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## One locker remains empty

“D

*o we have eight guys?”*

That’s a question Bob asked Tuesday and Thursday noons as the guys stashed their white shirts and ties in the lockers here at work and donned gym shorts and tee shirts for an hour of pickup basketball. You need eight

guys to play four-on-four basketball at the Chapel gymnasium down the street. This wasn’t above-the-rim, slam-dunk hoops, but it had its spirited moments and Bob Earley supplied a few of them.

Some of the guys wondered among themselves if Earley wasn’t jeopardizing his career. He was, after all, vice president of a publishing company with sales exceeding \$200 million at the time. Playing hoops with the troops over lunch isn’t exactly boardroom stuff. But he was what he was. Basketball, touch football, business — they were all games that he participated in with great passion.

He was, in fact, a person of many passions. His family. Jazz. Sports. The Green Industry. But, of course, he loved and nurtured his family most.

On Dec. 6, 1999, after an illness of several weeks, Robert “Bob” Earley died. He was 49. Many of us learned of his illness at the Green Industry Expo in Baltimore in mid-November. The news shocked long-time industry friends at the show. We all knew him as a robust man and a man of great energy.

Here at Advanstar Communications, news of his death struck particularly hard. Earley was a Clevelander. He started as an editor here at our company shortly after graduating from Northwestern University and was a driving force, along with a handful of far-sighted lawn care entrepreneurs, in establishing the Professional Lawn Care Association of America. Ironically, news of his illness reached PLCAA the very night it was celebrating its 20th anniversary.

As editor of *Lawn Care Industry* magazine, he was PLCAA’s biggest supporter. He reported on lawn care’s significance and growth in those early years. He was the heart and soul of LCI which was later incorporated into *Landscape Management*.



Robert “Bob” Earley as editor of *Lawn Care Industry*

Earley gradually assumed bigger tasks and more responsibility, eventually managing many magazines. But he always remained “Bob” to everyone at Advanstar, even after he moved west.

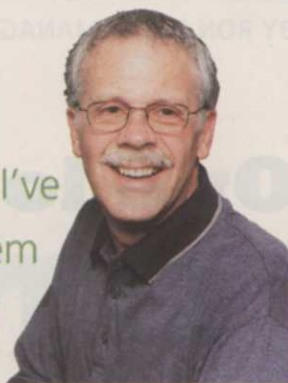
The past several years he guided the fortunes of competing Green Industry magazines but there was never a suggestion of bitterness or ill will. He stayed in close contact with friends here, competitors or not.

The Green Industry lost a friend and accomplished journalist and publisher. His family lost a wonderful husband and father. The guys here at Advanstar lost a great eighth man.

-----  
Contact Ron at 440/891-2636  
or e-mail at  
rhall@advanstar.com



"Can your operation become 'Your Gang?' I think it can. I've seen more than one branch in which every activity, problem and serious challenge became a team event." — BH



## Make 'Our Gang' work for you

Remember the old movies known as 'Our Gang' comedies? Fat little Spanky, Darla, Alfalfa (with that tuft of hair) and Buckwheat — a real cross section of humanity, stuck together with a mysterious glue most of us never thought about.

If you do remember them, you may recall that no matter what grief Butch, the neighborhood bully, cooked up, that gang always stuck together. At the end of each reel, when they stumbled through

the latest caper, there they were, laughing and having fun. And, every time, mean old Butch was defeated.

### The 'Our Gang' team

What a strange crew they were. Do you think for one minute that Spanky could have made his "brilliant" schemes work without Alfalfa's help? And what about cute little Darla, who usually kept them from going off the deep end? How would Alfalfa have survived the panic brought on by singing in the school talent show? Win or lose, those kids went at it as a team — a gang, if you will. They worked together, faced challenges together, defeated the evil Butch together and always survived.

When the gang won, they won together. When they lost, they consoled each other, taking the sting out. Playing off each other and using the strength of their collective interdependence, they pulled up their socks and went right back at life — together.

Too often in our careers, we work to perform well and be recognized, to get ahead, pay the bills, support families and sock away money for the future. And sometimes it gets very serious, stressful, draining and downright lonely!

So I'm hoping that, in your work, you will see yourself as part of 'Your Gang.'

### Get 'Your Gang' started

The beginning of 'Your Gang' may be as simple as a group meeting held informally after work, where you decide to come together as a team, a group of different individuals who believe in a common cause.

