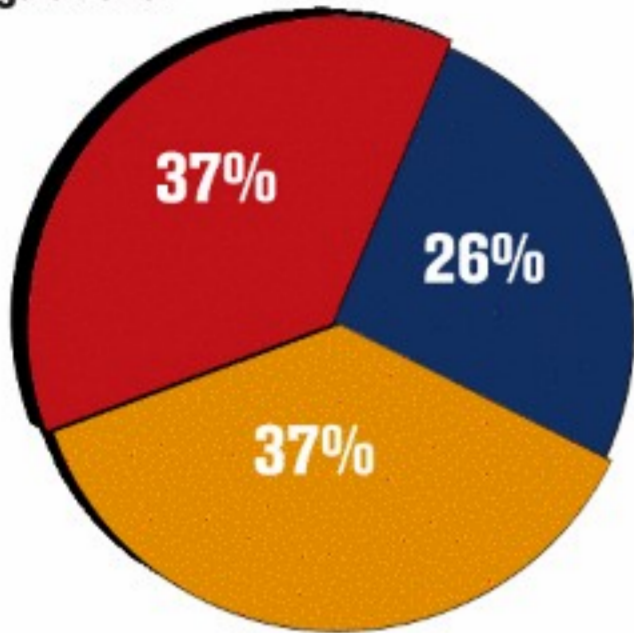


**Do turfgrass maintenance issues affect your federal voting preferences, such as worker availability (H2B) or chemical regulations?**



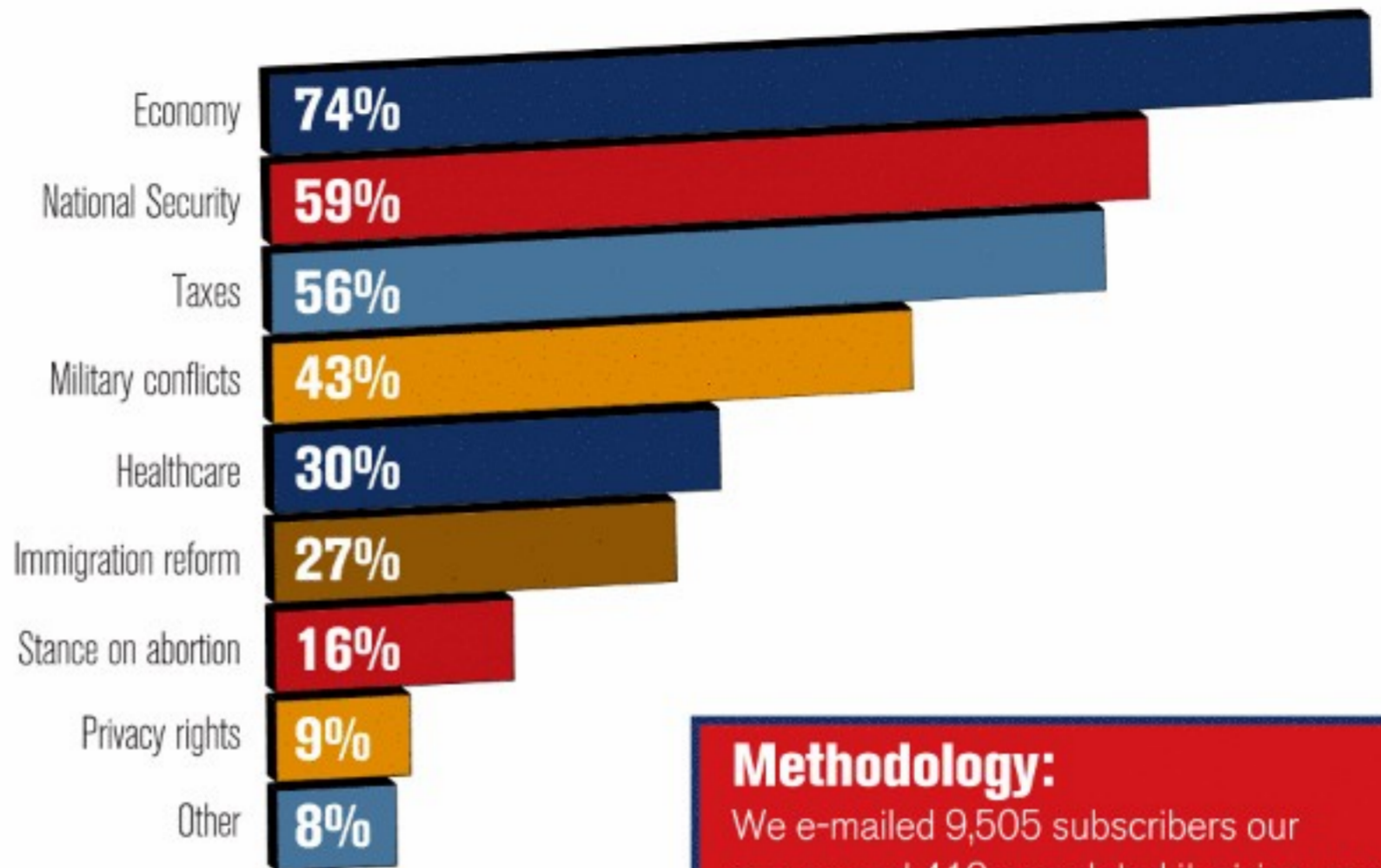
- Yes, it's important to address our profession at the national level
- No, there are more important things than golf
- No, most of the issues that affect our profession are local

