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Stop the
horrifying
creatures from
underground

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My Second Office

BECAUSE THE COURSE IS YOUR FIRST

About our host

TONY MANCUSO, CGCS, director of golf course operations at Cherokee Town and CC in Atlanta has a thing for bulldogs. And for good reason: he's a Mississippi State Bulldog, having received a degree in agronomy and turf management from the school.

Prior to his position at Cherokee, Mancuso was superintendent at Bellerive CC in St. Louis. He would have been the host of the World Golf Championship-American Express in

2001... if it had happened. "I was the superintendent for the Tour event that was cancelled the week of 9/11," Mancuso says with sadness in his voice. It was one of the few Tour events ever cancelled before it even began.

Now in his tenth year at Cherokee, Mancuso's office proudly displays his Bulldog fandom, as well as the tournaments that he did (and didn't) get to host.



"You go for two years, getting ready for an event and just like that it was gone. Of course that was all for good reason."

1 HEY BULLDOG! Anything that has a bulldog, someone has bought for me. A lot of my bulldogs have stories behind them. I have this cross-stitch bulldog, a ceramic one, a lamp... Just about every bulldog that's in my office is a gift from a friend or my wife, daughter or mother-in-law.

2 TURNING A BLIND EYE When I was an assistant at New Orleans CC our club held the U.S. Blind Golfers Championship. I have this really cool poster of a golf ball with sunglasses on it. The

person who won was a member of New Orleans CC and he was my green chairman. A lot of guys can probably say they think their green chairman is blind, but I actually had a blind green chairman.

3 THE HAMBURGLAR STRIKES BACK You know the Wendy's 3Tour Challenge? It's three LPGA players against three Champions Tour players against three PGA Tour players. So there are nine players that play in it. The club I was at in Ohio hosted the very first Wendy's 3Tour challenge

because a member of our club was Dave Thomas, the founder of Wendy's. That poster contains probably seven or eight Hall of Famers. That poster was supposed to be signed by all of the players, but somebody got in there between when they signed them and the next day and stole all the posters!

4 A LITTLE MORE COWBELL Every student who goes to Mississippi State has their own cowbell. Typically you make your own, so when I got there in 1977, I made my

own cowbell. I literally welded the handle onto the bell. Sitting next to it is the little ball from inside the bell. I've actually rung the ball out of the cowbell twice. I lost the first one, but the second time somebody behind me found it. That's like a badge of honor — to have rung the dinger out of your cowbell.

BY MOLLY GASE // PHOTO BY SCOTT MAY

Proud of your second office? Email us a photo of you in it to sjones@northeastmedia.net, and we may feature you and your office in an upcoming issue of *Golfdom*.

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“(Millennials are) an important group that may in fact help grow the game if the golf industry is willing to start looking at things a little differently.”

MARK WOODWARD, *Contributing Editor*

Just saying...

The other day I was sitting in my office with a young colleague and we started talking about the growth of the game initiatives in golf and in general the state of the industry. The conversation was all over the place until she mentioned something about the golf industry missing out on targeting one segment of the population that you don't hear much about in reference to growing the game of golf. This group is called the Millennials.

This colleague of mine has been in the golf business for over 12 years and she happens to be a Millennial. She pointed out to me that, as an industry, we have developed or tried to develop many programs related to getting more people involved in the game of golf. Groups include juniors, women, minorities etc., but most programs don't specifically address the 20- to 30-year-old age group.

This is an important group that may in fact help grow the game if the golf industry is willing to start looking at things a little differently.

Millennials are different. If you really put some thought into this age group in our society, they truly are an interesting group of people. They are

extremely tech-savvy, as technology has boomed since they were born. They aren't used to having to be at a job from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. They are a generation that is not going to settle because they saw their parents settle, particularly in reference to their jobs. To them, it's OK to have four to five jobs on their résumé by the time they are 30.

If you have Millennials working for you, it's important that you adapt. They respond better to coaching than bossing. They are the future and bosses need to realize this difference. If you don't, they have no problem going down the street and selling themselves to the next boss.

In most cases Millennials aren't as concerned about hav-

ing a long career in one job as they are with having a great lifestyle. Millennials place a higher value on actual experiences than they do on tangible items. They may be willing to pay a premium for a good golfing experience if it were a more enjoyable and possibly even a “less stuffy” activity.

