

When It Comes To Turf Quality, Ask Those Closest To It.



*"I wish my feeding schedule could be as consistent and predictable as our course's POLYON® fertilizer program."*

— Mary, Tom Leahy's Black Lab

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QUICK TIP

All superintendents know that to fully understand plant health and durability, they need to be aware of the impact that soil can have on their turf. Floratine Products Group provides one of the most comprehensive and accurate soil evaluation systems in the industry. Floratine works with Harris Laboratories to perform chemical extraction, water extraction and soluble paste tests to measure chemical components and nutrient availability. The data is then run through the proprietary Analync system, an exclusive partner to Floratine, which analyzes soil, water and environmental factors to give superintendents the most accurate information about their soil. All of this gives superintendents an in-depth look at possible soil issues, allowing them to better treat and strengthen their turf. To learn more about Floratine's soil evaluation, or for a list of Floratine distributors, please visit [www.floratine.com](http://www.floratine.com).

TABLE 1

We have released nine vegetative and seeded type cultivars since the start of our breeding program in 1984.

Cultivar	Year Released	Propagation Method
609	1993	Vegetative
315	1993	Vegetative
378	1995	Vegetative
Tatanka	1995	Seed
Cody	1997	Seed
Legacy	1997	Vegetative
Bowie	2001	Seed
Prestige	1997	Vegetative
SWI-2000	2006	Seed

*Continued from page 60*

concern for the turfgrass industry, these characteristics and the drought resistance of buffalograss will become even more important and its acceptance as a golf course turfgrass species will continue to increase.

**Improvements made**

The following cultivars are some examples of the excellent improvements in buffalograss turfgrass performance that we have been able to make.

**Legacy** is a dark blue-green cultivar with a low growth habit and excellent turfgrass quality. It is noteworthy for its reduced canopy height and rapid lateral spread, making it an excellent turf-type buffalograss. Legacy is adapted to the central and northern Great Plains, but it has performed well as far north as Toronto and as far east as Maryland. It has excellent winter hardiness.

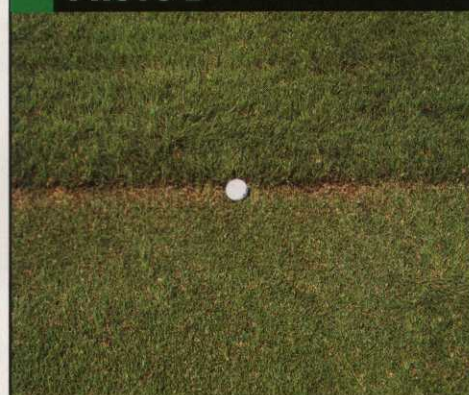
**Prestige** is a vegetative cultivar with a wide range of adaptation. Prestige is lighter green than Legacy, and tolerates mowing heights as low as one-half inch (Photo 1, p. 60). It has an extended green cover period that is enhanced by its greening up early in the spring and staying green longer in the fall than most other cultivars. It also has excellent winter hardiness, and is adapted to the southern through northern Great Plains. Prestige also has excellent chinch bug (*Blissus occiduus*) resistance.

**Bowie**, a seeded, turf-type buffalograss, has a wide range of adaptation and very good turf-

grass quality characteristics. Bowie is comparable to Tatanka and 609 for turfgrass quality, but is darker green and has a wider range of adaptation than either of those cultivars. It has very good seed yield potential, similar or better than Texoka. Bowie has excellent winter hardiness and excellent mealybug [*Tridiscus sporoli* (Cockerell) or *Trionymus* spp.] resistance. In 2006, we released SWI-2000. It performs and appears similar to Bowie, but has superior seed yield potential.

*Continued on page 64*

PHOTO 2



*Selections are based on desirable turfgrass color and quality, and tolerance to low mowing heights. This selection is being evaluated at five-eighths of an inch (foreground) and 2.5 inches (background), and receives 1 inch of water per month. This photo was taken in July 2007.*

# WARNING

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**TABLE 2**

**Our buffalograss breeding program is based on a team effort. In 2002, we formed a working group to address the complex issues of improving buffalograsses. The following individuals are current members of this working group.**

Working Group Member	Area of Expertise
Bob Shearman, Ph.D.	Leader/Facilitator
Bekele Abeyo, Ph.D.	Project Coordinator
Fred Baxendale, Ph.D.	Entomology
Roch Gaussoin, Ph.D.	Weed Science & Management
Loren Giesler, Ph.D.	Plant Pathology
Tiffany Heng-Moss, Ph.D.	Entomology
Don Lee, Ph.D.	Genetics
Gautam Sarath, Ph.D.	Molecular Biology
Desalegn Serba	Breeding
Kenton Peterson	Physiology & Management
Songul Severmutlu	Physiology & Management
Paul Twigg, Ph.D.	Molecular Biology
Ken Vogel, Ph.D.	Breeding and Genetics
Lannie Wit	Project Management



JOHN DEERE

**QUICK TIP**

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*Continued from page 62*

Certainly, we are fortunate to have several excellent cultivars available for golf course use. Some of these cultivars are being used in golf course roughs with good success and performance, but their use has been limited.