Obama. Five percent of respondents said they would abstain from voting, and 1 percent said they would vote for a third-party candidate.

At presstime, the latest Gallup Poll showed Obama leading with 48 percent of the vote and McCain with 45 percent of the vote. Obama led throughout much of the campaign by double-digit margins, but McCain has gained ground since the Republican National Convention.

More than half of respondents (55 percent) say they support and respect their candidate of choice, despite the widespread public sentiment that neither candidate can possibly be the best that the country has to offer. Fewer than one in three of superin-

**What federal issues help dictate your candidate of choice? (please choose three answers)**



tendents (30 percent) said they were voting for the lesser of evils, and 10 percent said they were voting for a candidate to spite another political party. Five percent said they will vote out of constitutional duty.

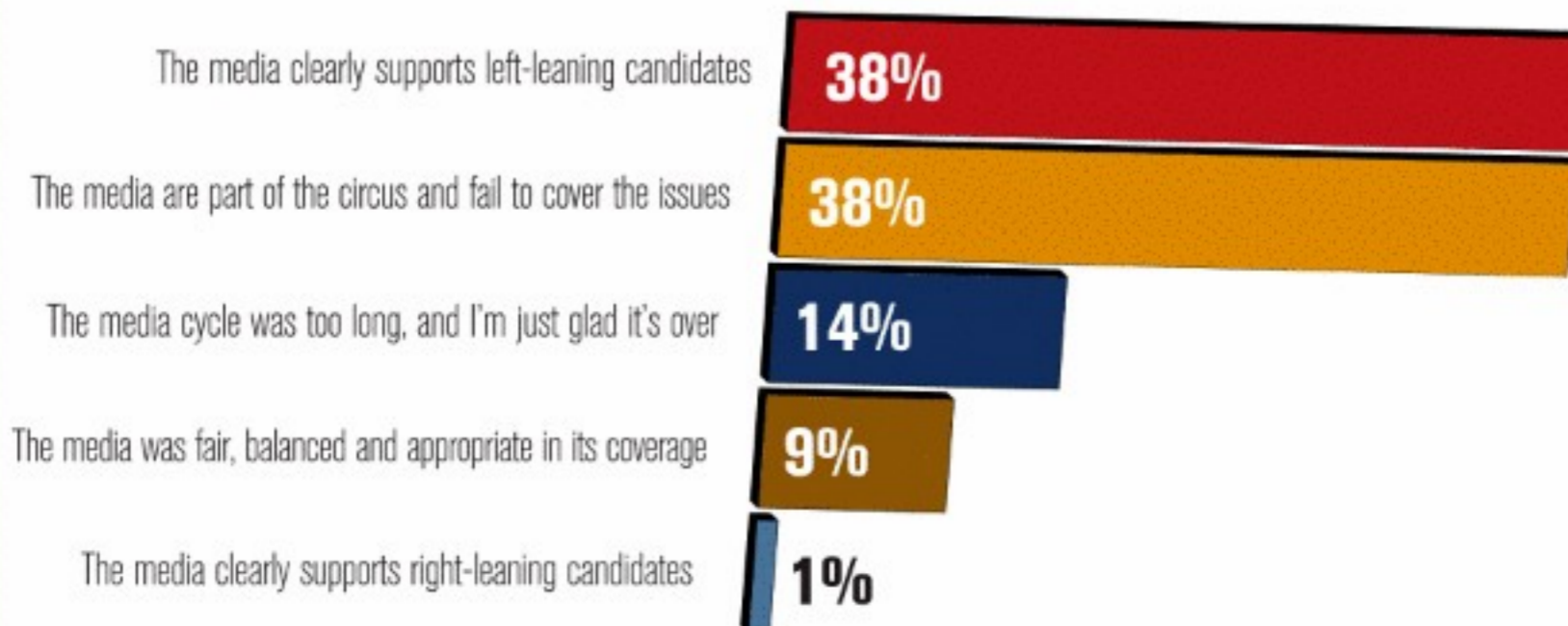
Sixty-three percent of respondents said turfgrass maintenance issues do not influence their federal voting preferences, while 37 percent of respondents said it was important to address turfgrass maintenance issues, such as worker availability and chemical regulations, at the national level. Making up the 63 percent who do not vote on professional issues, 37 percent said there are more important things than golf, and 26 percent said most turfgrass maintenance issues are local. ■

**Methodology:**

We e-mailed 9,505 subscribers our survey, and 419 completed it, giving us a 4.4 percent response rate. The margin of error is plus or minus 4.68.

