

Off The Fringe

Business briefs

Rutherford replaces Dimino at LESCO

Jeffrey L. Rutherford was named to replace Michael P. Dimino as president and CEO at LESCO in Cleveland. Dimino resigned both positions and his directorship, the company said. Rutherford was previously senior vice president and chief financial officer.

The company also announced a number of other senior management promotions:

- Bruce Thorn was named chief operating officer;
- Michael Weisbarth was named chief financial officer and controller; and
- Kathleen Minahan was named general counsel and secretary.

Bayer names Cleveland

Neil Cleveland was named director of the U.S. Green Business for Bayer Environmental Science in Research Triangle Park, N.C. Cleveland will assume his new position in April. Dan Carrothers, current director of the U.S. Green Business, is resigning effective Dec. 31 to become chief operating officer of Datacore, a company based in Kansas City, Kan., that specializes in database marketing and customer relationship management (CRM) initiatives. He has been with Bayer in various positions for nine years.

"Dan has always had a strong entrepreneurial spirit and this opportunity is consistent with his ultimate personal objectives," said Josh Weeks, vice president of Professional Products North America for Bayer Environmental Science.

Weeks will assume management of Bayer's Green Business on an interim basis and will work closely with Cleveland, who currently holds the position of global portfolio manager of Green Business at the global headquarters for Bayer Environmental Science in Lyon, France.

Handheld Controllers Revisited

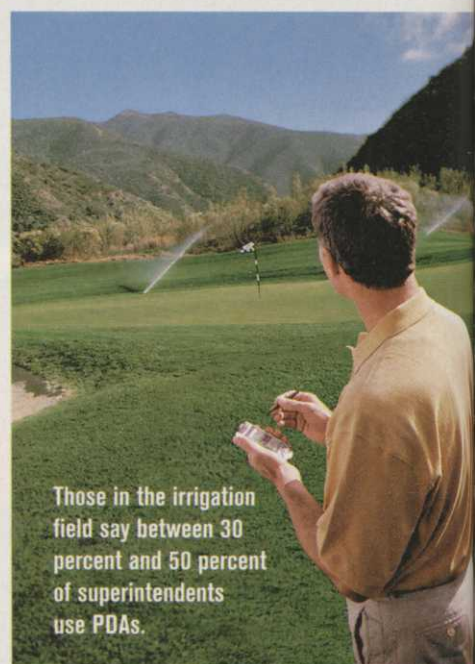
IS PDA TECHNOLOGY ON THE WAY OUT? ARE CELL PHONES ON THE WAY IN?

By Anthony Pioppi,
Contributing Editor

Five years ago there were predictions that handheld controllers would be the wave of the future in the golf course irrigation field.

The prediction that PDA's would be standard equipment for superintendents has only turned out to be true at higher-end facilities. Down the economic ladder, transmitting irrigation commands via UHF radio still is the norm on most courses. But some say the PDA may already be on its way out, surpassed by the increasingly versatile cell phone, while others think the hand-held controller technology has gone as far as most superintendents want.

Randy Mills, central control product manager for Rain Bird, said the PDA has not performed as well as expected, not just in the golf course maintenance industry but in many industries. He also points out that Rain Bird and other irrigation companies are at the mercy of the technology developed by PDA manufacturers, such as Motorola.



Those in the irrigation field say between 30 percent and 50 percent of superintendents use PDAs.

As an example, Mills said that when PDA's first hit the market, superintendents shied away from them because their battery life was short and they couldn't be kept on for an entire day. But that technology improved dramatically in the past couple of years, Mills said, making PDA's more enticing.

But Paul Standerfer, The Toro Co.'s product and marketing manager for golf central controls, said the improvements might not have come in time to save the PDA's place. He compares the PDA-cell phone battle to that of VHS vs. beta.

Standerfer said a few years ago PDA had the upper hand but not now. "Cell phones have now blown by

Continued on page 21

Longer Than

PRECISION LABS SAYS SYNC ENHANCES
PERFORMANCE AND LENGTHENS DISEASE
CONTROL OF SYSTEMIC AND CONTACT FUNGICIDES

By Larry Aylward, Editor in Chief

Precision Laboratories believes it has created a new category in the golf turf market with the recent introduction of its new product, SYNC.

