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# GOLF

# Sand replacement, weather or not...

Off-season jobs can be complicated by inclement weather. This project at Terrace Park went as planned during a break in January's bitter cold.

■ If you travel Ohio much in winter, you've felt the widely ranging temperatures between the state's northern and southern halves. If it's 32 degrees in Cleveland, it may be 40 or higher in Cincinnati. Usually.

But this has been a most unusual winter—with record cold north and south and it made Rick Grote's latest project at Terrace Park Country Club near Cincinnati tougher than he thought it would be.

The project: new sand in each of the course's 42 bunkers.

"We knew two or three years ago this project was going to come about," says Grote. "The members didn't care for the sand we had (crushed limestone); they wanted a looser, silica-type sand."

Never-say-die guy that he is, Grote turned the cold mid-January weather into a positive.

"This kind of job is easier in winter anyway, when the ground is frozen," he says. "We don't have the problem of wet sand, and the snow helps pack the sand down. By April it'll be playable, with no more 'fried eggs' (buried golf balls); and you won't be able to putt out of the sand."

In less than a week's time, Grote and crew—Karl, Joe, Gene, Doug and Mike—replaced the old crushed limestone with 850 tons of higher quality, silica sand.

The truck used to transport and spread the sand—called a "floater" due to the large flotation tires—was assembled by the R.K. Hydro Vac company of Covington, Ohio. A high-speed conveyor boom propels



The swinging conveyor used for this job can fill a bunker in about 10 minutes. The tires exert a mere 9 psi of pressure on the turf.

the sand at distances of up to 35 feet. Driver Jim Hart says the R.K.Hydro Vac company sanded the tire treads down to make these heavyweight jobs possible.

"It's a hell of a lot easier with the Hydro Vac, rather than rutting up the course with dump trucks and utility vehicles," says Grote. There's also less back-and-forth for refills, which can make it a monotonous, time-consuming job.

Neighboring superintendents visited the course throughout the week to view the job's progress.

**Project cost**—This job wasn't cheap. The 900 tons of silica sand was the bigticket item: \$30 a ton, delivered.

The Hydro Vac rented for \$4000 a week, including driver wages. A week's use of a Case front end loader cost \$1600.

Grote planned well in advance to secure the funds needed for the job.

"We try to have at least a five-year plan on capital expenditures. That way, it's easier to get the money because the club

planned for it. Members can only take so many surprises every year."

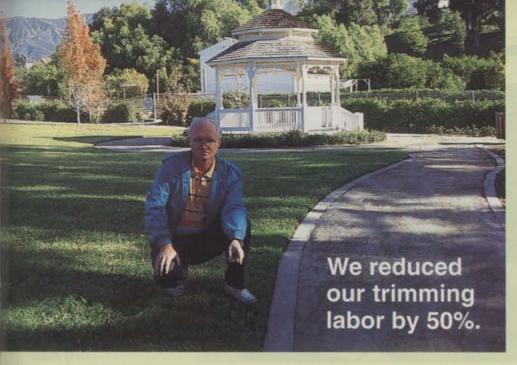
Around the course—Terrace Park has bentgrass greens, tees and fairways. Greens are mowed at 1/8 inches with a Toro Triplex.

But Grote always tries to minimize heavy equipment traffic on greens. Turf groomers are used about twice a week. Rollers are used sparingly; Grote doesn't want to encourage compaction-related problems.

Grote believes Scott's growth regulator, Enhance, helps keep greens fast without having to use equipment as often. It slows turf growth down for about three weeks, he says.

"We topdress only after we aerify, and once or twice during the summer to fill in unhealed ball marks or to slick the greens up a bit," he notes.

