

Off The Fringe

Jacobsen Opens New Midwest Dealers

BY BETH GERACI

As part of its effort to build ties with customers across the U.S., Jacobsen has opened three new Midwestern dealerships to better service customers in Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana, regions that previously were serviced directly by Jacobsen. Jacobsen also will double its territory sales force and triple the amount of service personnel in the field.

“We want to build stronger relationships with the customer base,”



An Eclipse 322 riding greens mower

said Chuck Grief, director of sales for Jacobsen’s Eastern Division. “We have more product sales managers. And we’re just going to be much more visible out in the market.”

The push for more customer interaction began with new Jacobsen President David Withers, who told *Golfdom* in January building customer relationships was among his highest priorities.

“I’m very interested in working a partnership with dealers to really go after conquest accounts and show people the Jacobsen product, people who haven’t seen the product in maybe 10 years,” he said at the time. “We really have an opportunity if we can get that right.”

Jacobsen also has hired staff to demonstrate products in the Midwest for what the company says is an increasing demand for Jacobsen’s Eclipse line of mowers. “Everybody wants to see these things,” Grief said. “The intent is to make sure, if they want to see how Jacobsen products operate, it’s available for them to see.”

Becker Underwood Adds Staff

BY BETH GERACI

Becker Underwood has hired staff to enhance its marketing and communications division and regional sales.

“It’s the first time Becker Underwood has had a full-fledged communications team, so I’m hoping to come in and set some high standards,” said Charles Whitt, Becker Underwood’s new communications manager.

Dan Kuester, a marketing communications specialist in agriculture products, joined the team in April. With 25 years of communications experience, Kuester earned his bachelor’s from Luther College and his master’s from Drake University.

“Dan’s going to be a very strong member of the team,” Whitt said.

Sherman Hollins has come on board as Becker Underwood’s new regional sales manager for the eastern and southern U.S., covering sales in 17 states.

Hollins has 24 years of sales and marketing experience in agricultural consumer products, plus a bachelor’s degree in agricultural economics and an MBA.

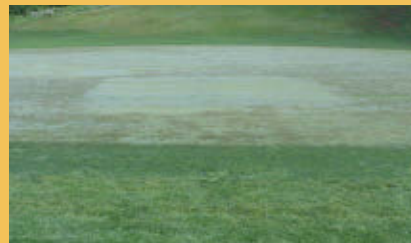
“Sherman has a lot of experience and has really cultivated a number of relationships in the southern crop markets,” said Mike McFatrigh, national sales manager at Becker Underwood. “We’ve been looking for a while. The wait was worth it.”

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The photo above shows an area of green kyllinga just after a fall treatment with Dismiss.



This photo shows the same area the following spring. While the green kyllinga has reestablished most everywhere else, the area treated with Dismiss is lush and green.



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If GCSAA were an NBA team, I'd put a few dollars on them to take down the Miami Heat next month in the playoffs. Because in case they don't realize it, the crew at 1421 Research Park Drive in Lawrence, Kan., is on a roll.

Here are a couple moves the GCSAA has made recently that, in my book, are as deft as drafting Kevin Durant at No. 2 overall:

Condensing the GCSAA Tournament schedule:

It would be totally uncool of me to gripe about the GCSAA Tournament three issues ago and then not tip my cap to them for making one of the much needed changes to the format.

GCSAA CEO Rhett Evans told me that they were working on condensing the schedule of the Golf Industry Show in order to keep the show viable. He's delivered.

GCSAA recently announced that the tournament will now begin on Sunday and conclude on Tuesday. Previously, the tournament started on a Friday and ended on Monday. In both incarnations, the GIS concludes on a Friday.

In the old format, players could arrive as early as Wednesday for practice rounds, if they wished. That meant to also attend the GIS, it could be anywhere from eight to 10 days away from your course, and most important, your family.

For most of us, eight to 10 days away from both work and family is a deal-breaker.

There is some overlap with the educational conference now. But superintendents are adults; they can make educated decisions on what's best for them, their careers and their facilities.

Next year's GIS is in San Diego. The courses haven't been announced yet. If GCSAA keeps the golf in San Diego so superintendents don't have to travel twice for the same event, expect to see a big bump in tournament numbers.

