

Starter

NEWS, NOTES AND QUOTES



//THE LAW

BORDER PATROL

SENATE PASSES IMMIGRATION REFORM

BY BETH GERACI // Senior Editor

➔ The U.S. Senate on June 27 passed bipartisan, comprehensive immigration reform that would, if signed into law, have a major impact on labor in the golf industry.

In a 68-32 vote led by Sens. John McCain, Chuck Schumer and other senators in the so-called "Gang of 8," the Senate passed groundbreaking legislation that would create a path to citizenship for the 11 million people living in the United States illegally.

In addition to increasing security at the U.S.-Mexico border, the legislation would create a mandatory E-verify system, make minor changes to the H-2B worker visa program, which the golf industry depends on for seasonal help, and more.

Those changes to H-2B would make returning H-2B workers exempt from the program's 66,000 annual cap through 2018, change the way H-2B worker wages are calculated and require employers to pay worker transportation costs.

The act also would create a new year-round "W-visa" program geared toward low-skilled foreign temporary workers and allow their spouses and

children to work in the United States for the same temporary period.

However, it appears highly unlikely that the legislation ever will reach President Obama's desk for a signature.

Republican leaders in the House have been slow to entertain immigration reform and have flatly refused to take up the Senate act at all, with House Speaker John Boehner telling the Washington press, "The House is not going to take up and vote on whatever the Senate passes. We're going to do our own bill, through regular order, and it'll be legislation that reflects the will of our majority and the will of the American people."



//ONLINE LOOKING FINE

GOLFDOM WEBSITE GETS A NEW DESIGN

We're not sure what we're more excited about, the fact that our blog has a new home, or that said home has just undergone a pretty sweet makeover.

That's right, the *Golfdom Daily*—which was just named best blog in the business by the Turf and Ornamental Communicators Association (TOCA), mind you—recently moved to the Golfdom website (golfdom.com). With a brand new redesign, the website is looking better than ever, too.

Now Golfdom readers can get the same useful Web content they always have, but in one central place. And, the site features even more interactive elements to keep you engaged.

"I'm not going to say this is the greatest thing since sliced bread," said Golfdom Editor-in-Chief Seth Jones, "but given how user friendly it is, it's pretty

Check out golfdom.com now to keep up with the latest news, get the scoop on what went down at the U.S. Men's and Women's Opens and see Seth's latest and greatest interviews.

//HEADING OUT

RICHARD KONZEM RESIGNS AS GCSAA COO

On June 19, Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) Chief Executive Officer Rhett Evans announced that Richard Konzem had resigned his post as the association's COO.

"I appreciate Richard's contributions to the association's operations and its members," Evans said. "We will miss him as a GCSAA team member, and wish him much success in his future endeavors."

Evans said that as is standard procedure, the position will be evaluated before any posting decisions are made.

Konzem was hired for the position in October 2011 and has a diverse background that includes fundraising and college athletics administration.



//ON TOUR

Taking the Florida spring regulator tour

➔ For the past 16 years, the Florida GCSA has partnered with the Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association (FFVA) to be the first stop on its annual spring tour. On the tour, federal and state regulators of south-west Florida's agricultural and green industries visit Tim Hier's Old Collier Golf Club in north Naples, as well as nurseries, sod farms, cattle ranches and more.

Thanks to tighter budgets, only 20 regulators made the trip this year. And whereas superintendents on hand usually mix and mingle with the regulators and answer questions on the tour, the trip around the course was cancelled this year due to heavy rain showers. Consequently, this year's tour was reduced to a two-hour Q & A session centered on pesticide use and safety issues.

I gave the basic breakdown of average turf acreage in terms of greens, tees, fairways and roughs, while superintendents in the room explained their insect, weed and disease programs, the products they use and their turf treatments. Kyle Sweet, who runs The Sanctuary Golf Club on Sanibel Island, talked about his programs and products, which have to be approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Dept.

George McBath, a retired ornithologist who works with area courses to

install nest boxes, told regulators he was skeptical of golf courses during his early years as an ecology instructor but after doing bird counts on golf courses he realized what great habitats they are.

He also explained how the large eastern blue bird population in the Naples area allowed the Fish and Wildlife folks to harvest young bluebirds to repopulate Everglades National Park, whose own bluebird population was declining from years of inbreeding. The new influx of birds from Naples now is restoring the native population.

One of the state regulators on the tour specifically mentioned getting "numerous" complaints about spray drift. Some of it was the typical reaction when an adjacent property homeowner sees the spray rig at work and assumes the worst.