Grote often makes test plots available for control product testing. Recently, Monsanto tested its new Vantage, for



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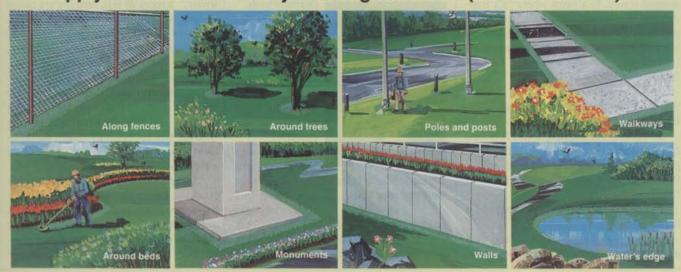
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Rick Grote: Keeps a 'clean' course, plans well ahead for expensive projects.

nutsedge control, at the course.

Grote's next project might be cart paths; but he's not sure.

"A lot of the members like to walk, the course" he explains, "and there's not a lot of room for cart paths," because of Terrace Park's narrow layout.

Grote's a busy man; he's currently on the board of the Ohio Turfgrass Foundation.

Terrace Park was built in 1931, and is situated along a busy ribbon of winding road in Milford, Ohio, about 15 miles east of Cincinnati.

-Terry Mclver

# Computers a worthwhile adventure in trial and error, say these superintendents

■ We all know by now that a computer can make your life easier. It's just a matter of admitting that you need one—and granted, you might not need one...yet—and then taking the plunge.

"I don't think there is a low to medium budget golf course that would not be receptive to a \$1000-\$3000 expense to buy a computer," says John Carlone, CGCS, of the Middle Bay Country Club, located in Oceanside, N.Y.

"We're in the information age, and we need a way to manage that information," says Carlone, whose computer skills progressed slowly, to a point where he's now-comfortable enough about the subject to give a speech to his peers. Carlone told his story of computer enlightenment to superintendents at the recent GCSAA International Show in Dallas.

Payroll, irrigation scheduling, budgeting, landscape management, it's all possible with a good computer system.

To narrow his learning curve, Carlone turned to a colleague more skilled in computer science, superintendent Duane Patton at Lawrence Country Club in Lawrence, Kans.

Patton visited Carlone twice to lend a hand.

Carlone says having someone help with initial computer training is "the most valuable thing you can do. Trying to teach yourself can be very frustrating, not knowing where to start or where to go for help. My computer was off for a number of months before I had someone come in and teach me."

A good reference book helps, too. Carlone's computer bible is "DOS for Dummies." (DOS stands for disk operating system); he'll page through it at any spare moment.

Corey Haney, super at Bristow Manor Golf Course, Arlington, Va says computers are not a cure-all, but they are helpful

t they are helpful business tools.

"They're not going to solve all your problems but they're certainly going to help you with any you have now," he promises.

Carlone: Hire a tutor for computer help

Haney says computers are "nothing more than electronic replacements

for tools we use everyday.

"The computer can process and store large quantitities of information, and help



you use it in different ways; it can also help you make decisions."

What's right for you may not be right for the super down the road, but Haney believes the common computer denominator is how it improves efficiency.

Word processing is "an eletronic typewriter, no more or less. Newsletters can be written to communicate with the golfers, and help explain course projects. Spread sheets can be used for budget calculations, cost per acre, annual costs, all faster, neater and more professional.

"(Computer skills) could certainly become a career requirement," says Haney—and the superintendent who ignores the technology might be overlooked for someone who can operate even a most basic system.

"The popularity of golf has led to what seem like longer seasons," says Haney. "We have tougher conditions and more demanding golfers. Computers will reduce the time we spend indoors."

-Terry McIver

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Poly-S. Fertilizers

# LAWN CARE

### Quiet Capitol Hill signals deceiving Iull

LCOs keep up their guard, say reinforcements are desperately needed during PLCAA's fifth annual 'Day on the Hill.'

 Lawn care pesticide safety hearings appear unlikely this spring.

Industry-crippling legislation, long threatened by Sen. Joseph Leiberman, (D-Conn.), simmers on a back burner. It's apparently not robust enough—not even after four years of cutting and stitching—to fight its way to a committee hearing.

