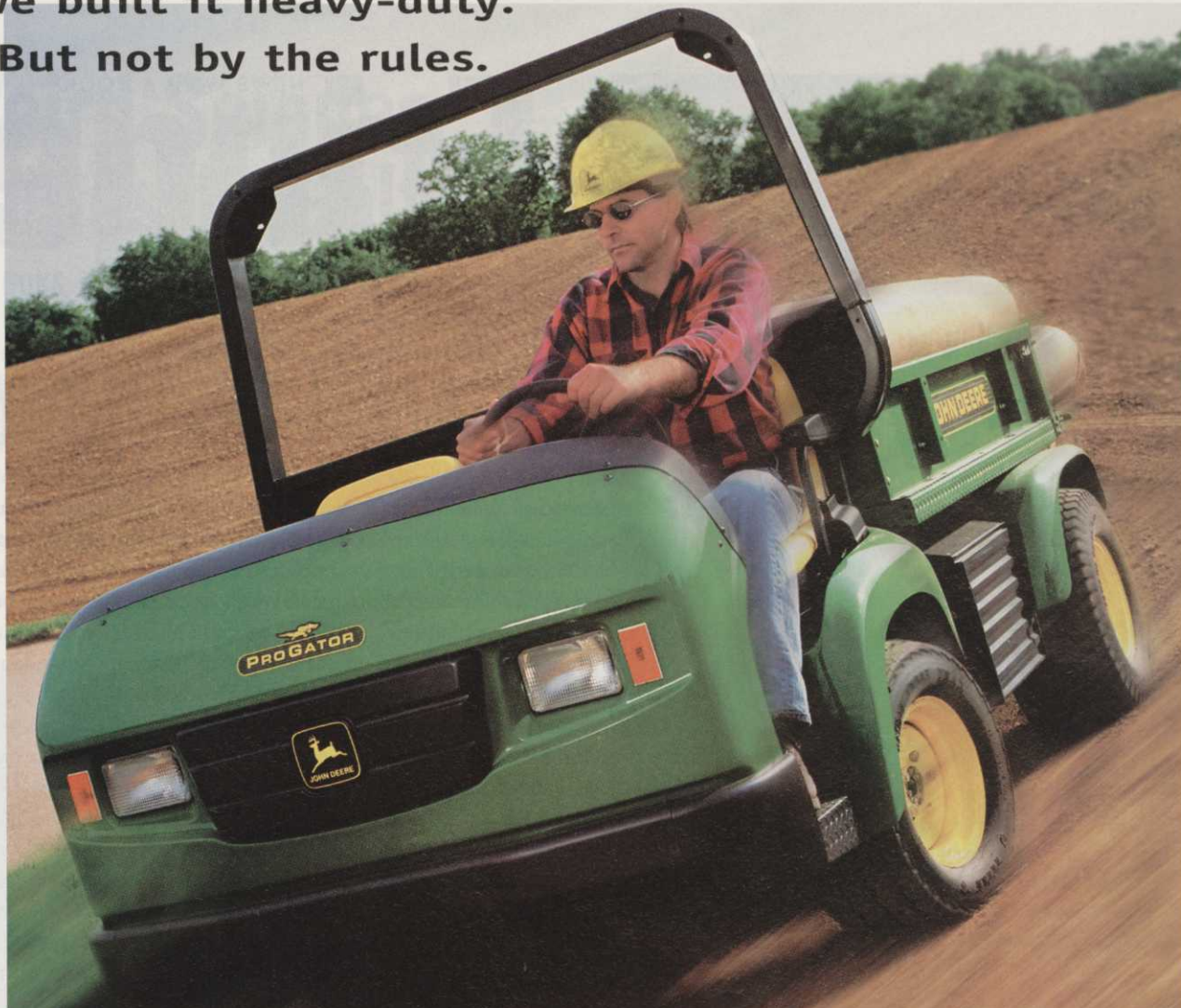


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With the new John Deere ProGator, the idea of a heavy-duty utility vehicle just got redefined and redesigned. No other vehicle combines the strength, reliability, and flexibility of the ProGator UV.

