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# Golfdom

SEPTEMBER 2009 • VOLUME 65 • NO. 9



## All-Environment Issue

In this special issue, we devote every column and story to issues dealing with the ecosystem

### columns



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Will You Be on the Bus or Under It?

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A Pointed Threat

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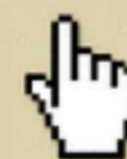
**12 Hole of the Month**

### Turfgrass Trends

This month, *Golfdom's* practical research digest for turfgrass managers discusses controlling grubs with parasitic wasps and using newer insecticides to achieve maximum control. See pages 49-55.

### Online Exclusive

Listen to this video podcast only at [www.golfdom.com](http://www.golfdom.com):



**The Summer, the South and the Wacky Weather –**

In August, it finally began to warm up in the South after a cool first few months of summer. Were superintendents thrown a curveball with this weather as far as golf course maintenance goes? We posed this question and others to Kathie Kalmowitz (right), Ph.D. and technical specialist for BASF Turf & Ornamentals.



**14**

### Good for the Environment, and Good for the Golfers

Marvel Golf Club transforms savings from environmental programs into savings for golfers. By Christopher S. Gray, Sr.

#### About the cover

We thought this photograph by Mike Klemme of Glen Ellen Country Club in Mills, Mass., captures the essence of golf and the environment perfectly.



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### Keep an Open Mind

Sure, the environmentalists can drive us wacky. But does that mean we should just write them off? By Ron Furlong



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### Product Progression

New insecticides target pests more specifically, reducing the quantity of product needed to perform. By John Walsh

#### CORRECTION

In the July article, "Looking for Work," Eric Czarniecki was misquoted. He didn't imply that either the greens chairman or the general manager at Colliers Reserve Country Club in Naples, Fla., was on a "power trip".

**Environmental ENDEAVORS**

Special advertising section begins on page 19

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**I**f I were in charge of programming for the Golf Industry Show, I would get Joe McCleary in front of the thousands of attendees during the opening session in February to talk about what he's doing to educate outsiders — the people who don't play golf, especially those who abhor it — that golf courses can be good for the environment.

The golf course maintenance industry needs more superintendents (and owners and general managers) to spread the gospel of good environmental practices. But the industry also needs a big church to house all the superintendents preaching to the choir about this issue. Superintendents talk to each other about their environmental endeavors, but they also complain to one another about the lack of respect from nongolfers for those efforts, like putting up birdhouses on courses, returning acreage to its natural state, and using pesticides and fertilizer responsibly.

Then there's McCleary, the certified golf course superintendent at Saddle Rock Golf Course in Aurora, Colo., who has gone on the offensive to promote golf courses as a friend, not a foe, of the environment. On a chilly, foggy morning in June, I went with McCleary while he gave a tour of his course to a gentleman named Mike from the Denver Botanic Gardens. McCleary invited Mike, who was not fond of golf courses and their role in the environment, to see the wildflowers and native vegetation in the out-of-play areas on the course.

It wasn't the first time McCleary conducted the tour for a person down on golf. He drove Mike in his golf car, making several stops along the 18-hole course to explore the flora and fauna, including yucca, New Jersey Tea, phlox and native thistle.

McCleary and his guest explored the mounded areas and engaged in native plant shoptalk for nearly an hour. At one point, McCleary plucked a leaf from a yucca plant and chewed on it. "It doesn't taste bad, but it would probably taste better in a salad," he said.

Early in the tour, Mike confessed that "golf courses make him shiver." After the tour, I asked Mike if his negative perceptions had changed. "They have for this golf course," he said.

## We Need More Joes Like Joe McCleary

BY LARRY AYLWARD



**SUPERINTENDENT  
JOE MCCLEARY HAS  
GONE ON THE  
OFFENSIVE TO  
PROMOTE GOLF AS A  
FRIEND, NOT A FOE,  
TO THE ENVIRONMENT**

McCleary doesn't duck the anti-golf crowd. He realizes running and hiding only makes them even more skeptical. In 2002, when a severe drought had seized the region, a reporter from a local anti-establishment magazine contacted McCleary about doing an article on golf course irrigation. McCleary, suspecting the reporter might take golf courses to the woodshed for their water use, still didn't deny the reporter.

The reporter met McCleary at the course at 5 a.m. McCleary gave him a tour of the course and explained to him the irrigation strategies at Saddle Rock and of golf courses in general.

"He wrote a great article," McCleary said. "I think he saw what we did and appreciated it."

I've heard talk in the industry about the people outside the industry who despise golf courses and will always hate them, no matter what anyone says to convince them otherwise. But after witnessing McCleary in action on that June morning, I'm not sure that's entirely true. Those with preconceived notions that golf courses are evil can be swayed — by the right people.