LCOs paid scant attention to either issue during the Professional Lawn Care Association of America's (PLCAA) "Day on the Hill" early this past February in Washington, D.C. And it doesn't look like a significant revision of FIFRA is going to make much headway on The Hill in 1994 either.

No crises.

No controversy.

Few real issues with any emotional



Joel Blackwell, far left, gave LCOs excellent advice on communicating with legislators. The others (left to right): Doug Hague, Al Cortez, Gene Pool and Phil Fogarty, all of Ohio.



A march in February: LCOs traveled together to the Old Executive Office Building to learn about Pres. Bill Clinton's Health Care Reform Package.

weight behind them surfaced during PLCAA's fifth annual legislative foray to the U.S. capital.

But Andrew Hines, president of Shrub & Turf, drove the 13 hours from Athens, Ga., to attend the event. So he wanted to get his say—which was that LCOs are like an opossum creeping across a super highway with "enviro-nuts" working the gears of a smoke-belching 18-wheeler.

"We just stuck our heads out of the hole and we're going to get hit with the back side of the hurricane," Hines insisted, admitting that some of this skepticism over this apparent lull in anti-lawn care feeling was fueled by seeing activists give his industry, and a fellow green industry business owner, a public relations and regulatory keel-hauling in Georgia in 1992.

"The entire purpose of some of these people is to destroy our industry," insisted Hines. "They tell us they're going to whip our butts. Then they do everything they can to do it. The scary thing is, they've been involved with politics a lot longer than we have."

The fiesty, red-haired Hines (Read his letter in the "Hot Topics" section.) was one of about six LCOs asking the tough (well, as tough as they got anyway) questions of U.S. EPA's Victor Kimm, three congressional agricultural committee staffers, and Capitol Hill columnist Charlie Cook.

Some other LCOs speaking out about their continuing concerns over misguided regulation included people like Coloradoan Don Kurtz of Lawn Medic; Don Tannahill, co-owner of Tridon Lawn Service, Olathe, Kans.; and Sam Lang, Fairway Green, Raleigh, NC.

These people received their political experience—and sometimes their first regulatory bloody noses—on local and state

issues. They obviously felt confident enough to take their concerns to a higher level. That they did.

To the person, however, they urged many other LCOs, the ones back home, to become similarly involved. That means visiting lawmakers—local, state and federal (or their legislative aides)—then keeping in regular touch with them.

"Our legislators want to hear from us. They want to hear our story," pleaded Tannehill. "They want to know how their decisions are affecting our industry, but they're not hearing from enough people in the industry."

Against this backdrop of two raw, sunless days in Washington D.C., the LCOs, with no dragons to fight off, practiced their presentations. Then they launched themselves to The Hill to reintroduce themselves and their concerns to the legislators and the hand-shaking cadre of cautiously smiling assistants, appearing almost by magic, one each from the senate and congressional offices.

For the most part, LCOs found a warm welcome from many Senators and Congresspeople and their assistants too.

The lawn pros touched on all the usual matters—preemption, pre-notification, registries, etc.,—but primarily they offered themselves as sources of information, particularly regarding the use of specialty chemicals.

But in spite of the sporadic outbreaks of incredulity—which, on one occasion, filled the Old Executive Building like a bad stink during a patronizing discussion of the administration's health care proposal—this was about as close to a Capitol Hill love-in as LCOs have mustered to date.

That is, until glaze-ice crept over the



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'We're learning how the game is played.' says Don Kurtz of Lawn Medic. Colorado.

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area's three major airports, and an American Airlines jet slid off a National Airport runway (fortunately with no

That sealed Washington, and about half the LCOs spent an extra day there, an expense in time and money some of them didn't need (particularly since an eightounce draft cost \$2.30 at the hotel bar). Most operate businesses grossing \$500,000 or less annually and they don't, as a rule, have fat travel budgets. In fact, a few of the stranded LCOs fretted over snow-removal accounts waiting for them back home. Snow, it turned out, fell in the East everywhere there wasn't freezing drizzle.

