have accomplished this without the help of these dedicated superintendents."

Sale approved of National Golf, AGC

Santa Monica, Calif.-based National Golf announced that its board of directors and its

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Going Buggy

PLAGUE OF THE NORTHEAST INVADES MID-ATLANTIC STATES

By Frank H. Andorka Jr., Managing Editor

A full-scale invasion may be imminent next year. No, we're not talking about President Bush's plans for Iraq. We're talking about an invasion of the annual bluegrass weevil into Mid-Atlantic states. The forward troops started moving in this year.

Traditionally an insect pest of the Northeast, the weevil entered the Mid-Atlantic region in earnest this year, reaching as far south as Maryland. What makes it doubly alarming is that the weevils have moved on from attacking *Poa annua*, its traditional target, to bentgrass. A few golf courses have lost significant turf to the pest, says Stan Zontek, director of the USGA Green Section's Mid-Atlantic offices.

"It's always been a minor insect pest from Pittsburgh to the Poconos on *Poa*," Zontek says. "This year, however, it moved farther south and attacked bentgrass. That caught us by surprise."

The insect's attack begins when it lays its eggs in the sheath of the turf's leaves. When the eggs hatch, the larvae sever the leaves from the rest of the plant. To kill them, superintendents must first identify the weevils accurately, according to Zontek.



USGA

The annual bluegrass weevil, a traditional pest in the Northeast, invaded the mid-Atlantic region in earnest this year.

Annual bluegrass weevils usually live in the top quarter inch of thatch, says Dave Oatis, director of the Green Section's Northeast offices. Superintendents who want to determine whether weevils have infected their turf should cut a small slice out of their turf with a pocketknife. They'll see the larvae crawling around, he says.

The insects produce three generations per year, which allows their numbers to increase rapidly, Oatis says. Since they can't be controlled when they're pupating, superintendents have to identify them quickly after they've hatched. The problem, however, is that the damage often mirrors some diseases.

"The visible effects on the surface can be mistaken for anthracnose," Oatis says. "Check your clipping baskets before you treat for the disease."

If your clippings are moving, chances are you have a weevil infestation.”

Zontek says superintendents should investigate wilting *Poa* to ensure the weevils aren't lurking. Oatis adds that weevils usually attack *Poa* and eat it before they move on to other turf species.

Tony Gustaitus, certified superintendent at Whitemarsh Valley GC in Eagleville, Pa., says he first noticed the discolored turf on his greens' collars in May.

“I remember talking to a fellow superintendent at a chapter meeting and telling him about the symptoms,” Gustaitus says. “I treated it for anthracnose for a month before the USGA visited my course and diagnosed the weevils.”

Once he got down on his hands and knees and took a closer look, the problem was obvious because he could see the larvae.

“It's just another curveball Mother Nature has thrown at us,” Gustaitus says. “It wasn't something I expected to see.”

Oatis says superintendents in the mid-Atlantic region should scout for the bugs in the spring. He recommends treating with two sprays of a non-thatch penetrating insecticide seven to 10 days apart in May to prevent the problem from spreading.

“They're not a bad pest to have around in small quantities because they can help thin out *Poa* stands in bentgrass greens,” Oatis says. “You can't be too cavalier about treating them, however, because they can do serious damage.”

GCSAA Wants to Increase Dues

Citing a difficult economy and decreased earnings, the GCSAA announced a proposal for a 20-percent dues increase beginning July 1 for fiscal year 2003-2004.

Under the proposal, Class A and superintendent member dues would increase from \$250 to \$300, and Class C assistant superintendent member dues would increase from \$125 to \$150. Members will vote on the proposal at the 2003 annual meeting in Atlanta.

If passed, the board would then approve corresponding increases in the remaining membership classes, including affiliate dues from \$250 to \$300, student and educator

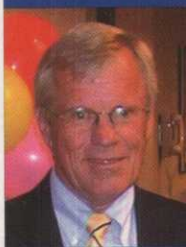


ARTVILLE

Quotable

“I hope Eb will drop us a line with an address. Perhaps Joe Duich will forward him some bentgrass seed to keep him active in his new life.”

—Bob Oechsle on the death of Eberhard “Eb” Steiniger, known as the dean of superintendents, who died last spring (*The Bonnie Greensward*).



“It's the last hurrah. I will never leave Austin — at least alive.”

—Veteran Doug Petersen, affirming that his last job as a superintendent will be at the Austin (Texas) CC.

“Just because grass is grass doesn't mean it can mate. I could compare it to a vegetable garden. Just because you have a row of tomatoes and a row of peppers, that doesn't mean that you'll harvest, in between, a row of salsa.”

