

Off The Fringe

Business briefs

Club Car goes on offensive

In an effort to promote the sport, Club Car is sponsoring free golf lessons for employees who want to learn the game. The lessons are part of the Link Up 2 Golf player development program offered at The First Tee of Augusta, Ga. Link Up 2 Golf was developed by Golf 20/20, a collaborative effort of the entire golf industry intended to accelerate growth and participation.

Club Car is paying for a pilot group of employees to participate in the Link Up 2 Golf program and hopes to expand the offer to at least 100 employees in 2005.

"Those of us who depend on the health of the game to support our business should be willing to invest in programs that grow the game," Club Car President and CEO Phil Tralies said. "We should not expect others to do what we're not doing ourselves."

Courses really are for the birds

A new study shows that natural vegetation on courses along the Grand Strand in South Carolina has increased the number and variety of birds while also drawing other animals.

The U.S. Golf Association and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation funded the \$60,000 study, which is the first to make the correlation between bird populations and golf courses.

"People have the perception that the course is all grass," said Peter Stangel, director of the Southern Region of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. "Not this one," he added, referring to The Reserve Golf Club at Litchfield, where the study's results were unveiled.

Stangel said some of the environmental improvements, such as letting grass grow and breaking up continuous patches of turf

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NGCOA Joins the Club

TRADE ASSOCIATION SUPPORTS EFFORTS TO LIMIT TECHNOLOGY

The National Golf Course Owners Association (NGCOA) has joined the great technology debate. The

NGCOA recently announced it's joining the United States Golf Association, the American Society of Golf Course Architects, the R&A and the PGA Tour in expressing its concern that technology is hurting the game.

NGCOA said it supports efforts of the rule-making bodies to limit the impact technology has on golf ball distance.

"We view this issue as a top priority for the industry; and encourage both the rule-making bodies and the manufacturers to develop a timely and credible set of parameters that restrict further technology-driven increases in hitting distances," the organization, headed by Executive Director Mike Hughes, said in a statement. "The NGCOA agrees that the purpose of the equipment rules is to protect golf's best traditions, to prevent over-reliance on technological advances rather than skill, and to ensure that skill is the dominant element of success throughout the game."

The NGCOA said any further significant increase in hitting distances is undesirable. It cited its concerns as the following:



EYEWIRE

- Increased golf ball distance results in errant shots missing their intended target by greater distances than before. New golf courses are required to be built with more land in order to accommodate the need for larger safety buffers to either side of the preferred line of play. The effect has been that golf courses take up more land, with subsequent increases in land acquisition, construction and maintenance costs.

- Older courses, many of which have been brilliantly designed, are being rendered powerless to challenge the modern power hitter.

- Off-line shots, due to the greater dispersion that is generated by increased distance, also contribute to slow play. Additionally, greater hitting distances subject longer hitters to increased waiting periods between many shots, further impacting the pace of play.

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grass, could be implemented immediately. They also could reduce costs for courses.

Gulf States group joins the club

Welcome to the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, Gulf States Superintendents Association (GSSA).

The GCSAA recently added its 104th affiliated chapter, which represents more than 80 members in the southern regions of Louisiana and Mississippi.

"We are excited about our association," said David K. McCallum, president of the GSSA and superintendent of The Island Country Club in Plaquemine, La. "We look forward to developing education opportunities and sharing experiences unique to this area. In addition, we will promote and advance the golf course superintendent profession."

NGCOA honors Finchem, Saratoga

PGA Tour Commissioner Tim Finchem will receive the 2005 National Golf Course Owners Association's (NGCOA) Award of Merit in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the game of golf.

The Award of Merit has been given since 1983 to honor individuals or organizations that have made long-term and significant contributions to the game of golf.

NGCOA also named Saratoga National Golf Club in Saratoga Springs, N.Y., as its 2005 Course of the Year. The award honors the course that best demonstrates exceptional course quality, exceptional management quality, outstanding contribution to its community and significant contribution to promotion of the game.

"The Course of the Year Award winners come from the association's core membership, who make an outstanding contribution to the game of golf in their market and are model operations," said Mike Hughes, NGCOA executive director. "Saratoga National is an extremely well-run operation. The president, Tom Newkirk, has generously shared his wisdom and experience with many others through involvement in the NGCOA at the state and national level."

The awards will be presented during the NGCOA annual Solutions Summit in February.

Of Praise and Criticism

EXPERT SAYS BOSSES NEED TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THE TWO

Do you praise employees for good work? Do you criticize them for poor performance? If you do either, you should know there's research behind this subject — and research that makes sense.

Paul Stepanovich, an associate professor of management at Southern Connecticut State University, has studied workplace dynamics for many years. Stepanovich points out that managers are frequently taught to praise their employees when they perform better than expected and to admonish them when their work standards are sub par. And while that may work in instances when performance has veered far from the norm, it only serves to hinder a company or department when it's done within normal variations.

