

# Off The Fringe

## Business briefs

### Club Car's Price Increase Reflects Spike in Commodity Prices

Augusta, Ga.-based Club Car, said it's increasing prices for its 2010 model year vehicles because of a renewed spike in global commodity costs. The price for Club Car golf cars and utility vehicles increased about 2.5 percent on orders that began Nov. 20. Company officials pointed to the rising cost of raw material, especially lead, copper and aluminum, and a strengthening global economy as a primary reason for the increase.

### Jacobsen Taps Griffith

Deanna Griffith has joined Jacobsen as marketing manager with responsibility for the Americas and Asia Pacific. Griffith was recruited from Exact Software Americas, based in Boston, where she was the senior marketing manager for the Americas, promoting and marketing brands and product lines for the business software solutions company.

### Revenues Soar at Carolinas Show

The Carolinas Golf Course Superintendents Association annual Conference and Trade Show held in November experienced several key statistics that declined marginally, but net revenues of \$295,000 were the second highest in the 12 years since the event moved to Myrtle Beach, S.C., the association said.

"The success of our event represents an enormous vote of confidence," said the Carolinas GCSA's new Executive Director Tim Kreger, who assumes the title from Chuck Borman, who became the Carolinas GCSA's first full-time executive director in 1998. "Confidence not only in our association but confidence in the future of the Carolinas golf industry." ■



Keith Smith says superintendents need to take control of their financial futures.

## Keeping Track of the Budget – *Your Budget*

### FINANCIAL ADVISER AND FORMER SUPERINTENDENT URGES HIS FORMER PEERS TO PAY ATTENTION TO THEIR FINANCES

By Larry Aylward, Editor in Chief

**K**eith Smith says too many golf course superintendents are more concerned about managing their courses' budgets than their own. While that's not a bad thing, Smith, a financial adviser for Morgan Stanley Smith Barney in Akron, Ohio, says more superintendents owe it to themselves to pay more attention to their personal savings and spending. "They get so focused on the finances of their facilities that they

don't focus on their own," said Smith, who spoke at the Carolinas Golf Course Superintendents Association of America's Conference & Trade Show in November in Myrtle Beach, S.C. Smith should know — he was a superintendent for 10 years before becoming a financial adviser.

The title of Smith's seminar was "Taking Control of Your Financial Future." The superintendents who came to hear Smith talk money seemed hungry for information. And Smith, who is well versed in the nuances of personal wealth, gave them

a lot to think about. And coming from Smith, a guy who has walked miles of turfgrass in their shoes, the superintendents trusted him.

Smith told superintendents the importance of calculating a net-worth statement and to establish a blueprint for achieving financial goals.

“You need to know where every dime of your money goes,” Smith said, “Do you know?”

## Saving for retirement is more important than saving for children’s college funds.

In these days of economic uncertainty, Smith harped on the importance of accumulating at least six months to a year of living expenses in case of job loss or other circumstances that could negate income.

“It’s extremely important to assess an emergency fund,” Smith said. “And this is money you can’t afford to lose. You can’t put this money at risk.”

Smith said superintendents should save about 20 percent of their salaries to live comfortably in retirement. He also said saving for retirement is more important than saving for children’s college funds.

“There are a lot of ways to pay for education,” Smith said. “There’s only one way to fund retirement.”

Despite the stock market’s volatility, Smith advised superintendents to participate in 401(k) plans, especially if their companies are matching funds. He also recommended superintendents check they’re portfolios every six months to make sure their getting the best bang for their bucks.

“This is almost like another job,” Smith said of keeping track of personal finances. “It’s that important.” ■

# I’ll Take a ... Mulligan

## SUPERINTENDENT WRITES BOOK ABOUT THE STORY OF HIS ADOPTED BLACK LAB

By John Walsh

**Y**ears ago, Greg Shaffer couldn’t keep him in the golf car. Nowadays, he can’t get him out. It’s been nine years since the Class A golf course superintendent at Elcona Country Club in Elkhart, Ind., adopted Mulligan, his 11-year-old black Labrador retriever. And the dog hasn’t left Shaffer’s side.