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# Off The Fringe

## Business briefs

### Scotts teams with Landmark Seed

Marysville, Ohio-based the Scotts Co. has teamed with Landmark Seed Co. to distribute Scotts' turfgrass seed products through a national distribution network.

The two companies are utilizing a network of seed distributors to sell products to a broad-based market. Spokane, Wash.-based Landmark and the regional distribution network will promote and sell Scotts' products to various customers, including golf courses and golf construction companies, according to the agreement reached Oct. 1.

In other Scotts news, David Harrison was named chief financial officer and executive vice president, succeeding Jean Mordo, who is now finance chief for international operations.

### Flowtronex acquires Mikotech

Dallas-based Flowtronex PSI acquired Riverside, Calif.-based Mikotech, strengthening the company's direct-service capabilities to courses in Southern California and Nevada.

Mikotech's seven service technicians stationed in Southern California and Las Vegas will remain with Flowtronex PSI as its Western service group, with plans to increase the total service staff to 12. The acquisition includes a 10,000-square-foot office complex/warehouse.

### Textron completes agreement

Racine, Wis.-based Textron Turf Care And Specialty Products completed a three-year supply agreement with Santa Monica, Calif.-based American Golf, which operates more than 300 golf courses and practice centers in the United States and United Kingdom.

In other news, Textron Turf Care's parent company, Providence, R.I.-based Textron, will

*Briefs continue on page 14*

## Dursban Alert Sounded

**D**ow AgroSciences has sounded a rallying cry for superintendents using Dursban to make themselves heard in Washington.

Dursban's active ingredient, chlorpyrifos, is one of the organophosphate pesticides being scrutinized by the EPA as part of ongoing implementation of the Food Quality Protection Act. EPA recently completed a risk assessment of chlorpyrifos and began a 60-day public comment period on Oct. 1. Dow is urging superintendents to write to EPA to let them know that continued use of Dursban is important to them.

According to Dow's Tim Maniscalco, Dursban is a "primary tool" for golf courses that may be lost to new regulations unless users act now. Superintendents "are an important group that need to be considered when any decisions are made on this compound," he said. "They need to make certain that their voices are heard."

Maniscalco believes superintendents can make a difference in the decision-making process. "People in Washington will take notice when voters let their voices be heard," he said.

He suggested that superintendents contact their Dow Agro representatives to learn more about the issue and how to respond. A Web site with key information is also planned.

Under the FQPA process, the risks and benefits of dozens of turf chemicals are being reviewed under a controversial set of standards developed by EPA in response to a federal law that was originally widely supported by industry and environmentalists alike.

Dursban is among the first widely used golf course products to reach this stage of the review. Despite the need for superintendents to comment immediately, Maniscalco noted that it will likely still be several years before a final ruling is made.

## Humdinger of a Price

**I**f you've got money to burn and really want to make an impression on the golfers at your course, have we got something for you.

Introducing the Humdinger golf car, an electric vehicle manufactured in the mold of the muscular Hummer sport-utility vehicle. The Humdinger, retailing for a mere \$15,600, is perfect for cruising the golf course or for light off-road excursions. Check out these features:

- 3.8 horsepower electric motor;
- 22-inch knobby tires;
- street-legal configuration;
- top speed of 30 miles per hour.

The Humdinger is sold at In Celebration of Golf, a 12,000-square-foot golf retail store located in Scottsdale, Ariz. "It's perfect for someone who wants to make a statement," says Peter Meyer of In Celebration of Golf.

A statement?

Yeah, like, "I'm rich, I'm bored and my golf game sucks, so I bought this yellow toy to impress my buddies."



# Weird Science Comes to Golf

## GENE GUNS, GOLD PARTICLES AND PLANT DNA

**A** brief glimpse inside The Scotts Co.'s Marysville, Ohio, research-and-development laboratory reveals there are no skittish white mice. Only scientists like John A. Neal, armed with Ph.D.s, gold and tungsten, a supply of petri dishes and an arsenal of expensive, high-tech equipment. Oh yes, and the all-important selected plant DNA.

Neal and his team of white-coated scientists are performing pioneering research to create genetically engineered turfgrasses that perform well on golf courses. Some scientists say it boils down to improving turfgrass traits by helping Mother Nature along with the evolutionary process. Critics say it's meddling. No one can argue its effectiveness because, in as little as six months, plantlets are created with important traits designed to make them hold up better under the strain of thousands of players.