Several years in the making, SYNC is the first activator adjuvant specifically designed for the turf industry to enhance the performance and lengthen the disease control of systemic and contact fungicides, at reduced spray carrier volumes, Precision Laboratories says.

At a recent meeting in Downers Grove, Ill., Precision Laboratories introduced SYNC to the trade press. A few superintendents were on hand to discuss SYNC, including Tom Breiner, superintendent of Fiddler's Elbow Country Club in Bedminster, N.J., who tested SYNC on his course in the summer. It was a difficult summer for disease control



in his region, Breiner says, and SYNC was put to the test. But he was impressed with the product's performance, especially the increased length of disease control it allowed his fungicides.

"I like to sleep at night," Breiner said with a smile, when asked about the increased length of control.

Unlike other adjuvants, Waukegan, Ill.-based Precision Laboratories says SYNC's proprietary adjuvant technology is comprised of a two-part surfactant system consisting of a carbohydrate-based surfactant and an amine polymer complex. It also contains a pH buffer to optimize fungicide solubility.

"Our development efforts have shown that SYNC consistently improves fungicide performance and longevity," says Don Spier, vice president at Precision Laboratories. "We have seen improved turf health and significant differences in performance in water volumes as low as one gallon of water per thousand square feet. For turf professionals facing a wide range of disease pressures, SYNC provides a significant return on their fungicide investment by saving time, labor and money."

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Off The Fringe

Asst. Superintendents Discover What It Takes to Cut Mustard

By Thomas Skernivitz, Managing Editor

The superintendents of tomorrow had best be ready to treat gray leaf spot one hour and pass Grey Poupon to the VIP from the water district the next.

That was the take-home message of the fifth-annual Assistant Superintendent Boot Camp, hosted by the Northern California Golf Association in Pacific Grove, Calif.

In what was a perfect metaphor for the all-around effort that it takes to be a modern-day superintendent, Monday's 14-hour day started with a tour of the Carmel Area waste treatment plant and ended with etiquette lessons.

Talk about going from the outhouse to the Pebble Beach penthouse.

Yours truly got to tag along with 39 other participants, primarily assistant superintendents from California and Nevada, as well as a few interns and turf science students.

Having grown up a few miles downwind from a sewage treatment plant in Northeast Ohio, the morning trip was particularly enlightening. I was finally able to put a face to the smell. Best of all, I can now safely say that Carmel's you-know-what doesn't stink any less than Cleveland's you-know-what.

"The bottom 2 feet of this," plant superintendent Mark Scheiter said, pointing to a vat of churning raw sewage, "is the worst substance known to man. ... You get this stuff on your hands, and it's not going to come off for two or three days no matter how much you wash it."

That might rub Rebecca Black the wrong way — if, of course, she had an unruly bone in her body. The etiquette specialist put on a two-part presentation that had just about every attendee wondering if he or she wasn't third-generation Java Man.

At dinner, in-between her sessions, Black walked from table to table, watchful as to whether her advice was sticking

Nearly every attendee was wondering if he or she wasn't third-generation Java Man.

Congratulations Iowa State!

Nick E. Christians, Ph.D.
Horticulture Professor
Iowa State University

Trion Lifts, Inc., the leading manufacturer of turf maintenance equipment, appreciates the efforts of Mark Howieson and Iowa State University in conducting two important studies regarding mower adjustments and reel sharpening. They show your school's dedication to advancing research and education.

In lieu of our company's attendance at various annual golf industry trade shows in 2006, Trion believes its resources are much better spent in supporting schools that are making a difference in our industry. To that end, we are pleased to announce Iowa State University as the latest recipient of a Trion Pro-M workstation.

Thanks again for your research that will promote further improvements in equipment and maintenance technology.

John M Beattie, President
Trion Lifts, Inc.



Links to
the ISU studies
can be found at
Trion's website:

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like the sludge. Meanwhile, we the eaters couldn't have been more nervous and meticulous in our every move had we been trying to defuse a bomb.

Consider that during a business meal you should:

- ▶ not hover over your food but sit up straight;
- ▶ not place a utensil on the table once it is used;
- ▶ not blow on hot food;
- ▶ not lick your fingers;
- ▶ not push food onto your fork with your thumb.