—Jim King, a spokesman for *The Scotts Co.*, on the controversy surrounding Scotts' new Roundup-ready bentgrass (*The Baltimore Sun*).

dues from \$55 to \$65, and associate dues from \$125 to \$150. Retired and inactive classes would remain unchanged at \$70 and \$30.

The last increase was in 1997 when Class A dues increased from \$210 to \$250.

The GCSAA said the proposal comes on the heels of the economic downturn the past two years and its negative impact on the association's corporate earnings and related marketing budgets. GCSAA said the negative effect of the down investment markets has resulted in a projection of overall negative earnings for the fiscal year that ended June 30.

The GCSAA also announced increased fees for seminars and the conference and show.

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independent committee have approved the sale of the company to an investor group comprised of Goldman Sachs' GS Capital Partners, Goldman Sachs' Whitehall Street Real Estate Fund 2001 and Starwood Capital Group's SOF VI U.S. Holdings LLC. In conjunction with the transaction, they will also purchase the outstanding equity interests of American Golf Corp. The combined transaction is valued at \$1.1 billion and includes full repayment of all existing National Golf and American Golf indebtedness. The transaction is expected to close in early 2003.

The companies will continue to own, lease or manage over 250 municipal, daily fee, resort and private golf courses and clubs.

David Price, founder of both American Golf and National Golf.

Robert Dedman, founder of ClubCorp, dead at 76

Robert H. Dedman, founder of ClubCorp and once called "the Henry Ford of the management business," died Aug. 20 at 76 after an undisclosed long illness.

Dedman was chairman of the board of directors of ClubCorp at the time of his death. He began ClubCorp in 1957 with the purchase of 400 acres in Dallas and subsequent development of Brookhaven CC.

ClubCorp eventually grew to hold \$1.6 billion in assets and internationally owns or operates more than 200 golf courses, country clubs, private business and sports clubs, and resorts. ClubCorp properties include Pinehurst Resort and CC in Pinehurst, N.C.; Firestone CC in Akron, Ohio; and Mission Hills CC in Rancho Mirage, Calif. Dedman purchased Pinehurst in 1984 after the Donald Ross-designed course had slipped into disrepair. Dedman restored the club to its now revered state.

Dedman's son, Robert Dedman Jr., has served as CEO of ClubCorp since 1998, and his daughter, Patricia Dedman Dietz, serves as a director for the company.

"I believe I speak for our extended family of ClubCorp members, guests, business
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Try to Lend a Helping Hand

SUPERINTENDENTS WHO VOLUNTEER HELP TO SHAPE THE INDUSTRY

By Frank Dobie

Volunteerism in the world of superintendents is not simply a nice thing to do; it's absolutely essential. Superintendents who volunteer help to shape the direction and integrity of the industry.

Where would we all be if it had not been for our predecessors, the people like Col. John Morley, John MacGregor, Chet Mendenhall and Fred Burkhardt, who took it upon themselves to create the National Greenkeepers Association? They banded together to pool their knowledge and resources. This all-volunteer group's dedication and love of the business gave us the legacy that we enjoy today.

However, their work was done years ago, and it would not have survived without the thousands of greenkeepers and superintendents who followed their lead for the past 75 years. Organizations stagnate unless they reinvent themselves over and over again with an eye toward the changing needs of the members.

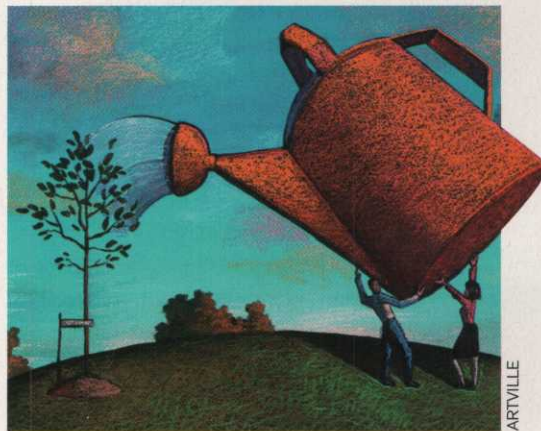
Opportunities to volunteer abound — from local GCSA chapters to state and national turfgrass organizations. All these groups operate on volunteer power. If members don't participate, important parts of the industry will die and be left to commercial ventures alone. And commercial ventures all have special interests.

Many superintendents also volunteer outside the industry by using their special talents and know-how. Whether in school systems or community parks, they not only strengthen the communities they live in but also build reputations within the communities. This participation, for the good of the communities, reaps many rewards beyond the obvious.

