

GREEN INDUSTRY NEWS

Landscape contractors focus on computers

Eight hundred landscape contractors and their spouses learned how to successfully utilize computers and properly manage their business in the complex economy of the 80's at the annual conference of the Associated Landscape Contractors of America.

Computers, management, election of new officers, and the presentation of environmental and safety awards dominated the week-long (Feb. 8-13) series of talks and presentations in New Orleans. A computer display presented by various manufacturers helped stress the importance of "Getting the Right Numbers," the theme of the meeting. Members of the industry challenged landscape contractors to sharpen their own business management procedures, find practical solutions to their problems, and develop the right numbers in their own operation.

Gunther Klaus, internationally known business economist and management consultant, revved up the meeting with his keynote address on

"The New Management." After crediting landscapers with shaping the land and the future, he listed changes that would occur in the 80's and suggested landscapers develop a workable, salable strategy.

Gray Payne of Ross-Payne Associates echoed many of Klaus's comments and addressed them in a framework suitable for the landscape contractor. "You have to manage more aggressively and understand the cyclical aspects of the economy," he said. He described the inaccuracies in some bases of accounting and the foibles of estimating. He also talked about losing

money through large material inventories and improper design/build and how typical money incentives don't work for landscape employees.

Talks on computers, an interiorscape workshop, an equipment demonstration, and specialty workshops were sandwiched between the management talks. Computers grabbed the stage for one full day and part of another. Hardware manufacturers and systems/software suppliers displayed products and services for the landscape contracting industry.

It was only five years ago that the first

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Arborists confront IPM in Sarasota

Along with solid advice on how to manage and save costs in operating a business, arborists heard several talks about the potential of integrated pest management at the National Arborist Association's annual meeting in Sarasota, Florida, Feb. 15-19.

Chuck Cissel, chairman of the NAA pesticide committee, delivered a message to the arborists which may be prophetic for all members of the Green Industry. Since arborists' work is highly visible and spray bans are being proposed, good planning and cultural practices have become very important. Much of the IPM technology is in its infancy, Cissel said, but now is the time to begin marketing and educating customers.

"An IPM program should be no less profitable," Cissel said. It retains the same objectives arborists have followed for good tree care, but accomplishes them in a different manner. The association is planning several pilot projects and developing new educational materials toward this end.

Dr. Ian Weatherston of Albany International Corp. spoke about how to practice IPM with pheromone traps. Acknowledging that there are more

than 90,000 species of insects in North America, Weatherston discussed his company's research in combatting some of them with pheromones. Basically, pheromones sprayed in a field confuse males so they can't find females and mate.

Dr. William Wallner from the USDA in Connecticut presented a thorough discussion on gypsy moth management, a problem in regions all over the world because of the insect's tremendous adaptability. Long-distance spread from campers and firewood has caused infestations beyond the Northeast into Oregon, Virginia, and throughout the Midwest. Prevention includes cleanup, biological control, and some chemicals, but this year's infestation may be the most devastating yet.

Other highlights included Larry Holkenborg's talk on his combination tree/lawn care business; Chuck Dauphinee's use of propane for fuel on his company's trucks; Barry Graham's discussion on the value of computer consultants; and Daniel Coffman's history and update on policies to avoid unions.

New officers for the association in

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Emphatic in style and message, Gunther Klaus, an international business consultant, urged landscape contractors to update their management and ways of addressing problems in a fluctuating economy.

GOVERNMENT

UPDATE

ALCA from page 8

economic computers were built for small industry, said Paul Ritchey of Gustin Gardens, Inc. Now it is a booming industry which should change much in upcoming years. It no longer takes a special computer operator to handle basic functions—payroll, general ledger, accounts payable/accounts receivable, and mailing lists—and secondary problems, such as generating statements and tax forms, word-processing, and analyzing value of services and personnel.