Such teamwork at Scotts has been ongoing for several years. In many ways, the work resembles that of seed companies that cross-breed different turfgrasses to create improved cultivars. The main difference is that biotechnological methods are much more precise and faster. Genes for tolerance can be cloned and transferred into different turfgrass plants.

At Scotts, one handy piece of proprietary equipment is the gene gun, which Neal said looks more like a toaster oven. In short, the gene gun is used to accelerate about 10 million gold particles, each containing about 10 million copies of a plant gene.

**The gene gun is one handy piece of proprietary equipment at Scotts.**

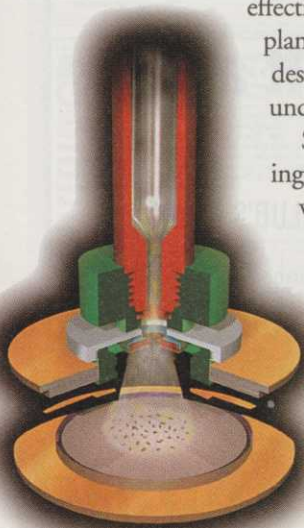
"That's like a hundred trillion bullets that we shoot at a million targets, and we get maybe 10 hits," Neal said of the process that takes a few minutes.

Neal said gold or tungsten is used because the material is heavy, inert and can be ground into a fine powder that is nearly invisible.

The real work comes in finding those 10 cells that survive because they contain specific genes.

"If the gene that I chose was the one to make the plant resistant to Roundup (glyphosate), then I would transfer those cells onto some media that contained glyphosate," Neal said. "Gradually, the cells that were not transferred would not do well and the ones that were transferred would." It's a selection process that takes months.

By 2002, the company's genetically engineered bentgrass may be growing on some golf courses.



## Quotable

**"We spilled our guts out."**

— Hal Sutton, top soldier and scorer for the U.S. Ryder Cup team, telling a Reuters' reporter how captain Ben Crenshaw's group overcame a seemingly insurmountable lead to reclaim the cup it lost to the Europeans in 1995.

**"Tuna!"**

— A catcall from a heckler in the Ryder Cup gallery intended for Colin Montgomerie, who bears an uncanny resemblance to New York Jets football coach Bill Parcells, the man they nicknamed after the stinky fish. Parcells reportedly hates the nickname, and Montgomerie didn't like it much either.

**"I've always said of most superintendents: If you give them a 50-foot section of garden hose and a walk-behind mower, they can make their courses look pretty nice."**

— Don Bulmer, golf sales manager for the Toro Co.'s Irrigation Division, on hard-working superintendents.

**"The greens aren't great. They're hard, and I don't think the weather has anything to do with it."**

— Lee Janzen, as told to the Chicago Tribune, griping about the greens at the Medinah CC for the PGA Championship.

**"All I can tell you is we are doing the best we can."**

— Medinah's CGCS Danny Quast, as told to the Chicago Tribune, on Janzen's criticism.

**"Superintendents are a lot smarter than they were 15 years ago. They're not tire-kicking, grease-monkey grass cutters."**

— Todd Gray, director of finance programs for golf and turf leasing at John Deere Credit

## Business briefs

*Briefs continued from page 12*

acquire Port Washington, Wis.-based OmniQuip International in a cash transaction valued at about \$477 million. OmniQuip is a manufacturer of light construction equipment, including telescopic material handlers, aerial work platforms and skid steer loaders.

The agreement was to be finalized in late September.

### **ABT meets with analysts**

Henderson, Nev.-based AgriBioTech said it would suffer a significant loss for its fiscal year ended June 30, according to a report. ABT blames the loss on the bankruptcy of a former customer, the Hechinger Co., a lumber and hardware chain.

In other company news, ABT's senior executive team recently met with sell-side analysts that cover ABT to review and update them on the company's business plan; to announce that the company has received proposals for and is working on completing new, long-term debt financing to provide working capital to carry out its business plan; and to present data that supports the company's expectations of profitability in fiscal year 2000.

