

Quotable

"Maybe we're all supposed to stink at this. It's our punishment for playing this insane game."

— *Golf commentator David Feherty on the average golf score, which has not changed for decades. (New York Times)*

"Leadership can be taught, learned and developed. The pay-back comes both in information gained and in lasting friendships."

— *Trent Bouts, executive director of the Carolinas Golf Course Superintendents Association.*

"I do like disease. If that makes me strange, so be it."

— *Bruce Clarke, director of the Rutgers Center for Turfgrass Science and a turf disease aficionado.*

"We're looking for big things out of this study," he added.

Falagan also said the MWD is offering incentives to courses that upgrade their irrigation systems and utilize detailed water budgets.

► Kevin Heaney, the assistant executive director of the SCGA and a representative of the lobbyist group California Alliance for Golf, said many golf course personnel are still a bit apathetic when it comes to water issues.

"They think perhaps the biggest issue confronting golf is the hot golf ball and how the elite players are hitting that hot golf ball and how it's making golf courses

obsolete," he said. "I guarantee you that that is an issue in golf, but that's certainly not the biggest threat to golf. We think water is our single biggest concern at this point, and that's where the California Alliance for Golf is focusing most of its efforts.

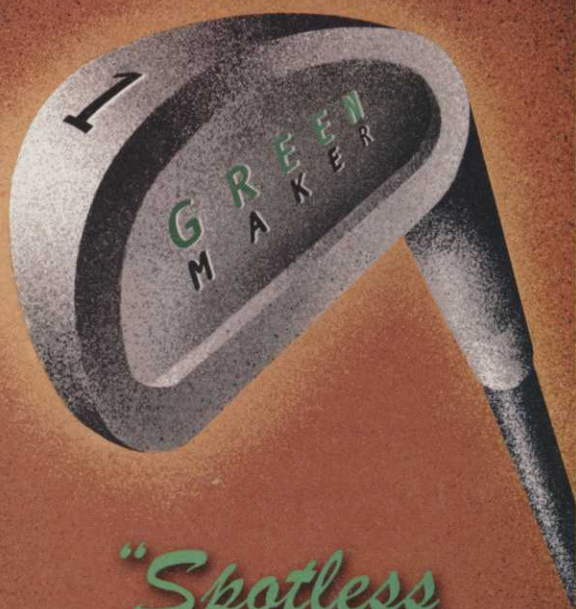
"In the big picture, golf isn't using much water. However, it's also a very visible use of water, and when people are concerned about water, and if their water is restricted at all, the first [one] they are going to point at is the golf course down the street because we do, unfortunately, still have the image of being the fat cats."



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Off The Fringe

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pleased with the operating performance of our new Service Centers and view this segment as our best avenue to consistently grow earnings over time."

Pulliam said Syngenta didn't agree with that approach. "We still value salespeople who are on the ground standing in front of an end-use customer and providing value and services and agronomic skills," Pulliam said. "We think end users value that and will align themselves with channel partners or distributors who do that."

DiMino said he thinks Syngenta has a goal of owning or controlling the relationship with the end-user on the golf course. "I think that's the role of the distributor, whether it's LESCO or another distributor," he added.

Pulliam stressed that it's not the company's goal to own or control such relationships.

"At the end of the day it's all about the end user and in this case were talking about superintendents," Pulliam said. "It's about meeting their needs

"By severing the relationship, it gives us the opportunity to expand in molecules that we didn't expand on before."

BRIAN ROWAN, LESCO

and providing the best possible end-user experience we can provide. No one owns that relationship. You do that in partnership."

DiMino said all of the Syngenta

products that LESCO will soon lose are replaceable with other molecules from other brands. "So we don't think we're going to lose any sales," he added.

But superintendents will no longer be able to purchase PRIMO, a widely used plant growth regulator, from LESCO.

"On a given product we may have some shortcomings," said Brian Rowan, LESCO's senior director of merchandising. "But by severing the relationship, it gives us the opportunity to expand in molecules that we didn't

expand on before because of our relationship."

While the relationship is over, it will officially conclude after a transition period.

