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Circle No. 104

Golfdom

AUGUST 2001 • VOLUME 57 • NUMBER 8

Serious About Skin Cancer



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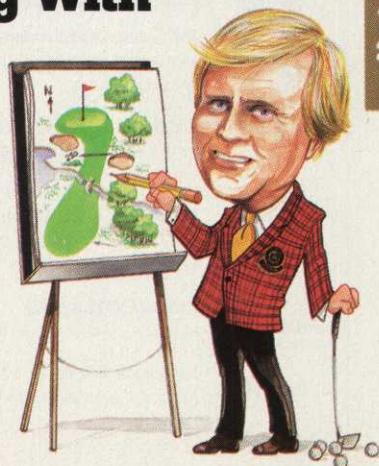
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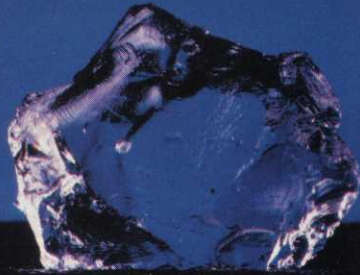


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Illustrator Dan Beedy set out to create a cover so bright and intense that you can feel it. You may want to slap on some sunscreen before viewing it.

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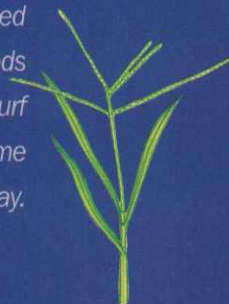
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Events

■ SEMINARS & CONFERENCES

AUGUST

14-19 Golf Course Builders Association of America's Summer Meeting
Atlanta
Contact 402-476-4444

15 Ohio Turfgrass Foundation Research Field Day
Columbus, Ohio
Contact 888-683-3445

16 Michigan Golf Course Owners Association's 8th Annual Golf Outing and Field Day
Augusta, Mich.
Contact 517-482-4312

21 Cornell University Field Day
Ithaca, N.Y.
Contact 607-255-1792

28 GCSAA Seminar: Managing On-the-Job Behavior
Tucson, Ariz.
Contact 480-609-6778

SEPTEMBER

10 Iowa Turfgrass Institute
Burlington, Iowa
Contact 319-286-5596

10 Mississippi Valley GCSA Monthly Meeting
St. Louis
Contact 618-259-3207

13 Intermountain GCSA's Annual Meeting
Ogden, Utah
Contact 435-259-6674

15-18 Club Managers Association of America's Annual Leadership/Legislative Conference
Alexandria, Va.
Contact 703-739-9500

23-24 Carolinas GCSA's Annual Golf Outing and Education
Jefferson, N.C.
Contact 800-476-4272

27 Tuskegee University's 22nd Annual Career Fair
Tuskegee, Ala.
Contact 334-727-8146

OCTOBER

8 Iowa GCSA State Meeting
Panora, Iowa
Contact 319-286-5596

10 Joint Meeting: GCSA of New England and Golf Course Managers of Cape Cod
Pocasset, Mass.
Contact 508-563-2652

15 Rocky Mountain GCSA's Annual Meeting
Denver
Contact 888-576-4272

15-16 Oregon Golf Course Owners Association's Fall Meeting
Black Butte Ranch, Ore.
Contact 503-378-0344

18 Western Washington GCSA's Annual Meeting
Kent, Wash.
Contact 360-705-3049

22 Georgia GCSA's Innovative Superintendent Series
Rome, Ga.
Contact 706-742-2651

29 Georgia GCSA's Assistant Superintendent Seminar and Tournament
Villa Rica, Ga.
Contact 706-742-2651

NOVEMBER

1 Golf Course Managers Association of Cape Cod's Annual Meeting
Sandwich, Mass.
Contact 508-693-0578

3-7 Georgia GCSA's Annual Meeting
St. Simons Island, Ga.
Contact 706-742-2651

5 GCSA of New England's Nine-Hole Meeting
Amherst, Mass.
Contact 413-253-3520

Let us know about your events. Send information to Frank Andorka at 7500 Old Oak Blvd., Cleveland, 44130. Fax information to 440-891-2675 or e-mail to fandorka@advanstar.com.