### **Eco Soil revenues up, income down**

Rancho Bernardo, Calif.-based Eco Soil Systems reported revenues for the three months ended June 30 of \$40.7 million, compared to \$26.9 million during the same period in 1998. It was comprised of \$34.2 million from turf business and \$6.5 million from agriculture sales and services.

The company reported net income for the quarter of \$1.1 million, or \$.06 per share, compared to net income of \$1.6 million, or \$.08 per share, for the same quarter last year.

### **King & Bear under construction**

Construction began on The King & The Bear, the World Golf Village's second golf course and the first collaboration by Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus. The course, to be owned and operated by Hilton Head, S.C.-based Scratch Golf Co., is scheduled to open next fall in St. Augustine, Fla.

"The property is exceptional, and will lend

*Briefs continue on page 16*

# The Full (Of It) Monty

**F**irst, it was professionals complaining about the difficult conditions at Carnoustie. Then, it was complaints about the course condition at Medinah. Now, it's European players saying fans shouldn't be allowed to cheer for their team in the Ryder Cup.

If professional golfers want to be considered athletes, they need to play under adverse conditions. Colin Montgomerie was one of the worst offenders at the Ryder Cup, proving that France isn't the only country to produce w(h)ine. Monty made an annoying habit of backing off 2-foot putts every time a baby belched in the tri-state area. We think Peter King of CNN/SI summed up his display best:

"Colin Montgomerie ought to shut up, stop glaring at the crowd and play golf. The Ryder Cup was fun to watch, but Montgomerie was a wuss throughout. What is so horribly unsportsmanlike about a crowd that is rabidly rooting for the home team and cheers when a foe misses a putt? Golf is so ridiculous about these things. Imagine Yankee Stadium, after Roger Clemens strikes out Chipper Jones in the World Series, being silent. Join the real world, Monty."

## You Know You've Made It as a Superintendent ...

... WHEN THEY NAME A SALAD AFTER YOU ON THE CLUB'S MENU

At Doral Resort and CC in Miami, you can stop by Champions Sports Bar & Grill after playing 18 and munch on Dan Dupree's Greens Keeper Salad, featuring romaine lettuce, garlic croutons, parmesan cheese and caesar dressing.

Now, if you don't like the green speeds, you can go looking for Dupree. But if you don't dig the greens, as in the salad, go looking for the chef. Club rules.

*Doral's Fruit Platter*  
Our finest fruits from all the green's with a large muffin and lemon yogurt.  
\$12.00

*Dan Dupree's Greens Keeper Salad*  
Romaine lettuce, garlic croutons and caesar dressing and parmesan cheese.  
\$8.50  
With grilled chicken breast.  
\$11.00

*The Brewmaster Shrimp Bucket*  
One half pound large beer steamed shrimp, served chilled in the shell with our house cocktail sauce.

## Can't Keep a Good Man Down

Superman would be impressed with Mark Connor, the superintendent of the South Course at Firestone CC in Akron, Ohio, who suffered a head injury after he was hit by an automobile while driving his golf car in August.

The accident occurred one week before the NEC Invitational, the biggest annual event at Firestone, and landed Connor in intensive care for three days where he was treated for bleeding on the brain. Initial reports said Connor would

miss the tournament on the course that he had (literally) almost killed himself to prepare.

But Connor showed up at Firestone on the second day of the tournament just in time to watch Tiger Woods take control. Brian Mabie, Firestone's director of golf course maintenance, was happy to see him.

"Connor deserves a lot of credit," Mabie said. "He baby-sat the course all summer."

# Scanning the Web

One of the questions publisher Pat Jones asked me before I took this job was whether I needed to have a great golf game. He said, "No, but you better be willing to learn." That got me to thinking: Where on the Web could I find tips to improve my game before I humiliate myself on the links as I play my way through my duties here? Here are a few Web sites I checked out that might help us all improve our games:

► <http://www.tagagolf.com> — TAGA stands for "The Amateur Golf Advisor," and for a serious duffer like me this site was golf tip Nirvana. Not only does the page begin with overall tips on bettering your golf game if you're a beginner, but it breaks the game down into grip, power, stance, balance and other topics for the more experienced player. You can also buy golf clubs, self-help books and other golf paraphernalia at this site. Book-mark it.