But, it was the lack of an obvious legislative or regulatory threat that may have been the most unnerving of all for some of the LCOs.

-Ron Hall

### Kimm says administration wants more reduction in pesticide use

■ The lawn care operators didn't expect to find government officials asking them to use more chemical pesticides: they weren't disappointed.

"Many of us have long believed it is quite likely that pesticides are used more than they need to be used," said Victor J. Kimm, EPA Deputy Assistant Administrator, addressing 85 LCOs (from 24 states) and nine representatives of chemical product suppliers at the Professional Lawn Care Association of America's (PLCAA) Day on the Hill on February 7.

Kimm, in fact, said that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) met in June 1993 to begin mapping policies to:

- 1) encourage the growth of integrated pest management practices, and
- 2) promote, through licensing activities, replacement products that are just as effective as and "inherently safer" than classic hard chemicals.
- "A good deal of attention is going into the general notion of trying to reduce the

### LAWN GAREINBUSTRY



EPA's Kimm says lawn care industry needs better data concerning applicator and customer exposure and quick.

Kimm said the timetable for these, and all, pesticide-related issues isn't clear-cut, an observation coming into clearer focus when Kimm admitted that the EPA's reregistration of pesticides, begun several years ago, won't even be near completion by century's end.

"I do believe that there will be significant debate about pesticide legislation beginning in the next couple of weeks," he predicted.

-Ron Hall

presence of persistent toxic chemicals in society," he said. These efforts, mostly aimed at production agriculture, will increasingly include lawn care.

But Kimm's message to the LCOs was multi-pronged and included warnings of other approaching pesticide-related concerns.

For instance, he briefly touched on a National Academy of Science (NAS) study concerning the health implications of pesticide residues on children's diets. This particular five-year investigation, Kimm said, will likely grow into related studies dealing with the additive impact of other exposures to pesticides on children.

He urged the lawn care industry to initiate investigations of its own to determine and document homeowner, particularly children, exposures on treated lawns. "It's absolutely critical to get that work started quickly," Kimm said. A task force being readied by three trade associations and 17 product registrants may, in fact, already be moving in that direction, he reported.

Even within the EPA itself, reforms are being sought to better deal with pesticide issues, the most significant being a drive to replace the Delaney Clause (zero risk, zero tolerance for any chemicals that seem to cause cancer in man or animal) with a new standard based on "no reasonable certainty of harm"—as is the case in the Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act as it relates to other food additives.

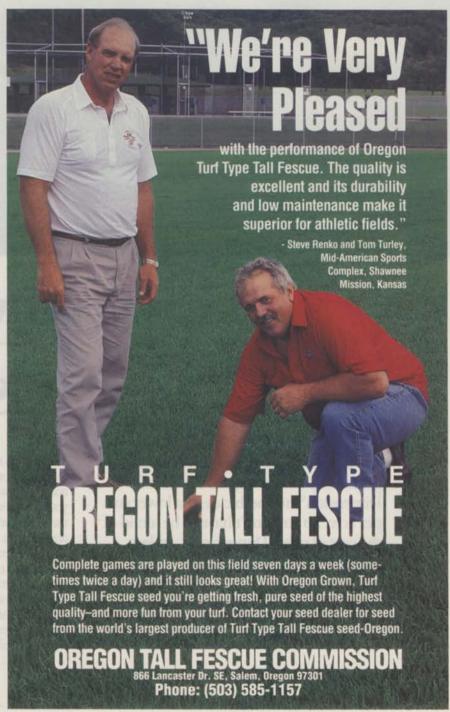
The EPA, Kimm said, is also looking for authority:

to revise its pesticide cancellation/suspension process which, Kimm said, is "antiquated, takes forever, and doesn't work very well:"

✓ to institute "phase out or phase down" of a pesticide when concerns arise over its risk:

✓ to issue pesticide licenses that run
out after 15 years so that re-registrations
can be carried out on a more routine basis;

✓ to ask that all pesticide label changes become effective on one date each year.





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