

Environmental groups have been patiently hanging around for the time and opportunity to pounce on our industry and our colossal water-use rate.

courses were first planted — problems ranging from unsuitable water supplies to massive water restrictions from suppliers. These guys are no strangers to the problems that the rest of us superintendents were facing this year, particularly those of us in the Southeast. You couldn't pick up a newspaper or turn on the TV without reading or hearing about the lack of available water in the country this past year. You can certainly believe that all the hard-core environmental groups have been watching.

We are an industry that weathers enormous scrutiny from almost every environmental group on the planet. There isn't one of them out there that wouldn't enjoy having the golf industry's proverbial head stuffed and mounted on their wall like a prize buck and take credit for being the group who finally forced our industry to be, at least, regulated with our water use.

Let's face it; we are an industry that uses water, not in the millions, but by the billions and billions of gallons each year. That alone paints a very large target on all of our backs.

Like hungry lions on the African plains, lying in the tall grass waiting for the injured gazelle to come limping by, these environmental groups have been patiently hanging around for the opportunity time to pounce on our industry and our colossal water-use rate. That time might be now.

In a time when towns like Orme, Tenn., has its mayor turn on the city's water supply for only three hours a day, it's easy to gain political support for regulating water use for a business like us, which is still publicly classified as a recreational activity. When you start to weigh the golf industry against an entire town population's basic needs, we quickly lose the most important battle — the one of public opinion. Ultimately, it's this arena that will decide our future regarding water regulation. Having to deal with this impending problem categorically qualifies it as "interesting."

Myriad other issues are poised to restructure our entire industry and how we do business over the next decade. Some of us will embrace these looming and inevitable changes, while others most certainly will not. It's our unique ability, as an industry, to solve problems that will serve us best when these new challenges come to fruition.

In the end, if nothing else, these challenges will unquestionably be "interesting." ■

Christopher S. Gray Sr.
is superintendent of
The Marvel Golf Club
in Benton, Ky. He expects
an interesting year.



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ISSUE DATE: January 11, 2008
DUE DATE: March 7, 2008
SITE VISIT: February 8, 2008 at 11:00 AM

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These procurements are subject to participation goals for M/WBES and /or WBES as required by Local Law 129 of 2005.

Copies of the RFP can be obtained on January 11, 2008 at the Agency's website <http://www.nyc.gov/parks>, the City Record's website www.nyc.gov/cityrecord and at the Olmsted Center, Room 61, Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, Flushing, NY 11368 during the hours of 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday - Friday from January 11, 2008 to March 7, 2008.

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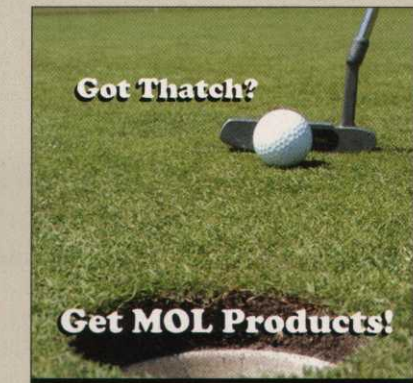
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Ad Index

Advertiser	Page No.		
Andersons	CV4	Reliable Golf	30
Arysta LifeScience	19, 52, 53	RISE	65B
Audubon	46B	Scott's Turfseed	7
BASF	16-17, 42, 54	SePro	67A
Bell Laboratories	BB	SoloRider	25
Champion Turf	9	Syngenta	32-35
Cleary Chemical Corp.	28-29, 31	Target Specialty Products	46A
Club Car	48-49, 51	Tee-2-Green	CV2, 6
E-Z-Go	21	Turfco	44
Elkay Mfg Co.	4	Valent	11, 23
FMC Corp	69, 71, 73	TURFGRASS TRENDS	
Farmsaver	5	Agrium Adv. Tech.	61
Golf Construction News	50	Bayer ES	65A
Griggs Brothers	15	Floratine	63
Jacobsen	41, 43, 45	John Deere	56-57
Lebanon Turf	4, 40, CV3		
Milorganite	2		
Oregon Fine Fescue	3		
PBI/Gordon	6, 13, 38		
Project Evergreen	67B		

This index is provided as an additional service. The publisher does not assume any liability for errors or omissions.