“He goes to work with me and comes home with me,” Shaffer says. “I’ve spent a lot of time with him. He doesn’t like to be alone. He always stays close to the car.”

In golf, a mulligan gives a player a second chance at a shot. In life, Mulligan got a second chance, too. He bounced around several foster homes in Colorado. In 1998, someone found him, undernourished and wandering the plains in the northeast area of the state, picked him up and turned him in to a Colorado Lab rescue group.

“I grew up with a black Lab,” Shaffer says. “My wife Dia and I decided to get a Lab as a test before we had kids. Then we thought to adopt one. We filled out the paperwork and then received a phone call saying a dog was available.”

At the time, Shaffer was working as an assistant golf course superintendent at the Country Club at Castle Pines in Castle Rock, Colo. At first, Shaffer didn’t bring Mulligan to work every day, but once he developed confidence and Mulligan was trained more thoroughly, he came to the course daily.

Next, Shaffer moved on to Highlands Ranch (Colo.) Golf Club as

the superintendent. Then, Shaffer, who landed the head superintendent job at Elcona, and his wife moved back to Indiana, their home state, to raise their children.

The typical days haven’t changed from course to course, but as Mulligan grew older, he became less active.

“When he was younger, you couldn’t keep him out of the water,” Shaffer says. “He chased wildlife all the time. Now, he’s more selective and stays on the floor in my air-conditioned office.”

Shaffer, with the help of his mother, Jan, a retired teacher and children’s book author, tells the story of Mulligan in his recently published book, “View from the Cart.” The book features 10 stories, including topics such as golf etiquette for the course dog, Mulligan’s first ladies’ day, encounters with members and wildlife, work-related injuries, and the touching story of his adoption. The book also includes information about the superintendent profession and life lessons learned from the dog on the golf course.

Shaffer also has a blog about Mulligan ([www.viewfromthecart.blogspot.com](http://www.viewfromthecart.blogspot.com)) that includes pictures at work, an audio file that demonstrates the collaborative writing process and a link to purchase the book. ■

**Greg Shaffer and Mulligan have plenty of stories to tell.**



## Off The Fringe

# Discovering a 'Green' Mine

**B**ayer Environmental Science is planting the seeds for sustainability.

“Sustainability has long been a way of life for us at Bayer — but now we’re sharing more, regarding our key role in environmental stewardship, through endeavors such as this symposium,” said Nick Hamon, Bayer Environmental Science’s vice president of product development and sustainable development, during a beverage break at Bayer Environmental Science’s inaugural Plant Health Symposium, held in Raleigh and Clayton, N.C., in November.

A group of about 25 golf course superintendents, landscapers, North Carolina State University (NCSU) “turf doctors,” trade magazine editors and Bayer Environmental Science team members comprised the symposium’s participant mix.

Healthy, well-maintained green spaces with turfgrass, trees and plants can work wonders to decrease erosion, buffer noise, reuse water, promote biodiversity, sequester carbon and cool outdoor temperatures, noted Tom Rufty, Ph.D., director of the Center for Turfgrass Environmental Research and Education and professor of environmental plant physiology, NCSU’s Department of Crop Science. Rufty noted the world already is grappling with limited oil and water resources and significant climate shifts — and he, Hamon and company suspect carbon output caps and credits similar to those already adopted by the European Union soon might be *mandated* in the United States. Further demanding more-sustainable practices across the globe, the world’s population is projected

**BAYER ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE'S PLANT HEALTH SYMPOSIUM FOCUSES ON KEY ROLE OF TURFGRASS, TREES AND PLANTS IN SUSTAINABILITY**

**By Marty Whitford**

to mushroom from about 6.9 billion today to 9.2 billion people by 2050.