Bringing the print GCSAA directory back to life:

Forgive me for making a big deal about a little book, but a tangible GCSAA directory is one of the better benefits of GCSAA membership. By show of hands, how many of us have been clinging to the 2008 membership directory, the last one they printed before the

Three Cheers for GCSAA

BY SETH JONES



HOW MANY OF
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ONLY?

GCSAA decided to go on-line only?

Finding a member's contact info at GCSAA's on-line membership directory is at times like trying to solve The Da Vinci Code. Course names can be confused, and what if you don't know the name of the super at the course in the first place? Plus, there's the overall convenience of just picking up the book and looking at the listings state-by-state. You can't do that on-line.

The print version is going to be produced every other year, and is available only to Class A, SM and Superintendent-Retired members. Which means an affiliate member like myself, unfortunately, is left flailing in GCSAA's on-line directory.

But now you have an idea of what you can give me for Christmas 2013.

Hiring David Phipps as the Northwest field staff representative:

Whether you like GCSAA's field staff program or deplore it, you have to admit that Phipps is a natural for the position. He's got a giant territory — from Alaska to Colorado — but there might not be a better person suited for such a job. (Check out our interview with Phipps on page 9.)

If you only know Phipps from his repeated GCSAA accolades (no more of those now, David!) trust me, he's the kind of guy you want representing your profession and your association.

Things I don't have space for: A new partnership with BIGGA; another successful National Golf Day in Washington, D.C.; GCSAA staff volunteering at Lawrence (Kan.) CC for the Big 12 Women's Tournament.

Don't look now, GCSAA, but you just might be in the zone.

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Good news! By sharing science and common sense with local, state and regional regulators, the golf industry is finally beginning to change common misperceptions about the game.

We've spoken out on well-known cases such as The Cape Cod Study; the phosphorus issue in Wisconsin and Minnesota; water conservation programs in the Southwest and Georgia; and BMPs, fertilizer and water quality issues in the East and West.

Hot-button regulatory issues impact how we conduct business, so they often take center stage. Our other efforts, such as school and member eco-tours, annual bird counts and our collaboration with schools on butterfly gardens, get less press coverage. We need to broadcast these efforts more to city and county regulators and the Media.

Along those lines, the We Are Golf coalition of golf associations has brought national attention to the positive impacts the golf industry continues to make. What's more, those efforts are beginning to trickle down to individual states. A number of state "Golf Days" are being proclaimed across the country. And they are successfully informing people nationwide about our industry, the good it does, and its economic and environmental realities.

As part of the Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association's annual tour of Florida's agriculture commodities, the Florida GCSA participated in its 12th Spring Regulator Tour. The Old Collier Golf Club has been the first stop on the tour for more than a decade. So, regulators from EPA; Florida's DEP and Dept. of Agriculture; Florida's Water Management Districts; and some county regulators have the opportunity to see the golf course and maintenance area.

Few of them have ever set foot on a golf course, so it's an eye-opener for most of them. While Old Collier is a premiere facility, the principles and facilities are common to all operations. By discussing actual acreages and pesticide programs, and showing the relationships between playing a game and running a business, we make a stronger impression on regulators each year.

Closing the Gap

BY JOEL JACKSON



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Just one or two zero-tolerance folks still refuse to believe what they are hearing and seeing. It's puzzling, given the wildlife inventory they see on the tour. We've even witnessed a couple of bald eagles fighting with ospreys over fish in mid-air. Great stuff!

Our host, Tim Hiers, CGCS, also gives fifth graders from a nearby school a golf cart tour of the course, educating them about what we in the golf course maintenance industry really do.

We need to encourage more of these kinds of activities and prepare handouts of economic and environmental facts, including revenue, jobs, charitable giving, wildlife inventories and golf water use. We need to share such handouts not only on these tours, but also with members at our clubs.

Unfortunately, politicians often don't respect scientific facts in rule making. Commission meetings are sometimes dominated by emotional appeals and rhetoric by agenda-driven activists. So the more we can show people what valuable economic and environmental assets golf courses really are, the easier it will be to defend the turfgrass industry against attacks.

Nothing warms my heart more than the story of the skeptical environmentalist who reluctantly attended one of this year's annual Audubon Christmas bird counts. She just knew she was in for a wasted day in a lifeless, barren, chemical-filled wasteland. Until, that is, she and the others on the count spotted a grand total of 46 species and 438 birds. They even had a bonus sighting of a bobcat resting in the shade in the rough. The tour organizer said the lady's attitude did a full 180-degree turn by the end of the event.

