

CASEY CRONIN

of the Guard

can find out what the previous superintendent has done well and what hasn't gone well."

Fisher doesn't have far to go when he wants Lynn's advice — Lynn still mows fairways at the nine-hole private club three days a week.

"Having him here to support me has been invaluable," Fisher says. "Why get rid of someone who might easily be your best resource?"

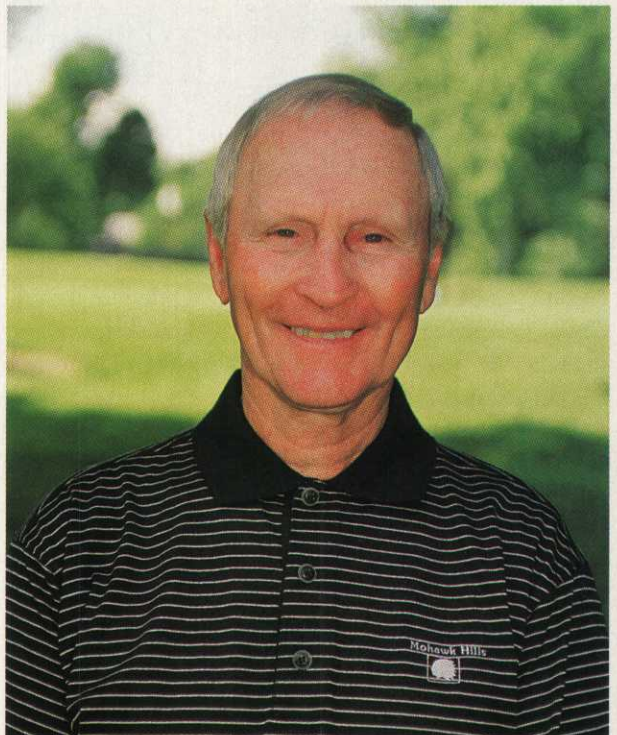
Fisher changed some agronomic practices, such as aerifying more frequently, watering more often to soften the greens and topdressing every three weeks. He knows members still make statements that begin with, "When George was here ...," but Fisher's willingness to call on Lynn's experience has helped make such statements less frequent.

Be accessible

Eric Greytok must love living on the edge. First he took over at Pebble Beach Golf Links five months before the 2000 U.S. Open. Then in April, he replaced a man whose name is still whispered in awe at superintendent conferences around the country — Paul R. Latshaw, who left Winged Foot GC in Mamaroneck, N.Y. in January to join an irrigation firm.

"I worked for Mr. Latshaw and was trained by both he and his son," Greytok says. "But I was a little worried [when I came to Winged Foot]. I didn't want to let my mentor down."

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"The members here loved George (Lynn)," Ryan Fisher says. "They like the idea that I've kept him on the staff."

Changing of the Guard

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But Greytok communicated with members from the moment he took the job and established a rapport with them. He addresses member concerns and complaints promptly.

"You always have to remember that you're working for everyone at the course," Greytok says. "It's important the members are part of the process. It adds to your credibility."

Do your homework

Tom Leahy wanted to replace Joe Camnaratto, who spent 40 years caring for Sleepy Hollow GC in Scarborough, N.Y. Leahy had worked as Camnaratto's assistant for four years when Camnaratto decided to retire in 1997. After Camnaratto announced his decision, Leahy expressed interest in the job. Camnaratto was thrilled. He told Leahy he always appreciated his work ethic and that he would recommend him to the members.

But Leahy's promotion ran into problems. Some club members demanded a national search and resented the idea that a successor had already been chosen. Camnaratto campaigned hard for his candidate, but Leahy knew he would have to overwhelm the members during the interview.

"This is an old club with a lot of tradition, and they didn't want to hand the job to anyone," Leahy says. "I worked for weeks preparing my presentation, and I was the first one they interviewed. It was important that my first shot be my best."

