

Off The Fringe

More on 'The Ball Stops Here'

CLEARY CHEMICAL DOES ITS PART TO GROW THE GAME

Editor's note: Part three of our Growing the Game series, which appeared in August, was titled "The Ball Stops Here" and reported on what the golf course maintenance industry must do to get more engaged in building its own business. We asked our readers to let us know what they're doing to grow the game. We received this response from Mary Ellen Warwick, the president of Cleary Chemical in Somerset N.J.

My family not only owns Cleary Chemical Corp., but we built and have managed a golf course in Somerset, N.J., for more than 50 years. Since the Tara Greens opened in September 1955, we have offered all of our employees free golf for themselves and their families.

Our course sits on more than 100 acres. We have a nine-hole regulation course, a nine-hole par-3 executive course that's lighted for night play, and a 60-stall-covered driving range with an acre of turf area also lighted for night-time practice. In addition, we have an old-fashioned miniature golf course. We also have three full-time golf pros available for lessons.

Tara Greens is public and is open seven days a week all year. It's the place where many people in central New Jersey learned to play. Tara gives people the opportunity to give golf a try without intimidation. ■

About Steve Mona ...

WE ASKED READERS HOW THEY WILL REMEMBER THE GCSAA CEO AND WHAT HE DID IN HIS 14 YEARS AT THE ASSOCIATION

Steve Mona announced recently that he's moving on to be the new CEO of the World Golf Foundation. Mona celebrates his 14th anniversary as CEO for the GCSAA this month. But the end of the Mona era is coming shortly, probably soon after the Golf Industry Show in January. *Golfdom* asked its readers how they will remember Mona and what they think about some of the things done during his tenure. Here's what some of them had to say:



"Steve Mona is a first-class man. I've been a member of the GCSAA for almost 20 years and the level of recognition that golf course superintendents and this industry gets has been raised dramatically during

Steve's tenure. Not everyone agrees with me, but I think he has operated our national association with one thing on his mind — raising the stature and professionalism of the golf course superintendent. He has hired an amazing group of people to manage the association, who are also very dedicated to superintendents' careers, their advancement and their promotion."

Steve Hammon
Superintendent, Traverse City Golf & Country Club
Traverse City, Mich.

"I feel as though the status of the superintendent has been elevated substantially under Steve's leadership. Our salaries have risen dramatically. I feel as though superintendents no longer stand in the shadows as the silent third party. I'm sure [he faced] some significant criticism from the GCSAA members. But if there wasn't any criticism, then he would have accomplished very little. His shoes will be hard to fill, but he has us rolling, and I am sure we will continue to do so well into the future."

Matt Shaffer
Superintendent, Merion Golf Club
Merion, Pa.

"I'm probably one of a few affiliated chapter association managers still working (an eternity) who remember GCSAA before Steve Mona. I must say the GCSAA will sorely miss this gentleman. He is, indeed, that and much more."

Barbara Mikel, Association Manager
Golf Course Superintendents Association of Northern California

syngenta Business Tip of the Month

"I think a lot of good things happened under Steve's tenure. I saw the level of member services improve. I saw the whole organization functioning a little better. ... I was a little disappointed with the end product [of the Professional Development Initiative] when it came out. It ended up being watered down. I can satisfy all the requirements of PDI in one year for a five-year cycle. Where is the teeth in that?"

Bob Marshall

**Superintendent, Skaneateles Country Club
Skaneateles, N.Y.**

"Some people weren't Steve Mona fans, and some people were huge Steve Mona fans. I think he's done a great job. The association will definitely miss Mona because he definitely has got it moving into a direction in which the members are happy. ... I don't agree with everything he has done. I don't like PDI. It was dumbed down, and too many people were grandfathered in with it."

Chris Gray

**Superintendent, The Marvel Golf Club
at Kentucky Lake
Benton, Ky.**

"Steve has been one of those rocks we never thought would falter or leave us. He is the one constant the GCSAA has always had, and probably the reason the association has a legacy of being so professional and personable and conducts itself with class and character. ... Steve is extremely likeable, a marvelous communicator and probably one of the best ad-lib public speakers you will ever hear. He is honorable and honest and believable, rare in today's executive offices."

James A. Simonini

**Regional Director of Business Development
Robert Trent Jones II LLC**

Rewarding Loyal Customers

Knowing how to effectively prioritize and balance your course's financial demands often leads to fewer sleepless nights!

While developing your annual maintenance budget, you must wear your agronomic hat, and you must know how to "sell" your recommendations to your course's owner(s), general manager or greens committee. When increased spending is required on must-have items like pesticides, you have a great opportunity to educate this group on the vital role branded products you trust play in the course's playability and popularity. The bottom line is that success is measured by rounds played, which is often all about the course conditions.

Coming up with a pesticide budget line item amount involves several variables, including such things as a history of pest outbreaks from the past few years. Providing this information in the budget proposal will illustrate historical patterns to justify the expense and help you decide how much money to earmark for controlling each pest.

Of course, any well-planned budget should include contingencies for unexpected problems such as a turf-destroying pythium blight outbreak. It is important to communicate that if no serious pest-related maintenance problems occur in the coming year, the money not spent may be transferred to course or clubhouse improvements.

Not all golf club budget items are created equal. Considering how items like a pesticide can save a course from irreparable damage, it's hard to think of it in the same vein as new furniture. Though clubhouse "creature comforts" are vitally important in making memorable experiences for your members and players, it's up to you to educate financial decision makers on the long-term impact that vital maintenance supplies have on your course's playability and profitability.

The "Tip of the Month" is provided by Syngenta to support superintendents in their agronomic, business and professional development. To comment on this column, submit a lesson from your own experience, or suggest a topic to be covered in a future issue, please visit www.golfbusinesstips.com.

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