Fortunately, the rain stopped toward the end of the tour, and the group was able to see Old Collier's immaculate pesticide and fertilizer storage rooms and mix/load pad. But we regretted not having the chance to show them the modern course design — complete with wildlife corridors and natural areas. As they say, "Seeing is believing."

Joel Jackson, CGCS-Ret., is director of communications for the Florida GCSA.

Starter

BY THE NUMBERS

129

DEGREES

The temperature in Death Valley, Calif., on June 30

//END OF AN ERA

SMITHCO FOUNDER PASSES AWAY AT AGE 98

Smithco founder Ted Smith passed away June 10 at age 98, the company has reported.

Smith launched Smithco in 1967 with just one product—the Red Rider utility truck. More than 45 years later, Red Riders continue to be used on golf courses and athletic fields worldwide.

The Red Rider was followed by the creation of the first riding bunker rake in the industry, a labor-saving idea that replaced hand raking.

Smithco has grown considerably larger and more diverse over the years, becoming a multimillion-dollar manufacturing, engineering and marketing organization with worldwide distribution.

"Smithco continues to operate as the family business Ted founded, with the values that were always so important to him," the family stated.

//PERSONNEL MATTERS

NEW VP OF DESIGN AT STAPLES GOLF

Staples Golf Resource Group, LLC and Andy Staples, ASGCA Associate, have named Doug Long Vice President of Design and Management at Staples Golf. Long will assist in servicing the company's current design projects across the U.S. and play an increased role in the management of the firm's expanding energy and water conservation projects.

Long is a 35-year veteran of the golf industry and a recipient of the GCBAA's Builder of the Year Award.



EMAILS @ TEXTS # TWEETS

Seth,

Thank you for your editorial recognizing Matt Shaffer as a true gentleman ("An Open mind," June 2013). Matt and I grew up in Bedford/Blair Counties of Pennsylvania. Matt worked on the Iron Masters GC crew along with my father, and I followed him on that same crew.

Matt has never changed. His genuineness of character has stayed the course over the years. His success never went to his head. He is a class act and you can take that to the bank.

Samuel R. Snyder VII

CGCS-Ret.
Shreve, Ohio

// GOLFDOM WISDOM

If your dog is chasing geese, great. If your dog is chasing away salesmen, that's fine. But if he's chasing away members, you'll soon be chasing a new job.

#golfdomwisdom

MOWER REBIRTH

INGENUITY AT MERION LED TO CREATION OF DEERE'S 180E MOWER

BY SETH JONES // Editor-in-Chief



This year's U.S. Open concluded on Father's Day. And for Robert Smith, equipment technician at Merion Golf Club, it was surely his most special Father's Day yet.

Smith and his wife welcomed their second daughter, McKayla, on April 16. Two days later, Smith was back at the course, working on what could also be considered one of his offspring: the John Deere 180 E-Cut Hybrid Walk Greens Mower.

Both the 180E and Smith's oldest, Annabella, might be jealous of McKayla. But Smith's a good dad... he's got time for all three of his babies.



Smith says he doesn't have a favorite — at least, when it comes to equipment. "Every piece is the same," he says. "I like working on stuff that doesn't break."

But the 180E should get more of his affection than the others. Because Smith, along with Merion's director of grounds, Matt Shaffer, helped create the innovative mower.

"We were walking past a piece of equipment that had an 18-inch head on it. (Shaffer) got this idea stirring in his mind." Smith recalls. "I brought it in the shop, reconfigured a few things... we started mowing about two weeks later."

The John Deere 180E was born. Designed after the 220E, the 180E meets the demands of superintendents who need a tight, clean cut with an 18-inch swath. Deere says the mower is ideal for courses that need maximum control on undulating greens. Deere saw the success Merion was having with the mower and took notice. In July 2012, the 180 E-cut became available to courses around the world.

READER JOKE

AS TOLD BY **P.J. McGuire, CGCS**, American Country Club Comedians, supplier of golf entertainment. Visit accocomedy.com to learn more.

Husband and wife, avid golfers their whole lives, were also very interested in the afterlife and specifically if there was golf in the afterworld. They agreed whoever was to die first would come back one year later and report to the other on the afterlife.

The man having passed first did contact her through a medium at a seance exactly one year later.

"It's really very nice here!" he reported to her. "I get up in the morning, enjoy a little sex, have some breakfast, then it's off to the golf course. Home again for lunch, a little more sex before heading back to the golf course until dinner. Then it's a little sex before bed and I'm ready to start the next day!"

The wife, disconcerted at the amount of sex her husband is having in the afterlife without her, takes the high road and asks how his golf game is.

The husband replies, "Oh, I didn't come back a human... I'm a rabbit somewhere in New Jersey!"