Leahy toured the course with Camnaratto and asked him questions to gather information he thought would help him in the interview. He practiced his presentation. Leahy did something right because he got the job.

Communicate with the crew

Chris Hague's reputation preceded him when he replaced Doug Petersan at Baltimore CC in Timonium, Md., because he had already hosted two U.S. Opens (the 1991 Men's at Hazeltine National GC in Chaska, Minn., and the 1993 Women's at Crooked Stick GC in Carmel, Ind.).

But his reputation didn't automatically win him the loyalty of the crew. For 90 days prior to Hague's arrival, no superintendent oversaw the course. That led to long lunches, crew members arriving late and leaving early, and other disciplinary issues that Hague felt he had to address.

Hague met with the entire crew (40 members in all) within 48 hours of his arrival to outline his management philosophy. In his first 60 days, he discussed concerns and complaints individually with each crew member. Hague says the one-on-one meetings proved invaluable.

"Everyone had a chance to have their say," Hague says. "It's critical to establish communication early."

Getting easier

Despite the pressure of replacing a legend, Fisher says he would still do so. He overcame his nervousness to establish

Rough Day at the Office

The prospect of starting a new job often fills employees with trepidation — even someone like Chris Hague, who has experienced his share of first days during his 28 years in the industry. But nothing prepared him for the stress he experienced when he took over for Doug Petersan at Baltimore CC in Timonium, Md.

Hague's first challenge was getting to Baltimore from Carmel, Indiana, where he worked at Crooked Stick GC. He arranged his trip to arrive the previous night to get a good night's sleep, but the airline had other plans for him. It delayed his flight for six hours, meaning the plane didn't touch down



Chris Hague, superintendent at Baltimore CC in Timonium, Md., says his first day reminded him to be humble.

until after midnight. Hague raced to the hotel, arriving after 1 a.m., determined to show up at the course later that morning at 6 a.m. after snatching a couple hours of sleep.

Mother Nature decided to challenge him before he ever arrived at the course. While he slept, a thunderstorm roared through Baltimore and dropped 2 inches of rain on the course in two hours. The rain washed out more than 200 bunkers and downed hundreds of trees, the remnants of which littered

the fairways. He arrived at the office to the frantic questions of golfers and crew members alike: What are you going to do?

"Everyone was on edge anyway with someone new coming on the job," Hague says. "I remember standing in the middle of the first fairway and asking myself, 'What have I gotten myself into?'"

With the help of assistants Mark Ross, Reid Mitchell and Doug Hall (veteran assistants from the Petersan days), Hague says he survived his frightening first day with good humor.

"It reminded me that no matter how good I think I am, there are going to be days when the Lord takes over and there's nothing you can do about it," Hague says. "It made a great story later, but while I went through it, I experienced a lot of stress."

— Frank H. Andorka Jr., Associate Editor


his own reputation for excellence. He'd like to emulate Lynn and stay at The Woodstock Club for 50 years himself — if the members would have him.

"No matter how good your predecessor's reputation is, you must take care of the course," Fisher says. "If you let the pressure of replacing a respected superintendent overwhelm you, you won't survive."

"I don't get caught up in being compared to someone else," he adds. "I can only go out there and give my best effort every day." ■



If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery,
our solution for localized dry spot
has many, many admirers.


A few years ago it came to our attention that lots of people were using regular, preventative surfactants to treat existing localized dry spot (LDS). This troubled us for two reasons:

First, treating existing LDS with preventative surfactants is unnecessarily expensive. Secondly, some regular surfactants can be too strong for stressed turf. So we did what we do best: Took a leadership role and introduced a solution. The first surfactant designed specifically as an effective treatment for localized dry spot.

The solution is called Aqueduct®, and it's a soil surfactant priced right and formulated correctly for the safe, effective, economical treatment of LDS. A product now proven to be, in fact, the most effective tool available for treating LDS and promoting the rapid recovery of stressed turf.

