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Golfdom

JULY 2002 • VOLUME 58 • NO. 7

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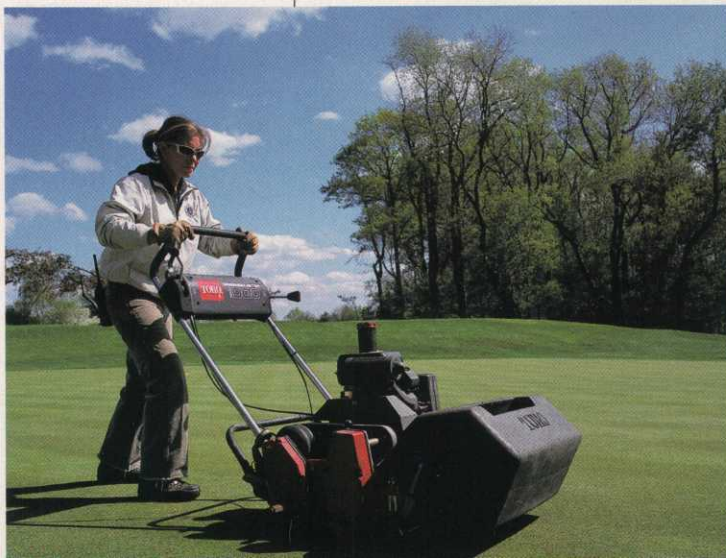


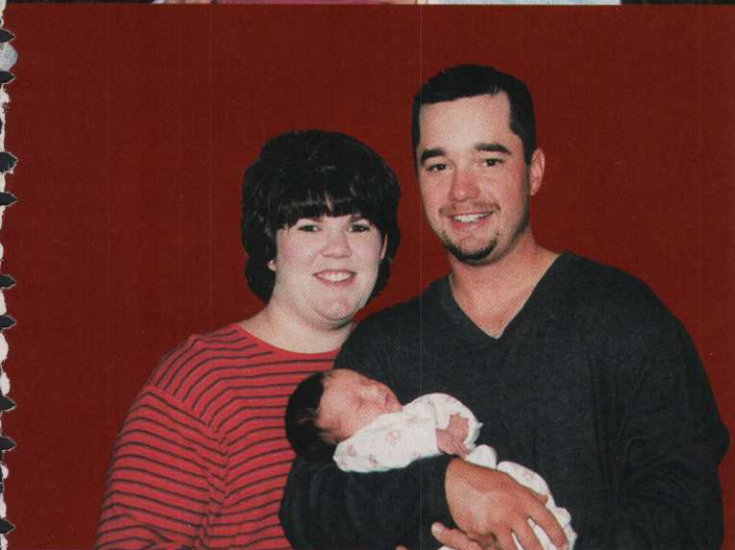
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She's a Woman in a Man's World

But Jennifer Mongeluzo plans on making her mark as a superintendent.

By Robin Suttell





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BY LARRY AYLWARD

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Art Director Lisa Lehman designed this cool typographic cover for our lead story.

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We Goofed

In our May story about organic fertilizers ("Do They or Don't They?"), we inadvertently misidentified the parent company that produces Nature Safe fertilizer. The parent company is Griffin Industries, based in Cold Spring, Ky. Also in that issue, we wrongly identified the hole of the month at East Lake GC. It is No. 18.

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By Frank H. Andorka Jr.