Princess 77 Provided Cimarrón Golf Course with the Cost Effective Solution for Their Renovation Project



Mario Aguilar, Golf Course Superintendent for Cimarrón Golf Course in Cathedral City, California kneels on a renovated fairway of Princess 77.



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*Response of Bermudagrasses and Zoysiagrasses to Applied Water Using a Linear Gradient Irrigation Design, Sean Reynolds, 2000, Master's Thesis



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As the baby boomer generation begins to phase out and burn out from superintendent positions on golf courses and association boards, I'm hoping there are enough dedicated and motivated members of the so-called Generations X and Y to fill the voids, especially when it comes to volunteer service in our professional associations.

I have no doubt there will be plenty of bodies to fill the jobs on golf courses, but I feel like the generation gap for association service isn't being bridged as well as it should, and I wonder if the younger generations "get it."

The image, salaries and respect that superintendents have today is not a product of the benevolence and insight of course owners, members, managers or golf professionals. It is because superintendents formed local, state and national associations and volunteered their time to address issues that were professional, educational and political. This proud history of growth and accomplishment often gets lost in the hustle and bustle of today's world.

The mere sharing of knowledge at meetings and conferences was a giant leap, but perhaps even more important was the networking and friendships that bound them together. That takes participation, and unfortunately, local chapters across the nation are suffering from poor participation.

Ladies and gentlemen of the younger generation, we have had our glory days. We have been founders, caretakers and innovators to move the superintendent's profession forward; now it is your time to step up and keep the momentum going. For as surely as you don't get engaged, the role and effectiveness of the superintendent will suffer unless strong leaders with vision and determination are willing to volunteer their time and energy.

The good news is that with technology, Web casting and video conferencing, the need to be away from your jobs is diminishing. You can participate and offer insight and leadership to the profession without leaving your office. The amazing fact is that the old guard drove hundreds of miles round trip to attend meetings that built associations and relationships

Time for Gen X-ers to Take Charge

BY JOEL JACKSON



LADIES AND
GENTLEMEN
OF THE YOUNGER
GENERATION ... IT IS
YOUR TIME TO STEP
UP AND KEEP THE
MOMENTUM GOING

that changed the face of golf course management and the superintendent's profession.

Just like today's golf touring pros owe a debt of gratitude to Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus and Gary Player, so do young superintendents owe a similar debt to the founders of the 103 local chapters around the country and those who have kept those chapters functioning and providing leadership on issues ranging from local turf disasters to fighting for fair and reasonable rules and regulations on water use and pest management.

I see glimmers of hope in a few faces of young men and women who appreciate what has been done to bring the profession to its current prominence. But as those who follow us deal with more and more demands on their personal time and space in this modern world, local chapters need to identify, educate and mentor our successors today to protect the profession for tomorrow. There is plenty of responsibility to be shared by all.