Case — I mean gap — closed.

Certified superintendent Joel Jackson is Executive Director of the Florida GCSA.

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While some conservationists dismiss established wildlife areas on golf courses as artificial, over the last decade serious conservationists and ecologists are re-thinking

what pristine wilderness means. Some even are questioning whether any pristine areas still exist at all. It seems that the Earth's every corner has been touched by humans in one way or another.

In the book "Rambunctious Garden," author Emma Marris discusses why wildlife conservation must move away from the concept of pristine wilderness. While many conservationists lament the loss of pristine areas, she and many scientists are optimistic about how the world's natural areas are evolving.

Marris is a reporter for *Nature*, one of the world's most prestigious ecological journals. In 2010, *Nature* was the most cited interdisciplinary scientific journal in the world. A few papers published in *Nature* over the last 140 years include the structure of DNA; the human genome; the existence of neutrons; pulsars; and the ozone hole.

In her book, Marris discourages us from trying to imagine what pristine areas looked like long ago and from striving to replicate those conditions today. Because now, when the human reach seems to extend everywhere, it's unreasonable to think we can recreate the same pristine conditions that existed prior to human discovery.

Ecological systems always are changing. In "Rambunctious Garden," Marris encourages us to embrace the continual ecological changes our landscapes endure rather than work aggressively toward past ideals now unattainable. She also encourages us to allow wildlife and plants to be their "rambunctious" selves, then manage them wisely.

"It can be really exciting and invigorating to give up on pristine wilderness as your goal, because then you can have all sorts of other goals to replace it," Marris explains in a video promoting the book. Those goals may include biodiversity, healthy ecosystems and beauty.

Links land golf courses in the United Kingdom have existed for centuries, yet many people

Embracing Ecological Changes

BY KARL DANNEBERGER



WHETHER YOU'RE
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HOLE GOLF COURSE
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believe those courses have never evolved. The fact is, ecological systems everywhere always are changing, including golf courses. Superintendents constantly battle exotic animals (rabbits and Canadian geese, for example) and the intrusion of plant material on native grasses.

So, whether you're talking about a dense forest in Brazil or an 18-hole golf course in New Jersey, ecological change is inevitable everywhere. Suppressing natural changes and converting land to its original state is costly, and in many cases, a losing battle.

In "Rambunctious Garden," Marris observed and interviewed conservationists and ecologists in Yellowstone National Park, Biawieza Primeval Forest, Hawaii and Australia. Based on her observations and interviews, we should not mourn the death of pristine wilderness.

If we look beyond conservation as pristine wilderness and open our eyes to the natural areas around us, new and exciting areas of conservation study will open up.

I found Marris' book to be uplifting and optimistic as she looked at the future of conservation and nature. You will, I believe, be encouraged by the changes in how conservationists are looking at natural wildlife areas. As for how we look at natural wilderness areas, I believe the impact on golf courses will be positive.

"Rambunctious Garden" is definitely worth reading, and it's written in a format that is easily read. If you're unable to read the book, a short video trailer of the book captures the result of Marris' findings and interviews.

The video is available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=9nwQoxzVKIY.

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**PLANT
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THREE-PART SERIES**

No one in this industry is afraid to get their hands dirty. Digging in the dirt is just part of the job. And those who are averse to getting a little dirt behind their fingernails have surely found a new career by now.

When taking a core of turf, superintendents always take a long look at their root systems. The health of their turf is reflected in its roots. If the roots are weak, so is the turf. But strong roots? That means strong turf, ready for the punishing summer months and hoards of golfers.

Golfdom, in partnership with BASF Professional Turf and Ornamentals, is proud to once again bring readers the three-part Plant Health Series. In this issue we present Part Two of the series, with the final part coming next month. For Part One, visit www.golfdom.com and click on the April issue. Be sure to check out *Golfdom* TV while you're there, and see our video interview with one of the superintendents profiled this month, Coal Creek's Chris Bradford.

In this series, we're asking superintendents what they're seeing when they look at "the root of the matter." As in, the roots of their turf. Do they like what they see? Or would they like to see stronger roots?

Summer is right around the corner. Here's hoping your roots are ready.

