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The Model 2500's low profile design and centrally located seat provide a clear view of the work area.

that a lot of times we think we're going to manipulate Mother Nature and try to force things to happen.

"In a resort area, the time of season when you're getting your peak dollar may not necessarily coincide with your peak maintenance. So you try and finagle, and a lot of times it hurts you. We'll try to push the bermudagrass out, stimulate it mechanically or with fertilizer. But it will come out when Mother Nature says it's ready to come out, not any time before. It's going to sit there until it gets the green light from her to move.

"What's funny is that you'd think you'd realize this is frivolous, but we keep hitting that brick wall because we're dense. We don't learn very quickly."

Fresh paint—Many of the decisions Betts must make on a regular basis are forced by the competitive situation on the island.

"In the last four years, it's gotten a hell of a lot tougher," Betts says. "Hilton Head has six new resorts, and you put the older courses up against 'fresh paint' and it's not apples to apples. That's why we're always looking at renovations."

The Cupp course, just opened last February, is the most interesting architecturally. It features a straight-line design that can only be appreciated by seeing it and playing it in person.

The Fazio course, on the other hand, was built in 1974, and will probably be renovated soon.

"When it was first built, it was one of the top 100 courses in the U.S.," notes Betts. "We don't really want to change that. But the problem is the age of the greens and the age of the grasses on the greens. I may have a half-dozen strains of bermudagrass out there now. They mow differently, take fertilizer differently, transition differently.

"In 1974, they may have been getting 23,000 rounds on its small putting surfaces and it probably handled that just fine. But now we're getting 45,000 to 47,000 rounds on that same confined area and we've got to struggle.

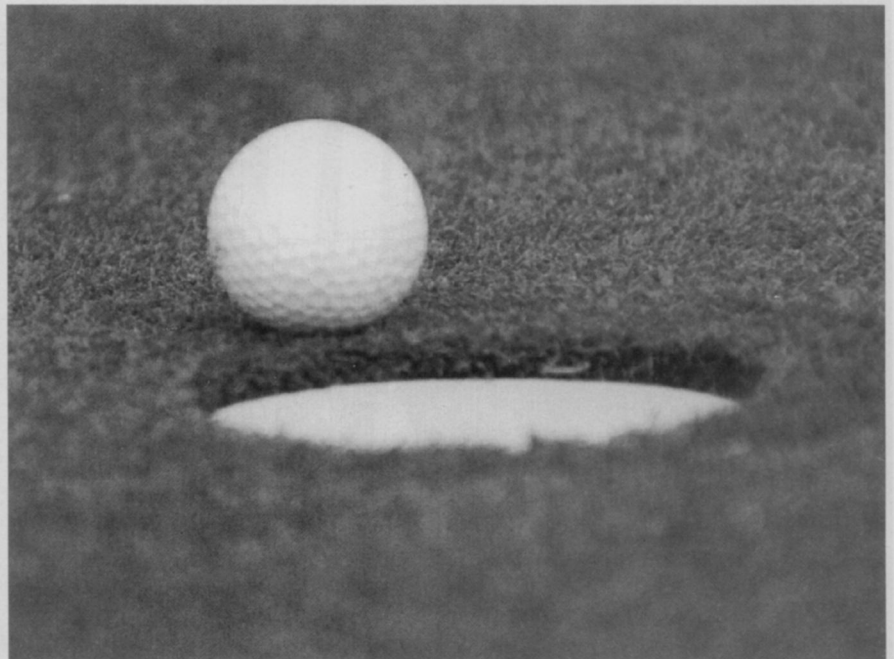
"So we're not going to change the look of the course, just expand it out a little bit. Playability will improve dramatically."

Despite the fact that Betts admits he could've used more business training at Michigan State University where he got his turf degree in 1981, he's still having fun.

"What's been fun and fast-paced is that we've maintained, renovated, and built—all at the same time."

—Jerry Roche

How to have white golf holes, without the paint



by Scott Niven, CGCS

■ Golf courses today are designed and maintained in a way that maximizes aesthetic qualities by creating near-perfect definition of all features. A lot of time, effort and money goes into producing this manicured look, which is characterized by such things as:

- perfectly outlined bentgrass greens, tees and fairways with eye-catching patterns of stripes and a dark blue-grass border;

- bunkers with sharp edges and bright white sand to improve visibility and appeal;

- tees flanked by signs with handsome graphics depicting the layout of each hole;

- bright colored flags embroidered with attractive logos and painted flagsticks marked to indicate exact locations; and

- all sorts of plaques and yardage markers on sprinklers to aid players in choosing the correct club.