Aqueduct is the answer for mounds, slopes, bunker faces, and all variety of problem areas that might develop water repellency or have difficulty holding water. It works by improving the penetration, dis-

tribution and availability of water in the soil, and it works well, providing noticeable improvement in as little as two days and increasingly dramatic improvement for weeks afterward.

Aqueduct is easy to use, too. It's very safe and never needs to be watered in. That, as you know, saves you time and labor.

We think Aqueduct is a great product, and a lot of our competitors apparently agree because the niche we created is now full of Aqueduct clones (Fortunately, the original Aqueduct remains the most effective). Sadly, there are also some companies out there trying to tell you that the same surfactant they're selling as a preventative or season-long treatment can also be used as a treatment. . . Yes, it could be. You can use any product for whatever you want, of course. The question is, "Does it work?" "Does it make sense?" The answer is, "If it's Aqueduct, it does, guaranteed."

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The municipal golf situation in this country stinks. In the past 10 years, the number of qualified superintendents and the possibilities for improved maintenance make it unacceptable for some of these courses to look the way they do.

Granted, there has been improvement at some facilities, but most cities haven't a clue what their classically designed golf courses once looked like or how they could provide better conditions. Many never will understand until they get some financial help.

There are hundreds of great old municipal courses designed by the likes of A.W. Tillinghast, Donald Ross, Alister MacKenzie, George C. Thomas and others that are poorly maintained. Worse, their architecture has taken a beating. They should be golf courses that everyone wants to play — like Bethpage State Park's Black Course (*see story on page 39*) — but are laughingstocks instead.

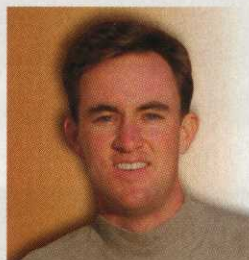
Well-intentioned programs like the First Tee are more feel-good public relations/tax write-off opportunities for corporations to claim they're doing work for inner-city kids. They serve a purpose by getting kids started playing golf and assisting other disadvantaged youths. But restoring existing municipal golf courses would not only take advantage of quality facilities that already have infrastructures, but also provide quality places for beginners and advanced players to pursue the game. Interesting architecture breeds passion for the game.

A First Tee course may get kids started playing, but where do the same kids move on to when they're beyond the beginner stage? And how about the everyday beginners who want to keep playing but can only afford the local municipals?

The question is who will pay for restoration of the classic municipal courses. Who will guide the courses to the promised land? After all, Palmer Management and Kemper Sports have tossed in the towel with San Francisco and its moronic mayor, who is owned by the local unions. The USGA, which helped finance the Bethpage Black project, and the PGA Tour seem interested in revitalizing municipal

Restore Public Golf Courses — Now

BY GEOFF SHACKELFORD



**BETTER MAINTAINED
MUNICIPAL COURSES
ARE VITAL TO
RETAINING THE
3 MILLION GOLFERS
WHO QUIT THE
SPORT EVERY YEAR**

courses only if there are big checks in it for them. In the USGA's case, it will be big bucks generated from next year's U.S. Open.

With a sizeable chunk of change in the bank and apparently no desire to use it to ward off litigious equipment companies, the USGA should look into a permanent loan program that is not necessarily tied to a major event. It should consider loans or incentive programs to municipalities that show a desire to rejuvenate their classic facilities. The Green Section is in place to help the agronomic side, and there are plenty of architects looking to do some good in their neighborhoods.

Like the trend of new retro ballparks that have helped return fans to baseball games, bringing back interesting design features will endear these great old facilities to golfers. The positive energy will spread throughout the facility, the city or the county. Like Bethpage, it can make a difference if common sense is used.

In every survey, the National Golf Foundation keeps announcing the most effective methods to retain golfers and attract new ones, but the golf business is not listening. Lower-cost and alternative golf courses (par 3, executive, etc.) that take less time to play will grow the game, NGF says.