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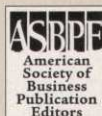
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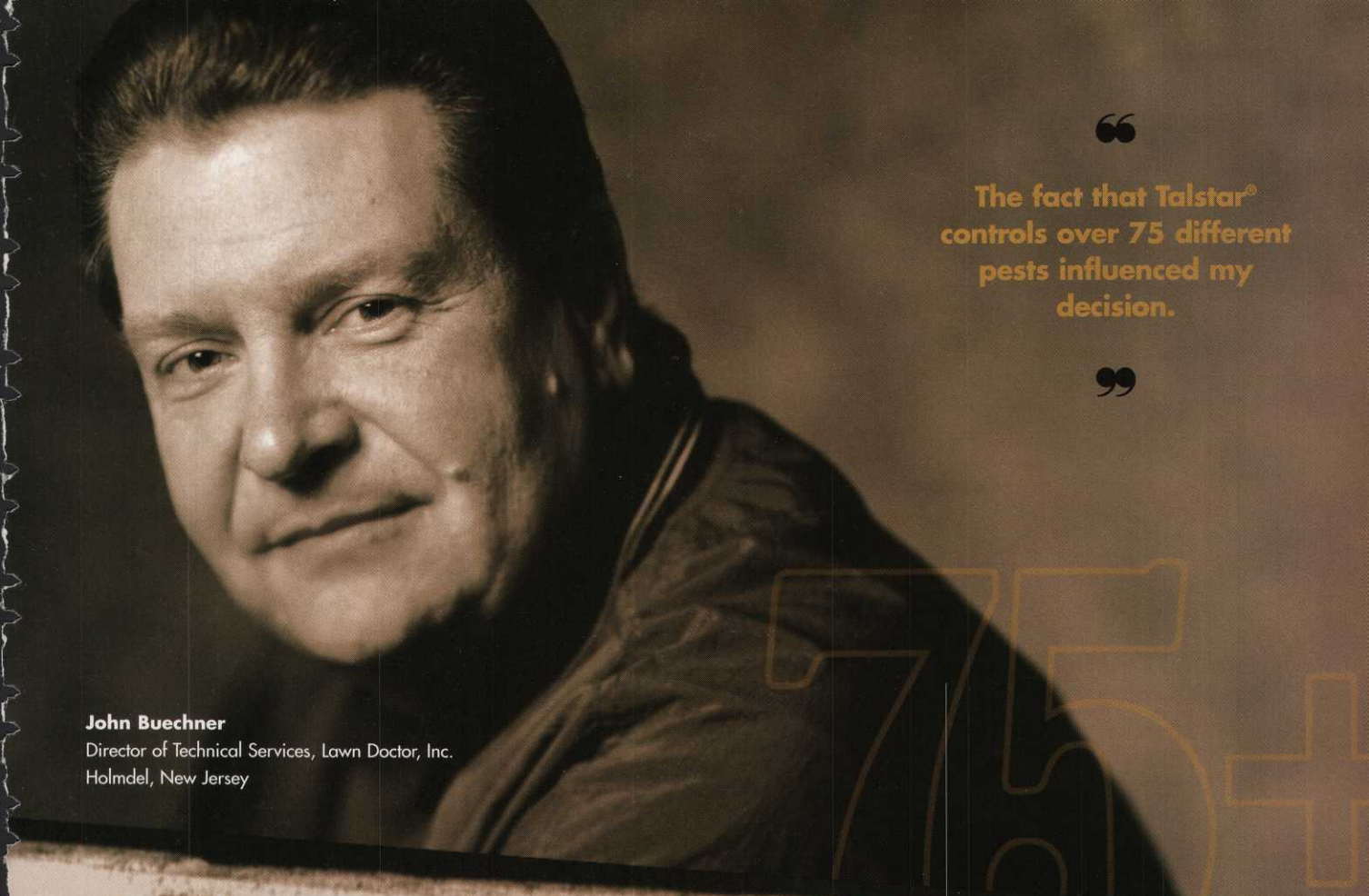
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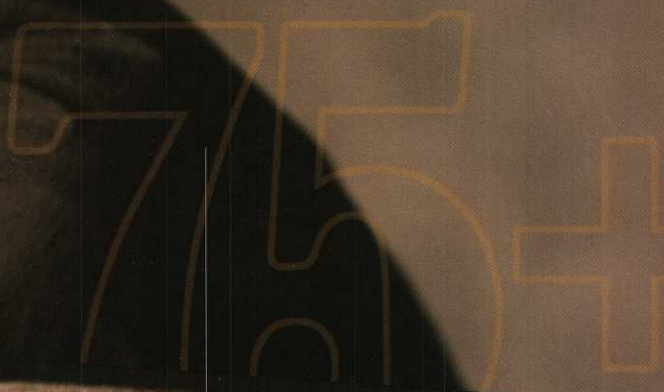




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Here's some advice if you're ever invited to give a speech at an industry conference or chapter meeting: Avoid being scheduled into the dreaded "right-after-lunch" spot. More importantly, run like hell if they try to put you in the nightmarish "after-the-golf-outing-but-before-the-prizes" slot.