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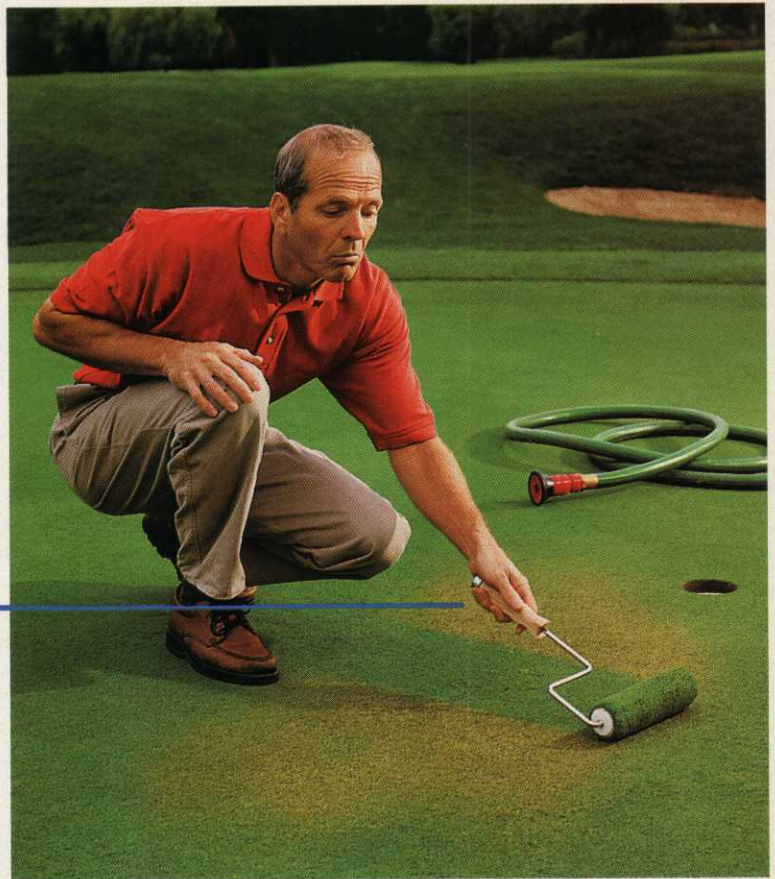
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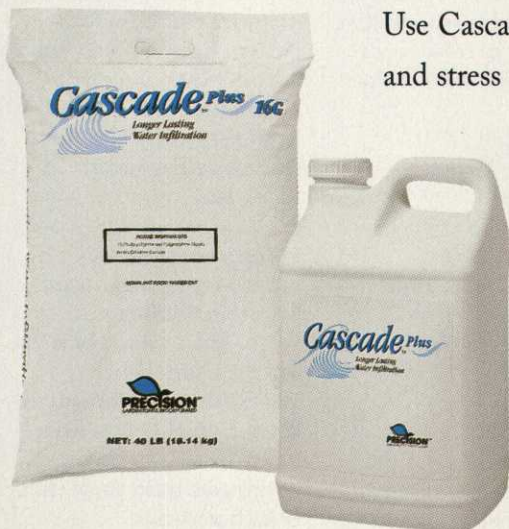
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Going Postal

■ WE'VE GOT MAIL

About That Southern Hills Work Crew ...

I read with interest — and some concern — Larry Aylward's fea-



BILL WELCH

John Szklinski: *Sports Illustrated* called him a "taskmaster."

ture article on superintendent John Szklinski and Southern Hills CC ("Labor of Love," June).

Having worked with former Southern Hills superintendent Bob Randquist and the maintenance staff at Southern Hills during the design and construction of the club's alternate nine-hole course, I was disappointed to read comments made in the article alluding to the maintenance crew's lack of a work ethic. The article also seemed to infer that this lack of work ethic was a residual from Randquist's tenure as superintendent.