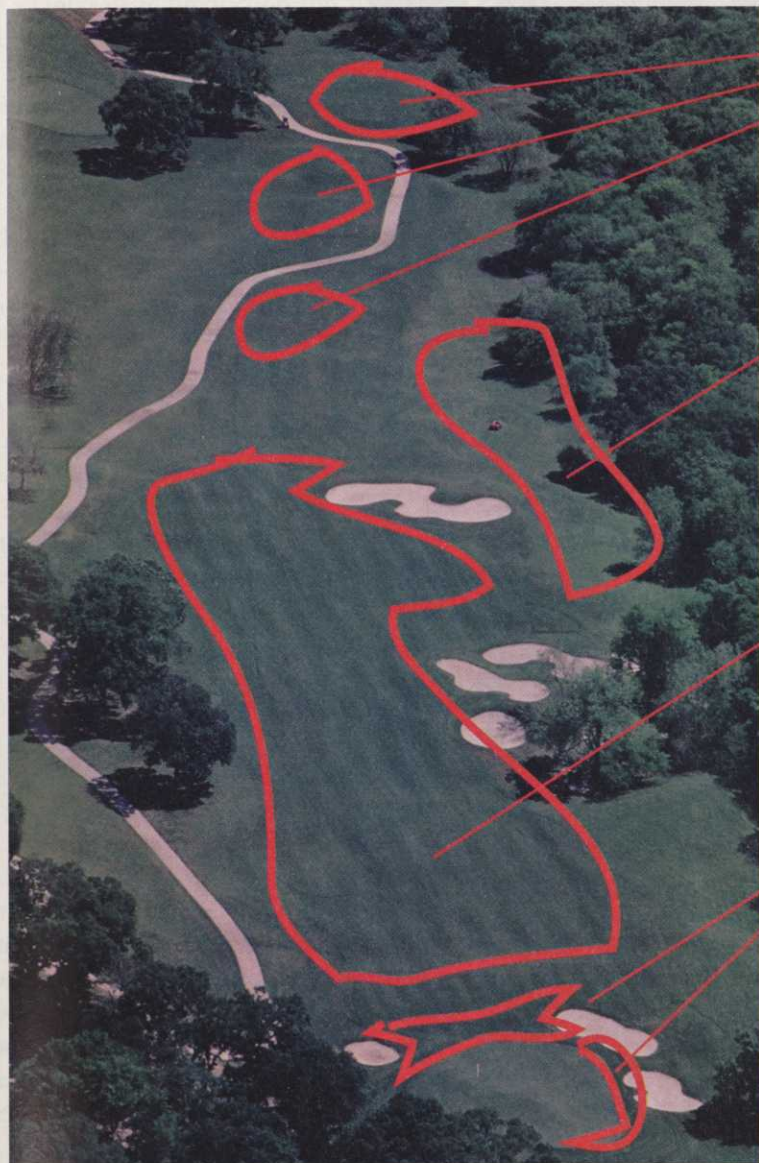
As the time crunch envelopes us all, those chapters that retain some sort of administrative help to do mailings, dues collecting and other necessary paperwork will be better suited for growth and survival and the recruitment of new board members.

Association participation and leadership should be all about vision, strategic thinking and accomplishing worthwhile goals for the good of all members and not about stuffing envelopes and collecting registration money. We need young blood to keep the profession healthy, strong and vital to the game of golf.

Young superintendents, I challenge you to step up. Older superintendents, I challenge you to give them a seat at the table.

Certified Superintendent Joel Jackson retired from Disney's golf division in 1997 and is director of communications for the Florida GCSA.

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Power Played

Superintendents seek to save money in other areas of their maintenance budgets to offset increased fuel costs

BY LARRY AYLWARD, EDITOR IN CHIEF

What do gas prices and a superintendent's blood pressure have in common? They're both rising like the mercury in a thermometer on a scorching summer day.

With surging gas prices sucking up the greenbacks from many a golf course maintenance budget, superintendents are starting to sweat like down-on-their-luck poker players when they consider how their financial books might appear at the end of their operations' fiscal years.

Will their budgets be in the red?

Could they be a tad in the black?

Will some superintendents be feeling the blues?

With plenty of mowers' and utility vehicles' gas tanks to fill, three of four superinten-

dents have definite concerns about the rising cost of gasoline, according to a recent *Golfdom* online survey of 150 superintendents. Fifty-two percent said they're worried that price increases will have a major negative impact on their courses' maintenance budgets. Another 28 percent said they're worried to a lesser degree.

Sixteen percent said they're beginning to feel concern, although they aren't too worried. The remaining 4 percent said they weren't worried at all.

As of June 21 the nationwide average for a gallon of unleaded regular gas was \$2.16, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. That's up nearly 22 cents from a year ago and more than 65 cents from the beginning of 2004. On June 21 the nationwide average for a gallon of diesel fuel was \$2.31, up more than 61 cents from a year ago.

In the early spring it appeared the price of

gas would soar to \$2.50 a gallon. But the price dropped several cents in coming weeks, thanks to an increase in production and a drop in demand, which created larger stockpiles.

But depending on whose report you believe, prices could soar even higher in the near future. Some say the \$3 gallon is reality and just around the bend.

Ron Ciancutti, purchasing manager for the Cleveland (Ohio) MetroParks, which operates seven municipal golf courses, points out that the root of increased gas prices has more to do with capacity. It's not about how much crude oil companies can pump in a given time to increase gasoline supplies, he says. Rather, it's about how quickly that crude oil can be refined into gas to meet increased demand.

