

Starter

NEWS, NOTES AND QUOTES



// HOLED IT



When Annbriar CGCS John Soetaert peered into the sinkhole that swallowed golfer Mark Mihal on March 8, he said it resembled "a bell-shaped void."

REPAIRS MADE ON ANNBRIAR GC SINKHOLE

BY BETH GERACI // Senior Editor

➔ On Friday March 8, Mark Mihal of Creve Coeur, Mo., was enjoying a leisurely round of golf with friends at Annbriar Golf Course in Waterloo, Ill. Things were going great until, while standing on the 14th fairway, Mihal suddenly was swallowed by a sinkhole 10 feet wide. The accident left Mihal with a dislocated shoulder — and Annbriar CGCS John Soetaert with important repairs to make.

"I couldn't believe it. It was unbelievable," said Soetaert. At the barbershop with his kids when the accident happened, Soetaert rushed to the course and assessed the scene before launching an intensive response plan.

"I've been working on golf courses since 1986 and I've never seen anything like this," Soetaert said. "The guy just disappeared. He just fell through the earth."

In responding to the accident, Soetaert first fenced off the sinkhole, a bell-shaped void he likened to "a Hershey's Kiss under the ground." But onlookers kept knocking the fencing down to get a closer look, leaving Soetaert and his crew no choice but to collapse the entire hole.

The accident hits home for Soetaert, considering just two weeks earlier his crew was spraying on the very same fairway. "They went right over where

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// SWEET RIDE

BUBBA'S HOVERCRAFT MAKES QUITE A SPLASH

Bubba Watson knows how to create buzz on the golf course even when he's not swinging a club. Case in point, the PGA Tour star lit up the Internet on April 1 when, via YouTube, he introduced the world to his new hovercraft prototype made by Oakley.

Combining hovercraft technology with golf cart elements like a roof, the BW1 hovercraft glides easily over water, sand, turf, even through woods. "And my ball likes to go in and out of the woods, so we gotta be able to get there in the best way and quickest way possible," Watson says in the video.

He adds: "People are 'just going to want to drive the hovercraft and not play golf. But that's how I got started, driving the golf cart then golf got in the way.'"



// NEW HIRE

KRUGER JOINS ARYSTA TEAM

Arysta LifeScience North America early this month announced the hiring of Jim Kruger as the Great Lakes territory sales manager for its Turf and Ornamental team.

Kruger previously held sales and technical positions at Cleary Chemical, Harrell's Fertilizer, Helena Chemical and Michigan State University. As Great Lakes sales manager, he will serve Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin.

"We welcome Jim to our team and look forward to him sharing his expertise and knowledge with customers throughout the Great Lakes region," said Laurie Treu, business manager with Arysta LifeScience T&O. "He has a deep understanding of the T&O market and its customer base."