McCleary is one of those people. He's an excellent communicator. He looks you in the eye when he's talking. And although he's passionate about the subject of golf and the environment, he's not preachy. He's also willing to put in the time, which is crucial to this equation.

Like I said, I'd make McCleary front and center at the Golf Industry Show so he can share with his peers how he has gone about convincing outsiders that golf courses are good for the environment. The industry needs more people like McCleary to spread the word. And with the world's focus on going green, which could mean unneeded and unfair environmental regulations for golf courses, the industry needs them now.

---

*Aylward can be reached at [larryward@questex.com](mailto:larryward@questex.com).*





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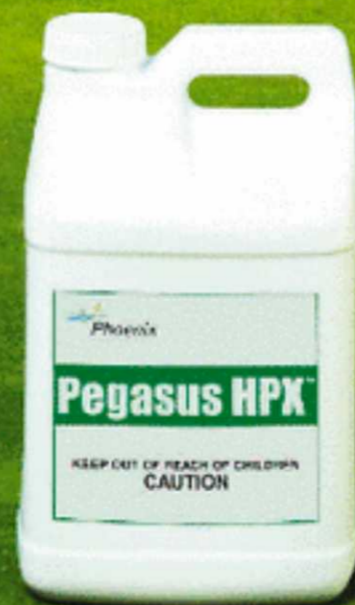
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# From the Back Tees

■ OPINION

I shuddered as I read the recent news from Canada where Quebec province and some cities are in the process of banning pesticide use for “aesthetic” purposes. I wonder how golf courses will be affected.

The do-gooders just can't see applying pesticides to control weeds, fungus and insects that destroy turfgrass in public areas. I guess dirt and weeds are OK for public consumption, but it doesn't take a rocket scientist or certified superintendent to know weeds and bare dirt patches just won't hack it on a putting green and keep the golf industry in business. In this case, it's performance and appearance that matters and why pesticides are used.

Too bad the anti-crowd can't appreciate the performance of turfgrass as it provides erosion control, temperature abatement, dust removal, oxygen production, noise reduction and glare reduction — all while it's aesthetically pleasing.

New York is making noises about banning pesticides as well. When these notions get traction, the emotional and political rhetoric drowns out the science almost every time. So what can you do about it?

It's past time to get off your collective duffs and make a genuine effort to document exactly what it is you do on your golf course and all the ways you really are environmental stewards. The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America conducted several baseline surveys to get a real-world look at how golf courses operate instead of fighting the battle on hearsay. How many of you participated? That's what I thought! It's way past time to stop letting a handful of dedicated men and women go up against city hall when it comes to water restrictions, fertilizer ordinances and pesticide use.

Those brave few who do put themselves on the line to represent our industry do so in the belief that most superintendents really do the right thing. But where's the proof? Only 55 percent of the nation's superintendents belong to an association.

And out of the 15,000 golf courses in the United States, just over 2,000 belong to the

## Will You Be On the Bus or Under It?

BY JOEL JACKSON



MISPLACED ENVIRONMENTALISM IS CHALLENGING THE CONTINUED SUCCESS OF OUR INDUSTRY. HOW CAN YOU STAND IDLY BY AND LET THAT HAPPEN?

Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program and less than half of those are certified. This doesn't mean the latter golf courses are dangerous cesspools of pollution. It just means there's a serious lack of documentation of environmental responsibility that can be demonstrated to make our case.

More state and regional associations are trying to generate best management practices to show how responsible golf courses really are, but it won't do any good if you don't go through the checklists and tick off what you're doing. It won't do any good if you don't write an environmental plan for your course and document the changes you make in reducing out-of-play turfgrass areas and reductions in chemical, fertilizer and water use. You don't have to do it all at once, but you do need to develop an attitude of change and participation and work on it every year.

We have great stories to tell, and we belong to a game of a lifetime as evidenced by the Tom Watson saga at the British Open. But misplaced and uninformed environmentalism is challenging the vitality and continued success of our industry and our profession. How can you stand idly by any longer and let that happen?

We've always known environmental issues were a big deal. So far we have dealt with them one water crisis and one fertilizer ordinance at a time. Now the rubber is meeting the road. It's time for us to either all get on the bus together for the preservation of golf, or get thrown under the bus by people who also have a mission and are willing to work at it harder than we have been up until now.