So with all of this in mind, here we have a very large portion of our population that strongly feels that lifestyle is important and this could obviously include recreational activities, like golf. Why don't we recognize this as an industry and try harder to attract them to the game? The truth is, other industries are way ahead of golf and have adapted to this segment of the population by making their

businesses more welcoming and accommodating.

Things as simple as allowing cell phones on the golf course, not worrying so much about dress codes, tattoos and appearance could go a long way to bringing more of these young people into the game. Let's face it, they may not want to play 18 holes of golf and take four to five hours to do it.

The bottom line is, they want to have fun. As an industry we have been talking for years that we need to make golf more fun. I believe if we did, more Millennials would want to participate. After all, they are more into hanging with their friends and socializing than becoming the best golfers in the world.

Now it's a well-known fact that I'm a baby-boomer and I'm certainly not overly qualified to talk about how to go about targeting Millennials, but my very astute colleague caused me to think about things differently. If we as an industry want to really grow the game, it is imperative that we look at things differently than we traditionally have in the past and maybe target this segment more aggressively. Their money is just as valuable as any other segment of our population.

Just saying.

Mark Woodward is a senior vice president for OB Sports, principal of Damarco Golf, president of Mark Woodward and Associates and a contributing editor for *Golfdom*. He can be reached at mwoodward@obsports.com.

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“Even the Deep South, including North Florida, didn’t dodge the bullet as rare snow and ice storms shut down roads and air travel.”

JOEL JACKSON, *Senior Contributing Editor*

Dealing with a harsh Mother Nature

The old saying, “It’s not nice to fool Mother Nature,” was a real oxymoron this year as she pulled the plug on turf managers north of the Mason-Dixon line. Mother Nature did all the fooling around with a new toy she got this year called the Polar Vortex.

Even the Deep South, including North Florida, didn’t dodge the bullet as rare snow and ice storms shut down roads and air travel. The abandoned cars on interstates in Atlanta and Durham, N.C., made the national news as testaments to the freakish winter.

In the South, clubs hosted their season-ending member-guest tournaments and superintendents started dragging out the aerifiers, sweepers and verticutters, just waiting for the snow birds to fly home for the warm season.

As play slows down in the Sun Belt, local superintendent chapter activities crank up with traditional fundraising and education events. Superintendents have a little more time now to devote to continuing education, networking and maybe even playing a little golf.

Normally, northern superintendent chapters and turf associations have their big regional turf conferences and meetings in the winter when the courses are closed. This year however, the weather made that an “iffy” proposition at best.

While all these storms were ravaging the middle and eastern regions of the coun-

try, a record drought placed a serious hurt on the golf industry out west. Irrigation water is undergoing severe rationing measures and, in some cases, courses are being cut-off completely, causing some course closures. Even traditional agriculture is facing severe cutbacks or bans on pumping water.

There’s no fooling around out there when you’re talking about losing your business and your job. It isn’t too far fetched to think that more desalination plants might be on the horizon along the entire U.S. coastline. Costs will go up, but what’s the alternative? Shutting down all uses but basic public consumption in the home?

That move would kill production agriculture and turf management industries in areas where annual rainfall is low or aquifers are drawing down.

It still drives me mad to see public consumption of outdoor water use continue down its ignorant path of the “set and forget” mentality for lawn and commercial irrigation systems. Last week we had two consecutive days of good soaking rains and as I ran some errands, not only were some commercial landscape systems running, they were running in the rain, past 10 a.m., both violations of basic irrigation conservation practices.

When you stop and think about how many times a day a superintendent or his staff inspects the performance of their systems and adjusts the daily run times based on the weather, is it too much to ask homeowners, condo owners associations, shopping centers and public works departments to appoint someone to at least flip a switch to “off” when it’s raining?

I urge superintendents to share common sense and easy steps to water conservation, with your golfers. Last month was officially “Water Conservation Month” in Florida, but there is no season needed to educate your members and golfing customers about your environmental stewardship.

Joel Jackson, CGCS-Ret., is senior contributing editor for *Golfdom*. Email him at flrjn@aol.com.