From working with Randquist and his crew and having admired his talents over the years, I have a different perspective. It is my opinion that he is at the forefront of his profession. With regard to agronomics, personal professionalism and staff preparation, I consider Randquist to have no superior. I wish the article could have focused solely on John Szklinski's talents and his perseverance in the face of many challenges.

**Bill Coore, Golf Course Architect
Coore and Crenshaw
Scottsdale, Ariz.**

Aylward responds: *One of the toughest challenges John Szklinski endured at Southern Hills was the loss of staff, and I would have been blind not to report it. The*

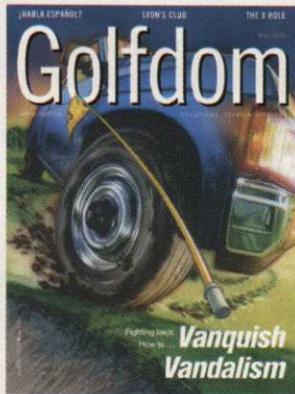
reason so many employees quit the demanding Szklinski's staff was because they didn't get along with him or agree with his ways. I was only reporting what Szklinski said about his staff.

The story was not intended to make Bob Randquist look like a poor superintendent. Randquist left Southern Hills because it was time to move on. Management hired Szklinski because they liked his work ethic and enthusiasm. This kind of thing goes on every day in every profession.

Szklinski acknowledges that he does things differently than Randquist, but he has the utmost respect for him. "He's an institution in this industry," Szklinski says.

Fighting Back

Having dealt with vandalism over the last 22 years, I've seen it all. I agree with the article ("Van-



quish Vandalism," May) that one of the best preventative methods is hiring students and teachers to work on the course.

The students and teachers I've hired take such pride in the course that they exert peer pressure on their classmates who might vandalize the course. In addition, on the rare occasions when vandalism occurs, the perpetrators usually can't keep their mouths shut and word quickly gets around school. Then the good guys (those students and teachers who work for me) take over to let us know who the vandals are.

I hired the high school athletic

director 15 years ago, and he's been with me ever since. His involvement has led me to hire other great teachers and students from the school, many of whom come back season after season.

**Jerry Coldiron, CGCS
Boone Links/Lassing Pointe
Florence, Ky.**

Where Is GCSAA Taking Us?

You did an excellent job on your editorial about GCSAA's e-commerce initiative (Flagstick, June). Your commentary on GCSAA's e-commerce initiative was articulate, to the point and relevant to today's political agenda. Let's hope the GCSAA reads and understands what you are saying and doesn't put on its blinders because its money-making idea is being pooh-poohed.

Where is the political arm of the GCSAA taking us — and to what end?

**John K. MacKenzie Jr., CGCS
North Oaks GC
North Oaks, Minn.**

I enjoyed your views on the e-commerce pilot program by the GCSAA. You are correct: Distributors do bring value to superintendents. E-commerce has a place in the market, but it will not replace relationships that have been developed for years.

When disease breaks out or irrigation/maintenance equipment needs immediate attention, the relationships between customers and distributors become crucial.

**Jeff L. Mobley
T&O Marketing Manager
ProSource One
Memphis, Tenn.**

Editor's Update: See this month's Flagstick for an update on GCSAA's e-commerce initiative.

Image Isn't Everything

Thank you for your commentary [Pin High, June] on GCSAA's

image campaign. It's important for the GCSAA to pursue its image campaign, but let's keep this in perspective.

First, superintendents maintain golf courses so that people can play a game. This is a simple concept. GCSAA President Tommy Witt's contention — "If there weren't educated superintendents to groom golf courses, the game wouldn't be this popular" — is indicative of an arrogance that is overwhelming this profession. We enhance the game, but to infer that we are responsible for golf's popularity is an extravagant exaggeration.

Secondly, Witt's denigration of other professions is uncalled for. After all, window washers and janitors pay my salary.

Lastly, the ads that you mentioned portrayed the stereotypical "greenkeeper" with tongue-in-cheek. They are parodies, plain and simple.

**John S. Cooper, Superintendent
Atwood Homestead GC
Rockford, Ill.**

He Likes Mike

I'm pleased to see Michael R. Heacock join *Golfdom's* editorial staff [Been There, Seen That, June].

