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Golfdom

SEPTEMBER 2001 • VOLUME 57 • NUMBER 9

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Blazing a New Trail

THE PUTTING SURFACE

In this issue, *Golfdom* reports on matters affecting greens, from speed to electric triplex greens mowers. See the stories in our "The Putting Surface" section.

32

Blast Off

Skyrocketing expectations about fast greens ignore good turf maintenance practices — and the good of the game.

By Ron Furlong

39

Giving A Charge?

No one can say whether the electric triplex greens mower will transform the way the industry does maintenance. But the machine is gaining a presence in the industry.

By Larry Aylward

43

Rollers Revisited

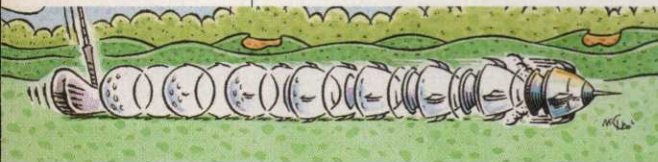
The need for speed may force superintendents to reconsider rollers. Can they make a comeback?

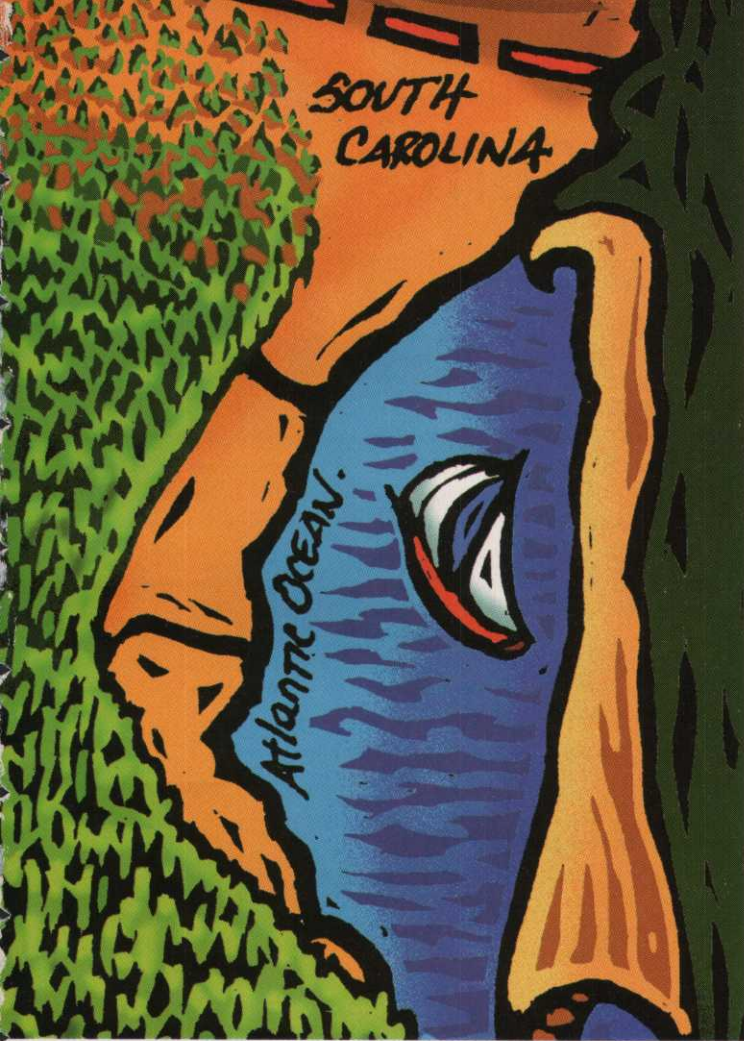
By Frank H. Andorka Jr.

36

Inside the Fringe

News from the dance floor, including updates on velvet bentgrass and painting cups to get the tournament look.





cover story

BY SHANE SHARP

The brash, new bermudas are headed north, challenging bentgrass varieties as a choice for greens in new areas of the country.

26

About the cover

We asked illustrator David W. Fogle of Rocky River, Ohio, to depict the Johnny Appleseed of the industry on our cover. Only in this case it's Johnny Bermudaseed.