The survey was in the field for two weeks. No incentive was given, and the survey was only allowed to be completed once for every e-mail address.

**What statement best reflects your opinion of the media coverage surrounding this election?**



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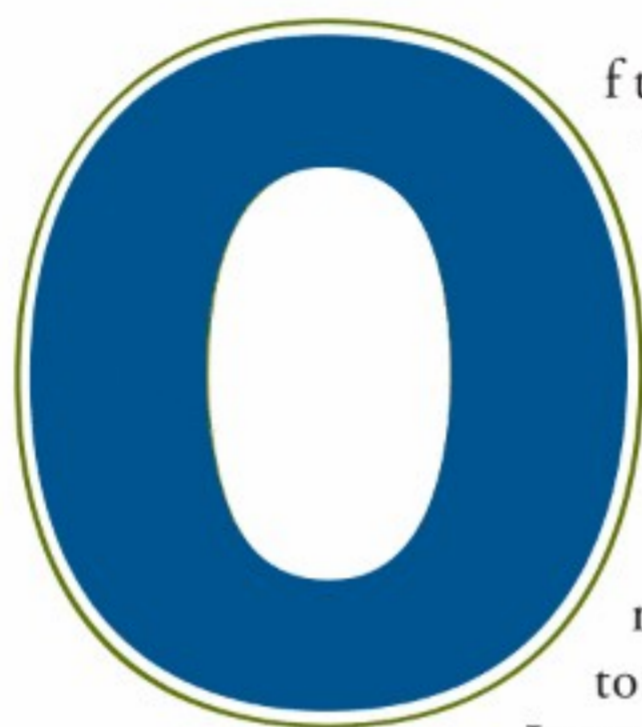
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# Been Around

Times have changed for these 'old-time' golf course superintendents, but they have no regrets about getting into the business

BY RYAN GRAFF



**O**f the 10 dozen or so ways a golf course superintendent can blow his budget, the phone bill usually isn't one of them. But a 19-year-old rookie can manage to wreck even that.

Just ask Ken Lapp.

Lapp landed his first superintendent job in 1955 at the Fresh Meadow Golf Club near Chicago. He had six years of experience working for his father at the nearby St. Andrews Golf Club, which was owned by Jemsek Golf, the same company that owned Fresh Meadow. He wanted to be a superintendent, but he was stunned nevertheless when one of the owners of

Jemsek Golf walked into the maintenance facility and asked, "You still want to be a greenkeeper?"

"I almost fell over," Lapp says. He took the job, "and I absolutely rang up the biggest phone bills calling my Pop and asking for advice."

Fifty-three years later, Lapp still runs courses for Jemsek Golf, though now he watches over the Cog Hill Country Club, a four-course club in Lamont, Ill., where he has been the superintendent for 36 years.

Lapp has company as self-professed "old-timers" who supervise courses around the country. There's Terry Bonar, who has worked at the Canterbury Golf Club in Cleveland for 47 years, 25 as superintendent. And Riley Stottern, a 42-year

*Continued on page 44*



## Who: Ken Lapp, 72.

**Got his start:** Working under his father at St. Andrews Country Club in Illinois.

**First superintendent job:** Fresh Meadow Golf Club in Illinois at age 19.

**Secret to his success:** "You've got to have, and I was lucky to have, an understanding family and an understanding wife. Because when you get in extreme weather, you're out there seven days a week."

**Best part of the job:** "Working outdoors. You work to get the place looking the best you can get it."

**Advice to superintendents:** "Make sure you know what you're getting into. [A lot of young guys] don't see me after they go home at 3:30 p.m. I may be out here until 9 p.m. if something's going wrong. They don't see that."

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OLD-TIMERS AT A GLANCE



**Who: Terry Bonar, 67.**

**Got his start:** Canterbury Golf Club in 1961 after graduating in the second class ever from the turfgrass management program at Pennsylvania State University.

**First superintendent job:** Canterbury Golf Club in 1984 after a few years serving on the crew, four years serving in the Air Force and a few more years as an assistant.

**Secret to his success:** Working at a tournament course that kept him busy – Canterbury has hosted the 1973 PGA Championship, two U.S. Amateurs, four Senior TPCs and a U.S. Senior Open while Bonar's been there. And he's preparing for the 2009 Senior PGA Championship. Bonar says finding good people has also made him successful. "If you have good people who are happy doing their jobs, you can do anything."

**Best part of the job:** "When you leave that golf course in the afternoon, 99 percent of the time it's better than when you got there. You can look to see what you've done that day. And a lot of people never get to see that in the jobs they have."

