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OUR WINDOW IS WIDER.™



Continued from page 40

Can you dig it?

Any booth playing obscenely loud music or any other completely obnoxious attention-getting marketing ploy will be forced to pay double its original booth fee and triple its original drayage charge. I will, however,

waive the drayage charge if you can simply and accurately explain to me what “drayage” means.

One final note: Every attendee will get to vote for the coolest booth on the show floor. The winner of the coolest booth gets free booth space for the following year’s show. And, by the way, “cool” is completely subjective.



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Special events

I would hide five “golden membership” tickets throughout the trade-show floor. Whoever finds one gets an automatic upgrade in GCSAA membership — superintendent members move up to Class A and Class A members move up to CGCS members. Sorry, CGCS people, you are ineligible for this event because you have reached the pinnacle status in the eyes of the GCSAA. But, hey, you still have the invitation-only lunch to look forward to.

Speaking of the CGCS invitation-only lunch, I would have 10 unidentified Class A members crash the event so they can learn what it means to be “recognized for their superior levels of achievement in golf course management,” according to GCSAA marketing materials on certification.

Superior? Really?

In the center of the show floor, I would have each of the Big 3 equipment companies enter a new, yet slightly modified greens mower into a large-scale version of a Battle Bots competition — three go on, only one comes out. Think of it in terms of Mad Max in “Thunderdome.”

And, finally, on Saturday morning the show floor would become the scene of the “Guinness Book of World Records” largest indoor laser tag game. Talk about a way to increase traffic flow on the most boring and desolate day of the show!

Game on! ■

Gray, general manager and golf course superintendent of the Marvel Golf Club in Benton, Ky., is a Golfdom contributing editor and editorial advisory board member. He is available as a consultant (paid, of course) to the GCSAA to help plan next year's show.

"Two Green Thumbs Up!" -*Bentgrass Review*

"The Bentgrass Legacy Continues!" -*NTEP Review*

"A True Bentgrass Classic - A Must!" -*Seed World Review*

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golf industry show
Preview

Where You Staying?



You might try an 'alternative' hotel to save some money. But hopefully you've picked a hotel where the bed bugs don't bite

BY RON FURLONG

Under no uncertain circumstances do I consider myself a money waster or excessive, especially when it comes to spending my boss' money.

However, it has been my usual tradition over the years to stay at a four-star hotel when attending the Golf Industry Show. I justify this with four main rationales:

- One, the hotels closest to the convention centers tend to be the nicer hotels in most cities.
- Two, I hate traveling and thus, when I have to, I like to do it with as much comfort as possible.
- Three, because most of my colleagues and friends tend to stay at the nicer hotels, networking can really only be done from these places.
- And four, as I spend almost the

entire year watching my spending and saving where I can here and there, it's nice just to treat one's self once a year.

But this year — considering the sour economy, how much money we spent on fuel and fertilizers last year and knowing that rounds are down across the country (including at my own course) — I figured I'd shop around for a hotel in New Orleans.

Can't hurt, right? I'm sure my boss would appreciate it. So instead of automatically choosing between the Embassy Suites, the Sheraton or the nearest Hilton, I thought I'd spend an afternoon on the Internet and see what I could find in the "alternative" hotel area.

The first thing I discovered is that many of the hotels and motels use the same descriptions. Terms like "quiet," "clean," "comfortable" and "affordable" are commonplace. You wouldn't believe how many places consider their hotels to be charming

or historic. It didn't take long for me to learn of what terms and descriptions to be wary.

After visiting the Web sites of the hotels themselves, I began reading some customer reviews about these places. It was interesting to read some reviews and then go back again and look at the descriptions. It became fairly obvious to me what some of the descriptions actually meant, if you read between the lines a little bit.

So, as you make your hotel reservations for the show, as well as any other travels, I've compiled a top-10 list of the descriptions of which to be suspicious:

10. Great amenities
9. Charming
8. Nostalgic
7. Unique
6. Conveniently located
5. Unforgettable
4. Historic charm
3. We welcome pets
2. Best prices in town
1. Affordable luxury

They all sound good, don't they? Book me a room! But here is my take on what each of these descriptions actually means:

10. Great amenities. This is really similar to saying to somebody you're trying to fix up him up with a girl who is not all that attractive. "Well, she has a great personality."