I've learned that trying to get the attention of people who've spent the morning in a darkened seminar room and then consumed a large lunch is nearly futile. Getting the attention of folks who've just played 18 holes (and perhaps consumed a frosty beverage or two) is roughly as difficult as juggling greased chain saws while wearing boxing gloves.

Nonetheless, I recently happily accepted the challenge of being the post-golf speaker at a joint meeting of the Wisconsin GCSA and PGA chapters. The WGCSA is one of my favorite groups, and the idea of speaking at its annual get-together with the state's pros was pretty cool.

I figured I had about 18 minutes to cram in my thoughts before I was rendered irrelevant by the combined effects of golf, beer and a burning desire to collect their prizes.

So I yelled . . . real loud . . . for 18 minutes.

Here's what I hollered about: In the modern golf marketplace, it's not "important" for superintendents and pros to cooperate; it's mandatory.

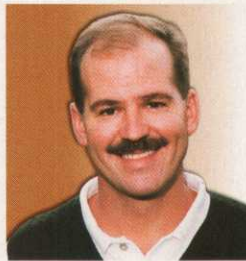
In case you haven't noticed, we've built a gazillion new courses over the past five years but the number of rounds played nationwide has essentially remained flat. That means new and old facilities are beating the stuffing out of each other for their share of the same market we had in 1996. If the pro and superintendent aren't working as a team, the facility's chances of success are thinner than Ally McBeal.

More importantly, there are some cold, hard pocketbook reasons to build better partnerships between the pro shop and maintenance facility. Here are three that have some appeal.

First, I've come across an increasing number of courses — many operated by management companies — that put the super and the pro on a shared bonus or incentive program. Part of this usually involves hitting certain profitability numbers through a combination of revenue growth and cost control. It forces the two managers to

Time To Tear Down The Wall

BY PAT JONES



COURSES CAN SURVIVE THE TRADITIONAL SEPARATION BETWEEN PRO SHOP AND MAINTENANCE, BUT FEW WILL THRIVE IN A TIGHT MARKET

think carefully about issues like restricting carts, height of cut in the roughs, tree management and other maintenance vs. revenue matters. But if they work as a team and hit their target, there are financial rewards that they share equally.

Second, I like creative, cooperative programs that help solve problems like slow play or unrepaired ballmarks. The best of these involve "catching someone doing something right" and rewarding them. For example, at public courses, why not have rangers or even maintenance staff carry coupons to hand to players they spot properly fixing ballmarks or filling divots? Better yet, make the coupon good for \$3 off the player's next round at the facility, which would give him or her an incentive to return. The idea is to reinforce good behavior.

Lastly, customer-satisfaction surveying is one of the fastest-growing trends in golf management. These range from simple rate-your-experience cards handed out with scorecards at daily fees to extensive member questionnaires at private clubs. Here's the twist: Superintendents and pros can use surveying to help build a bonus program. The idea is to go to ownership and say, "If we can increase overall customer satisfaction by 10 percent, you should give each of us a \$2,000 bonus." It has appeal as a management tool because it's measurable, it's customer-oriented and it's easy to do. Best of all, it's one more thing that encourages the superintendent and pro to think and act as a team.

Courses can probably survive the traditional "wall of separation" between golf shop and maintenance operations, but I doubt too many will thrive in a ever-tightening market. To paraphrase Ronald Reagan — it's time to tear down that wall.