► <http://www.golf-edge.com/tips.html> — Designed by LPGA teaching pro Lisa Ann Horst, this site may not help more experienced golfers, but beginners will find it useful. Much of the site focuses on the mental side of the game, and the physical fitness and nutrition sections will help golfers at all levels stay in playing shape throughout the year.

► <http://espn.go.com/golflonline/index.html> — Given the high-powered name behind this site, I expected far more than I got. It's text intensive, and the pale, off-white background makes what's there hard to read. If you can find the tips, it might help your game, but it's a lot of work to get there.

Scanning the Web is compiled by Frank H. Andorka Jr., *Golfdom's* associate editor. When he's not out working on his golf swing, you can contact him at [fandorka@advanstar.com](mailto:fandorka@advanstar.com) with future column suggestions or sites you think he should visit.



# Greens Around the Gills

## RESEARCHERS DISCOVER CREEPING BENTGRASS DISEASE

University of Maryland researchers have discovered a new disease for superintendents to worry about on their creeping bentgrass putting greens.

The disease, at presstime unnamed, can easily be confused with copper spot and/or Microdochium patch. It more frequently attacks sun-exposed areas than shaded sites. Symptoms initially appear as small, reddish-brown spots 1/2 inch to 2 inches in diameter. The centers of these spots are tan or gray and are often sunken, resembling ball marks.

While the disease was discovered in July

on a green at the Hartefeld National GC in southeastern Pennsylvania, it was also sighted in Virginia, Maryland, Ohio and Illinois, usually during the warm and dry conditions in August and September.

Researchers at the University of Georgia say they suspect the disease, which was also spotted there in July, is caused by fungus.

The disease, though spreading, has not affected all courses.

"We haven't experienced anything like that here," said Doug Davis, CGCS at the Broken Arrow GC in Lockport, Ill. "As a whole, our greens have been relatively healthy this year."

## Graffis Glorified

It's nice to know our bloodlines are impeccable, especially when the kudos come from a fellow industry magazine.

Herb Graffis, who started *Golfdom* magazine in 1927, was listed No. 3 on *Golf World's* Top 10 Golf Writers of the 20th Century in July. Graffis also started a second golf magazine called *Golfing*, as well as ghostwriting Tommy Armour's classic instruction book, "How to Play Your Best Golf All the Time." Most importantly, to those of us who write about the industry, he teamed with Grantland Rice to found the Golf Writers Association of America.

Graffis joined such esteemed authors as John Updike, P.G. Wodehouse and Bobby Jones on the Top 10 list. Only Wodehouse and Bobby Darwin ranked higher than Graffis.

### Business briefs

Briefs continued from page 14

itself to a natural rather than more artificial design," Palmer said.

#### **Toro, Maruyama extend agreement**

Bloomington, Minn.-based The Toro Co. and Maruyama Manufacturing Co. agreed to a four-year extension to deliver hand-held landscaping equipment under the Toro brand through the year 2003.

Redmond, Wash.-based Maruyama will continue to manufacture string trimmers, brushcutters, hedge trimmers, edgers, pruners and gas-powered backpack blowers to be sold under the Toro brand in the United States and Canada.

#### **Meadowbrook to acquire KSL**

Beverly Hills, Calif.-based Meadowbrook Golf Group has united with Apollo Real Estate Investment Fund IV to form a jointly owned company to acquire KSL Fairways Golf Corp.

Arnold Rosenstein, chairman of Meadowbrook, said that the acquisition of KSL Fairways was expected to close by the end of September. KSL Fairways includes 30 golf courses at 24 locations in the eastern United States, primarily in Virginia, Maryland, Florida and Wisconsin.

#### **U.S. Chemical Storage established**

U.S. Chemical Storage LLC, a new hazardous storage building manufacturer, recently opened its headquarters in Boone, N.C. The company offers prefabricated, relocatable hazardous material storage buildings that provide fire-rated, segregated, safe storage for flammables, combustible liquids and other chemicals.

#### **Deere declares dividend**

Moline, Ill.-based Deere & Co.'s board of directors declared the regular quarterly dividend of 22 cents per share, payable Nov. 1, to stockholders of record by Sept. 30.