9. Charming. This is another word for small.

8. Nostalgic. This means old and smells a little.

7. Unique. Different in a bad way.

6. Conveniently located. This means there's nothing better to say about it.

5. Unforgettable. Trust me, you want to forget a hotel stay, not remember it.

4. Historic charm. More like old and not charming.

3. We welcome pets. HOOOOOWWW-WWLLLLLLLL!!!!!!!

2. Best prices in town. Another way to say, "You probably don't want to bring your children."

1. Affordable luxury. This means scary.

In fairness, sometimes charming actually means charming. Sometimes conveniently located is not a bad thing. Sometimes the best prices in town do not equate to "you might want to pack a firearm." The trick is, how we go about figuring out when someone really means charming and not, "The room is the size of a walk-in closet?" Or how do we know when something really is nostalgic as opposed to simply outdated, old and smelly?

Visiting each hotel to see if it is up to par is, obviously, not an option. What we have, instead, in this wonderful age of technology, is online customer reviews. They are positively essential. Simply put, you can't trust the establishment itself. Without a doubt, the Bates Motel would have advertised itself as charming; best prices around; historic; discount for room No. 1! ("Front desk? Yes, sorry to be a bother, but my shower curtain is ripped. You'll be right over? Great. What wonderful customer service!")

Did you see the Luke Wilson/Kate Beckinsale horror movie "Vacancy"? Now they should have checked the customer reviews beforehand. Would have saved them a lot of trouble! How about the John Cusack movie "Room 1408?" ("The hotel was lovely and historic, and the room itself spacious and decorated beautifully, but I would give it a thumbs down due to the haunting and the ghosts.") Come to think of it, there are an alarming number of movies that are centered around this very topic. How about "The Shining" ("Here's Johnny!")? Or, if not movies about haunted hotels or motels, then movies where very bad things happen in hotels or motels. The Viggo Mortenson movie "A History of Violence" and the Oscar winner "No Country For Old Men" come to mind. Ooohhh, gives me the shivers!

Seriously, though, there are a number of Web sites dedicated to customer reviews or simply "experience sharing" that are invaluable. Expedia.com; Tripadvisor.com; Travelpost.com and even Hotels.com are all good sites for finding out just which places are the steals and which places might steal from you.

One thing that surprised me when checking out reviews is that an unexpected number of reviews were of the positive nature. I would

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In fairness, sometimes charming actually means charming. Sometimes the best prices in town do not equate to 'you might want to pack a firearm.'

Where You Staying?



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have thought that the people who take the time to write about a stay or an experience would do so because of some bad experience or poor customer service that they had. So, hats off to the people who actually write some positive and helpful feedback. If everything you read was negative, then the information would be mostly useless.

The negative reviews are, of course, much more fun to read. And I must say a strong negative review will steer you away from a place much more than a glowing positive review will make you book a reservation. Here's a sampling of a few of the, well, shall we say, more negative comments:

"When my Mum used to tell me every night, 'Don't let the bed bugs bite,' I realize now she must have stayed at this hotel once. Ouch!"

"The hotel was noisy and scary. There was used soap in the shower."

"After killing several large cockroaches, we called the front desk. The man hesitated and then he told me he'd call right back. He never did. I killed four more, and then we decided to sleep with the light on. I didn't sleep but two hours. I guess I just passed out somehow. When I woke up I killed two more and had a big welt on my leg that itched."

"The room reeked of Indian spices and what must have been barbecued goat. The Internet consisted of two wires

that came out of opposite walls, leading to cables all over the floor that didn't even connect. Also, during the ENTIRE night there was a steady, light tapping on the wall behind our headboard. A call to the front desk did nothing to stop it. Scared the crap out of me and I couldn't sleep."

(The following person is responding to a previous reviewer mentioning the motel was located in a hard-to-find spot and called the location a bit of a maze.) "It's a maze all right. A-Mazing you get out of this area in one piece!"

These reviews, though definitely negative, are not the norm. For the most part, reviews tend to be positive and helpful and give you a good indication of whether it is a place you want to stay.