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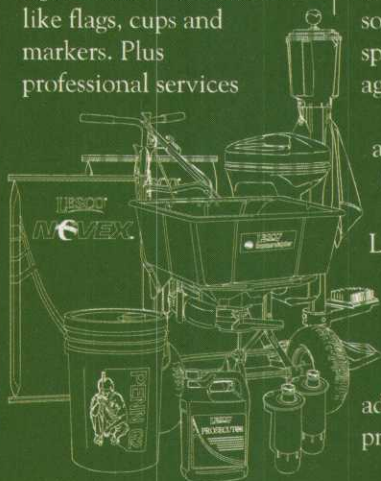
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It was like a scene out of Alfred Hitchcock's *The Birds*. I was walking toward the front door of the *Golfdom* office when a Canada goose swooped from its flight and tried to take my head off.

I backpedaled to avoid the sinister bird — its wings flapping, eyes bulging and beak hissing. But the goose knocked me off balance, and I fell into the mud. "Expletive! Expletive! Expletive!" I yelled. Then the goose landed nearby and began to charge me.

Hell yes, I was scared. I picked myself up and scurried to the door. I flung it open and hurried inside. I stood there for a few seconds — caked with mud, out of breath and shaking.

Then I realized that people — my co-workers — were watching me. They howled when I told them what happened.

A month later, I'm still living down the goose jokes. That dang bird bought me a lot of flak.

So you might think I'd be happy that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently proposed a new regulation to possibly give states more authority to kill geese to control their population. Well, I'm not.

This is going to sound strange, but I forgive the goose that attacked me. I now know he did what he did because I was treading on his territory. The walkway leading into our office door is close to the goose and his mate's nest, which happened to contain several eggs. The goose was only protecting his family. How can you fault him for that?

Yeah, there's a chance I could have been hurt during the attack. I could've sprained an ankle while tumbling to the mud, or the goose could have made Mike Tyson and champed part of my ear off. (Thank God I wasn't hurt or I never would've been able to live it down!) But I figure getting beat up by a goose is a long shot.

The goose and his pals have been hanging around here for several years. Nobody has much good to say about them. They're not cute, and they doodle all over the place. In the spring, when their eggs are ready to hatch, they become so protective of their young that they turn as surly as Albert Belle.

I know superintendents who also have problems with geese nesting on their golf

I'm Siding With the Geese on This One

BY LARRY AYLWARD



BEFORE WE
INHUMANELY WASTE
THEM, LET'S MAKE
SURE THE GEESE
PROBLEM IS AS
BIG AS WE WANT
TO BELIEVE



courses. The geese eat turf, harass golfers and leave a trail of dung. The superintendents battle back with border collies and other humane means to get rid of the birds.

I feel for those superintendents because they have enough to do without having to tend to pesky geese. But I still don't agree it's right to give them the freedom to kill geese. Yes, I'm siding with the animal activists on this one. No, I'm not a vegetarian and have been known to eat three Whoppers (with cheese) at a sitting.

I can't help but realize that geese, as nasty as they can be, possess a few endearing qualities. Did you know they mate for life? Did you know they constantly look out for one another during their lives? In fact, one goose will stay by its mate's side if it's injured or dying.

Let's face it: A lot of human beings don't possess those character qualities.

Reportedly, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service wants to eliminate about 25 percent of the roughly 3.5 million Canada geese that nest in the United States. Don't get me wrong: I'm all for controlling geese, especially at airports, where flocks pose clear danger. Let's just not take the easy way out and conveniently and inhumanely waste them. Let's be more tolerant in our approach. Let's make sure the geese problem is as big as we want to believe. (It's not just the poop, is it?)

First and foremost, you need to ask yourselves a few questions: Have you exhausted all nonfatal remedies to control geese? Have the border collies, plastic alligators and artificial distress calls stopped working?

If the answer is no, then do the right thing.

Finally, I remind you that this column is written by someone who was attacked and humbled by a goose — and lived to tell about it.

Editor Larry Aylward can be reached at 440-891-2770 or l aylward@advanstar.com.