I hope you will consider all of this because I see too many wayward working people out there. They show up each day and go through the motions, but do it

### Do you operate a team environment?

- ▶ Members are there by choice — not out of desperation or other pressures.
  - ▶ New team members are welcomed and quickly made to feel like they are part of the group.
  - ▶ Veteran team members discuss and agree on the rules for membership, procedures and problems that require solutions and group direction, sharing responsibility and inclusion in the team-building process.
  - ▶ Each new member is trained to high skill levels in gradual, logical and progressive steps, with ongoing recognition and feedback.
  - ▶ Veterans consistently "go the extra mile" to help new members and want them to succeed.
  - ▶ Members consider themselves personally responsible for the team's success or failure.
  - ▶ To insure team success, members demonstrate a heightened sense of dependability and reliability.
  - ▶ Team members consistently help solve common problems.
  - ▶ They tend to remain on the job longer, reducing turnover.
  - ▶ Team environments promote a high level of positive motivation.
  - ▶ Team members complain less and have fewer sick days.
  - ▶ Team members are promoted more frequently.
  - ▶ Team members earn more money.
- The list could go on and on, but you get the message.

completely on their own. And I know how much tougher the challenges are when you repeatedly face them alone without the gang to act as a support.

Another thing is consistent: They aren't having any fun, and that's a shame.

Can your operation become 'Your Gang?' I think it can. In fact, I've seen more than one branch operation in which every activity, problem and serious challenge became a team event from start to finish. Spanky and Alfalfa had the right idea. When you see a really cohesive team in action, it's a thing of beauty. And it's worth working to develop.

#### Why work toward teams?

Teams give you an incredible edge:

- ▶ Teams use the power of a common cause. Members feel better, stronger and more productive for longer periods when they believe in a cause.
- ▶ Teams build awareness of personal value. People are motivated when the team recognizes their contribution.
- ▶ Teams give a feeling of personal security. Fighting battles together and sharing the group's strength enhances each one's sense of a secure working environment.
- ▶ Teams build confidence. Each employee's confidence soars as others provide consistent and ongoing positive feedback.
- ▶ Teams solve problems more successfully. People working together to solve problems realize that the united group will always be more successful than the smartest single individual working alone.
- ▶ Teams have a lot more fun. As 'Our Gang' knew, it's fun to be part of something that works. And when people have fun, they try harder and work better.
- ▶ Teams win more often than solos.

I'm not talking about crew size here. Rather, I'm talking about building an atmosphere of teamwork throughout your organization. Think it over, is your business

staffed with individual soldiers? Or are you a team? Can you spot a Spanky or Alfalfa who might be a great team player?

You can win with a team of people who may not be stars but believe in what your organization is all about and want to

be part of it. In fact, you don't need stars!

You need team players.

— The author is director of training and development for Scotts Lawn Service in Marysville, OH.

## THE ULTIMATE WHEELBARROW



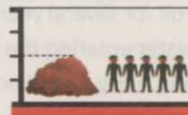
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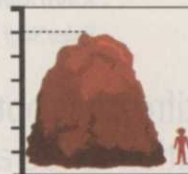
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# let's hear it

YOUR OPINIONS, COMMENTS, & QUOTES

## Some fountain motors cooled by oil

I am writing to address some misinformation that was offered in the article "Care for aerators & fountains in winter" in the November 1999 issue of *Landscape Management*. In the article, Willis Dane of Aqua Control states that pond aerator owners should "fill motors with an antifreeze solution" and that the antifreeze "can gradually be replaced with pond water leakage from seals." This recommendation is offered to all of your readers even though many of them own or maintain equipment that would be severely damaged by this maintenance technique.

Several manufacturers of pond aeration equipment produce motors that are cooled by an oil bath rather than an antifreeze bath. Such units are sealed and designed to retain their oil for several years without water entering the motor housing. They would not operate properly and could even be dangerous if the oil were replaced with antifreeze.

*Anthony P. Vogel*  
Kasco Marine, Inc.  
Sales/Staff Biologist

## Antifreeze is not the solution for aerators

I am in receipt of an article printed in the November 1999 issue of *Landscape Management* in which the writer states

that one should "fill motors with antifreeze solution." Therefore, as a manufacturer of ice melting, aeration and fountain equipment since 1967, I would like to go on record and strongly disagree with such a statement for three main reasons:

1) An oil-filled motor should never be filled with anything but the appropriate lubricating/cooling oil as recommended by the manufacturer, and then only if one is authorized or trained to do so. Also, oil-filled motors should never be filled with anything that has a poor dielectric strength.

2) Suggesting "antifreeze" in general is a total misnomer since there are many types available. Some are quite harmful and many poisonous, i.e. ethylene glycol which is commonly used in automobile cooling and heating systems.

3) Our ice melters, aerators and fountains use the same submersible, water-cooled and lubricated motor that the writer's company does. At no time do we or the manufacturer of the motor suggest that anyone other than an authorized agent recommend or suggest to disassemble this type of motor, much less add "antifreeze." The motor is provided with deionized water and propylene glycol, a non-toxic "antifreeze." This solution will prevent damage from freezing for temperatures down to -40° F. The manufacturer of this motor also states

that the "loss of a few drops of liquid will not damage the motor as an excess amount is provided. If there is reason to believe that there has been a considerable amount of leakage, one should contact the manufacturer for procedures."

