

OREGON GROWN FINE FESCUE

OREGON FINE FESCUE COMMISSION

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OREGON GROWN TALL FESCUE

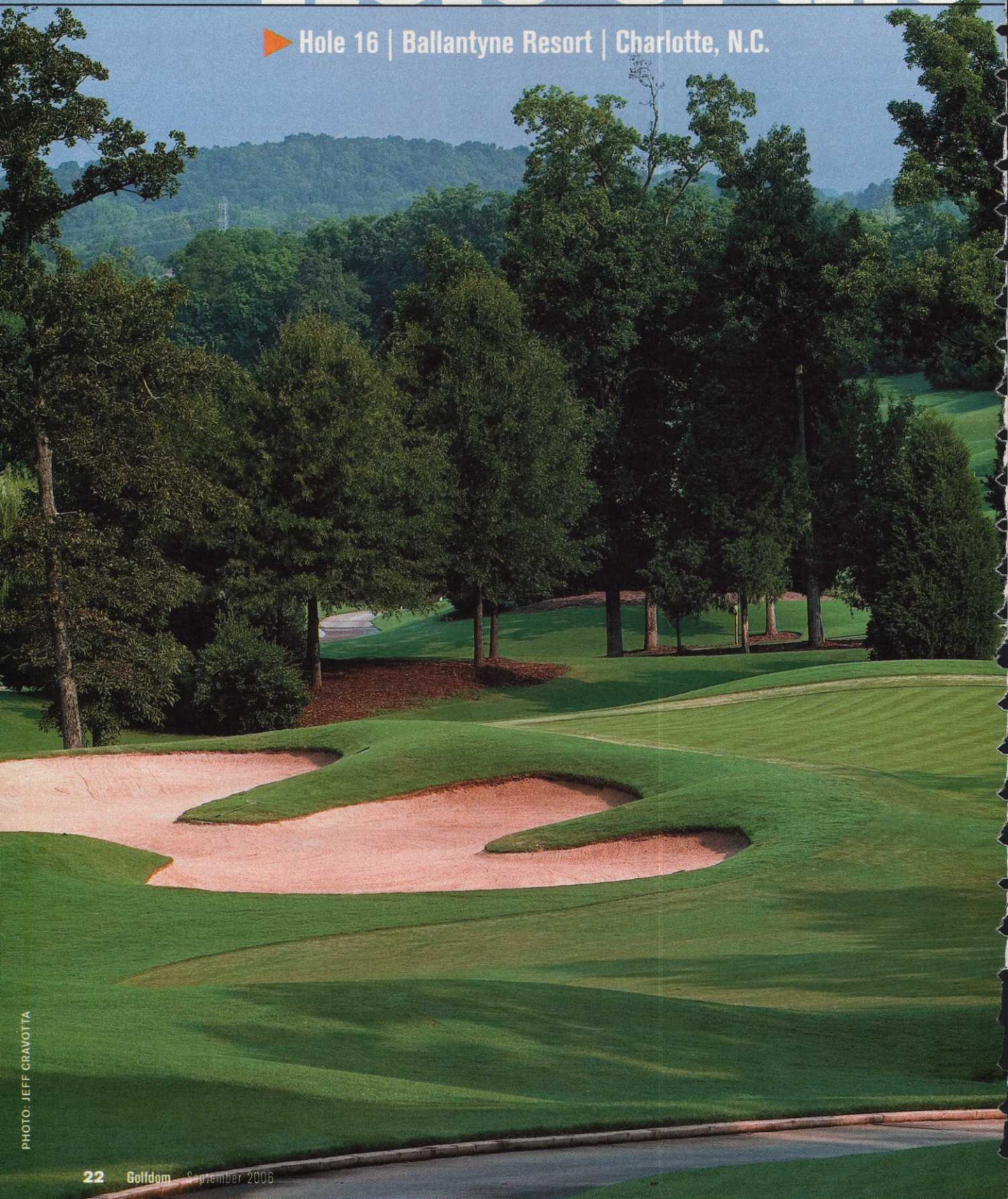
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Hole of the

▶ Hole 16 | Ballantyne Resort | Charlotte, N.C.