Three aspects have been the primary limiting factors for use of buffalograss to date on golf course turfs. First, turf-type buffalograsses are new to the industry, and it takes time for any to accept the use of a new turfgrass species in the industry. Second, it is relatively expensive to establish buffalograss. Vegetative plantings are costly and labor intensive. Seed sources are relatively expensive compared to other turfgrass species. Third, buffalograss is a warm-season species with excellent winter hardiness, but has an extended winter dormancy period. Prestige with its extended green period is certainly an exception to this concern.

I believe acceptance of buffalograss is on the increase due primarily to concerns of our industry over water conservation and the need to reduce inputs, like fertilizer and pesticide use. As more individuals use buffalograss on golf courses, its acceptance by the turfgrass industry will definitely increase.

Improving seed yield and establishment potential are also important. We have placed an emphasis on improving seed yield potential of our current germplasm (Photo 3, p. 66). Improving seed yield will reduce costs for the end user and improves returns for the seed producers.

We have made excellent strides in this regard and have recently placed eight experimental lines with outstanding seed yield characteristics into extensive regional turfgrass evaluation trials. Pending their overall performance in these trials, we anticipate their potential release in the next year or two.

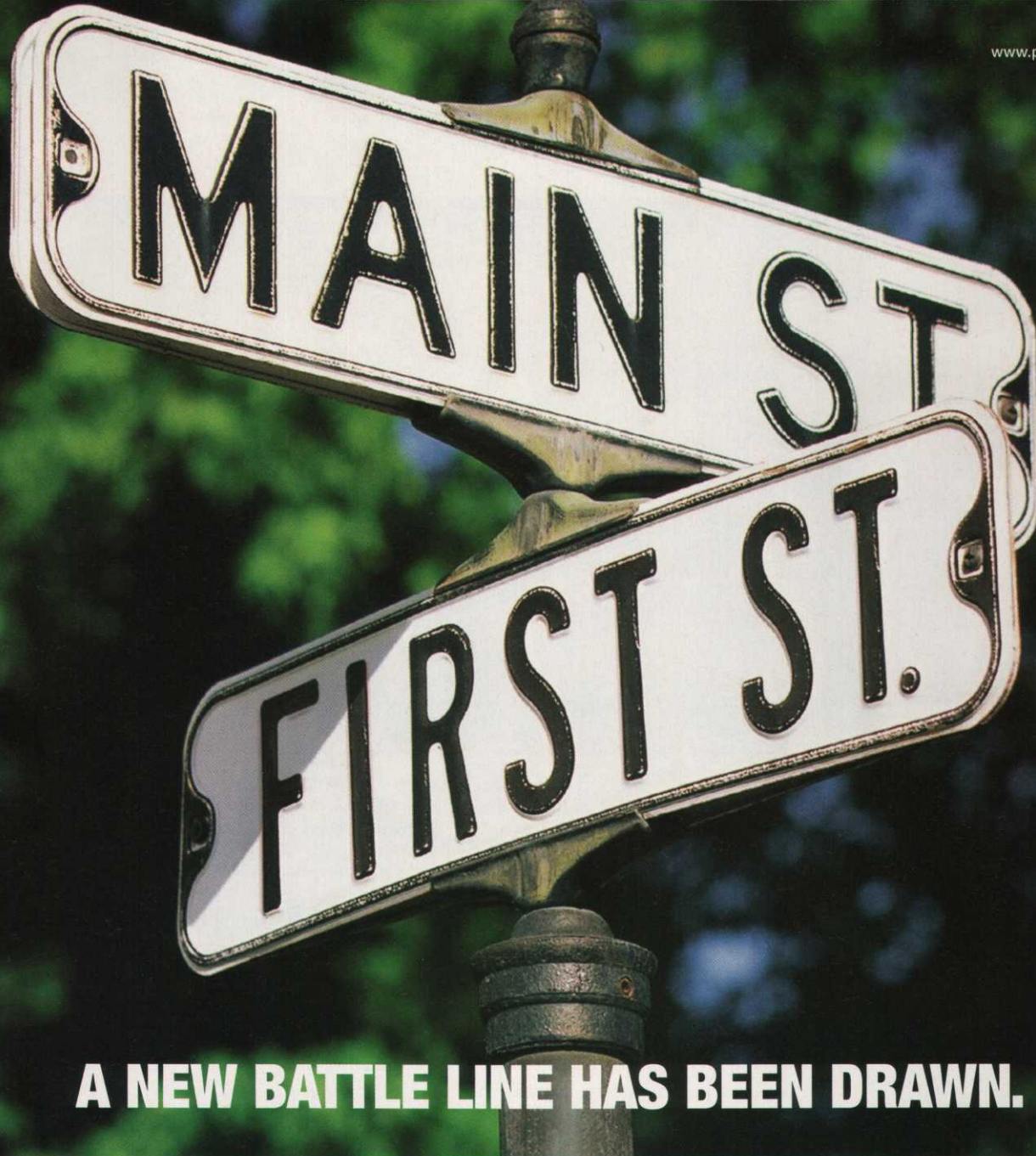
We also have some excellent vegetative experimental lines (Photo 2, p. 62) that have very good fairway and rough turfgrass characteristics. Five vegetative experimental lines were also placed in regional turfgrass evaluation trials. These lines have outstanding turfgrass quality and drought resistance traits, and several have excellent chinch bug resistance characteristics as well. These lines tolerate low mowing and require limited fertilizer inputs. We anticipate release of some of these lines in the very near future.