All of these things give the golf course a professional, appealing look and the sharp definition shows the golfer exactly where to play his shots.

Until now, we have stopped just short of doing everything possible in providing the ultimate in visual definition. The one location where we can still

A lip-out study demonstrated that the difference with the Hole Target is statistically insignificant.

improve—which, ironically, is the most important in all of golf—is in highlighting the hole itself.

Even if we frequently apply white paint to the metal cup, the one inch of exposed brownish soil just below the surface is still difficult to see from most areas of any golf green. So much so, the USGA and the PGA Tour will attempt to paint this exposed soil white for their tournaments so that TV viewers can see the hole better while watching at home.

Of course, those lucky participants get the benefits of a more visible hole as well, but most amateur golfers do not get to experience this luxury. Instead, they must putt to a soil-edged hole that they can't see very well. Unfortunately, regular painting of the soil edge is not practical because it's very difficult and time-consuming.

But thanks to a clever inventor from

Texas, we now have a patented device called the U.S. Golf Hole Target that simulates white paint on the edge of the hole. This white plastic collar covers the exposed soil above the metal cup to a level of 1/4-inch below the green's surface and creates a clean, bright, white and highly visible "target."

Some other less obvious benefits of this collar, besides a reduced need to tend the pin, are:

- 1) Preservation of the perfect 4 1/4-inch diameter of the hole, which can expand and contract during dry or wet weather.
- 2) Elimination of soil particles flaking off on high sand-based greens.
- 3) And a reduction in desiccation around the top of the hole.

The U.S. Golf Hole Targets are very easy to install and, since they are reusable, need only to be replaced at approximate two-week intervals. The cost averages less than two cents per golfer-round.

The biggest criticism I've heard of this new invention is one of fear that it might cause the ball to lip-out of the hole. This scenario has been looked into in great detail through a lip-out study that simu-

lated more than 4,000 putts under all types of weather conditions. It demonstrated, without a doubt, that the difference in lip-outs with or without the device is statistically insignificant.

The position of the Target, at 1/4-inch below the green's surface, was not chosen arbitrarily. The laws of physics were used to prove that once the centroid of an object, with the mass and weight of a golf ball, falls 1/4-inch into the hole, only gravity can then affect it to fall to the bottom of the hole.

The USGA has not yet approved of, or declared, the Target in conflict with the Rules of Golf. That decision will have to wait until 1996, when the rules can more accurately define what constitutes a metal cup liner versus a plastic collar. Until then, the definition of "hole" says:

"If a lining is used, it shall be sunk at least one inch below the surface of the putting surface unless the soil condition makes it *impracticable* to do so." (Surely, the exposed earth, subject to dehydration, erosion and instability, is *impracticable*, which by definition is "hard to manage; difficult to maintain." With this interpreta-

tion, using the Target for regular play at any golf club is perfectly legal.)

We've used the Target successfully every day at our club for more than a year, as have many other golf courses. I'd predict that it is only a matter of time until the USGA and the PGA Tour will make the Target standard equipment for their special events, as well as on all golf courses everywhere.

For more information on the patented U.S. Golf Hole Target, with headquarters in The Woodlands, Texas, phone (800) 256-7400.



—Scott E. Niven, CGCS, has been property manager of The Stanwich Club in Greenwich, Conn., since 1983. This prestigious club is ranked by "Golf Digest" as one of the top 100 courses.

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LAWN CARE INDUSTRY

Russell J. Frith, 1993 'Person of the Year'



Russell J. Frith

Lawn Doctor's president and CEO is in the forefront of efforts to promote the industry's image and message on the political front.

■ Twenty-two men and women sat around tables arranged in a square dominating a first-floor meeting room in an Alexandria, Va., hotel. This was an unlikely group, the only common thread among the participants being some expertise or agenda concerning pesticides. Some objected to their use. Others defended their use.

One of the 22 is a big man with a round ruddy face, blondish-gray hair, and a loud, clear voice. His name is Russell J. Frith, and guess which side of the fight he is on.

Frith, 50, president and chief executive officer of Lawn Doctor, Inc., is LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT's 1993 lawn care "Person of the Year."

The meeting we refer to took place last February and dealt with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

efforts to develop "guidelines" for individual states on pesticide-related issues such as pre-notification, the establishment of chemical registries, etc. (As it turned out, the EPA had pretty much settled on guidelines already—a fact that Frith firmly took issue with at the time.)

