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Golfdom

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Budget CRUNCH

24

Are you caught up in the numbers game with your maintenance budget? *Golfdom* aims to offer you some financial direction in its sixth-annual Budget Guide.

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BUDGET GUIDE**

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Budget Crunch

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Art Director Kristen Morabito illustrates the "crunch" of money on our cover with images from iStock International Inc.

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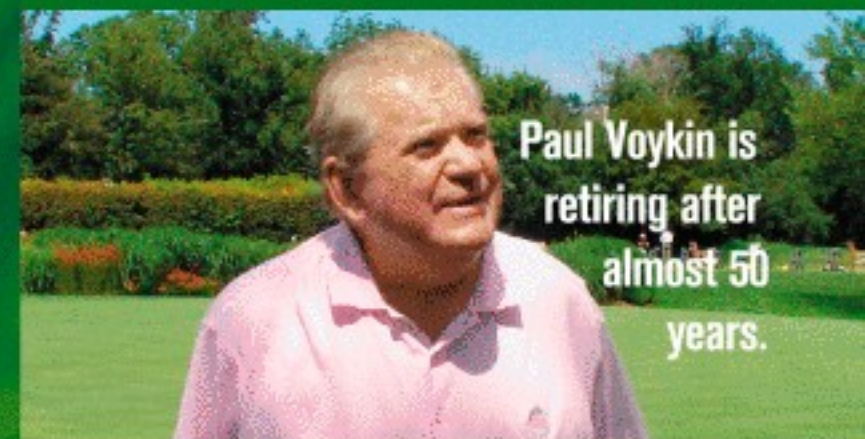
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Mark Wilson has a lot to celebrate — his 20th anniversary at Valhalla Golf Club and his facility hosting the Ryder Cup.

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Online Exclusive

 Read this story only at www.golfdom.com/online-exclusive: Georgia GCSA is a case study in successful government relations.
By David Frabotta

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THIS MONTH'S HEALTH TIP




When the school bell rings, don't let your dog go back to school! Many dogs will naturally follow kids — or will be encouraged to tag along. Many become lost, injured, or cause a nuisance around the schoolyard. Keep your dog confined when children leave for school. If you drive, don't take your dog with you. Animals learn quickly and may find their own way to school later on. Brief separations during the days just before the new school year will help those children and dogs that are especially close. And if your dog is missing, call the school first!

Dewey. His owner is John Martin, superintendent at Contra Costa Country Club in Pleasant Hill, Calif. (Photo by: John Martin)


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He's finally hanging it up. Paul Voykin has announced his retirement at the end of this month. This super superintendent is finally parking his utility vehicle for good at age 77 after more than 47 years in the business.

Amazing.

But what's even more incredible, especially in this I-must-change-jobs-every-five-years-to-get-ahead-in-this-world mentality in which we live, is that Voykin is retiring after almost a half-century at the same club, the Briarwood Country Club in Deerfield, Ill. On top of that, Briarwood is a private club with more than 200 members — and probably just as many opinions on how the putting greens should roll.

Voykin is not only a hard and loyal worker; he's a survivor.

The first thing I wanted to ask Voykin about his retirement when I spoke to him recently was: Why now? Why not keep going until you're 85?

Well, like most retirees, Voykin wants to travel and spend more time with his five children and six grandchildren while he still has the time.

My second question to Voykin was: Why did you work into your late 70s (beyond the life expectancy of a typical American man)? His answer was simple. Voykin says he still had the verve after hitting 65. And he says the club's members kept telling him not to even think of retiring.

It fascinates me that Voykin didn't get bored of Briarwood after so many years. I mean, the man has literally walked every inch of the place's 160 acres. So my next question to Voykin was: Why did you stay at the same place for so long?

I love his refreshing answer to what I asked. Voykin says he kept charged by having spring fever every day, not just during the spring. Having spring fever prompted him to see his course in a different light. A day didn't go by where Voykin didn't appreciate the beauty of his surroundings, from gazing at the glistening fairways after a cool, spring rain to listening to the birds sing new songs every morning.

My next question to Voykin was: How did you manage to stay at the same place for so long, especially a private club? After all, I've heard many superintendents say their jobs are comparable to

At 77, He's Finally Calling It Quits

BY LARRY AYLWARD



PAUL VOYKIN IS NOT ONLY A HARD AND LOYAL WORKER; HE'S A SURVIVOR

that of a Major League Baseball manager. You can make the playoffs one year and get fired the next. So how did Voykin not wear out his welcome?