Golf needs to forget about growth and start worrying about keeping more players. Better maintained municipal courses with interesting designs are vital to retaining the 3 million golfers who quit the sport every year.

Is there enough common sense in the golf business to see that Bethpage-like projects can make an impact? Of course. Golf just needs a gentle helping hand. The USGA would be a great candidate to help — before it completely loses its credibility.

*Geoff Shackelford can be reached at
geoffshackelford@aol.com*



WHY PUT UP WITH
POA?

MANAGE IT, SUPPRESS IT, CONTROL IT, FIGHT IT.

For most golf course superintendents, *Poa annua* is their number one weed problem. Since this robust annual bluegrass prefers cool, moist conditions for germination and growth, it flourishes from fall to spring. Hence, it has a strong competitive edge over the grasses many courses prefer. Combine this natural advantage with close mowing and frequent irrigation, and *Poa* can easily become dominant. In fact, *Poa annua* has become so prevalent on putting greens and fairways around the country that many superintendents have simply chosen to live with it.

We want to help them fight back.



The Chipco *Poa Annua* Initiative

We at Chipco Professional Products are determined to beat *Poa*. With the broadest range of leading-edge herbicides in the industry and the most knowledgeable and experienced turf experts, we are prepared to assume a leadership role in addressing the problem - con-

ducting field research, establishing best practices, and developing new products. We're organizing our efforts around this label: "The Chipco *Poa annua* Initiative." It's a phrase you'll be hearing often in the weeks and months ahead.

An annual occurrence. A perennial problem.

Some superintendents consider *Poa* to be a desirable turfgrass, but there is an indisputable problem with it: seed heads.

Poa plants produce seeds at almost every mowing height, often for several months straight. Each plant can generate more than 350 viable, visible seeds, enough to "whiten" the lush, green color of a course and detract from its aesthetic value. The seeds also scatter like confetti and are capable of lying dormant in the soil for years before germinating. Germination itself occurs in a range of temperatures spanning at least 30 degrees, and at any time from late summer through fall, even in the winter.

Suppress it, manage it, or control it?

Despite its vigor and efficiency, *Poa* can be controlled. Your Chipco representative can advise you on the best product or products to use given the specifics of your location, your turfgrass, and your *Poa* problem. The key components of most programs would be one or more of these products . . .

Prograss Herbicide: The only one for pre- and postemergent control.



Unlike other selective herbicides, Prograss Herbicide provides both pre and post emergent control of annual bluegrass. This unique advantage doubles the effectiveness of a control program since it allows you to attack the *Poa* in both its cool season germination period and its growth period. When applied at labeled rates, Prograss can be used safely on the most popular actively growing turfgrass species, and also on dormant Bermudagrass.

Prograss is designed to be applied during the fall and spring. Generally, 2 to 3 applications are the rule in the fall, with 21 to 28 day intervals between them. Spring requires 1 to 3 applications, with the same number of days in between. Application rates and timing depend on your specific situation.

Ronstar: Pre emergent *Poa* control without turf root pruning.



Ronstar has long been the preemergent herbicide of choice for the control of goosegrass and crabgrass in warm-season turfgrass, not only because of its effectiveness, but also because Ronstar is not a DNA herbicide and therefore does not cause turfgrass root pruning. Now, more and more superintendents are discovering that Ronstar also does a great job of controlling *Poa*.

Because *Poa* is a winter annual, pre-emergent control using Ronstar demands a fall application on non-overseeded turf. Ronstar won't degrade unless soil temperatures exceed 60 degrees for an extended period of time, so it remains in place and potent through the fall and winter and into the spring.



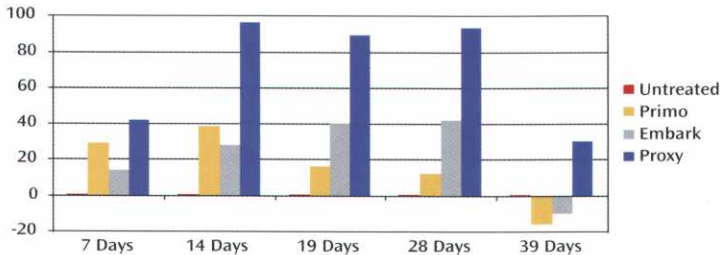
Proxy PGR: A unique plant growth regulator that suppresses *Poa* seed heads.