That said, it's common knowledge that oil supplies are diminishing because of increased demand, which can be attributed to mankind. People's Fords and Toyotas are using more petroleum than ever, especially those folks' vehicles in China, India and, of course, the gas-guzzling United States. The Chinese, at 1.3-billion strong, are buying cars as fast as Elvis did in his heyday and building super-highways on which to drive them.

Gas prices have commanded superintendents' attention. Many have reacted to higher prices with creative plans to save money in other areas of their maintenance budgets. And they realize they'll have to continue to do so as prices continue to rise.

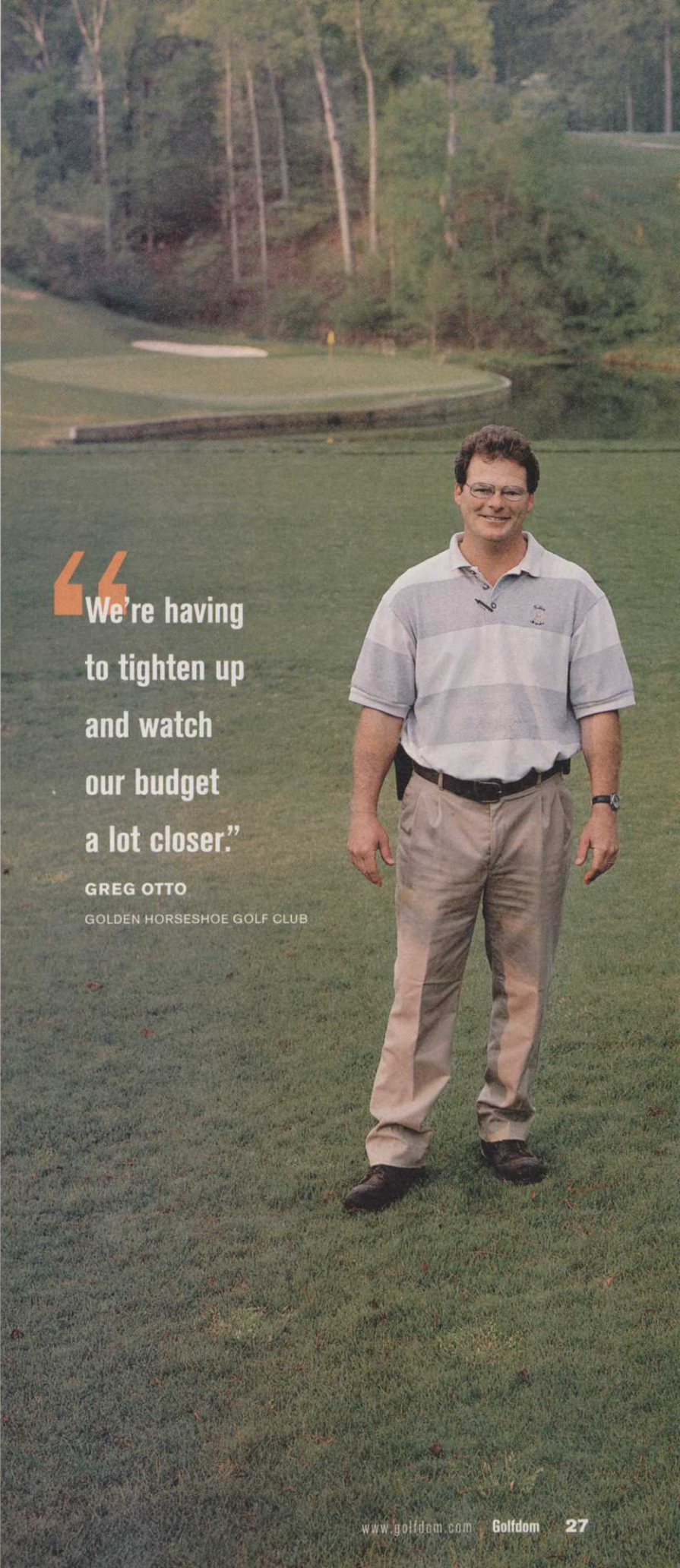
"How often in our lifetime has the price of gas gone down?" asks Tim O'Neill, certified superintendent of the Country Club of Darien (Conn.), knowing full well the answer to the question.