Month

Hole Stats

Distance: 195 yards

Par 3

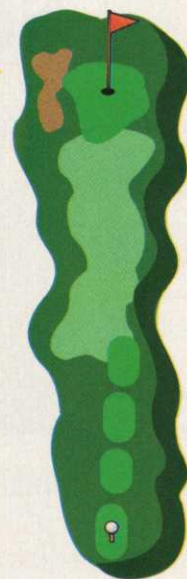
The Turf

Green: L93 bentgrass

Fairway: 419 bermudagrass

The Carolinas are renowned for great golf resorts. Touted by PGA Magazine as a "Great Golf Resort of the World" the year the course opened in 1998, Ballantyne Resort is a public, par-71, five-star championship golf course set in the Ballantyne community of south Charlotte.

The elevated tee box on the 195-yard, par-3 16th hole gives players a vantage point to view the entire layout of the rolling, tree-lined course. The left green-side bunker creates a challenging back left pin location that forces many shots to the center of the green, making the hole one of Ballantyne's most memorable feats.



Golf course superintendent Paul Stroman coordinates a maintenance staff of 12 to manage the 6,700 yards of turf and the challenges posed by 35,000 annual golf rounds.

"Our cultural practices are backed up with careful consideration when choosing fungicides to maintain and enhance our L93 bentgrass greens," said Stroman. "Insignia fungicide has become a reliable product in our fungicide program when we're faced with pythium pressure."

Ballantyne began using Insignia in the spring and fall of 2005, after the identification of a southeastern pythium root dysfunction disease that can result in poor performance and bentgrass decline in the summer months. Insignia is now the primary fungicide used on greens to prevent pythium root dysfunction.

"As a 28-day product, Insignia has provided the prevention of this root-inhibiting fungi and also suppresses brown patch, which are two primary concerns when managing bentgrass greens in the Southeastern region," said Stroman.

Insignia® fungicide is effective against a broad spectrum of turf diseases with long-term results and residual

control. To find out more about Insignia®, contact your distributor or BASF at www.turfacts.com.



GOLFDOM'S HOLE OF THE MONTH IS MADE POSSIBLE BY:

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The Chemical Company

Here is a brief collection of statements and observations that speak to the frustration, heartburn, high blood pressure and gray hairs that many of us in the golf industry have experienced or are enduring as we try to make sense of some of the environmental nonsense that goes on around us:

"The broad-based risks from contaminated fast-release fertilizer, including harm to intergenerational health and welfare, make it imperative that the law does not leave control of hazardous substances in fertilizer to discretionary or voluntary industry measures."

This was a statement contained in a Crystal River, Fla., city resolution and became a focal point in Citrus County's proposed regulation of fertilizers. What in the Sam Hill are "contaminated fertilizer and intergenerational health and welfare?" And why would we leave control of hazardous substance in the hands of politicians?

"To protect our springs and rivers we are proposing a ban on soluble fertilizers."

Somebody please tell them that all nutrients have to be soluble for plants to absorb them, even "organic" fertilizer.

"Once political action is mandated by pressure from the activists and media, even if you have a scientifically defensible position, they don't want to be told they are wrong."

This was a quote from a senior Florida Department of Environmental Protection official at a Fertilizer Association meeting. So they are going to make a law that addresses an emotional issue but has no basis in fact, no effective practical solution, is largely unenforceable but will make them look really environmentally responsible at election time?

"We are proposing a ban on the use of phosphorous in (our town or county — take your pick, there have been several). Agriculture is exempt from this ban."

There are 154 million tons of fertilizer applied in the United States annually. One million tons has been attributed to lawn fertilization. I'm really not picking on agriculture. I like my safe, low-cost food, but isn't somebody missing the elephant in the room?

Trying to Make Sense of Nonsense

BY JOEL JACKSON



WHAT IN THE SAM
HILL ARE
"CONTAMINATED
FERTILIZER
AND INTER-
GENERATIONAL
HEALTH AND
WELFARE?"

A fertilizer manufacturer claims that the red tide algae blooms in the Gulf of Mexico are being fueled by runoff of nutrients from home lawns, and he's sick and tired of it. So if the county will mandate using only his slow-release fertilizer just twice a year, the problem can be solved.

I was in Naples, Fla., for a meeting this past spring, and as I took a cup of coffee down by the shore, I watched several flocks of seagulls (close to 40 to 50 birds in each group) land on the beach and strut and squirt their guano on the sandy beach. Their deposits were just waiting for the high tide to claim them or for the sun-bathers and castle-builders to lay and play in them.

And offshore a large squadron of pelicans made a bee line for an inlet just up the beach and as they paddled and pooped waiting for the outgoing tide to bring them baitfish I wondered how many times this same scenario was taking place up and down the coastline. Meanwhile, somewhere inland some evil golf course or sadistic homeowner is spreading fertilizer on turfgrass.