Stepanovich said it is not intentional but rather learned of how they perceive employees to react to praise and criticism. Managers who see a job done well will sometimes praise the employee. But more than likely their next task will not be done as well. Over time, bosses sometimes subconsciously develop a sense that praise elicits a slackened performance, which tends to discourage the use of praise. In reality, the praise does not generate such a change because the dip in performance would have happened anyway. — **Newswise**

Roberts Named Publisher of *Golfdom*

Golfdom magazine has named Pat Roberts as its publisher. He replaces Pat Jones, who left the magazine in December to pursue other interests.

Roberts, *Golfdom's* former national accounts manager, has been with the magazine since 2001 and has played an integral role in its growth. Roberts has worked in publishing in the green industry for seven years. During his high school years, the University of Cincinnati graduate spent his summers working on the golf course maintenance staff and as a caddie at Canterbury Golf Club in Cleveland.

"Our challenge will be to continue to provide timely and cutting-edge information to superintendents while working closely with our advertising partners with unique opportunities to convey their messages to the market," Roberts said.

Roberts is also associate publisher of *Landscape Management*, *Golfdom's* sister publication at Advanstar Communications, the company that publishes both maga-



zines. Tony D'Avino, general manager of Advanstar's Portfolio Group, including *Golfdom* and *Landscape Management*, said Roberts brings solid industry experience, energy and innovative thinking to his new role.

"*Golfdom* is a terrific success story, and I'm confident we can continue to succeed and add value to an evolving market under Roberts' leadership," D'Avino said. "He is committed to our business and to the overall health of the golf course market. He will work closely with our management team, including Editor in Chief Larry Aylward, Associate Publisher (and *Landscape Management* Publisher) Kevin Stoltman and Managing Editor Tom Skernivitz to develop the *Golfdom* brand."

Jones joined Advanstar in 1998 and helped launch *Golfdom*. "Pat Jones played an important role in the launch and success of *Golfdom*, and we thank him for that and wish him well in his new initiatives," D'Avino said.

Off The Fringe

Hot Topics

TURF AND WATER DOMINATE DISCUSSION

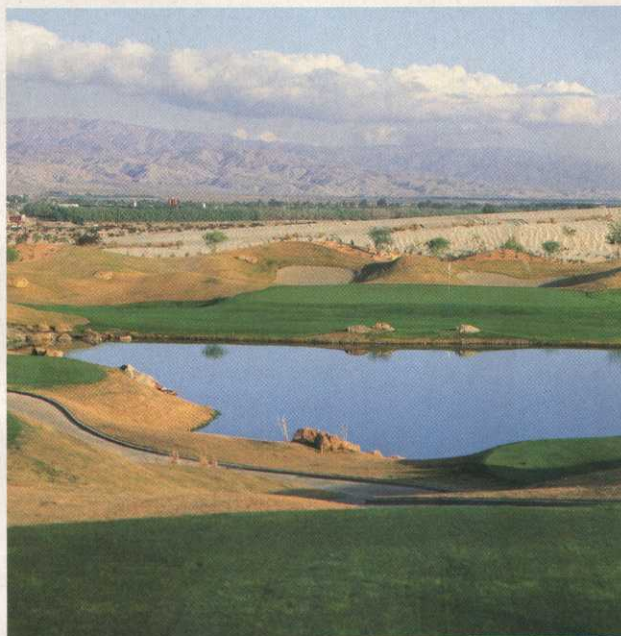
AT TRI-SOCIETY MEETING

By Curt Harler

Turf is hot. The growth in turf research proves that and bodes well for the future of the industry. At this year's tri-society meeting — featuring the Crop Science Society of America (CSSA), Soil Science Society of America (SSSA) and American Society of Agronomy (ASA) — held in November in Seattle, the C-5 turf-grass division presented 215 research papers, more than ever before.

This bodes well for the future of an industry that faces challenges from insects, weeds, water shortages and all the other daily management problems superintendents must face.

So successful was the CSSA portion of the meeting that the group has decided to have a trial summer meeting in



MIKE KLEMM

Without a specific water conservation plan, “no technology or infrastructure” can conserve water, says Bert Clemmens, director of USDA's Water Conservation Lab.

June in Bozeman, Mont. This will provide an added venue for materials to be examined by industry and researchers.

Water conservation was also a hot topic at the meeting. The irrigation industry is trying to form a plan for water conservation. Without a specific water conservation plan — and the proper person to follow through with it — “no technology or infrastructure” can conserve water, Bert Clemmens, director of USDA's Water Conservation Lab in Phoenix, told attendees of the meeting.

Robert Carrow, University of Georgia, said that all water conservation ultimately gets down to a site-specific plan. That plan, all panelists agreed, has to be based on best-management practices (BMPs).