Proxy has been shown to reduce visible seed heads in *Poa* for periods of 14 to 28 days after a single application. In addition, Proxy improved the surface quality and appearance of the existing turf, by increasing turf density and uniformity.

Poa seed head suppression was not on the original Proxy label, but that benefit became apparent during the product's first season on the market. This use has been added to the label since. Superintendents might appreciate the fact that Proxy also suppresses white clover flowers, which attract bees to courses, without damaging the clover plant.

Percent Control of Seed Heads on *Poa annua* Putting Green



DAT = Days After Treatment.

* Embark was tankmixed with Ferromec (3.0 oz./M) and Surfside (2.0 oz./M).

Initial application made July 16, 1999.

The Links at Spanish Bay, Pebble Beach, California.

PB9902: The Pebble Beach Company and MMM & Associates

Finale: For fast, non-selective control.



When the percentage of *Poa* in your turf exceeds 50%, complete renovation may be necessary. This involves spraying the infested area with Finale, a non-selective, post-emergent herbicide, in order to kill all existing grasses, then overseeding with your desired turfgrass in late summer or early fall.

Finale works quickly, even in cool temperatures that slow the action of other non-selective herbicides. Targeted plants are dead in 1 to 4 days. And Finale is rainfast in an average of just 4 hours. Finale stays put, too; there is none of the "creep" you typically see with other brands. Reseeding is possible within one day.

After the new grass has established itself, regular applications of Prograss or Ronstar will help maintain high-quality turf.

Finale may also be used to control *Poa* in well established ornamental dormant hybrid or common bermudagrass. It should be applied only when the turf is fully dormant and prior to spring green-up.

A MEETING OF THE MINDS.

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Professional Products

POA SUMMIT 2001



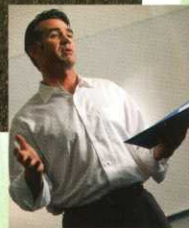
Welcome to the *Poa* Summit.

We'll be talking about *Poa* in greater detail at the Chipco *Poa* Summit this year, a unique convergence of many of the top *Poa* researchers from across the country. The four-day event will include sessions on *Poa* biology and biotypes, control strategies, herbicide resistance, and new research proposals, all led and attended by dozens of the most experienced and knowledgeable turf scientists and professionals in the industry. We'll

talk, too, about how Chipco products can be used to take on *Poa* and what new products and ideas we're working on.

It's the formal launch of our *Poa* initiative and the first of many important events we'll be sponsoring as efforts to thoroughly understand and effectively control *Poa* gather momentum. As more and more information is exchanged and discussed and more research is funded and conducted, we'll move closer and closer to effective, sustainable solutions to the *Poa* problem.

In the meanwhile, we'll do our best to keep you informed of *Poa* developments along the way.



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Bethpage State Park's
renaissance proves
a run-down public golf course
can be revitalized – and host
a U.S. Open

Black's Magic

STORY & PHOTOS BY GEOFF SHACKELFORD
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

After entering the Bethpage State Park golf course complex, visitors are teased with two signs reminding them the U.S. Open will be staged there next year. Making your way through the parking lot, you feel the energy of the five-course complex and remodeled clubhouse. The improved facilities, the upgraded golf courses and the general enthusiasm of golfers changing shoes in the massive parking lot bring to mind the hundreds of public golf facilities in

America that are not on such an upswing.

A first-time visitor to Bethpage sees what the economic and architectural renaissance has done for a place once known for being the quintessential run-down public course. But you're left to wonder: Can this type of revival only happen when a facility is awarded a U.S. Open?