**Advice to superintendents:** "Give your best every day. If you're a good person and giving your best effort, people notice that and it will take you far."

*Continued from page 42*

member of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of American, has run about 10 courses and is currently supervising the construction of Kokopelli Golf Club in Apple Valley, Utah.

The three superintendents have seen plenty of changes during their combined 148 years on the job. Lapp hand watered greens and tees long before he could sit at his desk and irrigate the 1,000 acres at Cog Hill with a few mouse clicks. Bonar cut greens at one-quarter inch long before he used a micrometer to measure blade height on his greens mowers. And each fretted about how to keep turfgrass both healthy and short long before the rise of plant growth regulators.

For the most part, advances in technology have made the game and the job better. These days, courses stay in such good shape year-round that if "you want to put a tournament on it, you just have to buff it out a little bit," Stottern says.

And it has leveled the playing field, so to speak. When he started, golfers without country-club memberships played lower-quality privately owned and municipal courses. "There used to be a separation," Stottern recalls. "But I think with the technology that the gap has closed and the demands placed on superintendents by golfers have gotten to the point where all golf courses are good now."

The career path has changed, too. "I came up from the  
*Continued on page 46*

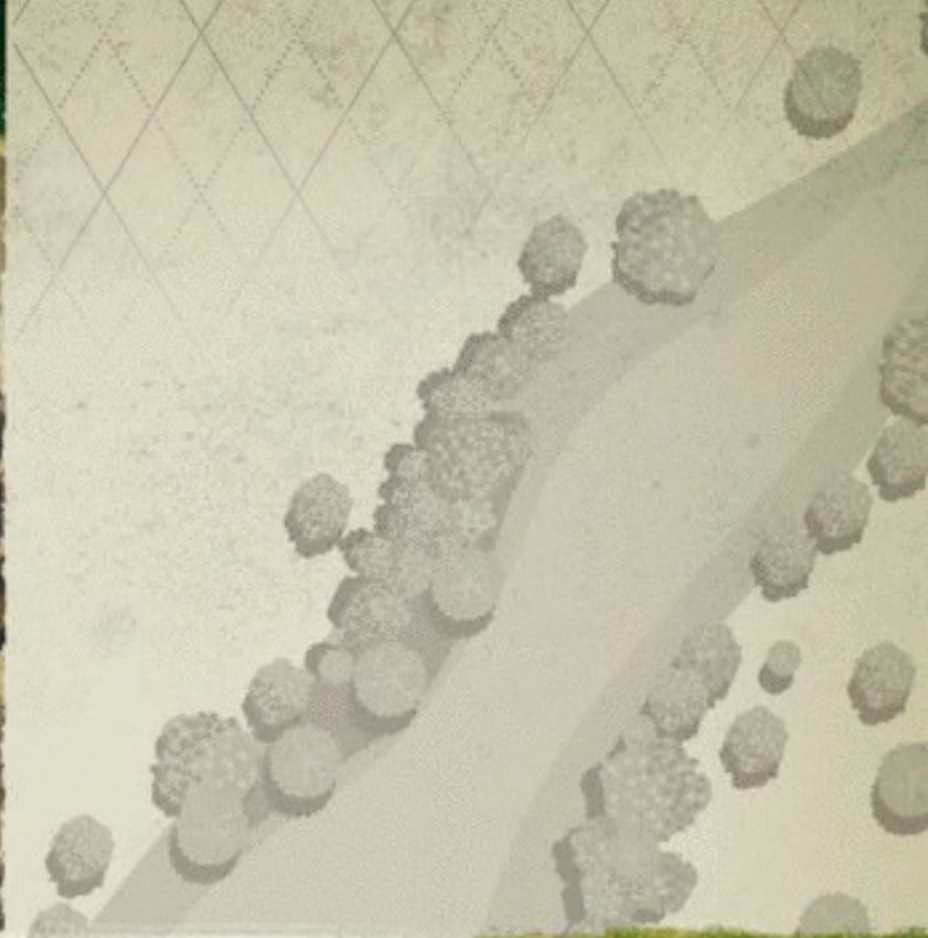
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Myth.

## Been Around

*Continued from page 44*

old school, through the ranks,” Lapp says. “These young men now, they’re going to college, and they’re coming out well educated.”

Like Lapp, Stottern also came through the ranks under the eye of his father, who himself was the son

**If you want to do well  
in this industry, then  
get your degree in  
business management  
while you are taking  
agronomy classes.  
Then work for a good  
superintendent who  
can teach you how to  
grow turf.**

of a superintendent. “Through the school of hard knocks, that’s how I grew up,” Stottern says. “My dad, he didn’t cut me any slack and he made me do all the jobs, and I appreciate that now.”

Both of these superintendents, though, note that either path taken these days is valid and challenging.