#### **YAZOO/KEES completes acquisition**

Jackson, Miss.-based YAZOO/KEES Power Equipment finalized its acquisition of PUG Inc., Applied Design Technology and CheTech Co., all located in Chetek, Wis.

# Dumb, Dumber ... Dumbest

## SUPERINTENDENTS STRIKE BACK

By Jerry Coldiron Jr., CGCS

**S**uperintendents take more criticism than Notre Dame's head football coach, with less reason. Since we find ourselves at the mercy of Mother Nature more often than Al Roker, the circumstances that create golfers' perceived problems with the courses are often beyond our control. That's why, at first glance, Geoff Shackelford's "Dumb and Dumber, Superintendent Style" column in the May/June issue hit some of us so hard. It's frustrating to see that sort of criticism in print — especially at a glance, which is sometimes all we busy superintendents have time to do.

That said, the column hit closer to home than most of us want to admit. I've been a superintendent for more than 20 years, and I've experienced almost all of the situations that Shackelford outlined. But if you put aside personal pride and reread the column with an unbiased eye, it was funny — damn funny. And remember: Golfers have provided us with our own personal "Dumb and Dumber" material for years. If I earned a commission for every golfer's comment that split my sides with its complete lack of understanding of what it takes to run a golf course, I'd be retired to Jamaica by now. So as painful as Shackelford's comments might have been at first glance, we must realize that golfers have repaid us tenfold.

With the help of my staff, friends, fellow superintendents and TurfNet buddies, we devised a David Letterman-style list of comments that golfers (not to mention golf professionals, television announcers, turf magazine editors and witty golf writers) have made to superintendents that have had us roaring with laughter. Sit back and enjoy:

**10.** Golfer to superintendent — "Can you cover the bunkers with plastic so when you irrigate — or when it rains — the sand will stay dry?"

**9.**irate golfer to topdresser operator — "Stop! Stop! Can't you see you're losing your sand load all over the green?"

**8.** Golfer after watching the U.S. Open on TV: "Could we install some straight lines from the tees at our club so the players will not get lost (referring to dew walks)?"

**7.** Message left on superintendent's answering machine by a member after a major flood hit the area: "Do you not realize we have a city water valve to fill the irrigation lake? Someone on your crew has left the valve on too long, and it is flooding the golf course and surrounding community."

**6.** Golfer to the superintendent: "The new coolers you put out on the course are great, but the ice water is a little too cold."

**5.** Grounds chairman asks superintendent during a major drought: "When it rains, could we somehow get a huge plastic bag or balloon to capture the water for storage and later irrigation use?"

**4.** After a heavy rain, the golf professional asks: "Is it cartpaths only today? I suppose I



will have to cancel my playing lesson.”

3. Golf writer interviewing superintendent during course renovation: “How many inches do the greens sink each year after aerification?”

2. Golfer to irrigation technician while repairing a sprinkler head: “I thought the reason we installed an automatic system was

so it would never break or need repair.”

And finally, my all time favorite, heard from a well-respected TV announcer at a major tournament:

1. “The green committee has gone too far this time, instructing the greenkeeper to install those fans around the greens to cool the members.”

With gems like these to keep us amused on cold winter nights, it's probably not too much to ask us to have a sense of humor about ourselves, too.

*Jerry Coldiron Jr. is a CGCS at Boone Links/Lassing Pointe in Florence, Ky., and a member of the Golfdom Advisory Staff.*

## An Airport, Augusta and Cake for Arnie

What do you get a man for his 70th birthday when he already has almost everything the golfing world has to offer?