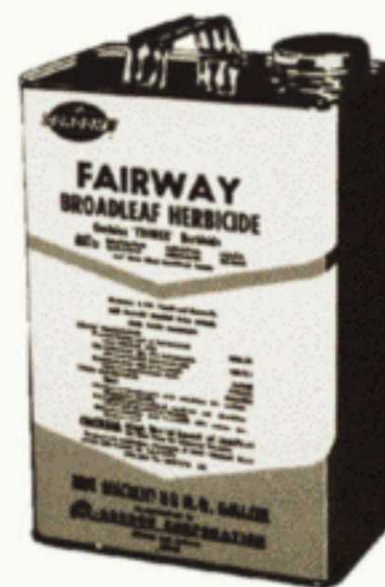
Based on some very helpful and insightful customer reviews, I'm planning to secure a reservation at a nice three-star hotel, saving a little money for my boss, but not saving quite so much that I'd be staying at a place with used soap in the bathroom or a light tapping on the wall all night. I'll see how it goes.

Who knows? Next year I'll probably be back at the Hilton, but at least I gave it the old college try.

And with that I bid you a pleasant good night. Don't let the bed bugs bite! ■

Furlong, golf course superintendent of the Avalon Golf Club in Bellingham, Wash., likes to go to sleep in hotels with ESPN on the television at a low volume.

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Show Case

COMPILED BY LARRY AYLWARD, EDITOR IN CHIEF

Here are some of the things companies will do and display at the big show

Don't forget to bring your comfortable shoes to New Orleans to walk the trade-show floor at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center from Feb. 5-7. They call New Orleans the Big Easy, but you know that walking a trade-show floor is never easy on your feet.

With that in mind, here is some — but not all — of what you'll find on the show floor:

For the Love of Science

In keeping with its dedication to science-based turf solutions, BASF Turf & Ornamentals says it will feature multiple educational events at its booth. Superintendents and assistants who visit the BASF booth Thursday and Friday at 11 a.m. will have the chance to meet Bert McCarty of Clemson University and Joseph Vargas of Michigan State University and receive free, signed turf textbooks. McCarty will sign his book, "Color Atlas of Turfgrass Weeds," on Thursday, and Vargas will sign "Management of Turfgrass Diseases" on Friday.

BASF will also host three "Ask the Expert" sessions with BASF technical specialists Kathie Kalmowitz, Kyle Miller and Todd Burkdoll. Also, show attendees will also have the chance to showcase their turf and trivia knowledge while playing Turf Jeopardy, which takes place throughout Thursday and Friday. A special round is scheduled for 2 p.m. on Friday with members of the trade media, including myself (guess I better brush up!).

Pick Up This Catalog

Standard Golf Co. is giving away \$25,000 in product at the show to promote the complete

redesign and philosophical change reflected in its 2009 product catalog.

"We understand that golf course superintendents have a long list of daily tasks to attend to so we wanted to make the process of ordering golf course accessories as easy as possible," Standard Golf Vice President Matt Hurley said. "The entire philosophy behind the new catalog design was to make it easy to navigate and place orders. We're going to add some incentive for superintendents to pick up a catalog at GIS by placing 25 stickers in randomly selected catalogs with \$1,000 in free product redemption."

The free product stickers will be put inside the catalogs to encourage users to peruse the books. Winners can place an order for free product at the booth or redeem their winning catalogs for a voucher to be used later.

New Company in Town

Putnam, Conn.-based Kocheck Co., which has found success in the fire-equipment market, has recently expanded into the golf, turf and irrigation markets and will exhibit its products at the show. "There are a number of crossover products that we currently make, such as suction hose and strainers, that have very useful applications in the golf, turf and irrigation markets," said Greg Kozey, Kocheck's president. "In addition to these items, we are excited about the full line of high-quality nozzles we have developed specifically for these customers."

Hazeltine Worth a Thousand Words

Tee-2-Green says the fifth painting in the popular "Artistry of Golf" series will be unveiled and awarded at the show. The series of