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Bigger Roots Combat Turf's Challenges

As we discussed last month, golfers often judge a superintendent's turfgrass management skills by what they see on the surface of the course — but superintendents know they've got to train, nurture and treat the health of underground root systems to keep blades playable.

Dr. Christina Wells, associate professor in the Department of Environmental Horticulture at Clemson University and plant physiologist, helps me explain what superintendents should consider when determining root management needs that improve plant health.

"In a situation where a lot of the nutrition is being provided for the plant, like on a golf course, it makes more sense to use sugars for energy to drive high rates of uptake," said Dr. Wells. "There's really no reason to grow more roots because it's not necessary. The plant doesn't need to explore to find nutrients when they are right there."

Sugars, which are derived from photosynthesis, play a big role in root development. Below ground, they provide the carbon and energy for continued root growth, as well as powering the mechanisms of nutrient uptake.

Root systems are larger when the photosynthate supplies from the turfgrass leaves increase. The carbon is freed up to other areas



BY KATHIE KALMOWITZ, PH.D.

of the plant, such as the roots. Properly balancing that carbon use is important to helping the plant fight disease, withstand stress, and recover faster if a stress event occurs.

Root health implications for the turf manager

There isn't one answer to what a healthy root system looks like. It really depends on the turf manager's point of view. Why should deeper roots mean a healthier plant? In fact, especially on a golf course, many practices by superintendents promote smaller root systems. Turf is watered and fertilized frequently, and mowed almost daily. With water and nutrients in abundance, and added stress to the plant, roots do not often grow deep.

"If your turf management goal is consistent, dark green turf with no dead or diseased patches — you can achieve that with a minimal root system," said Dr. Wells.

However, as we have seen in the past few summers the perfect growing conditions are becoming harder to find.

"Superintendents faced with re-

strictions on irrigation or the amount of nitrogen they can put on their turf should focus on promoting a bigger root system for a healthier plant," she said. "It's all about the constraints and turf management goals. A healthy root system is whichever one gets superintendents to their management goals."

Understanding how turfgrass functions below the surface can help superintendents more effectively work through multiple agronomic options and select solutions that are essential to keeping turf healthy, and players and course management happy.

Research from BASF Professional Turf & Ornamentals indicates that Intrinsic brand fungicides (active ingredient: pyraclostrobin) can be a helpful tool for superintendents seeking to manage a broad spectrum of diseases and support plant health, including deep roots and stress tolerance.

Learn more about Intrinsic brand fungicides at www.Intrinsic-PlantHealth.com and other BASF Professional Turf & Ornamentals innovations at www.betterturf.basf.us. ■

Kathie Kalmowitz, Ph.D., is a Technical Specialist for BASF Professional Turf & Ornamentals.

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PLANT HEALTH SUCCESS STORIES

Two supers discover better plant health right when they need it. **BY KEN MOUM**

For tickets to see the Rolling Stones. The men's room at halftime of a college football game. Any time there is a buffet involved.

These are all valid reasons to wait in line, and most people have probably spent some time in one of the above lines. There's nothing glorious about waiting in line, but at times it is warranted.

Just ask Chris Bradford, superintendent at Coal Creek Golf Course in Louisville, Colo. He knows a worthwhile line when he sees one — like the line at the BASF booth at the 2011 GIS.

“Like pretty much everyone else in the business I have budget constraints, and I was more than willing to stand in line to get \$1,500 worth of product. I got a sample of Insignia SC at the 2011 Golf

Industry Show, along with a couple of dozen others,” Bradford says. “Any time you can get enough free fungicide to help the course's bottom line a little bit, it's worth a try.”

Seeing results

As recommended by BASF, Bradford applied Insignia SC to his greens about a week before he aerified them in 2011.

“The winter of 2010-2011 was relatively warm, which allowed us to have 4,000 rounds over the winter, adding a bit to the stress on the greens. So we used the Insignia SC in conjunction with spring aerification, because we were hoping to prevent anthracnose from coming in to the injured turf.”

After applying the fungicide, it wasn't long before Bradford noticed the plant health effects. His greens, he said, “all greened up really quickly. And the aerification holes closed very



Chris Bradford

THE SUPERS

Jeff Rottier and Chris Bradford don't know each other, but they have a few things in common. Both have had success with plant health products, and both know how to care for golf courses designed by Dick Phelps.

Early on, Bradford learned working inside wasn't for him.