Sudden impact

Charlie Fultz, superintendent of Shenvalee Golf Resort in New Market, Va., sits at his desk and cranks up his adding machine to figure precisely how much high gas prices have impacted his course's maintenance budget.

Fultz says he budgeted \$25,000 in 2005 for gas used in equipment and utility vehicles. He figured 25 grand would buy him about 14,000 gallons of fuel at about \$1.79 a gallon.

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A man with glasses, wearing a light-colored striped polo shirt and khaki pants, stands on a golf course green. In the background, there is a sand trap and a dense forest of tall trees.

**“We’re having
to tighten up
and watch
our budget
a lot closer.”**

GREG OTTO

GOLDEN HORSESHOE GOLF CLUB

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Now he figures it will only buy him about 11,800 gallons because he's been paying anywhere from \$2 to \$2.25 a gallon lately. "That's almost a 25 percent increase," he notes.

For months Fultz has also expressed concern that escalating gas prices will affect Shenvalee and the entire resort business.

"We pull people from Pennsylvania, Maryland and the District of Columbia," Fultz said last fall. "You have to wonder if fewer people will want to drive here if gas is more than \$2 a gallon."

In May, Fultz declared the resort's hotel was not as full as he expected. He wondered if his autumn prophecy had come true.

Still, rounds were up at Shenvalee in the spring (thanks to local golfers and wonderful spring weather), but Fultz remains concerned about play in the late-summer and early-fall months, the resort's bread-and-butter season.

Greg Otto, superintendent of the 18-hole Gold Course at the Golden Horse-

shoe Golf Club in Williamsburg, Va., uses plenty of unleaded gas and diesel fuel — the course has 500-gallon tanks for each — in his maintenance operation. So does the entire 500-acre club, which features an additional 27 holes of golf as well as lawn bowling and croquet fields.

It's not just increased gas prices that have evoked the mathematical portion of Otto's brain. He's concerned about increased costs of equipment and other materials as well.

"Everything is going up," he says. "And we're having to tighten up and watch our budget a lot closer. But we're finding different ways to reduce costs and still stay within our budget."

Not all superintendents are that worried about increased gas prices, however. Mike Sosik, the owner and superintendent of Harrisville Golf Course, a nine-hole track in Fiskdale, Mass., says an increase in the golf car rental business has helped offset high gas prices. Sosik raised rentals 50 cents this sea-

son to keep up with increased fuel prices, but the higher cost hasn't stopped people from renting them. "It seems like nobody wants to walk a golf course anymore," Sosik says. "Our revenues are up almost 50 percent over last year in golf car revenue."

Thanks to increased gas prices, superintendents have also noticed increased surcharges on deliveries. O'Neill, president of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA), says the amount of the charges "has really caught my attention."

"Recently I purchased a load of topdressing . . . and the trucking charge was more than the material," O'Neill says. "I'm definitely concerned about that."

Sosik says he ordered a few loads of bunker sand and screamed "Holy Cow" when he got the bill. "They're getting you for \$35 to \$50 just on a surcharge," he adds.

Fultz says companies that didn't have surcharges before do now.

"In a month you're up over \$100 just in fuel surcharges," he says. "Spread that over 10 months of ordering and there's another \$1,000 dollars I have to accommodate that I wasn't planning to accommodate before."

Fultz doesn't blame companies for instituting the delivery charges. "When diesel fuel is \$2.27 a gallon and these guys drive big rigs that get 15 miles a gallon . . . you can't fault them."

Fultz says his budget takes an extra hit when the delivery truck rolls up to the maintenance facility with a load of fertilizer. He not only gets dinged with a surcharge, but an increase in fertilizer prices, too.

Like gas, fertilizer prices have soared because of increased worldwide demand for natural gas and petroleum products, which provide the basic building blocks of fertilizer.

Ciancutti, who buys fertilizer as needed for the Cleveland park district's seven courses, estimates the price has risen 3 percent to 5 percent from 2004. Some experts predict as much as a 20 percent increase in the price of fertilizer this year.