While EPA representatives guided the meeting from the north end of the huge table, Frith and several other pro-lawn care spokespeople formed a loose coalition to their left, facing, about 15 feet away, several of the industry's harshest critics.

A strong voice—Actually, this was the second, and final, meeting of the so-called EPA Lawn Care Pesticide Advisory Council. The first had been in Annapolis, Md., in May 1992. Frith had been at that one too, and just as vocal.

At both meetings, his rational defense of lawn care issues (he certainly wasn't alone) visibly altered the agenda of industry critics who, it seemed, had come to the table viewing the lawn care industry as an easy target. They discovered—after going

face-to-face with Frith, other lawn care proponents and several product manufacturers—that the industry is both proactive and, for the most

part, united.

They also learned that it isn't easily intimidated. Pro-industry spectators at both hearings considered this to be the bigger victory.

Frith's involvement on this committee isn't the sole reason why we've chosen him as "Person of the Year." It is, though, one of many telling episodes in his 16-year involvement with the lawn care industry.

In fact, lawn care is an industry that Frith, through his company, has helped grow. Many small business owners (about 300) wouldn't be in lawn care today if it weren't for Lawn Doctor and its remarkable dealer retention record. Lawn Doctor is the industry's leader in franchised lawn care.

What's lawn care?—Frith admits that as a youngster in a working-class Philadelphia neighborhood he never dreamed of directing a lawn care company. In fact, if there was a lawn care industry, it was microscopic. Lawn Doctor itself didn't exist until 1964 when the late Tony Giordano, owner of a hardware store, and

friend Robert Magda opened a lawn care operation. The company was called Auto-Lawn then; it became Lawn Doctor in 1967. Giordano died in 1984. Magda is a vice president with, and remains active in, Lawn Doctor.

Frith joined Lawn Doctor in 1978 as director of franchise sales. In 1979 he became vice president of marketing, and in 1980 executive vice president. He's been company president and CEO for the past 12 years.

Frith probably would have been successful without any further involvement in industry-wide issues. But that appears to go against his out-going, sometimes-ebul-

lient, sometimes-challenging nature.

Not only is he a past president of the Professional Lawn Care Association of America, but he also served as president of PLCAA's Educational Foundation and remains active on its Government Relations Committee.

Enjoying his role—As the president of the nation's leader in franchised lawn care (locations in over 30 states), Frith has made it a point to maintain a high profile in Washington D.C. affairs as they relate to the industry. Actually, he seems to enjoy it.

He also regularly commits Lawn Doctor staff and resources to support industry causes, while he urges the com-

pany's independent franchisees to become involved in local, state and regional political and regulatory actions too.

Frith is married, and he and his wife Margaret have two sons, both in college. Frith attended LaSalle University where he earned a B.S. in Accounting and Marketing.

Previous "Person of the Year" award winners: Jerry Faulring (1984), Richard Lee Duke (1985), Ron Giffen (1986), Bill Fischer (1987), Jim Marria (1988), James Fitzgibbon (1989), James Brooks (1990), Marty Erbaugh (1991), and Patrick J. Norton (1992).

—Ron Hall

Wierichs, big man for big job

New PLCAA president to remain active in GIE negotiations, wants association to reach out to members

■ Lou Wierichs brought the cigars. They were good ones, from Tampa.

This could only mean one thing. The out-going president of the Professional Lawn Care Association of America, in this case John Robinson of Calgary, Canada, gets to light up, prop his feet on a table and relax. PLCAA's incoming-president, in this case Wierichs of Appleton, Wis., gets to lazily contemplate the coming year through the lingering blue smoke of a fine stogie. One last time.

This ritual marks what is sure to be a hectic year in the life of Wierichs who describes himself as a practical person. A nuts-and-bolts kind of guy. A commonsensical man ("If there is such a word.").

But associates describes this mountain of a man (6-foot-5 and about 280 pounds) as out-going and hard working. He can be all business, or fun loving. It just depends on the situation. "But, you always know when he's around," jokes one peer.

"I know being president of PLCAA will take a lot of my time. But when you have something that's worthwhile, you find the time," says Wierichs, operator/majority owner of Pro-X System Lawn Care, a company he and two partners founded in 1986 as a ServiceMaster franchise.