Sally Kujawa of Kujawa Enterprises, Inc. told her success story with a computer system and what guidelines to follow when purchasing one. These include knowing the software vendor and who he buys from, picking the type of software program for your particular needs, and getting a written agreement if you buy software from a different vendor than the hardware seller.

In a session entitled, "Learning to Live with a Computer (Marriage, Not Divorce)," a panel of industry representatives and contractors discussed the problems with a computer once you are engaged with one. "There is a direct correlation between top management's involvement and the success of a computer installation," said Frank Ross of Ross-Payne Associates.

Dale Saville, manager of computer operations for the J.P. Stevens Co., listed troubles from computer installation, which if not handled, could and have forced companies out of business. Yet it is inevitable that computers are here to stay. "Automate?" Saville asked. "Yes. People not doing it will be left behind. In this decade, those not involved will be gone."

Specialty workshops that ran concurrently dealt with marketing design/build, people development in maintenance firms, land reclamation, and task force, which discussed how landscape contractors and landscape architects could work together. Jot Carpenter of Ohio State University conducted a separate workshop on how to read design plans and how to design your own plans clearly.

New ALCA officers for 1981 are: Allen Keesen (Allen Keesen Landscape, Inc.), president; Ray Gustin III (Gustin Gardens Inc.), president-elect; David Pinkus (North Haven Gardens) and J. Landon Reeve (Chapel Valley Landscape Co.), vice presidents; Rodney Bailey (Evergreen Services Corp.), treasurer; and Irvin Dickson (Chem-Lawn), secretary.

EPA advisors recommend pesticide study

The Committee on Urban Pest Management of the National Academy of Sciences has recommended to the Environmental Protection Agency that it undertake "a comprehensive nationwide study of pesticide use in urban areas," including use and exposure of pesticides to professional and private applicators, as well as the exposure and effects of pesticides on others.

The committee stressed the need for special attention and regulation of non-agricultural pesticide use. It suggested grants to urban governments for the management of pests tied to enforcement of laws for pest management as a condition of funding. The committee recommended establishment of guidelines followed by regulation.

If put into effect, the regulations could provide needed funding for pest management technology. However, such regulations would add a second layer to the current regulations intended to cover both agriculture and urban pest control. They would also require personnel to enforce and manage.

Members of the committee included national experts in urban rodent control, insect control, public health, medicine, and law. The Environmental Defense Fund was also represented.

Fire ant program restored with pesticide

The recent conditional registration by EPA of Amdro, a bait product, has regained USDA support for aerial fire ant programs. Support was stopped in 1977 due to problems with mirex.

Seven southern states have indicated interest in aerial programs. North Carolina and Mississippi will conduct ground application programs with Amdro.

The imported fire ant has been found in nine southeastern states. It looks like an ordinary red ant but is aggressive and has a vicious sting when disturbed by humans or livestock. They create large colonies dependent upon worker ants to collect food. When the workers pick up the pellets of Amdro combined with soybean oil and corn grits and take them back to the colonies control approaching 98 percent is achieved.

North Carolina State University entomologist Charles Apperson has been tracking the spread of the ant in North Carolina. He says Amdro brought back to the colony kills the queen ant only. He expects a delay of two to three years before full registration is obtained. North Carolina farmers have reported soybean crop losses caused by the ants.

More funds available for small businesses

The Small Business Administration has acquired an extra \$200 million to lend through Local Development Companies for plants, buildings, and machinery. Terms are up to 25 years to pay and a \$500,000 ceiling. Details are available from local SBA offices.

IPM from page 8

1981 are: Walter Money, Guardian Tree Experts, president; Eric Haupt, The Haupt Tree Co., president-elect; Lee Lesh, Lee's Tree Surgeons Inc., vice president; Robert Mullane, Alpine Tree Care Inc., secretary; and Neil Engledow, Midwest Tree Experts, treasurer.

The arborists also dedicated an historic tree, a huge banyan. It was

growing at the Thomas Edison Home in Fort Myers.