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) predicts natural gas demand will increase 2.2 percent in 2005 and 3.2 percent in 2006. At the same time, domestic natural gas production will only increase 0.5 percent mainly because existing U.S. gas wells are nearing depletion. So the

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Price Increase Is Not a Gas

Are you worried that the constant increase in gas prices will hurt your golf course's operation in some way?

Yes, prices will impact us big time for sure

52%

Yes, but not too much

28%

I'm getting concerned

24%

Not at all. Prices can rise to \$3 a gallon for all I care

4%

* Online poll based on 150 responses

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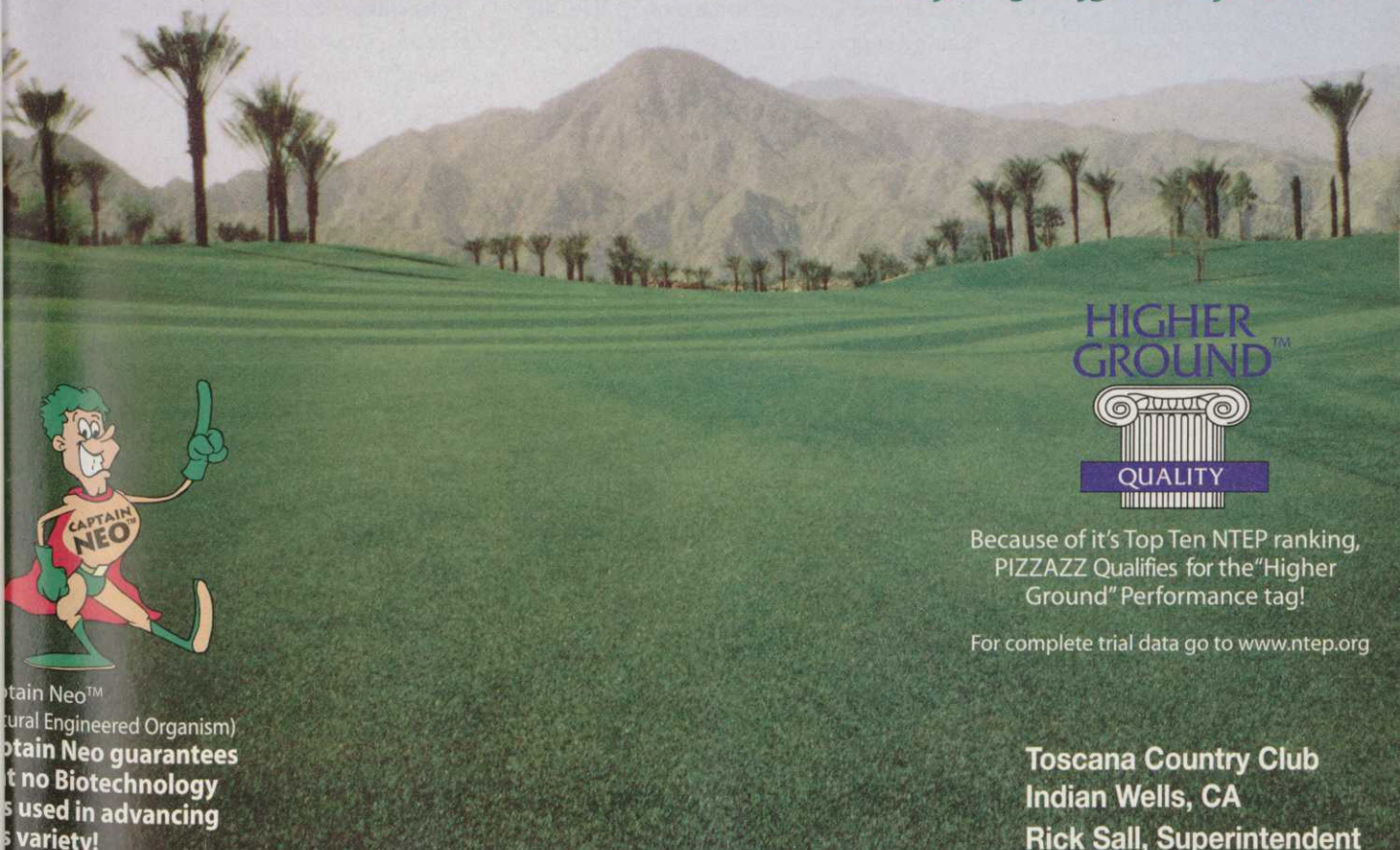
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**Toscana Country Club
Indian Wells, CA
Rick Sall, Superintendent**



“That almighty dollar doesn’t travel nearly as far as it did 18 months ago.”