If you're Arnold Palmer, people spring for a membership at Augusta and an airport, not to mention

new socks and underwear

Westmoreland County in Pennsylvania, which is home to Palmer's hometown of

Latrobe, renamed

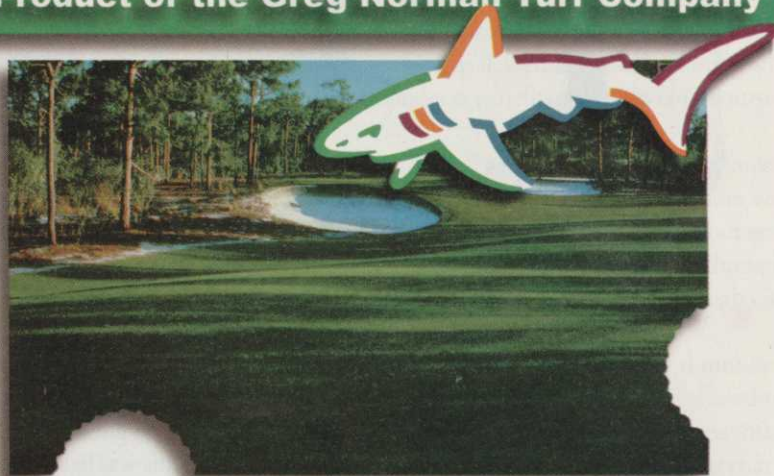
its airport to Arnold Palmer Regional Airport as its way of honoring the golfing legend who has brought such positive attention to Latrobe since he started playing the game at Latrobe CC in 1940.

On the same day, Augusta National GC awarded Palmer a full membership in the club, an honor that had eluded him since he won his first Masters (the first of four, by the way) in 1958.

Though it may have seemed that he owned the course through much of the 1960s, Palmer could still only play the course with a card-carrying member unless he was playing a tournament. Now, Augusta will deign to allow the golfing great to bring his own guests into the club and attend all club functions.

# GN-1 Hybrid Bermuda

A Product of the Greg Norman Turf Company



**Develops less thatch and seed head production than Santa Ana and Tifway grasses**

**Extremely low nitrogen requirements**

**Very dark green, medium textured**

**Exhibits good 'winter color'**

**Available in 'Big Roll'**



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MANAGEMENT COMPANIES:

# The Civilized Debate

CONTINUES

**Remember the kid who threw rocks at the hornets' nest?  
You know the rest of the story.**

Well, in the golf world, International Golf Maintenance, a Lakeland, Fla.-based management company, allegedly threw rocks at superintendents in the form of a pitch letter soliciting its business as an outsourcing option. You can guess the rest of this story, too.

A swarm of superintendents was livid about the letter sent in August from IGM to club presidents that stated:

"We are confident our team of turf professionals can develop a maintenance program that will help you get the most out of your investment in maintenance resources — and we're prepared to bring along \$50,000 in new golf course maintenance equipment with the execution of a three-year maintenance agreement."

It's the latest spat (at press time, anyway) between management companies and superintendents. But Golfdom, aware that management companies and superintendents get along like India and Pakistan, decided to let both sides tell their stories. We asked Greg Plotner, IGM's vice president of Florida operations, to tell us what's good about IGM and management companies in general. And we asked Mike Hamilton, CGCS at Foxfire CC in Naples, Fla., to tell us why he likes management companies as much as pickled herring. Their columns follow.





# Superintendents can benefit from the way management companies do business

BY GREG PLOTNER

**A**s a long-time superintendent and past president of the Florida GCSA, I watched the debate about management companies up close for many years. Sure, there were plenty of horror stories, but there were also plenty of examples of superintendents benefitting from this new way of doing business. So why did I decide that International Golf Maintenance was the right choice for me?

First and foremost, IGM is a maintenance company. We are hired to manage an owner/operator's No. 1 asset — the golf course. IGM will maintain the course with a team of experts that specializes in agromonic services. Our goal is to allow course owner/operators to focus on improving other club operations that will, in turn, put money in their pockets.

I would like to answer some questions that superintendents may have about our operations, such as:

- How does your company solicit new business?
- When IGM comes on board, is the superintendent dismissed?
- If IGM does hire the current superintendent, what will his benefits be?
- If you don't cut salaries and benefits, how does IGM stay in business?

Let's talk about soliciting business, since this is the first step in the process. IGM has a successful marketing campaign in place. It relies on focused advertising in several national publications, as well as word of mouth. These sources draw many inquiries from course owners and operators. When owners/operators contact us, we provide them with information over the phone, through company literature, from our Web site or conducting an on-site visit. If we do go on-site, we encourage the owner to inform the superintendent.