It's up to each of us to decide exactly how to contribute. People should volunteer in the area where their greatest interests lie — where they will enjoy their efforts without them being burdens or sacrifices. The satisfaction should come from what you do as well as the result.

Most people who volunteer do so not for credit or their own ego, but because they see that it's wanted and needed. Making a contribution is a natural part of being human. I've always been very proud, during my 41 years as a superintendent, to be associated with people who freely share their wisdom and time for the good of the whole.

Frank Dobie is superintendent and general manager of Sharon GC in Sharon Center, Ohio.



It's up to each superintendent to decide exactly how to contribute to the cause of keeping the interests of superintendents alive.

ARTVILLE

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partners and employee partners when I say we have lost an inspirational leader, a caring mentor and a devoted friend," Robert Dedman Jr. said of his father.

Jack Nicklaus said Robert Dedman "truly was a visionary."

"It was my honor and privilege to know him, learn from him and be associated with ClubCorp," Nicklaus said. "The world of golf has lost a legend."

Dedman Jr. has assumed the additional title of chairman. Nancy Dedman, widow of the founder, has been added to the board.

In other ClubCorp news, the company named John A. Beckert as president and chief operating officer. Beckert, 49, also joins the company's board of directors.

Beckert, 49, is responsible for all aspects of ClubCorp's domestic and international operations. He replaces Jim Hinckley, who resigned in July.

Environmental Industries changes name to ValleyCrest Cos.

Calabasas, Calif.-based Environmental Industries has changed its name to ValleyCrest Cos. The ValleyCrest name will be used by the parent company and all its business units to unify under one brand a comprehensive and integrated portfolio of landscape services. Environmental Golf, the nation's pre-eminent provider of golf course maintenance services, will become ValleyCrest Golf Course Maintenance.

"The driving force for the re-branding is to simplify the way customers view us and to better communicate the scope of the company's services," said Richard A. Sperber, president and chief operating officer of ValleyCrest.

Toro earnings up

Bloomington, Minn.-based The Toro Co. reported net earnings of \$21.9 million or \$1.68 per diluted share on net sales of \$375.6 million for its fiscal third quarter ended Aug. 2.

In the comparable fiscal 2001 period, the company reported net earnings of \$16.9 million or \$1.30 per diluted share on net sales of \$329.7 million.

LaPlante Wins John Deere Challenge

Tony LaPlante, superintendent of Kennebec Heights CC in Farmingdale, Maine, is the winner of John Deere and *Golfdom's* Major Challenge, the online fantasy golf competition for superintendents and other turf professionals. LaPlante, who finished six-under par, won an all-expense paid for two to the John Deere Team Championship in November at Grayhawk GC in Scottsdale, Ariz.

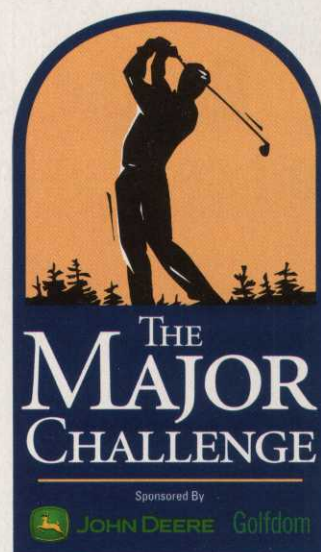
LaPlante edged Jim Knaffle, superintendent of the International Club in Murrells Inlet, S.C., and Stephen Cohoon, certified superintendent of Heritage Hunt Golf and CC in Gainesville, Va., who finished tied for second at two-under par.

Rounding out the top 10 are:

4. Brad Wolff, retired superintendent in Calgary, Alberta — Even.
5. Pat Cowan, sports turf manager in Birch Ridge GC, Soldotna, Alaska — five-over par.
6. Dan Wollner, superintendent, Lake Panorama National in Panorama, Iowa — 11-over par.
6. Ernie Miller, superintendent, Recreation Center of SCW in Sun City West, Ariz. — 11-over par.
6. Ian Cameron, technician, Alberta Springs Golf Resort in Red Deer, Alberta — 11-over par.
9. Don Ewoldt, director of golf course maintenance operations, Lake Erie Land Co. in Chesterton, Ind. — 13-over par.
9. Shannon Wheeler, horticulturist, The Peninsula Club in Cornelius, N.C. — 13-over par.
9. Steve Merkel, agronomist, Landscapes Unlimited in Lincoln, Neb. — 13-over par.
9. Scott Smith, superintendent, Little Ocmulgee GC in McRae, Ga. — 13-over par.