Bonar had a foot in each world. He started out in the second class ever at Pennsylvania State University’s turf-grass management program, but he had never worked on a golf course before. “I got good grades because I could memorize,” he says. “But I didn’t know a lot about what they were talking about. Having never done it, I couldn’t picture it in my mind.” So he dropped out for a year, went to work on a golf course and then finished his degree. Eventually he made superintendent at Canterbury Golf Club — the only course he has ever worked.

Not all the change in technology has been great for superintendents, though. “You’re always on a call,” Stottern says. “Back when I first got into the business, you could leave on a Friday afternoon and go play golf, and you didn’t have to worry about it until Saturday morning because nobody bothered you. Today, you’re constantly on the phone, even when you’re trying to play golf.”

And there are new demands on superintendents that they didn’t use to have.

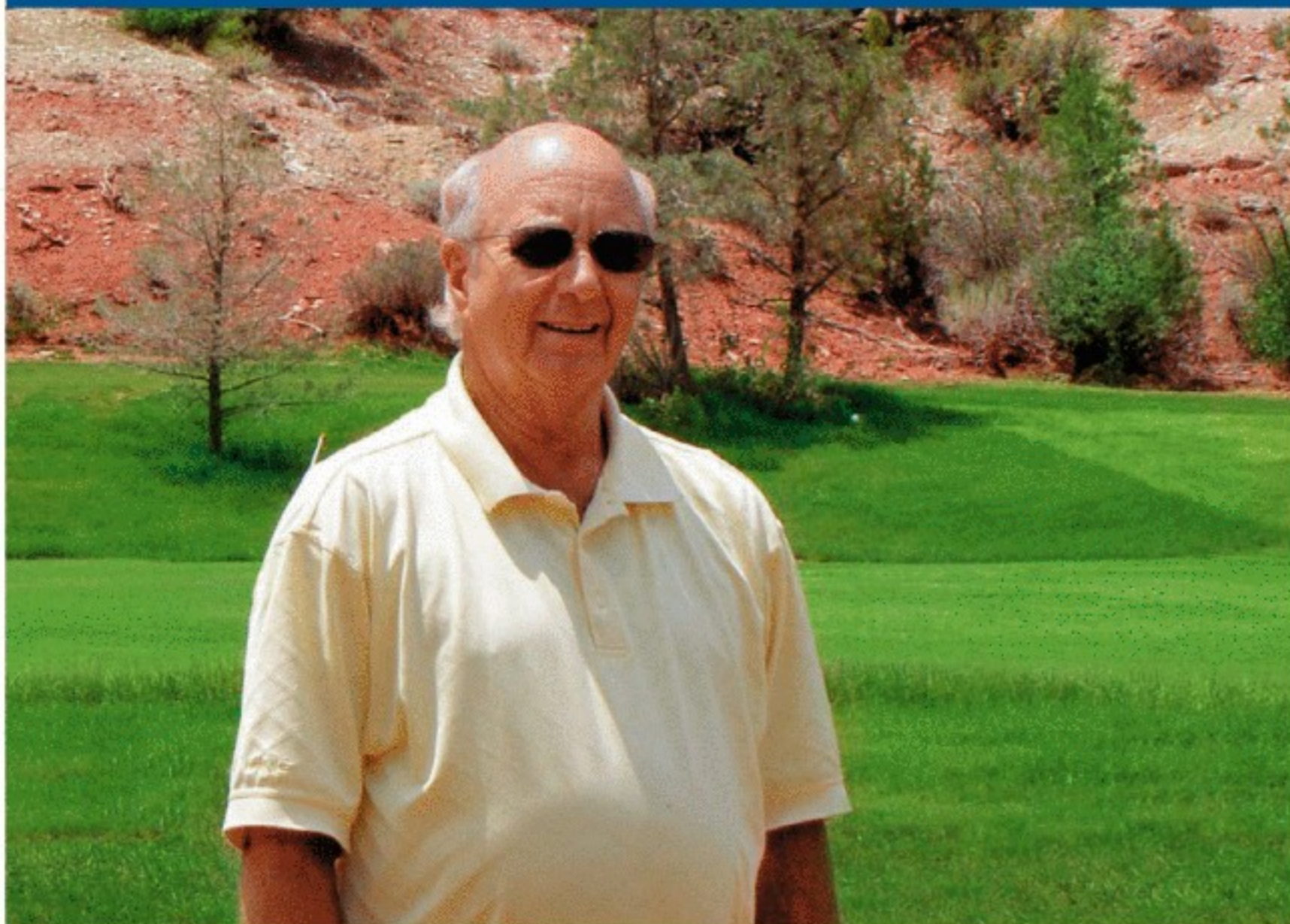
“It’s a business — you’ve got employees, you’ve got all the government regulations and so forth,” Stottern adds. “I used to jump on a mower and go mow six hours a day and help my guys out. We had a great time, and there were no problems. That doesn’t happen much anymore.”