“As countries like China and India continue to industrialize and grow, resources are going to become more costly and less available,” said Rufty, recently named the first Bayer Environmental Science Professor of Sustainable Development, a chair endowed by the Bayer CropScience LP business unit. “Ready or not, like it or not, we are challenged with using our resources much more efficiently and better protecting our environment — while maintaining the quality of life we have come to value so much.”

Rufty noted 1 hectare (2.47 acres) of healthy turfgrass can sequester 1 ton of carbon emissions annually. The United States is home to up to 60 million acres of turf, capable of storing a combined 24 million tons of carbon each year. Healthy trees reportedly store another 3,200 pounds of carbon per acre annually.

Turfgrass chemicals help combat turf weeds, diseases, pest insects, and heat and water stress. They are part of the solution — not the problem, Rufty said. These green industry innovations help protect our turf and, in turn, our

**Bayer and North Carolina State University are collaborating on a plethora of plant health research projects. One look in the mirror behind NCSU doctoral student Shannon Sermons reflects the pack of trade media reporters who toured NCSU's phytotron during Bayer Environmental Science's inaugural Plant Health Symposium, held in November.**

ability to sequester carbon and keep temperatures from rising higher and faster than the 6- to 7-degree climb already projected for the decades ahead.

“There are a lot of misperceptions about lawn care chemicals,” Rufty explained. “For instance, our research shows very little leaching with pesticides on turfgrass. Pesticides last five to 10 times longer in agricultural settings.”

In addition to carbon sequestration, turfgrass is rapidly becoming a key effluent dispersal solution. As populations bloom and fresh water supplies dwindle across the globe, intelligent irrigation on green spaces increasingly will incorporate the reuse of gray water. ■

*Marty Whitford is editor in chief of Golfdom's sister publication, Landscape Management.*



## Off The Fringe



Bill Powell

### Industry Loses an Icon

BILL POWELL ENDURED RACISM IN BUILDING CANTON, OHIO, GOLF COURSE **By Larry Aylward, Editor in Chief**

**T**he golf industry — and the country — lost an icon on New Year's Eve. William "Bill" Powell died at 93.

Powell, "Mr. P" as they call him, was the first and is the only black American to design, build and operate a golf course in the United States — Clearview Golf Course in East Canton, Ohio. But a lot of folks would never have endured what Powell had to endure to get it done.

Powell, who was captain of the golf team at Minerva High School, fought in World War II. But upon returning home from the war, Powell had to fight discrimination. The area's golf courses — the ones he had played while a member of Minerva's golf team — wouldn't let him tee it up because he was black. But Powell didn't back down. "I'll just build my own course," he said.

It wasn't easy to secure the funding, though, because white-owned banks refused to grant him a loan to buy a dairy farm that he wanted to convert to a golf course. The U.S. government also refused him a GI loan, even after he had just served in WWII.

Still, Powell didn't give in. He teamed with two black American doctors whom he was teaching golf to invest in the venture. Clearview's first nine holes opened in 1948. Powell bought out his two partners in 1959 and added nine more holes in 1978. Clearview is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Last year, Powell received the 2009 PGA Distinguished Service Award, the association's highest annual honor.

"William Powell's dream to build a golf course where players regardless of the color of their skin would be welcome was a task that he met under great duress, hardship and personal sacrifice," said PGA of America President Jim Remy. "Yet, Mr. Powell displayed exceptional courage, grace and the finest character while persevering toward his goal of opening Clearview Golf Club."

Not many of us can emphasize with what Powell went through. But we can sure learn from it. We can act on it, too. ■



### Stanley Cup Stops By Oakmont

John Zimmers Jr., the golf course superintendent at Oakmont Country Club near Pittsburgh, is a huge sports fan. So you can bet Zimmers (right in the utility vehicle) was excited when the Stanley Cup trophy, won last year by Zimmers' beloved Pittsburgh Penguins, made a stop at the Oakmont maintenance facility last fall. Zimmers said his former grounds chairman/club president, Robbie Hoffman, has an interest in the Penguins franchise and was able to secure the trophy for a day. Zimmers and his staff were all smiles posing with it.

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