The second- through 25th-place finishers received John Deere golf travel bags from Club Glove.

More than 200 top finishers who "beat the bosses" — Deere's Greg Brenningmeyer and *Golfdom's* Pat Jones — received hats commemorating their victories.



Get the Inside Information

October marks the debut of *Golfdom's* new e-newsletter, *The Insider*, which provides up-to-date news and other features, including *Digital Flagstick* by Pat Jones, *Training Tips*, *Working the Web* and more. *The Insider* is sponsored by Standard Golf. For more information and to sign up to receive *The Insider* free of charge, log onto www.golfdom.com.

Off The Fringe

On the (Golf) Ball

NORM SPAHN MAKES HIS LIVING DIVING IN THE DRINK TO RETRIEVE SHOTS GONE AWRY (AND OTHER ASSORTED ITEMS)

By Shane Sharp

On the other end of the telephone line is golf ball diver Norm Spahn. If you didn't know better, you'd swear it was Bill Murray's character Carl Spackler from *Caddyshack*. The words roll out of his mouth with a surfer-like drawl, and you half expect every sentence to end with "dude." The stories don't involve the Dali Lama, hitting a 200-yard approach shot with a nine iron or receiving total consciousness on his deathbed.

No, they're much better than that.

It's a sunny, warm spring afternoon outside of Atlanta, and the third round of the PGA Tour's Bell South Classic is underway. Sitting just beyond the grandstand on the 18th hole at the Tournament Players Club of Sugarloaf is a small lake. One of the tournament officials decides to park a brand new Dodge Ram pick-up truck on the bank so it won't block a small service road. Only problem is that he leaves the truck in reverse, not park.

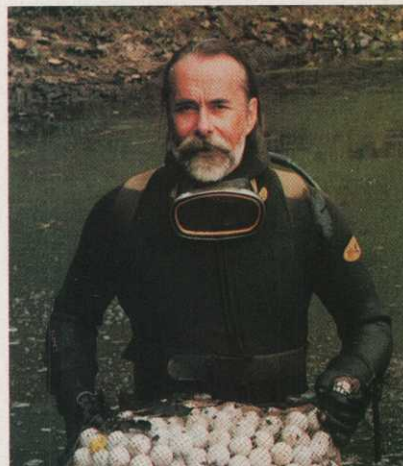
Five minutes later, the Dodge is sitting at the bottom of the lake, poised to become the course's most expensive artificial reef. Mike Crawford, Sugarloaf's certified superintendent, is momentarily perplexed as to what to do. Then he remembers the chap that spends up to four hours a day in zero-visibility water searching relentlessly for golf balls. By Monday morning, Spahn is at the bottom of the lake, searching through the muck to find a secure place on the truck to tie off the tow chain.

"Now that was a tough job because the frame of the truck was up against the hardpan, under two feet of mud," Spahn says. "It was a brand-new truck with 100 miles on it, and it was trashed. But they couldn't leave it there,

and no one else wanted to deal with those diving conditions."

For Spahn, it was just another day at the office. Since an entrepreneurial endeavor went belly up a few years back, the Jacksonville, Fla., native has been making his living salvaging golf balls from watery graves for the Davis Golf Ball Co. Spahn's territory includes most of the Southeast, with an emphasis in Florida and Georgia. Half his working life is spent in water that you wouldn't wash a stray dog, much less set foot in. And Spahn's unique vocation hasn't gone unnoticed by superintendents from Naples, Fla., to Duluth, Ga.

Fred Klauk, superintendent of the




Norm Spahn fishes for golf balls, Ford trucks and ball retrievers as part of his job.

Tournament Players Club of Sawgrass in Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla., says Spahn and his crew come by every three months.

"I try to get them on the Stadium Course on Tuesdays when it's are closed for maintenance. If I have any problems with any of the irrigation pipes in the water, I can ask Norm for help."

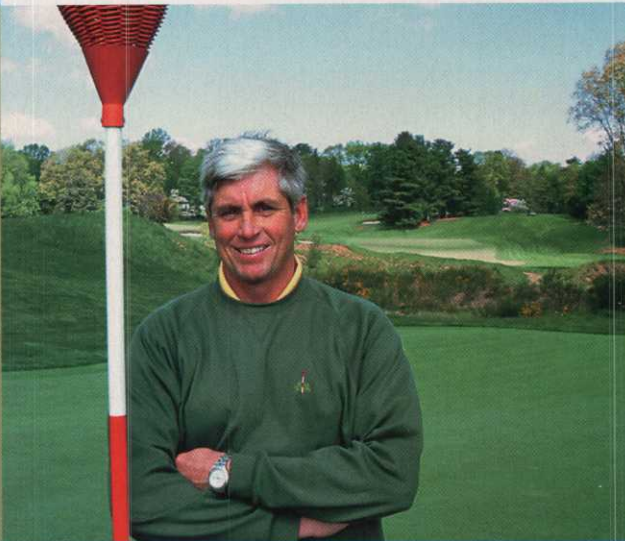
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Get a world-class education in golf course turfgrass management in just 18 months.