We also call on courses when we hear that their superintendents have left. These cases are treated as a typical sales call, and our company profile becomes our resume.

As for recruiting, we are always in the market for good, knowledgeable people. IGM will almost always offer the superintendent the opportunity to work for it at that course, and becoming an IGM employee gives superintendents benefits that individual courses may not offer them.

For example, security, as well as opportunities for advancement, abound at IGM. Superintendents can move up the ladder without having to change bosses, benefits or companies. We encourage them to enhance their job skills by furthering their education through programs sponsored by IGM or by attending seminars through GCSAA or its regional chapters.

IGM will save a superintendent time and money when there is a problem. Instead of spending fruitless hours to find a solution themselves, superintendents with IGM can turn to the regional manager or peers at other IGM-maintained courses for advice. Odds are, someone at IGM has experienced similar problems and has solution suggestions. Also, should the need arise for a special type of equipment that the course doesn't own, the superintendent can turn to IGM to borrow the tools necessary to get the job done.

Because IGM is a turnkey maintenance operation, owners and operators can concentrate on profit-producing areas of the golf course, including marketing and retail.

Which brings me to the "How does IGM earn its keep?" question. IGM can do many things in-house that individual golf courses can't. The company has a network of preferred vendors and reviews bids and proposals to negotiate the best possible rates. It has contracted with all kinds of companies that deal with everything from mower repair to water drainage. Contracting with these preferred vendors results in preferred pricing. IGM passes these savings on to its clients. It's one way the company earns its management fees.

*Continued on page 22*





# Several reputable management companies exist, but many still diminish our profession

BY MIKE HAMILTON

**I**'ve gained the reputation of being anti-management company, but that's not a true representation of my position. There are many positive things about management companies. In fact, if all management companies were as wonderful as some, I would consider it an honor to work for one. But the problem is that not all management companies are created equal.

There are several reputable management companies that satisfy the needs of all involved. However, too many still diminish our profession, leave clubs in shambles and make huge profits at people's expense. As a result, I believe that our governing associations should set standards for management companies, monitor their accreditation and endorse those who follow the guidelines.

Over the years, I've heard countless horror stories about management companies. One superintendent told me about his experience with a management company that his owner hired to oversee his course. The management company's fee for operating the club more efficiently was \$200,000 annually.

Just before the management company took over, all employees were fired by the club and rehired by the management company at an average of \$1.50 an hour less than they were making. The maintenance budget was slashed by \$200,000. The superintendent was asked to take a \$10,000 pay cut, but was promised he would get all of the money back and more in bonuses at the end of the first year.

Savings attributed to the company's volume buying power was only \$30,000 less than the superintendent had spent the year before. Therefore, corners had to be cut. The 12 person crew was cut to seven. The preventive fungicide program during an El Nina year was scrapped in favor of a curative. The superintendent couldn't treat the course without first consulting with the management company's agronomist.

Pre-emergent weed control was dropped for post-emergent, and

the fertilizer budget was cut in half. Needless to say, the golf course began to deteriorate. So the management company blamed the superintendent, who was eventually fired. Now there's a nice bonus, wouldn't you say?

Two years later, the owner finally saw the light, and he went back to the old way of doing business. Unfortunately, an experienced, hard-working superintendent had been fired, and dedicated employees were forced to leave.

Then, to get the golfers back and the course back in shape, the owner had to spend more money than he saved the two years he employed a management company.

Here's another dismaying story. A former superintendent I knew was working at a high-budget private club, which hired a consultant for several years. The consultant convinced the board of directors to replace the superintendent with a management company. A few weeks after the management company took over, the consultant was named president of this management company.

Two years later, the management company was fired, and another superintendent was hired. I spoke with that superintendent, and he told me that the course and equipment were in terrible condition. He said there was equipment that hadn't had its oil changed in two years. More than half of the equipment was broken down and had been stripped for parts.

I could fill this magazine with stories about superintendents that are making \$20,000 less than the average because they are employed by management companies. But the reality is that this is the American way. Any of us can start a management company. All you need to do is get one contract and you're on your way. But at that time you can choose to do business the honorable way, or you can choose to do business dishonorably.

The golf industry's governing associations must share in the blame

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