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Golfdom

AUGUST 2008

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Generation NEXT

Is your club relevant to the hip 30-something crowd?

BY DAVID FRABOTTA

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Online Exclusive

 Read this story only at www.golfdom.com/online-exclusive:

MSMA Lives ... for Now – North Carolina State's Fred Yelverton says rumors of the herbicide's demise have been greatly exaggerated. Larry Aylward reports from Bayer Environmental Science's Weed-Control Symposium.



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Gabby. Her owner is Shaun Kerr, assistant superintendent at Legacy Golf Links in Aberdeen, N.C. (Photo by: Shaun Kerr)



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Some of you from the new-wave music genre might recall the 1980s Police song, "Too Much Information." The chorus goes: "Too much information running through my brain/Too much information driving me insane."

I can relate. I have "too much information running through my brain" to write about one topic this month. So I will hit on several issues in this space that have been on my mind. Here goes:

The future is ... fake?

Did you hear about the new waterless putting green that was built on an adult housing community in Vail, Ariz.? Considering the freshwater shortage in the West, could the waterless green be a harbinger for the future?

The 37,000-square-foot green, located at K. Hovnanian's Four Seasons at Rancho del Lago, has 18 putting holes. It was designed by Toby Bourguet, president of Tucson Turf Waterless Lawns. An acre of the fake turf used to build the green would save almost 1 million gallons of water a year compared to what's required to maintain an acre of grass in the Arizona heat, Bourguet says.

Bourguet also used the same fake turf to build the green that is used for the playing surface at Dallas Cowboys Stadium. "I figured if it was good enough for (Cowboys owner) Jerry Jones, it would work well for us," Bourguet says.

Yeah, but is it good enough for demanding golfers? It might have to be, some day.

Where's the party?

When I was in my mid-20s, I have to admit that my professional career took a backseat to my busy social life. I didn't miss too many parties.

Then there's Ben McGargill, superintendent of the South Course at Oakland Hills Country Club, site of this month's PGA Championship. McGargill is 26 and has his priorities more in order than others his age. His career is ranked higher on his list than his social life. I guess that's why McGargill, who works 12 days straight before getting two days off, is at such a prestigious club and hosting a Major tournament at such a young age.

"I do like to have my fun, but I'm usually in bed by 9 o'clock," McGargill says.

From Fake Greens to Sergeant Hulka

BY LARRY AYLWARD



I LOVE 'CADDYSHACK,'
BUT THIS WHOLE
'IT'S IN THE HOLE'
THING IS WAY
OUT OF HAND

What? No complaining?

The U.S. Open is usually a cause for griping among professional golfers. They complain about the height of the rough, the speed of the greens and the warm Gatorade in the locker room. But there wasn't much complaining this year at Torrey Pines, where the South Course played beautifully.

"This is the best," runner-up Rocco Mediate said after the second round. "Nothing is wrong. The pins are all good. ... I think most of the guys will say the same thing."

What a sweet swan song for Mark Woodward, the director of golf operations for the city of San Diego, who left Torrey Pines after the tournament to become CEO of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America.

Calling Sergeant Hulka

I love "Caddyshack," but this whole "it's in the hole" thing is way out of hand at professional golf tournaments. It seemed like every time Tiger Woods and other golfers hit their shots at Torrey Pines, some idiot would yell out the classic Carl Spackler line — once spoken so eloquently by Bill Murray — a millisecond later. What a shame it is that this great movie line has become such a cliché. The drunken American golf fans have ruined it.

If I was running a professional golf tournament, I'd hire Sergeant Hulka — the no-frills platoon leader from "Stripes" (another Bill Murray classic) — and have him patrol the grounds to arrest the loudmouths juiced up on beer who can't stop themselves from yelling, "It's in the hole!" And then I'd make these idiots spend two long weeks with Hulka in basic training. Hulka would end this nonsense.

And that's the fact, Jack.

Aylward, editor in chief of Golfdom, can be reached at laylward@questex.com.

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Off The Fringe

Business briefs

Andersons Gets Grant for Granules

The Andersons says that a collaborative team it is leading will receive \$5 million in grants from the Ohio Third Frontier Commission. The grants are for the development and commercialization of advanced granules and other emerging technologies to provide solutions for the economic, health and environmental concerns of today's agricultural industry, according to a press release.

The collaborative team consists of:

- The Andersons, a 60-year-old Maumee, Ohio-based diversified agribusiness that markets proprietary and patented dispersible granular technology for the turf industry through its Turf & Specialty Group.
- The Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center, the nation's largest ag-biosciences center.
- Syngenta Crop Protection, an agribusiness company committed to sustainable agriculture through innovative research and technology, which has invested in advanced granules for global consumption.
- PSB Co., a Columbus, Ohio-based manufacturer of granule applicators.
- National Lime and Stone Co., a Findlay, Ohio-based limestone supplier and granulator of advanced soil-dispersing granules.
- Ohio Bio-products Innovation Center, a Third Frontier Wright Center of Innovation group to foster industry and academic collaboration.

"This grant will enable us to accelerate our research in extending this proprietary technology to agriculture applications that we believe will provide benefits on a global scale. We are proud to be a leader in this project," said CEO Mike Anderson.

Briefs continue on page 16

After the Flood

WHILE MOST IOWA COURSES ARE GETTING BACK TO NORMAL, THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF JUNE'S NATURAL DISASTER REMAINS TO BE SEEN

By Larry Aylward, Editor in Chief

"IT LOOKS LIKE KATRINA."

A lot us said that when we saw photographs of Iowa after the state endured severe floods in June. We thought of Hurricane Katrina and how it wiped out the Gulf Coast in 2005 with fierce flooding.

The Midwest, however, is not a safe haven from Katrina-like flooding. Much of Iowa was hammered by severe storms and intense rain last month. Eighty-three of Iowa's 99 counties were declared disaster areas by Gov. Chet Culver.

Cedar Rapids, the state's second-largest city, was hard hit. In fact, the natural disaster is being called a 500-year flood in Cedar Rapids and other parts of Iowa. That means there is a one in 500 chance of such a terrible flood occurring in any given year. Incidentally, the city's Cedar River crested at 31.2 feet, 15 feet above flood stage.

The golf course industry, of course, was greatly impacted by the flooding. But a month later, things are getting back to normal, says certified superintendent Jeff Wendel, executive director of the Iowa Golf Course Superintendents Association.

"Our guys have been through hell, but they are coming out on the other end," he said.

Still, Wendel is concerned about the economic impact the flooding will have on the Iowa golf course industry. "I think it will be this time next year before we really know the economic impact," he says. "We have a number of courses that won't be open until this time next year." It has been a tough year for golf course superintendents in Iowa. The state's courses had a major problem with winterkill that superintendents had to endure. "Then, just as they started getting back in shape, the floods came," Wendel says.

Most all of the state's roughly 400 courses were impacted by the heavy rain, Wendel says. About 100 courses were flooded. "Some courses that don't even have streams on them were closed for a few days because of the heavy rains," he adds.

Wendel's big concern is that people have gotten out of the habit of playing golf.

"Play is way down," he says. "It will be hard to get those rounds back."

Wendel says the Iowa Golf As-

Continued on page 16