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Matt Shaffer, director of golf course operations, Merion Golf Club



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Klauk and Crawford are not alone. At Deerfield Lakes GC in Jacksonville, superintendent Bruce Whitson was at a loss as to how to keep one local citizen from spending up to 30 minutes ball hawking during his round. The golfer, nicknamed "Soupy" for his propensity to spend countless hours trolling for submerged golf balls, was holding up play almost daily. Finally, Whitson called Spahn into action.

"They made up a sign with his nickname, Soupy, and they had me take the sign out into the pond on the end of a pole," Spahn says. "The sign had a glove reaching up from the water holding a golf ball, and I mounted it in the middle of the pond. The idea was to embarrass this guy so he'd finally stop. I guess it worked."

The Big Cypress GC in Lakeland, Fla., is part of Spahn's regular diving circuit. The green on the par three 15th hole is supported by bulkheading in the front. Standing on its edge, golfers can peer down at the hundreds of golf balls that didn't quite make it home. The first time he dove the pond on the 15th, Spahn was shocked to find a mess of broken golf ball retrievers stuck in the bottom.

After reporting this discovery to the maintenance staff, superintendent Dave Harley became increasingly concerned that some of Big Cypress' older constituents might lose their balance while gawking at all the lost golf balls, fall and impale themselves on the broken ball retrievers. Harley called upon Spahn to retrieve the retrievers.

"I get down there, and it turns out there are 41 of these things," Spahn says. "It looked like some sort of medieval torture chamber. I had never seen anything like it."

It's not always as glamorous as Dodge trucks, as gratifying as saving countless golfers from certain death at the hands of broken ball retrievers or as comical as teaching ol' Soupy a lesson. Sometimes Spahn simply lends a hand with repairing broken intake



pipes in dank lakes or pulling pond scum from clogged irrigation lines. Whatever the job, Spahn looks at it as good public relations.

"I do that stuff pro bono," he says. "If I can help those guys out, I will. That water is impossible to see in, and it's hard to find someone that can dive in black water conditions."

Spahn says he has even salvaged a few of his own balls while on the job. A golfer most of his life, Spahn doesn't play as much as he used to because the snail's pace of play on the weekends is too much for him to bear. When he does decide to tee it up, he has both the

Spahn's pick-up truck holds all of the equipment he needs to dive in "black water."

tools and the venue. Spahn has collected nearly 500 golf clubs while on the job, including a new set of graphite-shafted Pings.

"And a local Jacksonville municipal course extended me an honorary membership," Spahn says in his oh-by-the-way manner.

Now, if Bill Murray could just get Spahn to take care of that pesky vermin.

Sharp is a free-lance writer from Charlotte, N.C.

Golfdom and Floratine Salute 'Mentors' in New Awards Program

Most all superintendents have had one — that special supervisor or colleague who took the time to guide them, teach them and help them along the path to becoming a professional. Now there's a new award designed to pay tribute to these mentors, who have been such an important part of the profession.

Golfdom is pleased to announce the creation of the "Keepers of the Green" Awards, an annual program that identifies and honors the nation's best superintendent-mentors. The program, which is underwritten exclusively by Floratine Products, will identify four superintendents who've gone above and beyond the call of duty to pass along their skills, values and ideas to younger generations, according to *Golfdom* Publisher Pat Jones.

"Historically, the idea of apprenticeship and mentoring is one of the keystones that made the profession what it is today," Jones said. "We want to pay tribute to the people

who mentored today's superintendents, but we also want to keep this great tradition alive for future generations."

Nominations will be made through local Floratine distributors around the country. Bill Byrnes, Floratine's president, said: "This is a great opportunity to show our company's commitment to our customers and to the values and traditions that make this the finest industry in the world. We're thrilled that Floratine and our distributors around the country can bring the 'Keepers of the Green' program to life."

Each of the four winners will receive an expenses-paid trip to New York and a commemorative award. Winners will also be profiled in *Golfdom* and may be featured in Floratine advertising in the upcoming year.

Interested readers can share their ideas for possible nominations with their local Floratine distributor. To find a distributor in your area, call 901-853-2898 or e-mail techinfo@floratine.com.