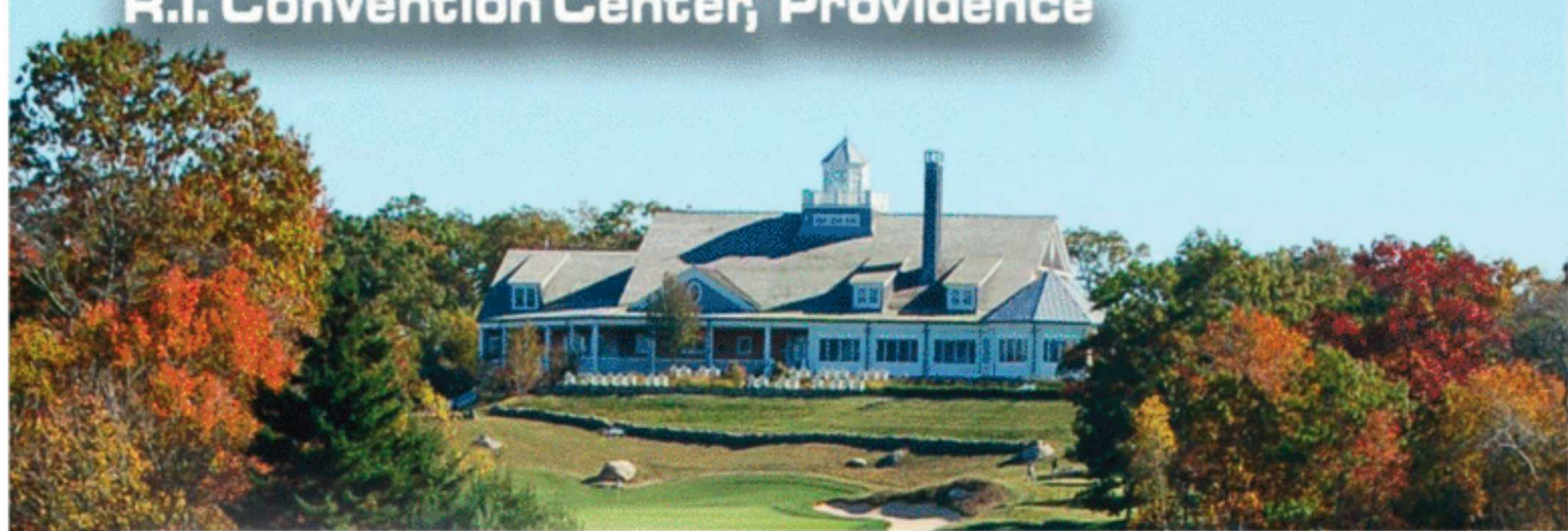
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12th Annual

New England Regional Turfgrass Conference & Show

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- Keynote Speaker • Educational Sessions
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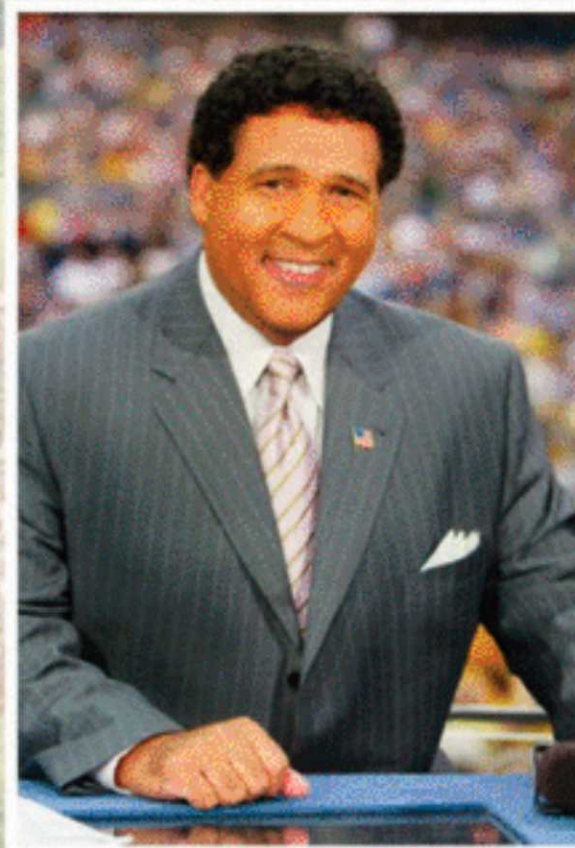
Pesticide Applicators Recertification Credits will be offered.