I had the pleasure of serving nearly 10 years alongside Heacock at American Golf Corp., and I have benefited many times from his wise consultation.

He is a premier practitioner and a truly great mind in turfgrass and golf facility management.

**Bill Johnson, CGCS
Field Sales Engineer
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EARTHWORKS - THE COMPLETE BIOLOGICAL SOIL MANAGEMENT COMPANY

A few weeks back, I walked through the doors of GCSAA's Headquarters in Lawrence, Kan., with mixed feelings. On one hand, I'd spent nine years working for the association and was excited to see former co-workers and visit my old stomping grounds.

On the other hand, given that *Golfdom* hasn't exactly been a cheerleader for the GCSAA, I also felt a little like I was walking into the lion's den.

But, the lion — in the guise of CEO Steve Mona — was as charming and forthright as usual. I emerged from the GCSAA Media Roundtable unscathed, though a bit bemused by the whole affair. The roundtable consisted of a bunch of us golf industry media types listening to Mona and his staff present updates on programs and issues. Here are a few highlights:

■ The online "reverse auction" part of the association's e-commerce pilot program appears to be DOA. It will likely be terminated in light of the firestorm of criticism from manufacturers, distributors and members. "It was the right thing to try it," Mona said, citing the association's interest in being on the ground floor of an e-business boom. But, contrary to my suggestion in this column two months ago, he insisted, "We never viewed this as a financial panacea for the organization." That's good, because 3 percent of nothing (which is what e-commerce has become in many instances) is still nothing.

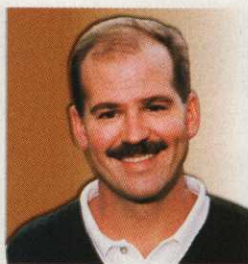
■ The numbers were a little fuzzy, but Career Development director Kim Heck projects that only about 7 percent of superintendents leave a position because of "involuntary termination" — on par with the national average.

In short, despite a pervasive feeling that superintendents are fired with great frequency, statistics suggest job security in the profession is about as good as most — and it's a hell of a lot better than for dot-commers or steelworkers.

■ Later this year, GCSAA will officially announce the formation of a political action committee to build access and awareness among key legislators. The PAC will funnel campaign contributions through local chapters into the coffers of golf-friendly congressional candidates. I think it's an OK idea in theory, but I wonder where

Into The Lion's Den In Lawrence

BY PAT JONES



I EMERGED FROM
THE GCSAA MEDIA
TOUR UNSCATHED,
THOUGH A BIT
BEMUSED BY THE
WHOLE AFFAIR

they'll get the dollars. I quietly asked a few executives of leading industry suppliers whether they'd help fund a GCSAA PAC and they all basically said "no way" (once they'd stopped laughing).

Which, of course, brings us to the central issue: GCSAA's reliance on industry to fund the lion's share of its operations. Between the recent departure of several executives, the disharmony caused by the PDI debate and the e-commerce debacle, many key companies are scratching their heads about the association.

If you add in lousy weather this spring and a weakened economy, it becomes even harder for industry to justify supporting the national at the same astonishing levels it has in the past five years.

"Every time they come here to see us, they have their hands out for something new," says one longtime industry executive who asked not to be identified. "It's gotten to be kind of comical. We actually take bets on how much dough they'll ask for."

The latest funding "opportunity" is the 75th anniversary celebration set for next month. From what leaders at major companies tell me, GCSAA staff have thus far found few takers for donations in the mid five-figure range to underwrite the cost of what the industry perceives to be a "big self-congratulatory party."

So, the lion of Lawrence, along with his pride — all 120 of them — are facing a new and largely self-inflicted challenge: How can the association continue to implement new programs when the people who pay the bills are beginning to balk? Short of holding a really big bake sale, maybe its time to slow down, take stock and listen carefully to what members — and industry — are saying.

Pat Jones is the publisher/editorial director of Golfdom. He can be reached at 440-891-3126 or pjones@advanstar.com