GCSAA's Greg Lyman noted that almost all government agencies and utilities understand BMPs. He reviewed a number of cases from Martha's Vineyard Golf Course to Suffolk County, Long Island, N.Y., to Washington State, where BMPs have the potential to save the day for superintendents implementing water-use plans.

The worst thing is to do nothing. “Public policy will continue in the absence of sound science,” Lyman said.

Carrow said Georgia has developed a 100-page BMP which can be used as a template for any golf course. Florida, too, has a BMP for water use, and many other golf associations and universities are going the same route.

This year's meeting is set for Nov. 6 through Nov. 10 in Salt Lake City.

Quotable

“Turf equipment gets treated worse than any other equipment I've seen. And I've seen it all. I've worked on everything from tanks, hand-mowers and 18-wheel tractor-trailers. Turf equipment gets abused the most.”

Jay Rehr, president of Turf Equipment Consulting and well-known golf industry mechanic.

“We're in a cell phone culture now, and it's getting worse. They seem to rule us.”

— Don Myers, product development manager for herbicides of Bayer Environmental Science, who hosted the company's Transition Management Summit last year.

Curt Harler, based in Strongsville, Ohio, is the managing editor of Golfdom's TurfGrass Trends.

Off The Fringe

What's in Store (and What's Not in Store) 10 Years Down the Road?

By Craig F. Zellers

Things in the golf industry that you're NOT LIKELY to see in the next 10 years:

- A week that goes by that you're not reminded about the smelly ballwasher fluid on hole No. 16.
- An architect that refuses to redesign a Don Ross or Alistair Mackenzie original.
- *Poa annua* that personally cares about your employment status in the middle of the summer.
- Equipment operators who throttle down the mower before pulling into the shop.
- The USGA regulating golf ball distance and golf club manufacturing.
- A self-contained, self-flushing, self-cleaning, self-powered, self-circulating ball washer. (Heck, they're available today, and they're called caddies).
- A general manager or pro who has successfully maintained a bentgrass/*Poa* green cut at one-eighth inch in the middle of summer.
- A golf pro showing up at 5:30 a.m. to go out with the crew to see what changing a cup is all about.
- The USGA adopts a resolution encouraging all 50 states to modify the USGA spec green and name the result after that state, as in New Jersey-Style Green.
- A 16-year-old golf car attendant at Any Course USA who has never dented a golf car or burned rubber trying to do a burn out.

■ A group of sunburned GCSAA employees saying, "I don't think we're in Kansas anymore"

Things in the golf industry that you are LIKELY to see in the next 10 years:

- An equipment operator that puts gasoline into the diesel tank.
- The head chef at the exclusive club who believes that all 500 members belong because they love Friday night pasta feeds more than golf.
- A seed manufacturer gets sued for royalty fees by somebody.
- An 8,000-yard golf course played on the pro tour.
- The GCSAA adopts a new educational pursuit for superintendents that has nothing to do with CGCS and PDI.
- An inspector will show up from one of the following agencies unannounced: Agriculture Department, Fish and Game, OSHA, Jimmy Hoffa official search team (just making sure somebody's reading this).
- A superintendent that oversees all vacuuming of his artificial greens.
- The American Society of Golf Course Architects changing the pattern on their sport coats.
- A superintendent that actually visits all 700 exhibitor booths at the national show.

Zellers is a Toro Golf Irrigation sales representative for Turf Star in California. In a previous life, he was a superintendent.

A Carolina Milestone

ASSOCIATION POSTS RECORD REVENUES AT ANNUAL SHOW. IS IT A SIGN OF GOOD THINGS TO COME?

If the golf industry is still hurting, it certainly wasn't apparent late last year in Myrtle Beach, S.C.

Superintendents in the Carolinas topped \$500,000 in gross revenues for the first time at the annual conference and trade show of the Carolinas Golf Course Superintendents Association (CGCSA).

"Reaching that milestone of a half-million dollars in revenues is clearly healthy for our association, but I think the figure is also a good indicator for the golf industry as a whole," Chuck Borman, Carolinas GCSA executive director, said after the show. "Golf has endured some challenging times in recent years, but I think we have all learned some valuable lessons as a result and the game will be stronger for it in the long run. Support of the kind that we enjoyed this past week tells me that business confidence is coming back."

The four-day event honored the 50th anniversary of the CGCSA and attracted about 2,500 attendees and a record 202 individual companies that bought exhibit booth space during the conference and trade show. Superintendents also filled a record 1,220 seats in education seminars.

Paul Jett, host superintendent for the 2005 U.S. Open in Pinehurst, N.C., said the association's 1,700 members benefited greatly from research support offered by turf-grass departments at Clemson and North Carolina State universities.

Rob Roy, superintendent at The River Club in Suwanee, Ga., won the 2004 Carolinas GCSA golf championship, shooting a 1-over par 73 at The Dunes Club, ranked by *Golf Digest* as one of the 100 best courses in America. The golf championship attracted 336 golfers, another record.