I love his answer to this question, too, which perhaps epitomizes how we should all approach our jobs. Voykin says he was always honest with everyone. He also treated others with respect and found that having a sense of humor never did him any harm.

I also asked Voykin: Did you ever have an offer from another club to leave Briarwood? His answer was "yes, 22 times." Voykin was offered more money and says Augusta National even called. He considered some of the offers, but no offer was ever enough to lure him from Briarwood.

I also asked Voykin: What was your biggest contribution to the industry? He didn't even have to think about the answer. Voykin says he helped spur golf's environmental movement by lobbying for courses to implement more no-mow zones and plant more wildflowers.

My final question to Voykin was whether he had any regrets. And just as Frank Sinatra sings in "My Way," Voykin says he has a few. A big regret was getting divorced from the love of his life after 18 years. Voykin admits that working seven days a week was not good for his marriage, even though he felt like he had to give his all to his job to support his family. If he could redo one thing, Voykin says he would've spent more time at home with his wife and kids.

Through all the highlights and low lights, though, Voykin will leave Briarwood a thankful man. He was not born with a silver spoon in his mouth and as a kid often ate lard and homemade bread for dinner. Voykin is genuinely appreciative for the life this industry has afforded him.

I suspect that the feeling is mutual.

Aylward can be reached at lalward@questex.com.

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Off The Fringe

Business briefs

SoCal Supers Can Get Cash Through Rebate Program

A new rebate program that helps Southern California golf courses save water while improving distribution uniformity has been launched by the state's Metropolitan Water District (MWD) and local water agencies, according to Underhill International.

Called "Save Water – Save a Buck," the program encourages golf course superintendents to replace plastic nozzles on large turf rotors with solid metal FCI Profile nozzles. The metal nozzles have been shown in testing by the Center for Irrigation Technology (CIT-California State University, Fresno) to improve irrigation distribution uniformity while conserving water and energy, according to Underhill International, which manufactures the nozzles.

Golf courses receive a \$13 rebate per replacement set of metal nozzles with a 25-nozzle set minimum. There is no maximum on the metal nozzle sets that can be retrofitted. The program is currently offered in four counties: Los Angeles County, Orange County, Riverside County and southern Ventura County. FCI Profile nozzles are the only nozzles that have been tested by the CIT and approved by MWD for this rebate program, according to Underhill International.

"With water consumption in the Southwest at a reported 88 million gallons per course annually, it is not surprising that water districts in the Sun Belt are seeking innovative ways to use water more efficiently while also improving play conditions and turf health," said Ed Underhill, president of Underhill International.

For more information, contact www.bewaterwise.com or call 877-728-2282.

MSMA Lives ... For Now

HERBICIDE MAY NOT BE BANNED BY EPA AFTER ALL, RESEARCHER SAYS. ALSO, A NEW HERBICIDE FOR POA CONTROL?

By Larry Aylward, Editor in Chief

What would Mark Twain say about MSMA? That the rumors of the embattled herbicide's demise have been greatly exaggerated.

Golf turf expert Fred Yelverton, a professor of crop science at North Carolina State University, is saying the same thing. Yelverton, who spoke at the Warm-Season Weed Control Symposium sponsored by Bayer Environmental Science July 9-10 in Newport, R.I., reported that the Environmental Protection Agency might not ban MSMA after all.

MSMA, classified as an organic arsenical, is used for grass weed control in bermudagrass and zoysiagrass and on some cool-season turfgrasses. It is used for postemergence control of goosegrass, crabgrasses and dallisgrass in bermudagrass. In 2006, EPA announced it would cancel reregistration of any pesticides containing MSMA. Arsenic levels left by MSMA "raise a concern for can-

cer risk," EPA officials concluded.

But nearly two years later, MSMA is still around. "We thought EPA was going to ban it six months ago," Yelverton said, "but it has new life. What are the chances of keeping it? I would say 50-50. The final decision could be tomorrow, or it might be six months from now."

EPA is taking a second look at MSMA because the organization admits it acted too quickly to dismiss it.

"There are some people who believe the EPA was under political pressure to ban some products," Yelverton said. "Because MSMA was not used in many commodities, it was an easy target."

The EPA has agreed to take a second look at MSMA for two reasons, Yelverton said. First, it underestimated the need for MSMA, especially in the golf course industry. Second, EPA admits it might have overestimated the risk of organic arsenic and MSMA's contribution to environmental inorganic arsenic levels. Yelverton noted that organic arsenic is a naturally occurring element. The problem has been that people, including environmentalists, associate MSMA with inorganic arsenics, which are very toxic. "But organic arsenics are not," he added.

Continued on page 12



Fred Yelverton