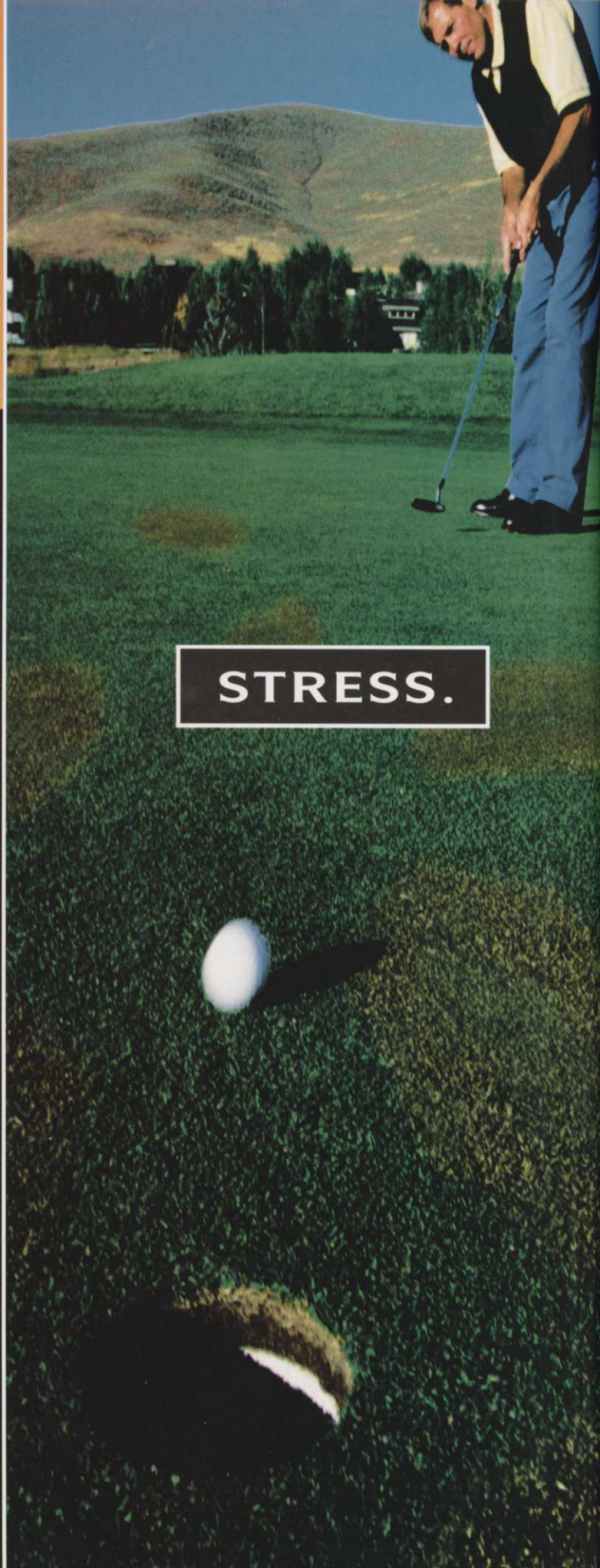


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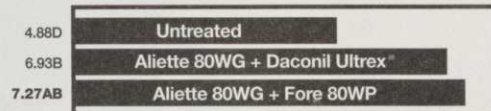
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Source: Martin, Clemson University, 1996

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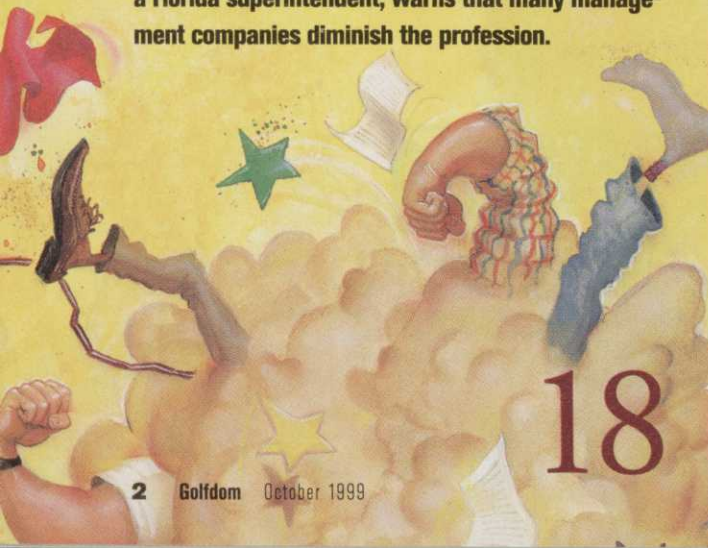
OCTOBER 1999 • VOLUME 55 • NUMBER 7



cover story

The Civilized Debate Continues

Superintendents can benefit from the way management companies do business, says Greg Plotner of International Golf Maintenance. But Mike Hamilton, a Florida superintendent, warns that many management companies diminish the profession.