A couple of years ago, I took our Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association table-top Golf & The Environment display to a tournament put on by the Everglades GCSA and Bonita Bay Properties to raise environmental education funding for a local ecological watershed preserve area. I didn't play in the event but I had a nice, informative conversation with the preserve's director, her assistant and the Bonita Bay environmental liaison person. After the post-tournament reception and the presentation of the \$9,000 check, I followed the woman out of the club and watched her get into her super-sized SUV and drive away. I got into my four-cylinder Toyota and pondered the meaning of life.

Joel Jackson is director of communications for the Florida GCSA.

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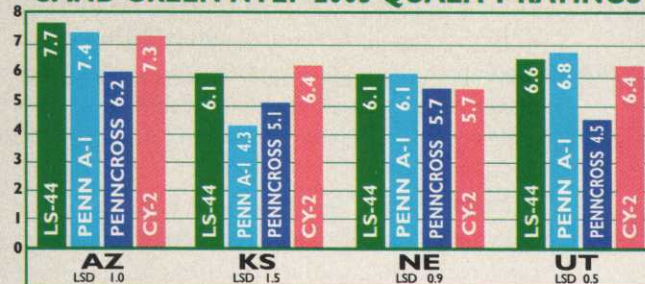
FAIRWAY QUALITY NTEP 2005



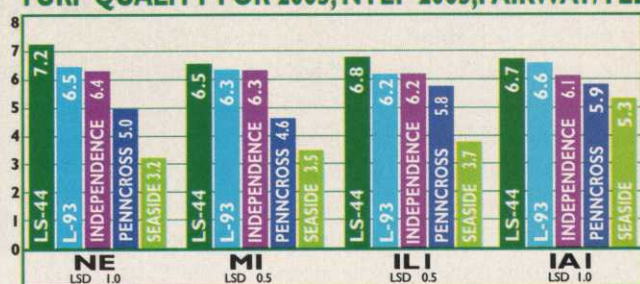
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I know, I know. Real men don't care about some dainty little piece of paper, just so long as they can tally their bets. Yet, why is it that so many golf scorecards have become overwrought productions loaded with too much color and useless information?

The great places in golf generally have pocket-sized, two-color cards with their course logos and names featured in a trademark font. Maybe the covers also state when the courses were established.

There are key local rules on the back of the cards and the proverbial stuff about playing by USGA rules. Inside, the information is limited to hole numbers, pars, handicaps and yardages.

We don't need to read a club's history or the book jacket-style blurbs about a layout's greatness. It is especially embarrassing to see a touched-up color photo depicting a course in an unrealistic state, or worse — a shot of a key water hazard's fountain spouting like a Yellowstone geyser. At a resort or high-end public course, these trivialities can be tolerated because the card acts as a memento.

Have you ever noticed how the look, feel and even the card stock tells us about the self-esteem of a facility? I'm here to tell you that keeping a card simple is the key to its success. Simplicity, as da Vinci said, "is the ultimate sophistication."

That said, here are my rules for the ideal scorecard:

Size. Small, vertical folding cards that fit into a back pocket are best. The cards designed for a cart steering wheel rarely fit in our pockets and almost never fit the pad for the cart either. Smaller is always better.

Paper. Off-white is nice, though white and yellow and assorted cream colors work, too. In the United States, we've taken things too far by varnishing paper stocks to the point that a pencil is unable to penetrate the dreaded coating. And all of the varnish in the world still won't make the paper impervious to the elements. So save some money and go with uncoated stock that allows pencils to actually do their job.

Aesthetics. No pastels, no peacockian color themes. Keep it simple at two or three colors max, with the important numbers in black.

Keep a Scorecard Simple, Stupid

BY GEOFF SHACKELFORD



THE GREAT PLACES
IN GOLF GENERALLY
HAVE POCKET-SIZED,
TWO-COLOR CARDS
WITH THEIR COURSE
LOGOS AND NAMES
FEATURED IN A
TRADEMARK FONT

The colors used should be the course's theme colors. If your course doesn't have its own color scheme, form a subcommittee to select one. On second thought, go with darker shades of green or blue, and shy away from bright, predictable primary colors.

Variety. There is something to be said for the multicard concept that creates a special scorecard for each set of tees. Or at the very least, a card that separates a "championship" or tournament layout from the primary card. Besides detaching the back tees that most people shouldn't be playing, the multicard concept allows for more space and bigger numbers that even the Haver camps can read. A variety of cards also makes it easier to change one set of cards if new tees are added.