In fact, these days, “when I get on a mower it’s a pretty good sign that maybe my crew ought to just stay away from me,” Stottern adds. “It’s one of those stress relievers, you

### Send Us Your Words of Wisdom

The veterans you’re reading about in this story offer some sound advice to younger superintendents. *Golfdom* realizes there are plenty of veteran superintendents out there who might have some good advice to share. We invite you to send us your words of wisdom so we can communicate it to other superintendents. Send your thoughts and pointers to Editor in Chief Larry Aylward at [larylward@questex.com](mailto:larylward@questex.com).

## OLD-TIMERS AT A GLANCE



### WHO: Riley Stottern, 64.

**Got his start:** Working for his dad at Willow Creek Country Club in Salt Lake City during high school.

**First superintendent job:** Oak Ridge Country Club in Farmington, Utah in 1966.

**Now at:** Supervising construction at Kokopelli Golf Club in Apple Valley, Utah.

**Secret to success:** "I've been on golf courses down in the desert Southwest and also I've had a mountain golf course at 8,000 feet, so I've become very versatile on the kinds of turf and conditions and what needs to be done. I guess maybe that's made my worth a little bit more to owners and to people looking for someone to build golf courses."

**Best part of the job:** "There's nothing like smelling the fresh-mown grass every morning. Getting up early to watch the sun come up and seeing your golf course and being able to watch it grow."

**Advice for young superintendents:** "Go to school and get a degree in business management and take all the agronomic or science classes you can take during that period of time. Then go work for a good golf course superintendent who'll show you the ins and outs of growing turf."

know. When I'm on a mower, I usually don't have a phone on me or I don't have a radio with me, and I'm just out there enjoying myself for a little while."

Still, these "old-timers" have few regrets.

"I always knew I had a great job," Bonar says. "And then eight years ago the club bought me a dog. Now how good is that?"

Molly, a border collie, is on official

Canada geese duty, but she spends all day with Bonar. "Now I've got a buddy," he says. And "she's the best PR I've ever had. A lot of people didn't know my name, but they know Molly."

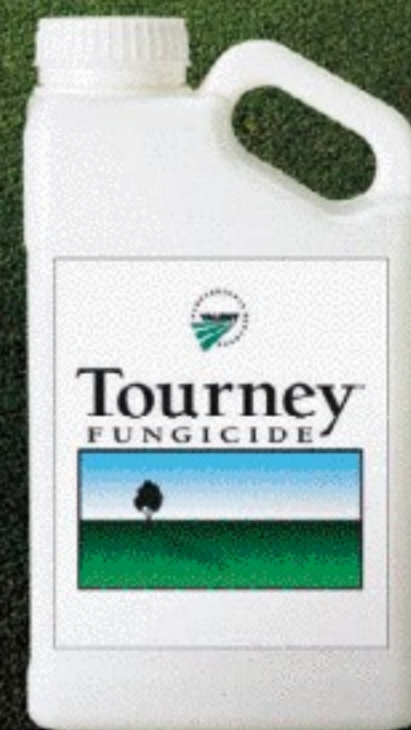
Lapp is similarly positive. "I've never regretted getting in the golf business," he says. "I love it. In this stage of life, I better love it." ■

*Graff is a freelance writer from Chicago.*

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# Primo at 15

PGR has developed into a vital apparatus in superintendents' turf maintenance toolbox

**BY LARRY AYLWARD**  
EDITOR IN CHIEF

**L.B.P.** That acronym stands for "Life Before Primo." Charles Joachim, longtime certified golf course superintendent of Champions Golf Club in Houston, remembers L.B.P. as spending a lot of time atop a fairway mower.

"We mowed all the time," says Joachim, noting that his course's bermudagrass fairways never stopped growing in the Texas heat.

And then around 2000, Joachim sprayed Primo MAXX, the popular plant growth regulator from Syngenta Professional Products, on his fairways. Eight years later he's still spraying it every 30 days.

"Because of Primo, we only have to mow it about half the time we used to mow it," Joachim says.

Other superintendents from across the land wax similar anecdotes about Primo, which turns 15 this year. It just seems like last year that the PGR, which slows vertical growth on all major turfgrasses, was registered for use. But it was 1993 when Syngenta (then known as Ciba) registered the product, first called Primo and then re-introduced in 1997 as Primo MAXX with a formulation presenting the active ingredient in a smaller size. In addition to slowing the production of gibberellic acid and reducing clippings by about 50 percent for up to four weeks, Syngenta says Primo also improves turf quality and provides a high level of pre-stress conditioning.

While Primo is 15, it's not as old as the number of years of research that went into creating it — about 20. Dennis Shepard, Ph.D., Syngenta field development manager, says that the success of Primo has been helped by a great partnership between the company, university researchers and turf managers. "The company supported numerous university research projects to better understand Primo's effect on turf," Shepard says. "When the researchers saw how well Primo worked, they developed new ideas for research which continues today."