Twenty years of improving buffalograss is a relatively short time compared to the time and efforts put into improving Kentucky bluegrass, perennial ryegrass, tall fescue and bermudagrass. We are pleased with the progress made to date, but we also know that as buffalograss is accepted for use in our industry there will be even more improvements made in the future. Certainly, buffalograss has a great deal of variable and desirable traits that can be exploited for the benefit of turfgrass use. It is just a matter of taking advantage of these attributes and putting them to use.

**Conclusions**

The acceptance of buffalograss as a relatively new turfgrass species has come along way in a little over two decades of selection, breeding and improvement. As water shortages become more of an issue in the future, the need to conserve water for turfgrass use will become even more essential.

*Continued on page 66*



## A NEW BATTLE LINE HAS BEEN DRAWN.

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**Make it personal. Get involved. Draw the line.**



PHOTO 3



*Project Coordinator Bekele Abeyo observes advanced lines that have been selected for improved seed yield potential and turfgrass performance.*

*Continued from page 64*

Certainly, a tough, drought-resistant, native turfgrass species like buffalograss will play an important role in meeting this need. The cooperative research effort between UNL and the USGA has demonstrated that buffalograss has excellent potential for development as a turfgrass species. The nine cultivars released to date have proven track records for excellent turfgrass performance with minimal requirements for inputs. The experimental lines presently under testing show promise for even better turfgrass performance in the future.

*Robert (Bob) C. Shearman holds a distinguished professorship in the Agronomy and Horticulture Department at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. His responsibilities include research, teaching and extension. He is Sunkist Fiesta Bowl professor of agronomy, and is currently in charge of the buffalograss breeding program.*

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Bayer Environmental Science

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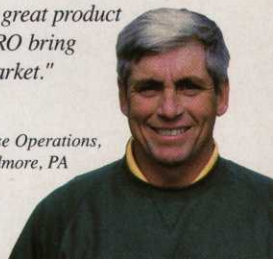
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**Matt Shaffer**  
Director of Golf Course Operations,  
Merion Golf Club, Ardmore, PA

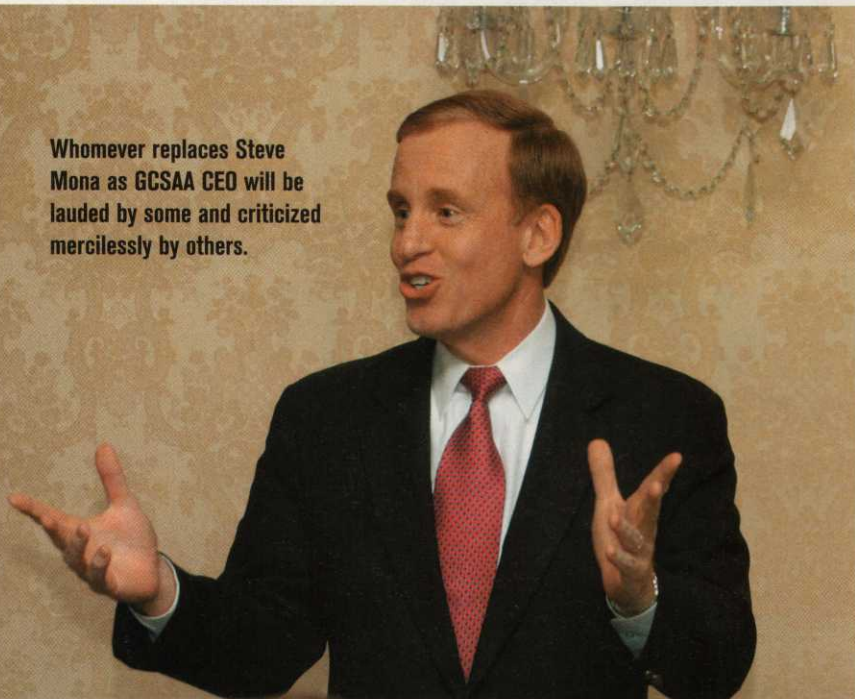


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# 'May You Live In Interesting Times'

Whoever replaces Steve Mona as GCSAA CEO will be lauded by some and criticized mercilessly by others.