CHARLIE FULTZ

SHENVALEE GOLF RESORT

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country must import more natural gas and the price keeps climbing.

What to do?

Superintendents realize they just can’t groan about increased fuel prices. They must do something to contest them.

O’Neill plans to use more plant growth regulators on fairways so they won’t need to be mowed on Sunday mornings. In turn that will save O’Neill gas, not to mention the cost of labor associated with the mowing.

Even Sosik, who says fuel prices haven’t hurt his budget, says increased gas prices have him re-evaluating his mowing schedule. “I question whether I need to mow fairways on a certain day,” he says. “I wonder if I should wait a couple of days to do it.”

Fultz has done a few things to save money in other areas of his budget. For instance, generic fungicides will be used more in his spraying program. Fultz has used them sparingly in the past on fairways and tees. This year he’s using them more on fairways and tees and now sparingly on greens. Fultz figures generics will save him about \$5,000.

Fultz also held off on hiring summer help for a few weeks to save some money. “Usually I have a couple seasonal guys in here by now,” he said in early May. “I’m trying to see how long I can hang on without bringing them in.”

Otto says his club has cut back spending in other areas, especially work done by outside contractors. “They’ve come in and done larger projects — from drainage on a fairway or a tee box to repaving a particular area,” Otto says. “We limited it last year, and we’ve really cut back on it this year.”

Ciancutti is considering his long-term options to offset even higher gas prices. He says one of the park district’s courses is building a new clubhouse and had planned a modest garage area for the gas-powered golf cars. Instead, planners are considering a larger, more comprehensive and expensive garage with the capacity to house and power electric golf cars. Ciancutti says the park district is discussing whether electric golf cars will make more economical sense in the long run than gas-powered vehicles.

To combat the increase in fertilizer prices, Fultz expects more superintendents will look into using slow-release fertilizers that could

last several months instead of four weeks.

Fultz has found a way to reduce fertilizer costs on his course’s fairways. He’s using manure made from human waste that he buys from a Boston company for about \$2 a pound. He says he spreads the fertilizer at one-quarter pound per 1,000 feet and is pleased with the product’s six-week feed.

In the previous few years O’Neill used a service provider to apply fertilizer at Darien. That way he didn’t have to worry about storing and handling fertilizer. But the process is expensive and O’Neill is changing his strategy to save money.

“This year I chose to go back to putting out fertilizer myself,” he says.

The long and short term of it

Superintendents believe that more fuel-efficient equipment will help them in their long-term plights to deal with increased fuel costs.

O’Neill says he’s hearing more talk from his peers about using electric mowers. Ironically, most superintendents desire electric mowers to reduce early-morning noise so people living in homes on golf courses won’t be disrupted. “But there will even be more interest in this alternate energy-type equipment because of the way gas prices are going,” O’Neill predicts.

Fultz still prefers to hear the hum of a gas engine on a mower but the escalating price of gas has piqued his interest in mower manufacturers’ electric technology, specifically a hybrid mower.

In the short term, nobody wants to have to sacrifice the quality of the golf course to help pay for more expensive gas and fertilizer.

Ciancutti says he won’t make cuts that will affect the quality and playability at the park district’s golf courses. For instance, cheaper sand won’t be used for topdressing to offset higher fertilizer costs. “We won’t sacrifice quality for cost but maintaining the balance through creative solutions is getting more challenging every day,” Ciancutti adds.

Fultz says only time will tell how much a \$2.10 gallon of gas will play in golfers’ decisions to cancel or shorten their trips to his resort. August, September and October are the big months at Shenvalee, and Fultz realizes that it might cost traveling players about \$100 more in gas to travel round-trip to Shenvalee.

“That almighty dollar doesn’t travel nearly as far as it did 18 months ago,” Fultz concludes. ■