After all, Wierichs points out he's successfully managed to grow his business while maintaining perfect attendance as PLCAA board member the past two years, and as an officer in the Grounds Management Association of Wisconsin. When Terry Kurth, Barefoot Grass of Madison, initiated the idea for the pro-industry Wisconsin Industry for Sound Environment (WISE), Wierichs joined in too.

Wierichs says one of his main goals as PLCAA president will be to help in Green Industry Expo negotiations. Representatives from PLCAA, the Associated Landscape Contractors of America (ALCA), and the Professional Grounds Management Society (PGMS) have until June 30, 1994 to hammer management of future GIEs. Presently, PLCAA manages the Expo.

"I was going to go off the (GIE) board, but the PLCAA board felt I should stay on as one of its three representatives during the negotiations with ALCA and PGMS," says Wierichs. "I feel very comfortable with what's going on."

Wierichs insists he's pro-GIE. "I understand the importance of staying together."

In an unrelated matter, Wierichs says he wants to see PLCAA more aggressive in reaching out to members again. That's because so there are so many small companies in PLCAA. Lou says about 70 percent of PLCAA membership reports gross sales of \$600,000 or less. ("Hey, I'm one of these guys," he points out.)

"A lot of those members need the how-to's," says Wierichs. "This year I think we're going to implement six educational road shows. PLCAA was at its strongest when it reached out to its membership."



Wierichs: believes in information network between companies.

Along these lines, Wierichs says he would like to see a PLCAA help line set up so that when a member has a question concerning a specific problem, that member can dial an 800 number and talk to somebody who has dealt with and resolved similar problems.

For his own part, Wierichs says PLCAA has allowed him to build up an information-sharing network of non-competing lawn care company owners, both in Wisconsin and across the country. "That's the number one benefit of participating in any professional association," says Wierichs.

Former restaurant manager, interstate truck driver, loan officer and, for the last eight years, small business owner. Lou Wierichs is certainly big enough to guide PLCAA for the coming year.

—Ron Hall

HOT TOPICS

Barefoot to buy more of Lawnmark

■ Barefoot Inc., Worthington, Ohio, says it's going to buy the Lawnmark lawn care businesses in New York, Vermont and Maine. The eight locations, all described as leaders in their particular markets, should finish 1993 with \$8.4 million in revenues.

The sale is expected to close on April 1, 1994.

Marty Erbaugh of Lawnmark, Hudson, Ohio, said several considerations figured into the decision to accept a Barefoot offer. Specifically:

- Improved career opportunities for Lawnmark employees and managers. "We are blessed with a lot of good local and regional management. Barefoot has very strong systems and will provide opportunities for upward mobility for our key people" Erbaugh told LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT.

- Comparable business philosophies. Both companies offer granular lawn care service. Both favor targeted direct mail marketing over telemarketing. Both strongly emphasize customer service and retention, said Erbaugh.

- Barefoot continues to grow, and shows no signs of slowing down. "Barefoot

has got it together. They've got a lot of fine things going on and I see it continuing," says Erbaugh.

Actually, this isn't the first time Barefoot and Lawnmark have dealt.

In January 1992 Barefoot bought Lawnmark operations in Cleveland, Wooster, Akron and Canton.

Through its wholly owned subsidiary Barefoot Grass Lawn Service, Inc., it is now the nation's second largest professional lawn care service company with 1993 sales of about \$90 million, says a company spokesman.

Chief Financial Officer Michael R. Goodrich said Barefoot grew from 315,000 to 432,000 customers system-wide during fiscal 1994. This figure includes the acqui-



Erbaugh: Barefoot, Lawnmark share business philosophies.

sition of Ever-Green Lawns Corporation in January 1993.

"The Ever-Green acquisition has made a significant contribution to 1994's growth," said Goodrich. "However, we continue to address Ever-Green's operating margin as an area for improvement.

"Likewise, the acquisition of Lawnmark should have a positive impact on earnings per share for fiscal 1995. It expands our customer base profitably to an area where Barefoot

currently does not have operations."

Barefoot now operates in 75 metropolitan markets, primarily in the central and eastern U.S. Of these markets, 30 are served by company-owned "branchises," 36 by franchises and 9 by the company.

—Ron Hall

Homeowners place value on their lawns, study says

INDIANAPOLIS—Homeowners place a high value on the personal values of a lawn, according to a recent study. They place less importance on environmental benefits, however, the study says.

The study, commissioned by DowElanco Specialty Products and conducted by Mar-Quest Research, examined homeowner perceptions and attitudes.