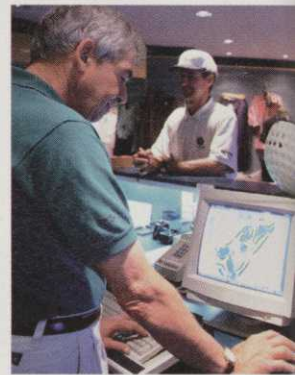


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► GPS systems give you an eye in the sky.

By Larry Aylward

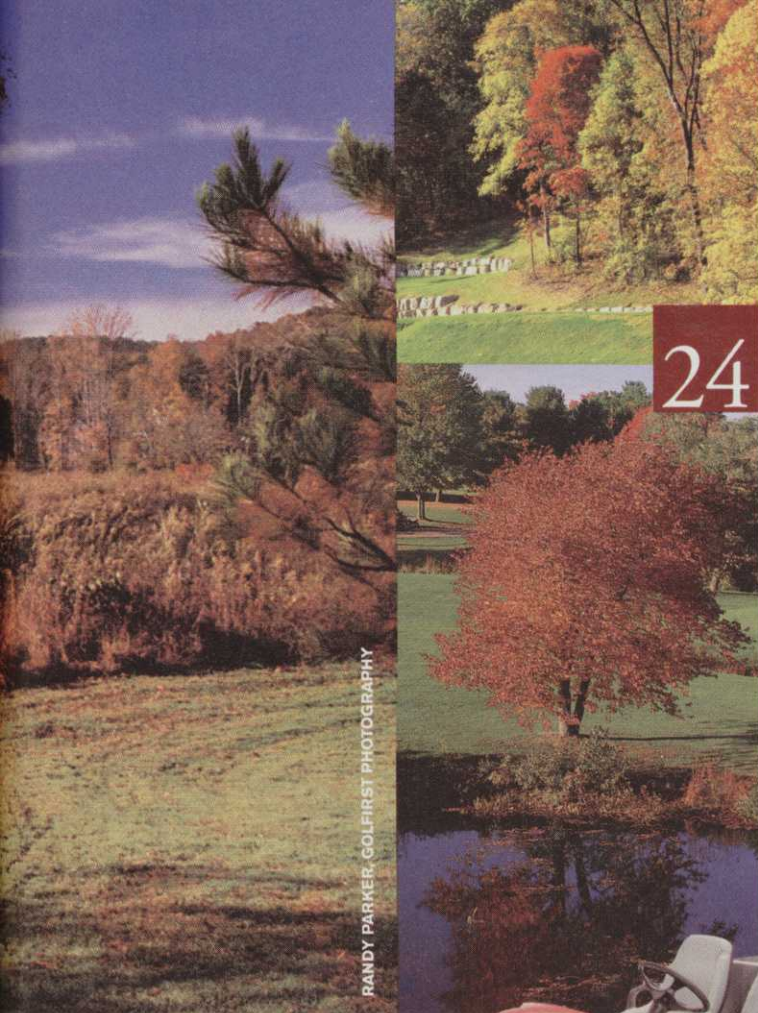


40 For Rent

Leasing turf equipment provides an alternative to budget-busting purchases.

By Larry Aylward





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True Colors

◀ Autumn lore has it that Jack Frost decorates trees in red, yellow and purple hues. But science tells another story.



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▶ The latest in utility vehicles.