46

Beware of Lyme Disease

The risk of contracting the tick-borne ailment is higher than you think. Here's how to prevent getting it. Part four of our Living Well series

By Robin Suttell

50

columns

- 10 **Flagstick**
Summertime's Best and Worst
- 12 **Pin High**
Time to Confront Evil, Menacing ELF
- 23 **Shades of Green**
Parallel Universes Divide Industry
- 38 **Designs On Golf**
Do You Need a Signature Hole?
- 57 **Dave's World**
The Things We Can't Live Without
- 64 **Out of Bounds**
Traveling Tips

real-life solutions

- 52 **Bermuda on Target**
Superintendent praises Bull's-Eye for surviving an extreme, unforeseen water shortage

departments

- 6 **Events**
- 8 **Going Postal**
- 14 **Off the Fringe**
- 20 **Hole of the Month**
- 59 **Tips: Increasing Pace of Play**
- 62 **Company Line**
- 63 **Classifieds**

News with a hook

- 14 **Worth the Trouble?**
- 16 **This Much I Know**

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Circle No. 104

Events

SEMINARS & CONFERENCES

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

13-14 GCSAA 75th Anniversary Celebration
Lawrence, Kan.
Contact 800-472-7878

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

1 Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents' Monthly Meeting
Geneva, Ill.
Contact 847-677-4112

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

8-10 Northwest Turfgrass Association Annual Meeting
Contact 541-549-1960

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

5 Oregon GCSA's Environmental Meeting
Welches, Ore.
Contact 541-549-1960

6 Iowa GCSA Annual State Meeting
West Des Moines, Iowa
Contact 515-232-8222

6-9 West Virginia GCSA's Annual Turf Conference and Show
Morgantown, W.Va.
Contact 304-243-4112

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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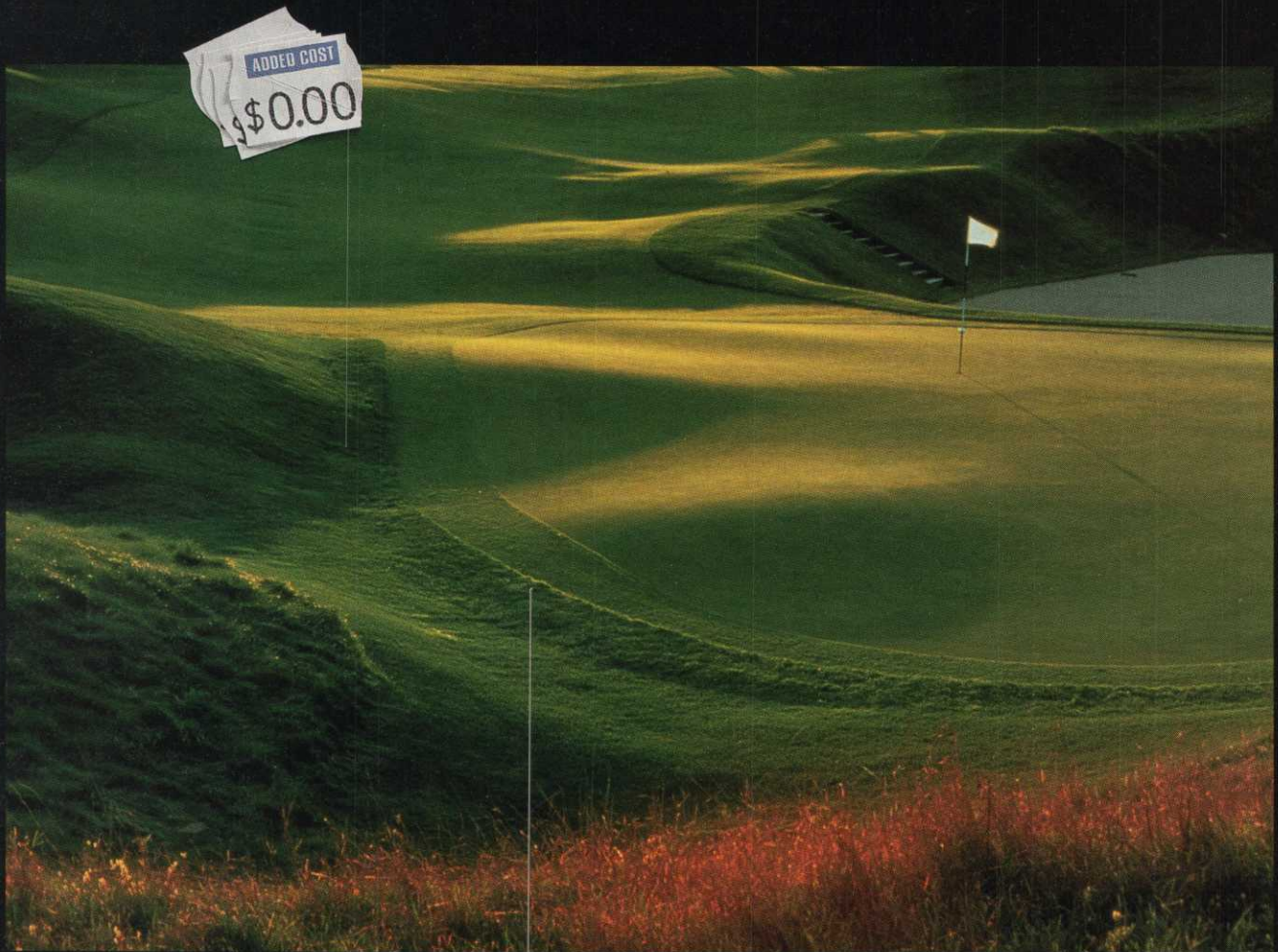
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Going Postal