No problem, you're thinking? Well, try scraping out the last remnants of a baked potato without using your fingers. It ain't, er, isn't that easy.

Aside from reverse osmosis and proper decorum, the boot camp had plenty to offer between Sunday evening and Tuesday afternoon. Drs. Fred Yelverton, Leah Brilman and Frank Wong touched on a variety of scientific topics, including weeds, seed breeding and fungicide application.

Jon Scott, the vice president of agronomy on the PGA Tour, detailed the resurrection of San Francisco's Harding Park Golf Course, the site of the American Express Championship. Randy Kane broke down bunkers, and Gail Rogers spoke on proper course marking.

On the safety side, John Lamb, a toxicology management specialist from the California Poison Control System, dis-



Attendees practice the Heimlich maneuver on each other.

cussed pesticides. And representatives of the Pebble Beach fire department gave a refresher course on first aid.

By the time everyone had been paired to play Poppy Hills Golf Club, home of the NCGA, the boot camp had been declared a success by its organizer, Mike McCullough, the NCGA's director of turfgrass services.

"For somebody that's young and is really wanting to climb up the ladder, you need to separate yourself," McCullough said. "And being a superintendent is not easy. You have to be a jack-of-all-trades. You have to change hats all the time."

Apparently, the boot camp is paying dividends. McCullough estimates that 20 previous attendees are now superintendents.

This year's class holds just as much promise, if not more, thanks to the etiquette lessons. They wouldn't be caught dead wearing one of those many hats to the dinner table.

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Off The Fringe

What They Don't Teach You in School

SUPERINTENDENT OFFERS TIPS ON INTERACTING WITH GOLFERS

By Charlie Fultz

Many times during my travels in the golf course industry, fellow superintendents have commented on things they've encountered that they had never been taught in college how to handle. For instance, daily interaction with golfers on your golf course is one issue that is seldom covered in class, yet it's one that every superintendent needs experience in to become a true professional.

Just the other day, my assistant came off the course more than a little upset. A foursome had pulled their golf cars off of the cart path around the greens despite the many signs posted around our course asking for golfers to keep cars on the paths around all greens and tees. When my assistant politely asked the golfers to follow this posted rule, one person in this foursome became confrontational. My assistant came back to the shop to find me and muttered, "This is something they definitely don't teach you in school."

How true.

Learning to effectively communicate with golfers is key to a superintendent's success in this industry. In fact, tactful communication may be the key to your survival, since the golfer you upset today may be on the golf course board of directors tomorrow deciding your fate. So, how can you diplomatically enforce your rules and regulations to help keep your course in good shape?

■ For starters, request help from your pro shop. Sit down with your golf pro in the off-season and explain why you need his or her help. If you're both on the same page, your golf pro

should be willing to help you, if only for the better of the organization. Ask the golf pro to explain to golfers what is expected during their rounds that day before they start. Starters (if you have them) can then reinforce what comes from your pro shop. Marshals are also helpful in dealing with golfers.

■ Proper signage will also help. Keep easily visible signs posted in places where they can't be missed.

■ Being proactive with your maintenance staff will also help. Your staff can be just as effective as you are in policing your golf course, especially if you establish guidelines in how to do so. But be careful with this. If there's a chance for a confrontation, instruct your staff to walk away from it to find you to handle the situation.

Also, as you tour your facility during the day checking on staff and such, be active in enforcing your course's rules. Expectations from the golfers will begin to change for the better if everyone is on the same page.

In the situation that my assistant faced, I went out onto the course and found the foursome. I then asked the group to please follow the signage on the golf course. I let them know that it helped us maintain the course better for them and that the hard work put in by my staff was being jeopardized. They said they were sorry.

I know that golfer etiquette isn't what we would hope it would be, but we can help mold it if we are proactive in enforcing regulations and rules on our own courses. Once golfers see it and hear it often enough, we can hope that they will see and hear what we are trying to do.

Charlie Fultz is superintendent of The Shenvallee Golf Resort in New Market, Va.



Off The Fringe

Caddyshaft?

INDUSTRY NEEDS TO SAVE CADDIES FROM BECOMING AN ENDANGERED SPECIES **By J. Clark O'Donoghue**

We all know that golf is a game with a deep and colorful past. Unfortunately, one of the most cherished aspects of the game — the role of the caddy — is now in jeopardy.