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On-course ambulances roll where others can't.
By Steve and Suz Trusty

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By Skip Lynch

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About the cover
Gary Locke, a Tulsa, Okla.-based illustrator, captured our cover story theme – the debate about management companies – in Beetle Bailey-esque fashion. Watch out for that flying boot!

columns

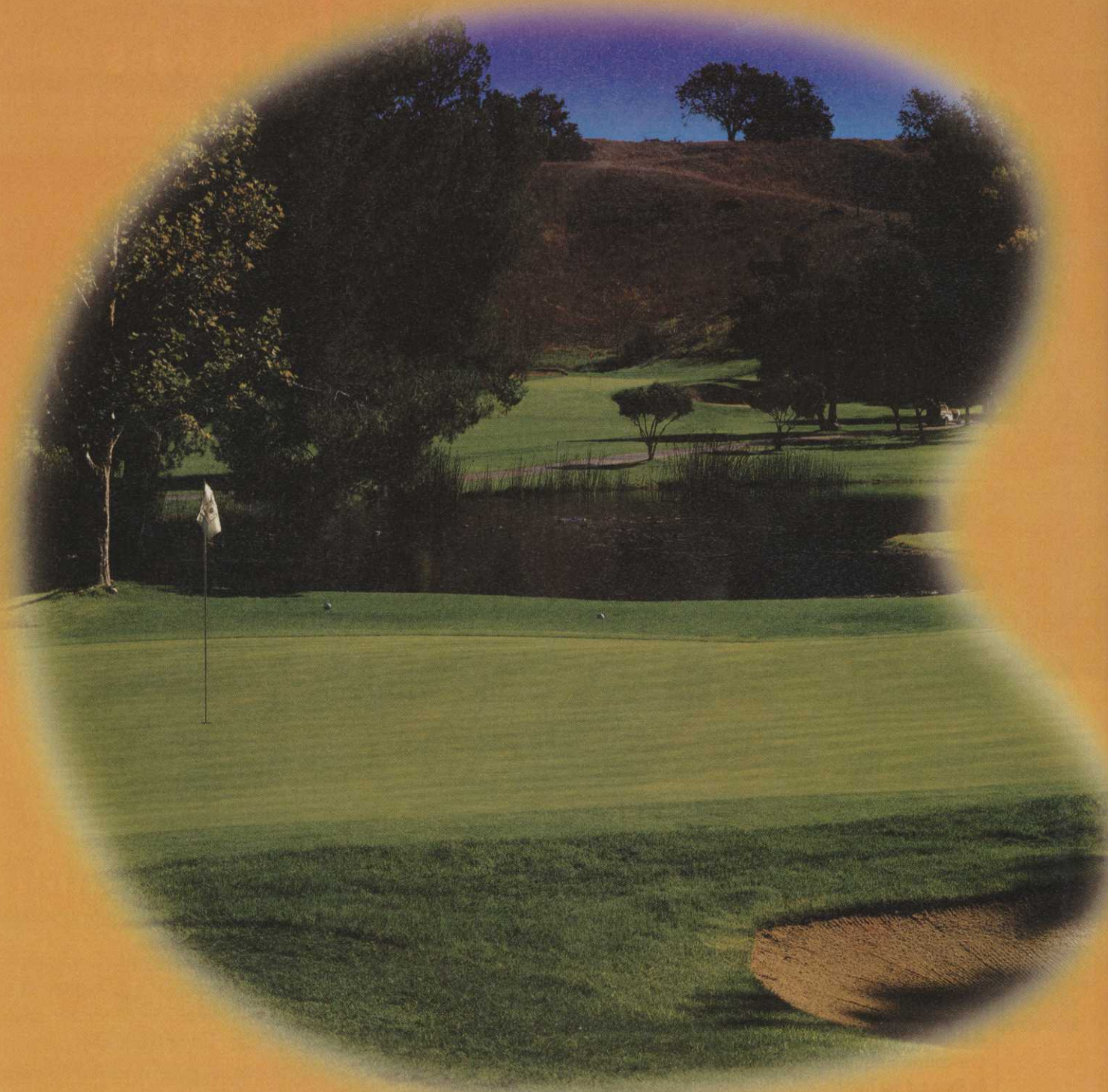
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Florida superintendent hails homegrown turf for successful greens renovation.
- 50 **Maintenance**
Superintendent Mike Petty made a winning choice when he selected a hybrid ultradwarf bermudagrass for a greens renovation.