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“We’re not fishing in the Bering Sea or defusing alcohol-fueled domestic disputes, but nonetheless the risk of serious injury or even death is present.”

MATT NEFF, *assistant superintendent, Wedgewood G&CC, Powell, Ohio*

Safety first and always

As the golf season is beginning to ramp up in the northern part of the country, and with it the hiring of seasonal staff, training of new employees is probably at the top of many of people’s lists right now. Many new seasonal staff members have little to no experience in golf course maintenance work and likely view it as a fun summer job and/or a way to play free golf. However, most of them have probably not given much thought to the inherent dangers that can come with the job.

We’re not fishing in the Bering Sea or defusing alcohol-fueled domestic disputes, but nonetheless the risk of serious injury or even death is present. New employees need to be made keenly aware of this. Operating vehicles and machinery on uneven, sloped and sometimes wet terrain, spinning blades, flying golf balls... the list of potential dangers goes on and on.

According to a 2008 United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (USBLS) report, there were 106 golf course related worker fatalities from 2001 - 2006. More recently, the year-end reports from 2011 and 2012 found 28 total fatalities in those two years combined. While this number represents a small percentage of total workplace fatalities

over the same time periods, it does illustrate the fact that serious accidents can happen and that the need to always make safety a priority is of the utmost importance.

Probably not surprising to those who have been in the industry for a while, the most common cause of golf course related fatalities was equipment or vehicle accidents. Of the 106 deaths cited in the 2008 report, 33 were due to “non-highway vehicle accidents.” Of those accidents, 19 were overturned vehicle accidents with nine of the overturned vehicles being mowers and the others involving carts. Three of the nine mower incidents occurred near bodies of water and resulted in the operator drowning.

A 2011 Centers for Disease

Control (CDC) report found that 1,142 grounds maintenance workers, including landscapers, tree care workers and golf course maintenance workers, were fatally injured on the job from 2003 - 2008. “Non-highway vehicle overturns,” the majority of which were riding mowers and tractors, accounted for 102 of those deaths.

These statistics not only highlight the need to educate new employees, but also the importance of reminding experienced operators to be constantly vigilant. Since most superintendents and assistants would prefer to not have a new employee with limited experience running a \$50,000 rough mower, it’s probably fair to assume that at least some of these victims were experi-

enced operators.

Both the USBLS and CDC reports also highlight the disparity in the number of Hispanic workers in golf course and grounds maintenance-related accidents compared to the number of Hispanic victims involved in all workplace fatalities, regardless of occupation.

The USBLS report states that 33 percent of all workers killed in golf course related incidents were Hispanic compared to 15 percent in all workplace fatalities. The CDC report found that 31 percent of fatal injuries to grounds maintenance workers were sustained by Hispanic employees. It is a reminder of the importance of Spanish language training materials and Spanish speaking trainers.

None of this is meant to sound alarming. We all know this job can be and is done very safely, without incident, every day. But the numbers don’t lie — accidents happen and people can be seriously injured or worse. Proper operator training and instilling a culture of “Safety First” from the most experienced operators all the way down to the new guy, can go a long way in preventing a tragedy.

Safety must be the most important priority of every employee as even a momentary lapse of attention to workplace safety can have serious and sometimes permanent consequences.

Matt Neff (mneff4@yahoo.com) is assistant superintendent at Wedgewood G&CC in Powell, Ohio.

Part 1

PLANT HEALTH

of a 3-part series

Golfdom is proud to once again partner with BASF Professional Turf & Ornamentals to bring readers the 3-part Plant Health series. In part one of the series, written by associate editor Molly Gase, we take a look at the meaning of Plant Health and how superintendents are using this concept to succeed at courses in Georgia and Michigan. And come back for next month's installment, written by contributing editor Chris Lewis, on surviving extreme temperature swings. The final part will be penned by *Golfdom* editor-in-chief Seth Jones, and appear in our July issue.

As we begin to enter the heat of the summer months, *Golfdom* and BASF wish you the best of Plant Health and a successful season.

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Continued on page 19



The picture *of* perfect health

Maximizing turf's ability to handle and recover from stress quickly takes a lot of the basics, as well as some help from Plant Health products

BY MOLLY GASE

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