COMPANY

Toro president leaves in major cutback

Toro, suffering from overcommitment to the snowblower market and two mild winters, released President Jack Cantu and three vice presidents. More than 125 salaried employees lost their

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jobs in the second cutback by Toro. The company did not pay a dividend in the last quarter.

Cantu, formerly president of the ProTurf Division of O.M. Scott and Sons, is a warm, personable man with more than ten years experience in the turf industry.

Toro was an impressive, growth oriented firm until recession and lack of snowfall cut earnings. Between 1976 and 1979, Toro's sales increased from \$130 million to nearly \$360 million. In 1980, sales still increased to \$402 million.

Toro Chairman David McLaughlin has been considered one of the most dynamic business leaders in the country and has received considerable coverage by the business press in the last three years. McLaughlin said the company will take a more conservative growth strategy in the future.

Dartmouth's search has taken more than nine months and included 400 candidates. McLaughlin assumes his new post in June 1981. He missed the announcement of his new job in New Hampshire so that he could personally explain to the Toro board his move.

McLaughlin announced to the Board of Directors in late February that he has accepted the post of president of Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH. McLaughlin, a 1954 graduate of Dartmouth, has long been active on the college's board of trustees and served as chairman.

CORPORATE

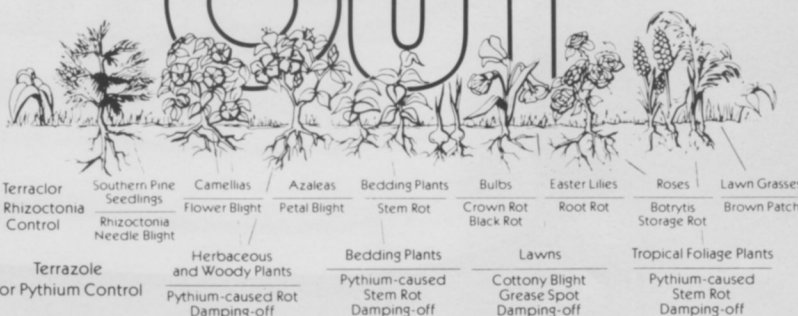
Melrose, Keating assume reigns after Toro shakeup

The Toro Company, faced with a total management restructuring after the departure of David McLaughlin and Jack Cantu, has selected ten-year Toro veteran Ken Melrose, 40, as president. Stephen Keating, 62, former chairman of Honeywell and director of General Mills, PPG Industries, and Donaldson Co., will serve as chairman of Toro's executive committee.

Melrose replaces Jack Cantu as president. He was most recently executive vice president of Toro's equipment division. He joined Toro in 1970 as director of marketing and served as president of Game Time, a Toro subsidiary for three years. Melrose graduated from Princeton University in mathematics and electrical engineering. He

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New Toro President Kendrick Melrose

received a master of science from Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a master in business administration from Chicago University.

Melrose was a track letterman at Princeton and has been a very active supporter of The Children's Theatre Company.

Keating has been a member of the Toro board of directors since 1966. Other credits include chairmanship of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis and a board member of the Mayo Foundation.

TURF Athletic field needs debated at Nebraska

Coaches, field managers, and turf specialists weighed natural and artificial alternatives for athletic fields during the Nebraska Turfgrass Conference and Show, Jan. 12-14, in Omaha.

Concerned that many Nebraska high schools are signing orders for artificial surfaces, turfgrass specialists urged field managers to review their natural turf programs for improvement.

John Melton, assistant coach of the Nebraska Cornhuskers football team, told conference attendants that players must wear pads everywhere, withstand the pounding from falling on the hard artificial surfaces, and take the impact that natural turf would absorb on knees and ankles. Melton said, however, that it's easier to coach on artificial surfaces, these fields can be used more intensively, and aren't turned to soup in heavy rains. Still, Melton states the conversion from natural to artificial

turf "is a big mistake."