Homeowners identified aesthetics, "curb appeal," resale value and a personal sense of accomplishment or pride as the main benefits derived from maintaining a healthy and weed-free lawn. They said lawns allow them to spend "quality time" with their family, friends and pets.

After further questioning, the homeowners mentioned environmental benefits such as dust control and providing oxygen.

"Lawns are an important part of their lives," says DowElanco director of public affairs Bill Culpepper. "They're willing to devote time and money to ensure their lawns are meticulous, flawless pieces of art."

Most respondents said pesticides were vital to maintaining a thick and healthy lawn. Generally, they accept pesticides and fertilizers, providing they are used properly.

Also, homeowners in the study consider posting a courtesy, but not a necessity.

Culpepper indicates that homeowners who either purchase a lawn care service or apply the products themselves are not overly concerned about posting. On the other hand, consumers who do not purchase these services and products tend to have a greater anxiety about them.

"We need to educate this group on the wide margins of safety that our products provide," Culpepper says. "The average homeowner views posting as the 'friendly, neighborly' thing to do, not as a cause for alarm."

Data was gathered in Columbus, Ohio; Atlanta; Salt Lake City, Utah and Philadelphia.

ELSEWHERE

Internships for college kids, page 49

This month's key dates, page 49

Publications to watch for, page 50

GREEN INDUSTRY EVENTS

DECEMBER

15: Lawn Care Assoc. of Pa. Winter Educational Meeting, Carlisle, Pa. Phone: LCAP, (717) 236-2050.

15-16: Oregon Turf & Grounds Maintenance Exhibit, Oregon Convention Center, Portland. Phone: D.L. Tom Miller, (503) 635-6867.

17: Pesticide Safety for Landscape Contractors, New Brunswick, N.J. Phone: Rutgers University, (908) 932-9271.

JANUARY

2-7: Advanced Landscape Plant IPM Short Course, Univ. of Maryland. Phone: David Laughlin, (301) 405-7665.

3-5: Wisconsin Turfgrass & Green Industry Expo, Madison, Wis. Phone: (608) 845-6536.

3-5: Maryland Turfgrass '94, Baltimore. Phone: Cheryl Gaultney, (410) 335-3700.

4: Ohio State Perennial School, Avon, Ohio. Phone: Charles Behnke, (216) 322-0127.

4-6: Kentucky Landscape Industries Winter Conference & Trade Show, Lexington Center. Phone: (502) 429-6171 or (812) 284-1042.

5-7: Turf Management /Park Maintenance Training School, Albany, N.Y. Phone: Beth Seme, (518) 783-1229.

7-8: Louisiana Arborist Annual Meeting, Baton Rouge. Phone: Robert Souvestre, (504) 389-3055.

8-11: GrowerExpo, Rosemont, Ill. Phone: (708) 208-9080.

10-12: Great Lakes Trade Expo, Grand Rapids, Mich. Phone: Michigan Nursery & Landscape Assn., (517) 487-1282.

10-12: Eastern Pa. Conference & Trade Show, Valley Forge. Phone: Scott Guiser, (215) 345-3283.

10-12: Nebraska Turfgrass Conference, Omaha. Phone: NTF, (402) 463-5418.

10-13: Advanced Turfgrass IPM Short Course, Univ. of Maryland. Phone: Lee Hellman, (301) 405-3920.

11-13: Eastern Regional Nurserymen's Assn. Annual Conference, Kiamesha Lake, N.Y. Phone: ERNA, (203) 872-2095.

11-13: Indiana Arborist Winter Meeting, Indianapolis. Phone: Lee Huss, (812) 331-6497.

12-14: Utah Green Conference & Trade Show, Salt Lake City. Phone: George Hoar, (801) 288-8858.

12: Sacramento Valley Landscape & Nursery Expo, Sacramento. Phone: Kenny Kakutani, (916) 442-4470.

16-18: Empire State Tree Conference, Suffern, N.Y. Phone: Ray Smith, (518) 783-1322.

17-18: Arkansas Turfgrass Assn. Trade Show & Conference, Little Rock. Phone: Angie McSwain, (501) 663-8810.

17-21: Ohio State Golf Course Maintenance Short Course, Columbus. Phone: Barbara Bloetscher, (614) 292-7457.

18-20: Mid-America Green Industry Convention, Kansas City, Mo. Phone: Olivia Golden, (816) 765-7616.

19: Professional Turf & Landscape Conference, White Plains, N.Y. Phone: (914) 636-2875.