Sports Turf Seminar

Tuesday, March 3 • 1pm-3pm
Making Sense of Soil Tests

Pre Conference Seminars

- Monday, March 2 • 8am-5pm Call (401) 841-5490
- 8am-12pm *Maximize Turfgrass Disease Control with Proper Application Strategies*
 - 8am-12pm *Computer Training-Basic MS Excel 2003*
 - 8am-12pm *Science and Philosophy of Foliar Nutrients*
 - 8am-3pm *A Photography Class - 'Hands On' Learning for Dummies and Smart Folks*
 - 1pm-5pm *Turf Insecticide Mode of Action and Resistance Mgt.*
 - 1pm-5pm *New Weapons for Old Weeds*
 - 1pm-5pm *Computer Training-Advanced MS Excel 2003*
 - 1pm-5pm *CPR/AED Training*



Keynote Speaker

Tuesday, March 3 • 3:15-4pm

Greg Gumbel

Trade Show Hours

Tuesday, March 3 • 4pm-7pm with reception
Wednesday, March 4 • 10am-5pm
Don't Miss This Year's Live Auction!
Wed.~ 4pm ~ on the Trade Show Floor
Thursday, March 5 • 9am-1pm

Educational Session Hours

Tuesday, March 3 • 9am - 4pm
USGA Session & Keynote Speaker Greg Gumbel
Wednesday, March 4 • 9am-11am / 2pm-4pm
Thursday, March 5 • 9am-11am

**Watch your mail for your registration form or call
(401)848-0004 or visit us online at www.TurfShow.com**

Continued from page 48

commissioned paintings, sponsored by Tee-2-Green, pays tribute to the hard work and dedication of golf course superintendents throughout the world.

"We were eager to get involved with the Artistry series because it pays tribute to superintendents who demonstrate the unique combination of science and intuition to successfully master the art of golf course maintenance," said Bill Rose, president of Tee-2-Green.

The fifth painting, titled "Number 17 at Hazeltine," features the par-3 17th hole at Hazeltine National Golf Club in Chaska, Minn. The painting, the work of artist Sandra Cashman, showcases the hole, which is encapsulated by bunkers and water.

Held in conjunction with Tee-2-Green's "Seeds of Fortune" game, the individual with the highest score will win the original framed oil painting.



Tee-to-Green will give away this painting, "No. 17 at Hazeltine," during the show.

In addition, every "Seeds of Fortune" participant will receive a signed and numbered, limited-edition artist print.

Granular Acelepryn

DuPont Professional Products will highlight the new granular formulation of DuPont Acelepryn insecticide, which is registered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Acelepryn controls every turf-damaging white grub species and other key pests such as the annual bluegrass weevil, billbugs and caterpillars. Acelepryn is a new class of chemistry that provides control at the lowest application rate ever utilized for white grubs, according to DuPont. Acelepryn was granted reduced-risk status by the EPA in April 2007 for applications to turfgrass.

Heritage Plus Daconil Equals Renown

Folks at the Syngenta Professional Products booth will be talking about Renown, a new fungicide designed to treat brown patch, gray leaf spot, dollar spot, large patch, leaf spot and anthracnose. Combining active ingredients from Heritage and Daconil fungicides, the new fungicide features both systemic and contact modes of action. Renown is expected to receive registration from the EPA in the spring.

Well-connected

Rain Bird will have some new products, including its DB Series Wire Connector. The product's smaller, more durable, single-piece construction allows installers to make more reliable wire connec-

tions and in less time than ever before, according to Rain Bird. The DB Series Wire Connector is particularly suited for the installation of below-ground decoder control systems. It's also useful when working with standard controllers, valve boxes and soil moisture sensors.

Fast Work

Underhill International will showcase the LiquidPro, a new applicator gun that evenly distributes wetting agents, fertilizers and micronutrients, according to the company. Weighing only 3 pounds, the LiquidPro is easy to use, UV-protected and chemical resistant. It covers 1,000 square feet of turf in less than a minute.

One Tough Bridge

Axion International Holdings will display its bridges, which are also used by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Union Pacific and Chicago Transit Authority.

The bridges feature textured surfaces that don't absorb water, which makes for less slippage. The bridges are also customized to withstand extreme traffic and weight from golf carts, maintenance and construction vehicles. The décor of classic and contemporary models blend with course surroundings, according to Axion.

Lots New at Deere Golf

John Deere Golf says it will unveil more products than ever before at the show. "John Deere will demonstrate how precision mowing and cut quality are only enhanced by next-level innovations with expansions on its current hybrid power platform and new quick, time-saving cutting unit adjustments," according to a press release. Those products include five new mowers, which John Deere Golf says are heavy on power and light on turf impact. ■

Editor's note: Golfdom will cover the GIS with a special edition of its Insider e-newsletter on Feb. 5. Also, watch for more show coverage in an upcoming issue.

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