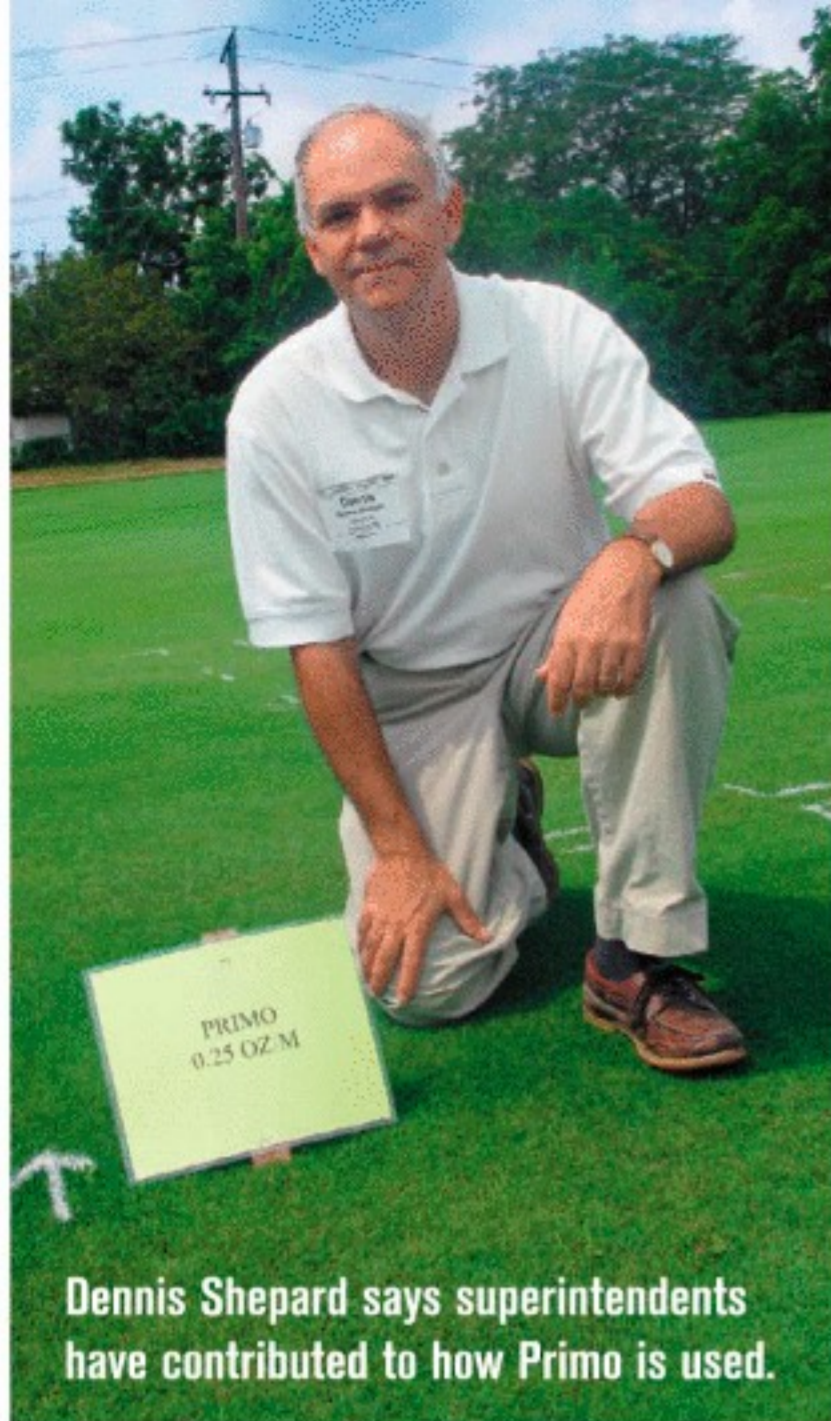
Shepard remembers when he was in

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Dennis Shepard says superintendents have contributed to how Primo is used.

graduate school at North Carolina State University. His professor was Joe DiPaola, Syngenta's previous golf market manager, who was researching plant growth regulators to slow down grass growth and improve turf quality in the process. DiPaola brought his PGR knowledge to Ciba when the company subsequently hired him, Shepard says.

"I have to give Joe DiPaola a lot of credit," says Shepard, who later joined Ciba and worked with DiPaola in developing Primo.

Primo was initially labeled for use on fairways, tees and roughs. Syngenta added greens to the label in 1996. Shepard says superintendents have contributed to how to use Primo. One key suggestion they made was to use it at lower rates more frequently. This is especially true for application to greens where they may spray every seven to 14 days.