According to some, the job of caddy is about 500 years old, though this is difficult to substantiate. The Professional Caddies Association (PCA) notes the position grew out of the tradition of personal servants employed by gentleman golfers at least as far back as the 18th century. Caddies of old were often men of “hard backgrounds,” says the PCA, some of whom were of very questionable char-

acter. Willie “Trap Door” Johnson was a notably crooked caddy whose fake limp enabled him to maintain a special boot on one of his feet that hid “lost” golf balls, which he later sold back to his own clients.

Over time, the role of caddy has evolved from servant of questionable repute to the golfer's right-hand man. An experienced caddy can help plan the overall game and offer sound advice.

Today the job is endangered, primarily by the growing use of golf cars on U.S. courses. In the 1950s golf cars were a new concept. Today they are a fact of life. The problem is accelerating as cars equipped with technology to

estimate yardage and other play factors compete with the training and knowledge of caddies.

The adoption of the golf car appears to be an economic issue. Years ago a caddy got paid \$5 per bag; today a good caddy gets \$40 per bag, up to \$80 per bag at some clubs. Add to that the fact that golf cars can be a lucrative source of revenue for the club, and it's easy to see why they are popular.

Perhaps the most important aspect of caddying goes beyond the confines of the game itself, to the development of character, leadership and ability in the young people who traditionally fill the role. Today there are only a handful of caddy scholarship organizations in the country. To honor and support the caddy's role, the Golf Association of Philadelphia in 1958 established the J. Wood Platt Caddy Scholarship Trust. It was named in honor of Philadelphia's premier golfer of that era, an accomplished player who was the scholarship's first contributor. The Platt Caddy Scholarship continues its mission to provide financial assistance to deserving caddies so they can pursue their educational goals.

With debate raging over the current costs and future role of the caddy, one only has to look to the historically important effects of this long-held tradition. Like the caddies of old, today's caddy-scholars have been enriched by the legacy of the ancient game's traditions. Their future contributions to the sport are worth the investment of continuing the caddy tradition.

J. Clark O'Donoghue is chairman of the J. Wood Platt Caddy Scholarship Trust.



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what you can do with a PDA," he adds.

Standerfer does not see the pendulum swinging back since a larger portion of the multibillion-dollar communication industry is designed to support cell phones with a much smaller proportion funneled towards PDA improvement.

Another problem in getting PDA technology adopted by superintendents, he said, is that the device just adds to an already large list of carried-around items such as radios, pagers, sunglasses, knives, notepads and cell phones.

For some superintendents, the technology of the PDA does not simplify their jobs.

For some superintendents, the technology of the PDA does not simplify their jobs, Standerfer said. Although there is no hard evidence to back their guess, those in the irrigation field surmise between 30 percent and 50 percent of superintendents use PDA's.

Jim Barrett, president of James Barrett Associates, a New Jersey-based irrigation

consulting and design firm, says his mostly upscale clients have embraced the PDA technology. "We haven't done a system (in the last four years) that didn't have a PDA in it," he said.

Barrett's firm has worked on courses such as Shinnecock Hills Golf Club and Muirfield Village Golf Club.

It doesn't matter if the PDA, the cell phone or another communication device is the tool of the future, said Brian Smith, president and CEO of Signature Controls, who is more concerned with the fact that the industry is hesitant to adopt technology quickly, or even at a rate on par with other parts of the world.

Smith said technology to improve a superintendent's life is available but is not being embraced. He says he has heard that superintendents are often not permitted by owners/members to be the first on the block to purchase new products. That attitude, he adds, is hurting the golf course's operation.

As an example, Smith says that one European country club his company works with runs its irrigation system exclusively by cell phone. "You don't see any course here with that," he added.

Quotable

"In Canada, we play hockey."

— Jim Ross, of the Prairie Turfgrass Research Center in Alberta, Canada, on what superintendents in the Great White North do when they get ice on their greens.

"If there's a way to get the speed of a round under control, that will help the game. I think more people should watch John Daly and the way he plays. He walks up to the ball and bang. . . . And he walks up to the ball and bangs it again."

— Dave Catalano, director of Bethpage State Park, on finding a figurehead to speed up the game.

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