Miscellaneous. If your scorecard company does not include the date of the card, see if you can have it included in the fine print somewhere on the back. Many of the old scorecards included a date, which proves handy for historians. In the future, this will allow architects and club historians to track all of the new tees added so the USGA can avoid upsetting a handful of equipment manufacturers!

And about those two little slits that allow walkers to store their pencil? It's a nice concept, but it rarely functions as intended. But since it's still handy, don't hesitate to include them, just try to locate a better place on the card so that the pencil smearing doesn't clog up the key documentation areas.

Mostly, remember Thoreau's words, because I'm sure he was thinking of golf scorecards when he wrote, "Our lives are frittered away by detail. Simplify, simplify."

For a daily dose of Shack's golf commentary, check out his blog at www.geoffshackelford.com.

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STAY THE COURSE WITH A STRONGER MANAGEMENT TEAM

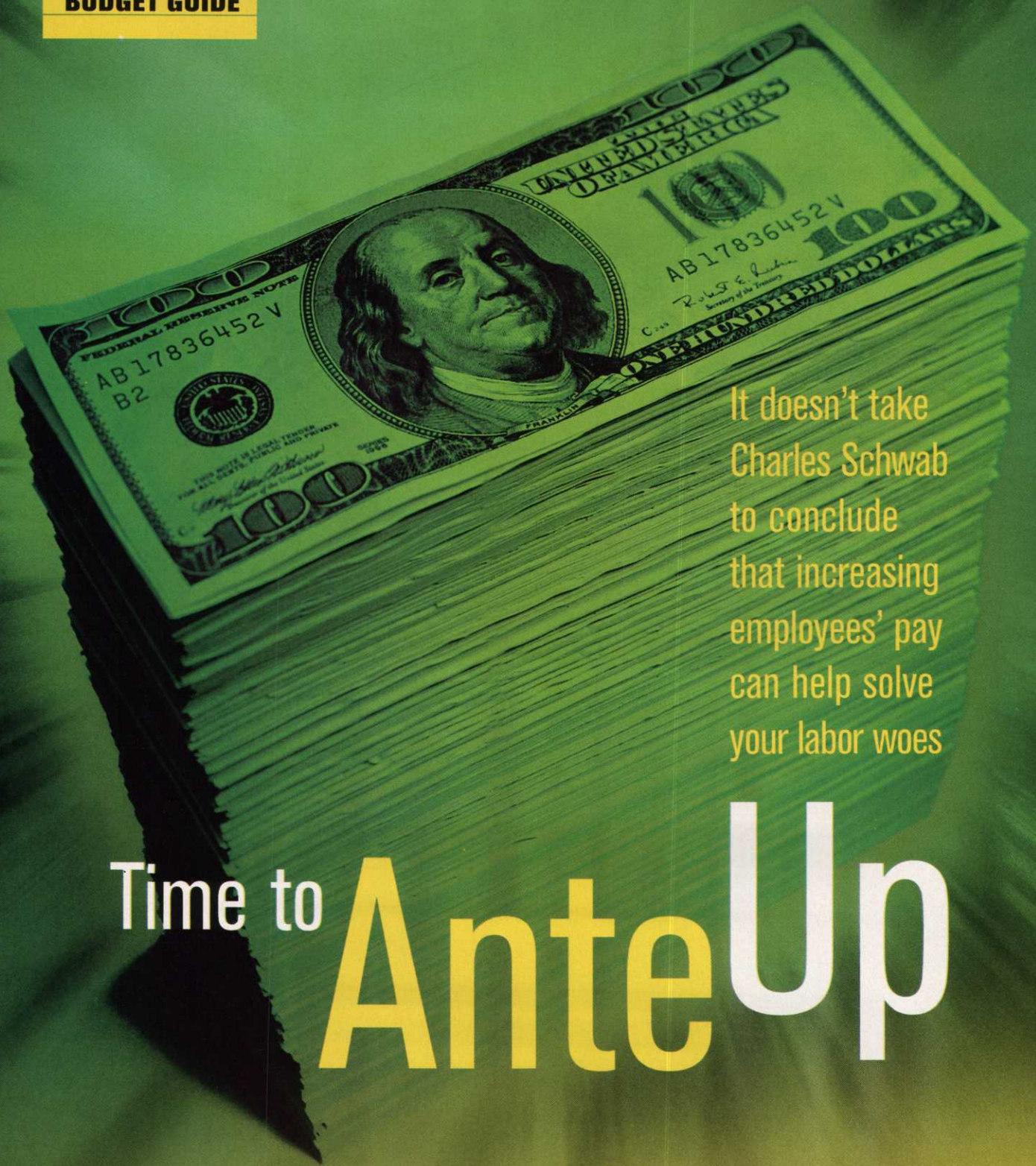
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It doesn't take
Charles Schwab
to conclude
that increasing
employees' pay
can help solve
your labor woes

Time to Ante Up

BY LARRY AYLWARD, EDITOR IN CHIEF

"Help wanted."