You also ask yourself: Are millions of dollars in corporate tent revenue and merchandise sales the only enticement for a local or state government to take serious interest in one of its historically important facilities? Is an approaching tournament the only way for a bureaucratically controlled facility to employ quality golf course maintenance personnel?

The Bethpage State Park renaissance proves that a U.S. Open or a major tournament is the best recipe to receive the financing necessary to restore and sustain a popular public facility. But a closer look at Bethpage also reveals that with common sense, quality personnel, hard work and a strong foundation created by architects from a previous era, similar projects can happen throughout the country. Not only would

Continued on page 40

▲ Bethpage State Park used the U.S. Golf Association's money to return design integrity to A.W. Tillinghast's classic layout.

► Signs of the facility's resurgence, emblematic of the energy created by the influx of funds, are everywhere.



Continued from page 39

such projects create more jobs for superintendents and apprentices, they would also create a long-term golfing environment breeding devoted customers — something the golf business is having a difficult time sustaining these days.

The USGA kick

The Bethpage story has been told several times, but key facts are worth repeating. The U.S. Golf Association's staff joined forces with New York's state government to restore the park's A.W. Tillinghast-designed Black Course. With the USGA's pledge of \$2.7 million and the pro-bono advice of architect Rees Jones, the state upgraded the facility to receive the 2002 U.S. Open.



Head superintendent Craig Currier (left), who oversees all Bethpage courses, fields a question from a golfer.

Naturally, the USGA gets a cut of the revenues, expected to be astronomically high thanks to Bethpage's space for corporate tents and parking. A special routing that combines holes from the other Bethpage courses will be used during U.S. Open week. Corporate tent buyers have first priority to play and are expected to pay lavishly for the privilege to tee it up within yards of the world's best.

The reason for Bethpage's success started and continues with strong governmental support, followed by the hiring of energetic and highly qualified golf course maintenance personnel. Led by Governor George Pataki and Parks Commissioner Bernadette Castro, New York provided Bethpage Park Supervisor Dave Catalano the support necessary to sustain the USGA's initial investment. In turn, Catalano has supported the efforts of superintendent Craig Currier, who oversees the maintenance of the four courses.

"Dave Catalano has worked in the park system since 1966 and understands what equipment we need," says Garrett Boddington, superintendent of the Black Course. Boddington worked at Augusta National, Meadow Brook GC and Garden City GC before coming to Bethpage.

"Dave knows the ins and outs of state government politics, particularly the state bid system," Boddington says. "We get great prices on equipment and have the chance to try out whatever we need."

Bethpage continues to roll with a new maintenance strategy and a common-sense approach to government policy — not only in the improvement of the Black Course, but in the entire facility.

Maintenance renaissance

Bethpage was legendary in the Long Island region for shoddy maintenance practices. Local superintendents laugh about stories of pickup trucks towing gang mowers to cut roughs — and even fairways.

That's a far cry from today. It's common to see Carrier operating heavy machinery to rebuild tees and restore bunkers on the Red, Blue and Yellow courses. Maintenance crew members are scattered throughout the property, latching on to whatever jobs need to get done. On average, Boddington supervises about 24 crew members on the Black Course, with anywhere from six to 10 drifting over to other courses to help out on various daily tasks.

"We knew this investment would have to transcend the Black Course for it to be a true success," Catalano says. "We had the good fortune of hiring Currier, who has a lot of talent. We have a well-motivated crew. The government's support means we're doing a lot of the work at a substantially lower cost."

Currier and his staff have made further improvements since the USGA's initial investment. New tee boxes were constructed on key holes and tees were resurfaced on par 3s prone to rapid wear and tear. Subtle incorporation of fescue grasses, extensive tree removal on the eighth hole and the overall attention to detail have improved the Black Course substantially. It's in such good shape that, instead of the course closing for the entire spring of 2002 leading up to the U.S. Open, it will only be closed for two weeks prior to the event.