To improve the endurance of Lincoln's Seacrest Field, manager Mike Callaghan overseeds every third game and aerifies after the close of the season. Callaghan also dethatches the field. One of the first steps he took when he assumed responsibility was to improve the drainage.

Nebraska extension turf specialist

Robert Shearman stressed annual renovation for intensively used fields, fertilization three or four times per year, and control of persistent weeds.

Richard Hurley, research director for Lofts Pedigreed Seed Co., said perennial ryegrass is the best value for use on athletic fields. If use can be limited to once a week, then Kentucky blue-

Continues on page 68

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grasses have time to fill in scarred areas, Hurley said.

A major conflict with athletic fields is they are used most heavily at the best time of year to seed, August and September, or the second best time, early spring. As a result, Hurley said, most fields are dormant seeded between Thanksgiving and Christmas. Seeding prior to the last game of the season will allow traffic to work the seed to the surface.

Shearman said the choice of turfgrass is reduced to tall fescue if maintenance is low. Hurley pointed out that improved tall fescues are making more desirable, durable playing surfaces than older varieties.

CONFERENCE

Lawn care cited for bigger turnout

Turfgrass associations all over the country report record attendance at this year's conferences and trade shows. Part of the increased turnout is due to the growth of the lawn care industry.

Dr. David Wehner of the Department of Horticulture of the University of Illinois, says, "Each year more people are being graduated with degrees in the (lawn care) field, and they maintain contacts with the universities and the turf organizations. This is how we help foster our own programs."

Also, many conferences now schedule special sessions to meet the needs of lawn care people.

The Virginia Turf Show, Jan. 20-22 in Richmond, which had never had lawn care sessions before, combined a trade show and complete lawn care program. Attendance, including speakers and exhibitors, was 516, the largest ever recorded. The association is entering areas such as highways and sod production and may plan a special program on cold-tolerant bermudagrass.

The 21st Illinois Turfgrass Conference attracted about 670 people to the Prairie Capital Convention Centre in Springfield, Illinois, from December 16-18.

The conference opened with concurrent workshop sessions on financial

planning and on various turfgrass problems—weed, disease, and insect control.

On the second afternoon, there were split lawn and golf turf sessions, followed by a banquet at the Springfield Hilton Hotel. Orion Samuelson, vice president of WGN-Continental Broadcasting System, delivered the keynote banquet speech on the importance of turf and horticulture to the American way of life.

The New Jersey Turfgrass Association marked its 10th anniversary with an Expo '80 at the Cherry Hill Hyatt House in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, from December 8-11. A record number of 1,200 people attended.

Dr. Henry Indyk, the association's general chairman, said, "We arranged the sessions consecutively so that talks, exhibits, and the trade show didn't compete. People could sit for two hours, then walk around at the exhibit. If you've been listening to speakers all day, your retention capacity goes way downhill by 4 o'clock."

The meetings began with an afternoon workshop on insect identification. The following day, a general session was held. On the third and fourth day, there were split sessions on golf and fine turf and on lawn and utility turf. A special session was held on the last afternoon for pesticide applicatory certification.

EQUIPMENT

MTD to purchase Harvester's Cub line

International Harvester's Agricultural Equipment Group has reached agreement with MTD Products Inc. of Cleveland, Ohio, to sell its Cub Cadet line of lawn and garden tractors. MTD will establish a new subsidiary, Cub Cadet Corp., to produce and market the line. International Harvester dealers will continue to market the Cub line as well in more than 2,000 dealerships in North America.

MTD is one of the largest manufacturers of mowers, tillers, and other outdoor equipment in the U.S. A sizeable portion of its products are marketed under the brands of large retail chains. The company introduced a professional series of products this year. The Cub Cadet line will strengthen its position in the homeowner and small commercial markets. The company will manufacture the Cub line at a plant recently constructed by International Harvester in Brownsville, TN.

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