 That sign is posted in front of golf course maintenance facilities from Portland, Maine, to Portland, Ore. Many superintendents need quality course workers like George W. Bush needs a spike in the approval polls. Badly.

But there's a problem — a big as a waste bunker-sized problem. Many laborers don't want to work on golf course maintenance crews for what they consider piddly pay.

You can't fault them. If you had a choice between working at the supermarket for \$9 an hour (no weekends) or working on a golf course maintenance crew for \$8 an hour (on weekends), which would you pick?

And even if someone takes a job on a golf course maintenance crew, he or she might be waiting for something better to come along. So a high turnover rate is another problem.

"This is a *really* tough issue," says Lyne Tumlinson, director of career services for the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA).

It's a *really* tough issue because there is so much below the problem's surface. For starters, maintenance budgets at many public and private golf courses have been reduced to the point that they can't be reduced anymore, Tumlinson points out. So courses must find the money somewhere if they decide to pay employees more.

The labor problem also feeds on itself. Because employees come and go, superintendents must retrain workers, which costs time and money. It also equates to more inexpe-

rienced employees, which could have a negative impact on course conditioning.

And who takes the heat if the course appears as ragged as an aging rock star? The superintendent. And, yes, superintendents are known to lose their jobs over this matter.

While some superintendents have solved their labor woes by hiring immigrant labor through the U.S. government's H-2B visa program, others struggle to attract and retain reliable workers. *Golfdom* conducted a recent survey that asked superintendents: What are your main management and job challenges? Many listed labor problems as their answer. And several respondents qualified their answers with lack of good pay for course workers as being at the root of their labor problems.

"We tend to have a lot of staff turnover," Phil Fitzgerald, superintendent of Steele Canyon Golf Club in Jamul, Calif., responded in the survey. "I have not had a full crew for more than six months in the last 10 years. This is a direct result of very low wages for staff other than the superintendent and assistant superintendent."

There's an obvious question linked to this dilemma: Is it time to increase the pay for golf course maintenance workers to attract more potential employees and to reduce turnover?

Continued on page 30



The happy crew from Walloon Lake Country Club: (front row from left) Spencer Henley, Ben Hayes, Jay Wheatley, Jamie Dunson, Hannah Bissonette and Carl Reiter; (back row from left) Charles Brannon, Matt Rankin, Brandon Belton, Mark Gardener, superintendent Dan Bissonette and Bill White.

If you're a good boss,
chances are more
employees will want
to stay with you, even
if a higher-paying
job beckons.

Continued from page 29

It doesn't take Charles Schwab to conclude that increasing employees' pay can improve the situation, perhaps dramatically. Boosting course workers' wages can provide them with more satisfaction and motivation, among other things. Superintendents can then benefit by having harder-working and more reliable workers, which translates into less turnover on their crews.

Many superintendents agree that money will solve many of their workplace woes. But they also say that money alone may not satisfy employees. They stress that it's also vital to empower employees and let them know they are valued.

Because it was difficult for him to keep his crew members feeling empowered when he thought they weren't receiving just compensation, Richard Mullikin, superintendent of Bonita Bay Club East in Naples, Fla., decided to approach his club's owners about the situation. Other superintendents at the five-course facility joined Mullikin. They

voiced their concerns that something had to be done to reduce turnover.

"We needed to prevent a mass exodus from here for higher-paying jobs," says Mullikin, who oversees two 14-person crews on two Tom Fazio designs at Bonita Bay. All are full-time employees.

To increase the hourly wage, Mullikin and the other superintendents agreed to trim money elsewhere. They won't increase their maintenance budgets next year, and they agreed to cut back on new equipment purchases.

Mullikin says the labor problem ensued when the club eliminated overtime pay in 2002 to cut spending. "The problem wasn't originally about the starting wage," he adds.

The overtime pay helped inflate some employees' paychecks, especially those who were working 55-hour weeks. They missed that money when it was gone.

"We probably had about a 20 percent turnover," Mullikin says.

A pay raise was also needed because

Continued on page 32