Superintendents today use Primo MAXX for myriad reasons, Shepard says. Slowing turf growth is just one reason, and it has ancillary benefits. Repeated applications of Primo MAXX, which can be tank-mixed with all fungicides on the market, will help turf increase stress tolerance and assist fungicide activity, Shepard says.

Scott Nair, superintendent of Kukio Golf Club in Kona, Hawaii, has been using Primo since it was an experimental product in 1992. Nair sprayed

it when he was superintendent at the Boulders Golf Club, a 36-hole complex in Carefree, Ariz., to aid in overseeding. Primo slowed the scalped bermudagrass growth and allowed the seeded ryegrass to transition in. Nair says Syngenta has refined Primo's role in overseeding, and the product has become a solid tool to help superintendents during the overseeding process. Nair now sprays Primo Maxx "religiously" on Kukio's paspalum greens, and says it has helped him achieve consistent green speed.

Dave Ravel, Syngenta's golf market manager, says Primo "took off" after proving it improved turf quality. Over the years, Primo has gained a name and a following for providing labor savings, clipping reduction and turf quality. "Now the buzz is for fuel savings," Ravel adds.

When gas prices began to climb, Syngenta began to research how much Primo could save an 18-hole course in

mowing expenses. Shepard estimates that if bentgrass fairways are mowed an average of four times a week for 25 weeks and bermudagrass fairways are mowed three to four times a week for 30 weeks, the annual fuel savings from eliminating one mowing a week could equal \$3,750. Syngenta estimates a labor savings of \$3,000 with those mowings for a total of \$6,750. With the cost of Primo MAXX at \$5,544, the savings would be \$1,206.

Shepard says Primo has attained as much brand loyalty as any turf product. "People don't think of trinexapac-ethyl," Shepard says, citing the product's active ingredient. "They think of Primo."

Ravel expects Syngenta will celebrate Primo's 25th anniversary in 10 years because superintendents will face the same turf issues then. "I think Primo will be around for a long time," he adds.

For now — happy birthday, Primo. ■

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# TOP Assistants

Nate James is not afraid to put in the time

*Editor's note: Top Assistants will feature a question-and-answer session with an assistant superintendent every month. If you'd like to nominate someone for the feature, please send an e-mail to Larry Aylward at [larylward@questex.com](mailto:larylward@questex.com).*

Kristy James is a big fan of her husband's work ethic. That's why she nominated Nate James to be profiled on this page.

"He's the hardest-working man in the world," Kristy says.

Nate is the assistant superintendent for the Wasatch Mountain State Park Soldier Hollow Golf Course in the Rocky Mountains of Midway, Utah.

Another thing Kristy noticed about Nate is his passion for the profession. Earlier this year while preparing his course for a tournament, she said Nate slept six hours in two nights.

We caught up with Nate recently to ask him a few questions about work and life.

**Golfdom:** What's your favorite part of the job?

**James:** I enjoy the diversity of the job. Each day brings a new set of tasks.

**Golfdom:** Who has been the biggest influence on your career and why?

**James:** All four of the superintendents who I have worked with have played an important role in the assistant that I am, and the superintendent that I strive to be. My father would have to be my biggest influence in my career, instilling in me a hard work ethic and a sense of pride in my work.

**Golfdom:** What's your favorite product or piece of equipment and why?

**James:** The Toro 5700 D spray rig. An application of any product on your course takes a good operator and an even better piece of equipment, especially when it comes to the risk of what could go wrong. The 5700 D has been a reliable and simple piece of equipment.

**Golfdom:** How many years have you worked in the golf industry?

**James:** Thirteen years. I started working in the golf industry as a seasonal in 1995 and have continued working until the present.

**Golfdom:** If you could change something about the industry right now, what would you change?

**James:** I feel that the maintenance side of golf deserves more respect for the job(s) that we do.

**Golfdom:** Describe yourself in one word:

**James:** Dedicated.

**Golfdom:** What is your favorite hobby and why?

**James:** I guess I have more than one favorite hobby; it depends on the time of year. I enjoy hunting and camping in the fall, and fishing and boating during the spring and summer. I really enjoy doing anything outdoors.

**Golfdom:** What's your favorite vacation spot?

**James:** Utah is the closest thing to a favorite vacation spot for me. Go north



and you have cool, snow-covered mountains. If you go south, you have warm, desert climate. There is always something to do in Utah no matter what part of the state you're in.

**Golfdom:** What's your favorite golf course besides your own?

**James:** Calusa Pines Golf Club in Naples, Fla. Nothing is out of place on the entire property.

**Golfdom:** If a movie were made about your life, what famous actor would play you?

**James:** I think that Kevin Costner would be a good fit. He is also passionate about his work, but he can have comedic and down-to-earth sides as well.

**Golfdom:** It's your last day on Earth. What would you do?

**James:** I would spend it with my family, friends and two dogs. ■