Editorial Index

Company	Page No.		
American Society of Agronomy	18	Meadow Lakes Golf Course	43
Arysta LifeScience	18	National Golf Foundation	12
Aurora Hills Golf Course	30	Oak Grove Golf Club	50
Bent Creek Country Club	26	Oregon GCSA	36
Bethpage Black	10	Oregon Golf Club	36
Challenge at Hideaway Farm	8	Pound Ridge Golf Club	10
Colligan Golf Designs	51	Prairie Lakes Golf Course	51
Crop Science Society of America	18	Quarry Hills Country Club	8
GCSAA	22	Royal Oaks Country Club	39
ClubCorp	47	Seneca Hickory Stick Golf Club	10
Golf Industry Show	22	Soil Science Society of America	18
CourseCo	26	Sunset Ridge Country Club	6
Dow AgroSciences	14	Stone Creek Golf Club	30
International Irrigation Show	12	The Club at Pronghorn	41
Inwood Country Club	10	The Clubs of Kingwood	53
Irrigation Association	12	Troon Golf and Country Club	30
John Deere	18	TyraTech	18
Jumeirah Golf Estates	6	University of Buffalo	18
Louisiana State University	18	University of Texas at Austin	18
		Windermere Country Club	31

Birdie on crabgrass; eagle on sedges and goosegrass.



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LEGO mania

Time for a linguistic lesson: Leg Godt means “play well” in Danish; lego is Latin for “put together.” Strangely, Mr. Ole Kirk Christensen, back in 1934, wasn’t aware of the Latin when he settled on the name for his new toy company. Fifty-four years later the name has become synonymous with fun and creativity.

My own LEGO experience began sometime in the 1970s, when stacks of bricks at my cousin’s house were a staple, complete with flat green bases. Through the years, I would see the sets at various stores, but it wasn’t until a few years ago that I got the fever. My current love of the little bricks wasn’t based so much on my perpetual desire to be a kid, but more my love of watching my son Miles’ eyes light up once he built something. Now, I flat-out love the things, even if it takes an inordinate amount of time to build a big set (try more than eight hours for a giant Star Wars Trade Federation MTT) and it thins my wallet.

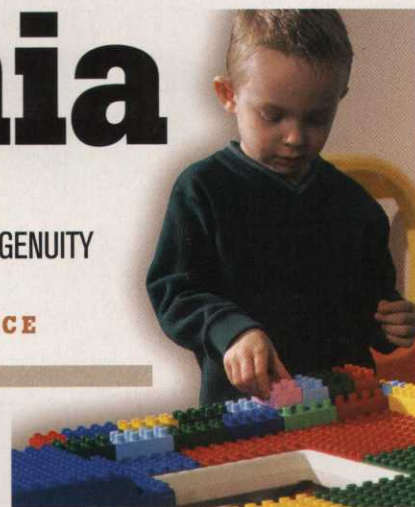
Miles started with Duplos, the toddler-sized big blocks, and immediately showed an uncanny ability for symmetry, whether making a parking garage for countless Matchbox cars (another story entirely) or color-coordinated high towers plum for crashing down onto said cars. What followed were the

THE SETS HAVE CHANGED, BUT THE INGENUITY REMAINS THE SAME **BY MARK LUCE**

basic tubs of bricks and simple things, including boats, mini-cars and rudimentary space ships. It wasn’t until the first set — a little fire truck complete with string hoses and that most kid-friendly part of LEGOs, the mini-figure — that I realized I was enjoying the sets as much as my son.

This past holiday may have well been called a LEGOMAS, for in the span of four days, I, with the help of my assistants, put together no fewer than nine LEGO sets of various sizes and complexities. From the zoom-zoom of a Formula 1 garage to the evil-idiot lair of Plankton’s Chum Bucket, from Darth Maul’s wicked Sith Infiltrator to the newest LEGO craze Indiana Jones’ Lost Tomb, I seemingly breathed multi-colored bricks.

At some level, the instructions for these kits remain quite simple, but a small oversight can cause serious misfortune later. But what continually strikes me is the sheer elegance of the engineering. It’s not enough to build a garage for Formula 1 cars, it’s the little things: a peg for extra helmets, the storage cases for wrenches, drills and the like. Over time, I have come to



appreciate the artistry of the set design as much as I appreciate watching my sons play.

Over these last few years, I have poked around the company in hopes of buying stock. However, it’s privately held, so forget it. But I have learned that the molding process of making the bricks is amazingly precise — within .002 millimeters. And every year a select group of folks pay \$1,700 for a two-and-a-half day tour of the Billund, Denmark, factory, the equivalent of Willie Wonka’s Golden Ticket.

While the price isn’t right for a trans-Atlantic LEGO blowout, we’re thinking about vacationing in Southern California at the end of the summer — ostensibly to see old friends, but, really, to take the kids to that other place where dreams are made: LEGOLAND.

Happy building.

Mark Luce lives in Kansas City, Mo., where he’s ready to challenge any comers in a LEGO speed-building contest.

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