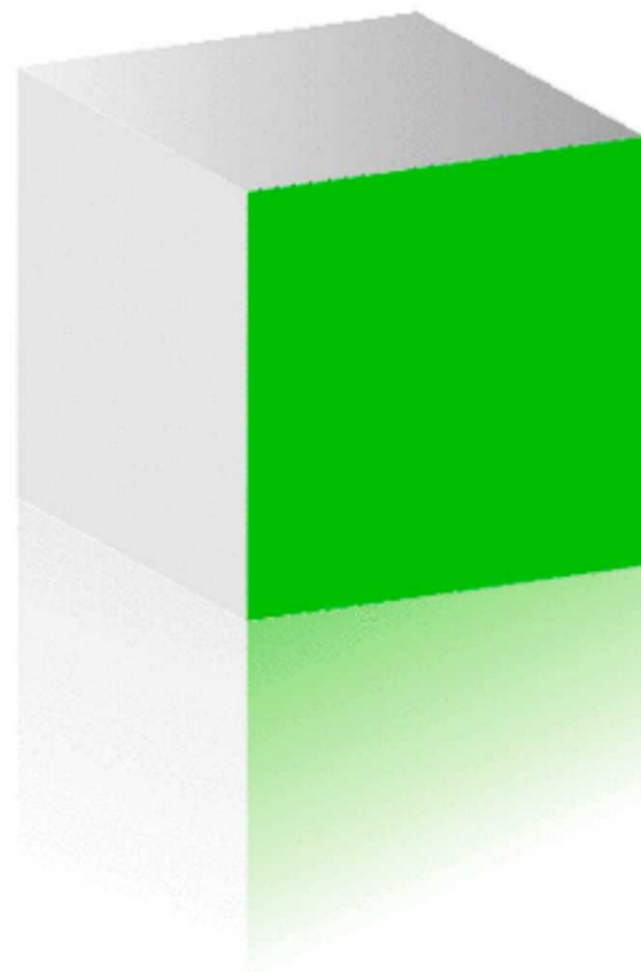
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*Joel Jackson, CGCS, retired from Disney's golf division in 1997 and is director of communications for the Florida GCSA.*





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**C**hange is a word we're constantly using personally and professionally. The word is used so much we don't give much thought to types of change. But I rediscovered the meaning of the word change when Michael Jackson died.

It's no secret the death of Michael Jackson dominated the summer news — washing away in its wake all discussion of other famous deaths, political scandal and global crisis. Given his recent weird behavior, lack of a hit in the last two decades and a prescription drug problem reminiscent of Elvis Presley, one wonders why his death is so riveting.

In part, it has to do with the type of change he brought to music. Change itself commonly occurs through incremental progressions. However, when watching those "old" music videos from "Thriller," it's not hard to see how music changed from what it was to what it is now.

Music underwent a transformational change with Jackson. Transformational change is not merely an extension or improvement over the past, but a state change — a complete directional change in how we think of something.

Prior to "Thriller," rock/pop performers in the 1960s and 1970s were influenced by the social events of the time. By and large, they were singers, musicians and songwriters. But the release of "Thriller" and Jackson's subsequent videos and concerts changed a rock/pop singer into an actor, stage performer and dancer along with being a singer and songwriter.

Transformational change can occur in areas besides music, including science (Einstein's Theory of Relativity), politics (The Marshall Plan), sports (Lawrence Taylor redefined the outside linebacker position in American football) and business (the Japanese method of building cars).

Now, to my point: Can transformational change occur — or has it occurred — with how we manage turfgrass environmentally? I'm not sure. To explain my answer, I've chosen two examples from what I consider an important change in golf course management — the effort to be (and no pun intended) more green.

The two examples are the establishment of

## Transforming the Golf Industry

BY KARL DANNEBERGER



NO ONE CAN ARGUE  
WITH SOME OF THE  
POSITIVE CHANGES  
WE'VE MADE.  
BUT ARE WE ON  
THE CUSP OF  
TRANSFORMATIONAL  
CHANGE?

native areas and pesticide reduction. To most everyone in the industry, and to many environmental groups, the incorporation of native areas on golf courses has been a huge and positive change. From a pesticide perspective, we've developed integrated pest management (IPM), and best management practices (BMP) programs to reduce pesticide use. In addition, chemical companies have developed new generations of pesticides that present minimal to almost nonexistent risk to the environment.

Are these transformational changes? Have they changed how we think and manage turfgrass? Are they perceived to be transformational?

Green is an interesting term. In some instances, what green means to a property owner along a golf course is not the same as to a golf course superintendent. The majority of homeowners who live along a course don't play golf and consider the course to be an amenity. To these property owners, tall grass, weeds and ticks is not what they envision as green. In many instances, homeowner associations are forcing golf courses to mow down these areas.

Transformational change?

From a pesticide safety and use perspective, no one can argue with the positive changes we've made. But are we on the cusp of a transformational change? Maybe, but we still face pesticide restrictions and bans.

It's easy to call for change without proposing what it will be. The transformational change that could occur — and it's still in its embryonic stage — is that an entire golf course management program will be based on net carbon use.

Now, that's change that will get you thinking.

---

*Karl Danneberger, Ph.D., Golfdom's science editor and a turfgrass professor from The Ohio State University, can be reached at danneberger.1@osu.edu.*