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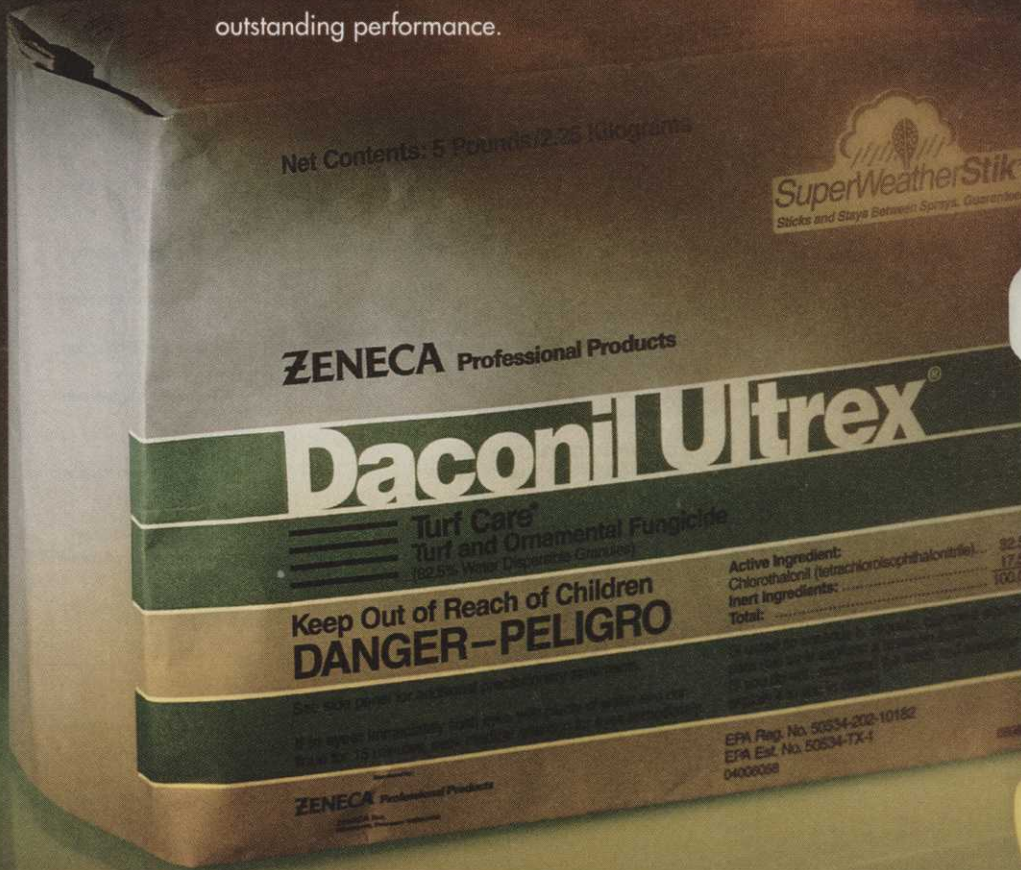
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Going Postal

■ WE'VE GOT MAIL

You Go Girls!

The superintendent brought me your article on Girl Golfers Just Wanna Have Fun (July/August "Money Shot" column). It made me think about my all-girls league, OFF (Out For Fun), at Earville CC. I manage the pro shop at the 70-year-old, 9-hole course. We have golfers from all walks of life, and Earville has been a learning course for many of them.

I decided to see if there was an interest in starting a league for women that was relaxing and fun. Most of the women were skeptical at first and thought they weren't good enough to join a league. To convince them otherwise, I told them how much fun golf can be when you're playing with a group of girls. Well, in three years the league has doubled in size, and the girls are having a ball.

They have also learned the rules and are very supportive of each other. This kind of league is important. Thank you and keep the articles coming.

Debbie Spears
Earville CC
Earville, Ill.

Our Aim Is True

I found the response letters to Geoff Shackelford very amusing, though predictable. For me, I find it refreshing to finally find a magazine that "tells it how it sees it."

The industry has built this profession larger than life. I hope its bubble doesn't explode in a few years when we all will be working for management companies for \$40,000 less than what we are earning now. Keep up the good work.

Jeff West
Director of Golf Operations
Golf Course Development
Rochester, Mich.

Fine Whiners

I loved your article on Philping Off the Whiners (September "Flagstick" column). Great job. I'm 15-year PGA

professional, and I'm embarrassed when Tour pros complain about how a golf course has been set up.

Let's put things into perspective: Did any NBA player ever whine to the press about how unfair it was that they had to play against Michael Jordan because he's too good? Did NFL quarterbacks ever complain how unfair it was that they had to play against Lawrence Taylor because he was too tough? No, they took their lumps, praised their opponents for their tremendous fortitude and went home, and in private, kicked their dogs (figuratively, of course).

Play the course as you find it, and may the best player win! Just because the boys who are historically the best at playing the impeccably manicured, fairly setup Tour courses got their (golf) balls handed to them at Carnoustie, everyone assumes that Paul Lawrie and Jean Van de Velde were just hacks who got lucky for four rounds. *Hello!* Has any player of the game ever gotten lucky for four consecutive rounds? I'm unaware of any. These guys (the Europeans) play that kind of setup week in and week out. Of course they had an advantage.