College intern program allied with businesses, looks to future

PALATINE, Ill.— The faculty and physical plant department of William Rainey Harper College and local business owners have begun a "Partnership in Education" intern program for Parks and Grounds Management students.

Patricia Bourke, dean of life science and human service, and Robert Getz, director of physical plant at Harper College, say the intern program is a joining of "the academic and practical aspects of grounds management."

Randy Illg is coordinator of the Park and Grounds Management program, and Chuck Gura, supervisor of the Roads and Grounds workforce, established the internship program last summer for current students at the college.

This summer, local firms and services provided more than enough intership positions for interested students as another step forward in the program.

Gura then widened membership in the program to include graduating high

school seniors as a way to learn about both the campus itself, and the Park and Grounds Management program.

The Roads and Grounds/Park and Grounds Management partnership has lately joined with the Biology and Physical Education and Athletics and Recreation departments to form a task force to develop a 20-year campus grounds management program.

Getz leads the task force. Its goal is to evaluate and inventory present land use and recommend a 20-year, ecologically balanced plan.

Getz says the grounds team is looking ahead so that they can provide a healthy environment in the years to come.

"We believe this land may be used without its being destroyed," says Getz.

"We hope, through our partnership, to establish a lasting commitment to the future use of our grounds' resources and continue to be an example for others to emulate."

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DOT REGULATIONS...DowElanco offers a free comprehensive guide to help professional applicators comply with the new federal Department of Transportation regulations which took effect Oct. 1st. The guide outlines compliance with HM-181. Another booklet helps comply with HM-126F on training those who work with hazardous materials. For more information, see your DowElanco field rep or phone (800) 352-6776.

WORKER PROTECTION...The Florida Nurserymen & Growers Association is now distributing the official 1994 EPA Worker Protection Standard Reference Guide, which outlines the new rules and regulations concerning applying agricultural pesticides. The Standard goes into effect in April, 1994. Guides are \$1.35 each for members, \$1.95 for non-members. Also, "This Water Not For Drinking" tags and chemical re-entry signs are available. Both follow strict EPA guidelines. Water tags are \$5 for 10, 30 cents each additional; re-entry signs are each \$1 for members, \$1.25 for non-members (minimum order is 10). Send your check to: FNGA, 5401 Kirkman

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SAFETY TRAINING...A safety training video on the use of wheel loaders has been released by Video Information System Training Associates (VISTA). The video includes facilitator's manual, participants' manuals and a post-viewing test on the material. For more information, call (800) 942-2886 or write VISTA, P.O. Box 247, Burlington, WI 53105.

NEW FOR TGIF...TGIF (Turfgrass Information File), the industry's largest single source of turfgrass information, has added a new listing of members of the American Society of Golf Course Architects. Information from TGIF is available in hard copy or via a modem, and can be searched by author, subject, etc. For

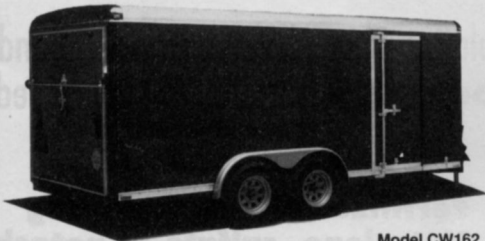
additional information about TGIF, contact Nancy Donati, Medinah Country Club, Medinah Rd., Medinah, IL 60157-9653; (708) 773-1700, ext. 254.

APPRAISING PLANT WORTH...The International Society of Arboriculture has released its "Workbook for the Guide for Plant Appraisal," which accompanies the eighth edition of the "Guide for Plant Appraisal." The workbook explains the factors which affect plant value, and gives hints to determine the appropriate ratings. Cost is 50 cents per book. Order from ISA, P.O. Box GG, Savoy, IL 61874.

FOR HOME LANDSCAPES...The "Home Landscape Companion," by Edith Henderson, shows how to create a landscape design plan. She explains the principles of landscape design and how to apply them to your particular site. Also offered: valuable information and assistance on subjects ranging from color and texture to fragrance and focal points. With illustrations; 155 pp. Write Peachtree Publishers, 494 Armour Circle NE, Atlanta, GA 30324; or phone (404) 876-8761.

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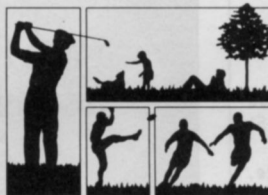
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