It is also suggested that the writer educate himself further about the motors he uses and that a responsible publication such as *Landscape Management* print a correction in the very next issue."

*Douglas D. Cramer*  
Air-O-Later Corporation  
President

## He's one swell employee

As a young company, only seven years in the landscape business, we already know how hard it is to find a reliable,

hard-working employee. In 1998, we found one. His name is Rob Easley. He's 26, and he's been landscaping for six years. Our working relationship has grown into a good friendship.

It's been just the three of us for now, and when we get to jobs, I explain what we're doing, and off he goes, putting in his best effort.

That means a lot to us knowing that he cares about the job and about pleasing our customers.

After work, he helps us back at the shop or even helps with our remodeling at home. He is a treasure and we hope he will stay. We will do whatever it takes to keep him with us.

*Jeff & Karen Christy*  
Christy's Something Different  
Landscaping Co., Chicora, PA  
Owners



"I realize you're my husband, Reginald but I don't give my landscaping contractor's name to anyone."



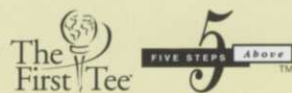
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# industry almanac

NEWS YOU CAN USE

## Deere sees big changes for equipment dealers

**NASHVILLE, TN** — Tractors, mowers and utility vehicles bumped up against cyberspace here this past Dec. 13. John Deere equipment dealers — in a Disneylike display of 3-D, computer-generated service technicians and music at the Opryland Hotel — learned that the game of selling and servicing lawn and garden equipment is changing fast.

In fact, Mark Rostvold, senior vice president of Deere's Commercial & Consumer Equipment Division, predicted that as many as half of the dealers would be gone in 10 years due to fundamental changes in how turf products are sold and serviced.

Rostvold also announced that his division intends to reach \$6 billion in sales by the year 2006. The division ended the year by meeting the \$3 billion goal it had set five years ago.

"The 6 by 6 goal is an ambitious target, but one that we calculate is certainly doable," said Rostvold. "With our existing resources, core competencies and the expanding scale of our operations, combined with a determined focus to meet our customers' needs, we believe we can reach that goal," he said.

But making those kinds of numbers is going to challenge the dwindling number of equipment dealers.

"The role of dealers is changing, a change being dri-



Computer-generated images of John Deere's vision of tomorrow's turf equipment dealership with a stronger emphasis on equipment service.

ven both by technology and the marketplace," he said.

"We're asking our dealers to refocus their emphasis on providing after-sale service. And not simply service for John Deere brands, but for all products — universal service — regardless of brand name," said Rostvold. "We believe the concept of universal service represents a major growth opportunity for John Deere and its dealer organization."

Deere is encouraging its dealers to sign up for the division's Private Label Service Center program, an effort to establish conveniently located outlets that will service all brands.

Rostvold also told reporters that the division is:

- ▶ expanding its Ready to Mow program, a mobile, at-home service concept launched in 70 markets last year with plans to expand into 300 markets in 2000. So far, most of its focus has been toward maintaining consumer equipment, but expect Deere's equipment maintenance vans to start visit-



ing landscapers soon, too.

- ▶ ramping up its manufacturing capabilities. Within the last five years, the division has

expanded its capacity with facilities in Raleigh, NC and Knoxville, TN. The Williamsburg, VA plant for manufacturing Deere utility vehicles will open in 2000.

- ▶ beefing up its web site — [www.deere.com](http://www.deere.com) — more comprehensive and interactive. "The internet is a vital part of our future whether we use e-commerce to inform customers or sell products to them," said Rostvold.

## SDS training debuts at PLCAA event

**TAMPA, FL** — How much is not having an effective training program costing you? Can you really compete in 2000 without skills development? If these questions apply to your operation, the new Skills Development Series (SDS) sponsored by American Cyanamid and Landscape Management, and endorsed by PLCAA, may be your solution.


Phil Fogarty of JP Horizons will explore how to think critically, develop employees' skills and establish a year-long training program at an orientation session on Saturday, Feb. 5, immediately following PLCAA's Management Conference in Tampa. SDS combines an interactive Web site, team competition and ongoing feedback and consultation to build employee skills.

"Anybody can be trained to use a trimmer in just a short time, but what about when that person comes in contact with a customer?" asks Fogarty. "Can that person adequately inform the customer about other services you offer?"

Tampa attendees can sign on at the orientation program. For information, contact PLCAA at 800/458-3466. Both sponsors are offering incentives for those joining SDS, including a copy of the *Landscape Management Handbook*, a subscription to *TurfGrass Trends* and more.

A second SDS orientation session will be held Saturday, Feb. 12 in the Cincinnati, OH area. For more information on attending this session, contact JP Horizons at 440/254-8211.





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Compass delivers the highest efficacy against Brown Patch and a broad spectrum of diseases at the lowest use rates ever. One pound of

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