The setup at Carnoustie was European golf — so accept it, play it and shut up, or stay home and play the Northwest Mideastern Cuervo Open.

Alyn K. Stanton
General Manager, Head Golf Professional
Raven GC at Sabino Springs
Tucson, Ariz.

Feel like going postal? We want to hear from you. You can e-mail your letters to Pat Jones at patrick.jones@advanstar.com, fax to 440-891-2675 or send them via snail-mail to: 7500 Old Oak Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44130. Make sure to include your name and phone number for verification. Letters may be edited for length or relevance.

Golfdom

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How to

How to

Let's be honest about something — my job does not suck. As publisher and editor of a golf magazine, I'm frequently privileged to visit some excellent facilities. I like to tell people that I get paid to play bad golf at the best courses in the world. (My buddies are often tempted to smack me upside the head when I say this.)

But as great as my perks might be, I have a dirty little secret: I like golf, but I *love* fishing.

Sorry if it sounds traitorous, but given a choice between the links or the lake, I'll drop my clubs and grab my rods in a heartbeat. Every spring, I wait for the new Bass Pro Shops catalog with the impatience of a kid on Christmas Eve. I have been known to actually kiss a nice fish (no tongue, though) before I toss it back. I carry around an old fishing license autographed by Jimmy Houston. Scary, huh?

I was in Alabama recently for a visit to the Pursell Technologies facility. (Pursell regularly brings in groups of superintendents and media types. The tour is fascinating and the hospitality is great.) I was eager to play golf on one of the best of the nearby RTJ Trail courses until my host, Dr. Jeff Higgins, casually mentioned that the Pursell family has a couple of "pretty fair" bass lakes on its property.

The next morning, I reeled in a "pretty fair" largemouth that weighed close to 10 pounds. For a kid from Kansas, it was bass nirvana.

We played golf later and I probably lost a half-dozen balls and busted 100, but I couldn't have cared less. I walked on air for a couple of weeks and showed everybody my fish pictures like a proud new daddy.

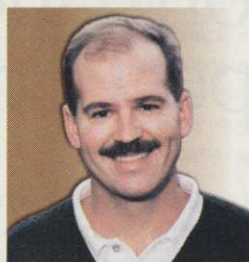
Is there a point to this rambling fish story? Nope, just wanted to brag about my catch.

But seriously folks, the point is that life in the golf course business is a lot like fishing. It can be difficult, frustrating, dirty and downright humbling at times. Weather can be your best friend or your worst enemy. Golfers, like fish, sometimes just don't care — no matter how well you present the bait.

But despite that, in both fishing and golf course management, the payoff can be incredible. Over the years, I've asked hundreds of superintendents why they put up with the long hours,

I Have a Dirty Little Secret

BY PAT JONES



GOLFERS, LIKE FISH,
SOMETIMES JUST
DON'T CARE — NO
MATTER HOW
WELL YOU PRESENT
THE BAIT

lack of recognition and scant job security. For many, the answer was, "From the first day I saw the sun rise over a dew-covered course, I was hooked."

Like a 10-pound bass.

Cheers and jeers

Cheers to Allen James and his team at Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment. At an August House of Representatives hearing on FQPA, James and others won over a number of Democratic congressmen who were appalled by EPA's seeming disregard for the original intent of the law. Thanks to RISE and others, FQPA reform bills in both the House and the Senate continue to gain bipartisan support.

Jeers to local anti-pesticide activists to continue to use fear recklessly to ban the use of pesticides. The latest effort in Seattle would prohibit municipal courses from using most products. James recently described the increase in local activism as "death by a thousand tiny cuts."

Jeers to Bill "Mulligan" Clinton who reportedly gives himself frequent "presidential pardons" after errant shots and then fails to include them on his scorecard. Lying to Congress and the American people is one thing, but lying on your scorecard ... jeesh!

Cheers to the superintendent we heard about who had sunk a Stimpmeter in a bucket filled with about 2 feet of concrete. Apparently, it's his personal tribute to the Excalibur story in the King Arthur tales. But in his version of the legend, only a green chairman who is true of heart and who faithfully approves all budget requests can pull the stimp from the stone.

Pat Jones is the publisher/editor of *Golfdom*. He can be reached at 440-891-3126 or patrick.jones@advanstar.com