■ WE'VE GOT MAIL

Defending Defibrillators

This morning I picked up a copy of *Golfdom* while waiting for a meeting at city hall. As a local Fire Rescue Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Division Chief, I was disturbed by some of the information and comments found in the article "Defibrillator Demand?" (June). First, all local laws do not dictate that a medical director be in place at a golf course for AED placement. In most cases, it only takes a prescription from a physician (though each jurisdiction may be slightly different and should be consulted prior to getting an AED unit). In addition, we only charge \$20 per student for AED instruction, not the \$50 to \$70 per student indicated in the article. I was most concerned, however, by Don Mahaffey's com-



Defibrillators spark debate

ments regarding AEDs on his course. He is quoted as saying his local fire department would rather his course not have AEDs, but instead hopes the course will concentrate on getting help as quickly as possible.

Getting help is an important component of the survival chain, but early defibrillation is equally important. I have never heard the views of Mahaffey's fire department from any other fire/rescue agency. As the article correctly reported, a golf course is the perfect location for these devices. In our city (which includes the PGA of America headquarters and resort), we maintain an average response time of five minutes. This is not always the case, however, when responding to a cardiac arrest call on a golf

course. In those situations, our response includes making our way slowly to the patient with our ambulance on the course or loading equipment to a golf car for transport. This all takes valuable time. A cardiac arrest victim's chance of survival decreases 7 percent to 10 percent for each minute he or she goes without defibrillation.

To give them the best possible chance of survival, AEDs should be part of every golf course's minimum equipment. I commend those courses that have had the forethought to get these life-saving devices in place.

**Chris R. Brown, EMS Commander
Palm Beach Gardens Fire Rescue
Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.**

Ill-conceived Comparisons

I'm writing in response to the article "Nothing to Fear but Fear Itself" (Flagstick, July). I loathe the attitude about our profession that the article espouses — that being a superintendent is more difficult and stressful than any other job.

You compare an accountant who makes a minor math error to an herbicide contamination. If putting herbicide where it shouldn't be is a minor error, what is a major one? I think a fairer comparison would be if the accountant made a mistake so bad that the IRS was investigating his client.

Everyone has budgets to meet, difficult bosses, office politics and occasionally unfair performance judgements. People in all professions have to justify their salaries against what they are worth to their organizations. Those stresses aren't limited to superintendents.

You make an excellent point about taking care of your life and remembering what really matters, but please get off the high horse

and realize that everyone has stress.

**Tony Campanella, Superintendent
Hampshire CC
Mamaroneck, N.Y.**

Lighten Up!

Editor's Note: In the July issue, John Baute of the CC of New Orleans, wrote a letter that criticized Golfdom for running what he considered a photo of Southern Hills CC superintendent John Szklinski using unsafe practices on his golf course. Szklinski responds:

It has been quite an educational experience as the host superintendent of the 101st U.S. Open. You can't completely comprehend how wonderful it is until you experience it. I have been extremely fortunate in my budding career to experience all that life has to offer.

I've also learned that there are individuals who always choose to look at the negative, and it would appear, that John Baute (Letters, July) is such a person.

He assumed the material being dispensed from the Multipro was fertilizer, but it was only sand. We at Southern Hills don't require our staff to wear protective gear when working with wet sand, nor do we require our membership to wear protective gear while playing recovery shots from our bunkers. Additionally, Baute assumed the vehicle was in motion, but it wasn't.

It's a shame that Baute has a tendency to search for the negative. Life is awesome, so enjoy it.

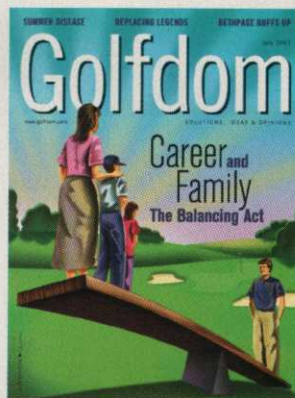
**John Szklinski, Superintendent
Southern Hills CC
Tulsa, Okla.**

On the Mark

I have been the wife of a superintendent for almost four years now. Every now and again, I like to read some of the articles in my husband's golf publications. "Career and Family The Balancing Act"

(July) caught my eye, and I read it to see what people in the industry had to say about balancing this stressful career and having a family.