BY CHRISTOPHER S. GRAY SR., CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

**I**t could pop out of a fortune cookie. But this famous and seemingly innocent Chinese proverb quoted above isn't a fortune at all. It's a curse.

The word "interesting" in this context actually means dangerous or turbulent. And secondly, it's not close to Chinese in origin. In fact, it's an American creation. Scholars have collectively agreed there is no such expression in Chinese teachings, although it is thought to be related to the Chinese proverb that says, "It's better to be a dog in peaceful times than a man in a chaotic period."

The English iteration first appeared in

an article in *Astounding Science Fiction*, but it was popularized when Robert F. Kennedy famously evoked these words in his Day of Affirmation Address at Cape Town, South Africa in 1966.

Regardless of its origin, the point of the phrase has long meant to be ironic, largely because Confucianism places value on stability and constancy.

None of us can deny that we currently live in very interesting times, both personally and professionally. Pick up any business magazine and read about the ongoing court battles with genetically engineered grasses, or the ever-growing controversies between brand-name chemicals and the post-patent products flooding the market, or the constantly changing immigration laws and H-2B provisions that directly affect many of our already-stressed labor issues. After perusing these "interesting" articles, how could you not long for simpler, less turbulent times?

During the next few years, we are facing several "interesting" issues that will reshape our industry for the next decade and beyond.

## Oh captain, my captain

He was our fearless leader for the past 14 years, but Steve Mona is leaving us for the blue waters of Florida and the World Golf Foundation. I think I have read just about every industry magazine article concerning Mona leaving the GCSAA. After the third or fourth one, they all start sounding the same. For those of you who might have missed them, here's a quick summary: Mona was a great leader; he led the association into the 21<sup>st</sup> century; he had more

*Continued on page 70*



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## 'May You Live In Interesting Times'

**Water issues might not be so black and white as local water districts continue to scrutinize availability and usage.**



*Continued from page 68*

successes than failures; he will be sorely missed, and his successor will have big shoes to fill. There you go. I just saved you countless minutes of valuable reading time.

Don't get me wrong, I truly like Mona and I will miss him. But I am more interested in exploring who will be filling those shoes and taking over the helm of the GCSAA ship.

In all likelihood his successor will come from somewhere in the golf industry. After reading "Position and Candidate Specification" prepared by Spencer Stuart (the consulting firm conducting initial screening and interviews), this becomes blatantly apparent. The first point under "Ideal Experience" states that the candidate should possess a "minimum of five to 10 years management experience in a golf association, foundation or other sports-related organization or business." This awfully specific criterion limits the field of candidates dramatically.

Simple logic suggests looking toward

the established executives and managing directors of both the larger GCSAA chapters and state golf associations for qualified candidates. For those members who are looking for Steve Mona version 2.0, which from my perspective is a pretty large group, you should be hoping that history repeats itself. Mona, himself, served for 10 years as the executive director for the Georgia State Golf Association.

Alas, for many more of us "rebel" members, ideal experience alone should not determine the next captain of our 110-strong staff-member ship known as the GCSAA. We are looking for a new direction to sail into, far from the tidal waves and rough seas of such endeavors as the infamous GCSAA Headquarter Relocation Study. Yikes!

We, and I'm including myself with this group, are excited about the possibility of having a new perspective and innovative ideas for the GCSAA and the members. I suggest that, perhaps, it's time for someone not so familiar with the trials and tribulations of our association to bring a fresh pair of eyes to peer at what we've become, and more importantly, see where we should be going. Many members became very comfortable with Mona running the association, but there is a very fine line between comfort and complacency.

In the end, whomever is selected and approved by the board of directors as the next CEO of the GCSAA, two things are absolutely certain. Some people will be overly happy with the selection, while others will believe beyond a shadow of a doubt that Armageddon has begun for the association. In turn, the new CEO will be both praised and criticized way too much for every move he or she makes. It certainly doesn't get much more "interesting" than that.

### **Oh water, where art thou?**

Anyone else have water issues last season? I'm sure that in some small way, the superintendents of the Southwest had to feel just a little slighted about all the press that this year's drought received from all over the country. They have been constantly dealing with numerous water issues since their