When I met my husband, he was about to attend turf school at the University of Massachusetts. He explained to me what taking care of



a golf course entailed. It was not until the following year, when he attended the turf program at Rutgers University, that I really understood what superintendents do, however.

When he would visit me or I would visit him, I would help him study the different varieties of grass, trees, plants and diseases. I was amazed and impressed by the amount of knowledge it took to do his job and do it well.

Although I do miss him during the summer and jokingly call myself a "golf widow," I understand why Brian keeps the hours he does. I also know that in November we'll have more time together and will take a much-needed vacation.

**Kim Luccini
West Kingston, R. I.**

Feel like going postal? We want to hear from you. You can e-mail your letters to Frank Andorka at fandorka@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.

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For most superintendents outside of the Sun Belt, Labor Day is like the finish line in a marathon course lined with land mines. The end of the hellicious summer of 2001 (which seemed to instantly arrive after a winter that just wouldn't quit) seems like a good time to reflect on the best and worst of our version of the silly season.

Best recovery from a near-death experience: Winterkill hit many in the Northeast, but nowhere did it hit harder than Salem CC in Massachusetts, site of the U.S. Senior Open. Kip Tyler, his crew and the USGA Green Section brought the course back from death's door in a matter of two months. Nice work, guys.

Best trend of the summer: Thanks largely to the efforts of local superintendents and the GCSAA, golf media in the Northeast were actively supportive of superintendents whose courses were hit by winterkill. Maybe some of these local scribes are finally starting to get it.

Best place to hang out for an architecture junkie: The ASGCA's Donald Ross Banquet, where you can rub elbows and talk shop with the world's finest designers — and then watch them sheepishly edge over to the head table to get autographs from Jack and Arnie.

Worst pest of the summer: This is a tie between the armyworm, which unexpectedly ravaged many courses in the North, and that nasty little woman who hosts "Weakest Link."

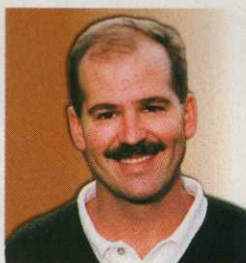
Worst development trend: Some new courses we visited that were opened WAAAAAY too early under terrible agronomic circumstances. Developers are in such a huge hurry to cut cups and start the cash flow that basic grow-in practices are ignored. My message to the money men: A little patience will pay off within a year or two.

One notable exception to the sod-it-and-sell-it phenomenon: David Pursell of PTI, who broke ground on his FarmLinks course in Alabama early this summer. The golf caps given to guests at the event had "Est. 2003" embroidered on the back.

Best round of golf I didn't play: I was merely a spectator at the pro/am honoring superintendents at the John Deere Classic in July. But I nonetheless sweated along with the superinten-

Summertime's Best and Worst

BY PAT JONES



JOHN DEERE

DESERVES CREDIT
FOR TURNING THE
CLASSIC INTO A
PUBLIC SHOWCASE
FOR THE
PROFESSION

dents, employers, Tour players and Deere staff who endured a 120-degree heat index to play TPC at Deere Run the Monday before the Classic. And you know what? Despite being baked to medium well, these guys absolutely loved the course and the experience.

Best of all, Big Green has turned the Classic into an unparalleled public showcase for superintendents. At Deere's urging, CBS and the rest of the media generated more awareness of superintendents and maintenance in one week than the rest of the Tour events do in the entire year.

Worst round of golf I did play: I dropped into a well-promoted daily fee in the Midwest for a quick 18 with a friend. After we paid and we're heading out of the pro shop, I gave my card to the assistant pro behind the desk and said, "Please give my regards to your superintendent." He said, "Oh, we don't even have one. We just hire some college kids and some (insert Hispanic ethnic slur here) and the place looks just fine."

After about six holes of hitting balls off dirt and clover, we bagged it and went to a real golf course with a real superintendent.

Worst reporting gaffe of the summer: In my August column, I suggested GCSAA would try to solicit funds from industry companies for its planned new political-action committee. Bzzzzz! Wrong! PACs can only take contributions from individuals. Companies usually can't contribute ... so they'll be soliciting you instead.

Worst proofreading gaffe of the summer: Misspelling Ken Mangum's name in August's Hole of the Month. Doh! Sorry Ken.

Best final words about this summer: It's over.

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