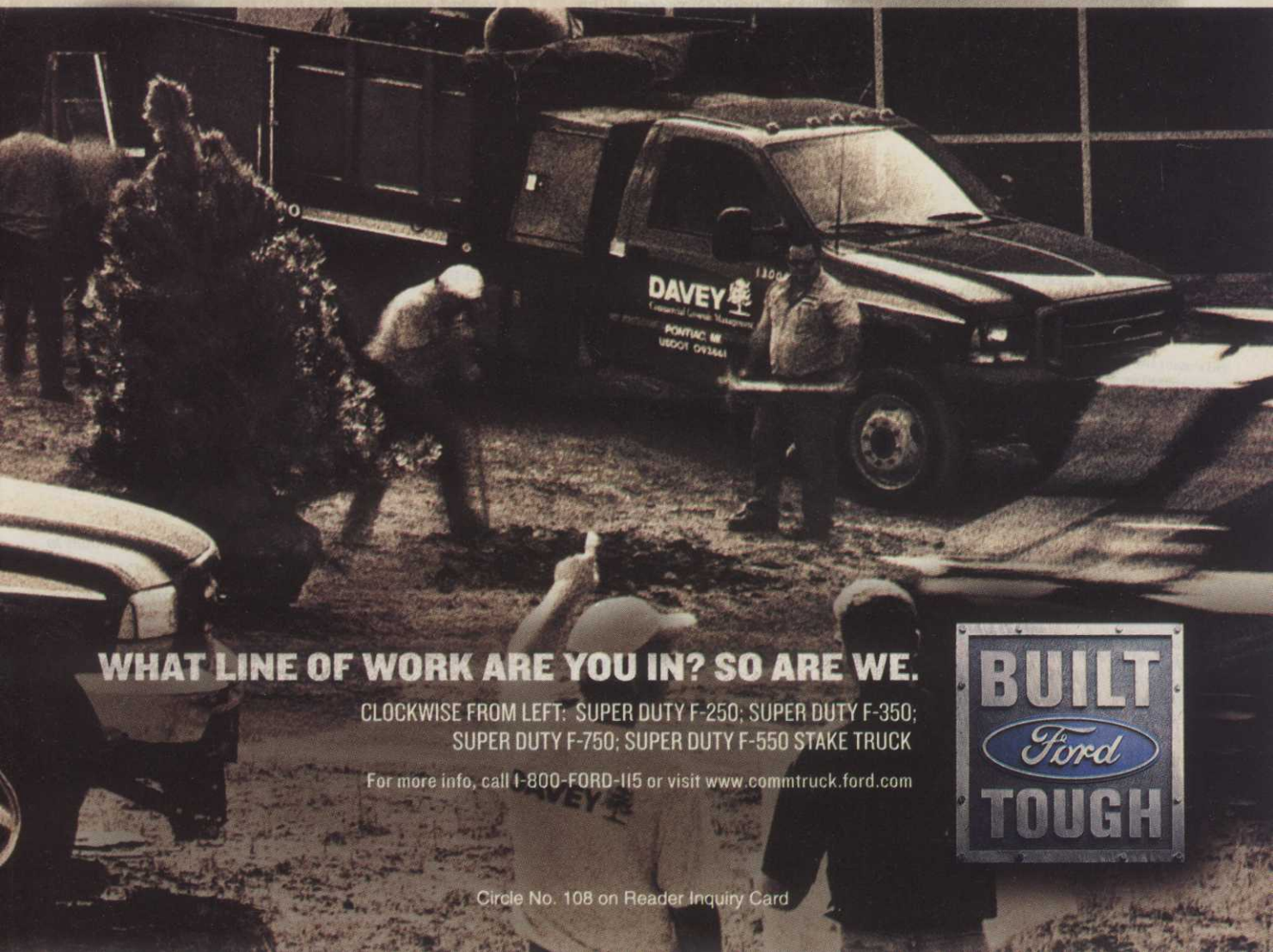


LOOKED LIKE THE NORMANDY INVASION.

IT TAKES A LOT OF MEN AND EQUIPMENT TO MAKE THINGS LOOK BEAUTIFUL. AND NATURAL.
ON SCHEDULE. WE PLAN CAREFULLY. AND WE WORK WITH THE BUILDERS TO COORDINATE OUR
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CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: SUPER DUTY F-250; SUPER DUTY F-350;
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Circle No. 108 on Reader Inquiry Card

BY LARRY IORII / GUEST COLUMNIST

I gained more practical information at my networking meeting than at any other event I've ever attended.



Come over to my place

If you want to learn a lot of useful information that you can use in your company, hold a meeting. It's as simple as opening your home or business for an evening to a group of local competitors. Last year, I held my first networking meeting. This year, I hosted two.

In my case, I organized it for local branch members of the Professional Grounds Management Society (PGMS).

The meeting was designed to gather information I couldn't get at traditional conferences. I think it worked great. I've attended local, regional and national conferences for 25 years, but I can say without

a doubt I gained more practical information during the two or three hours my meeting took than during any other event I've ever attended.

How to get started

I mailed a simple notice to all the PGMS branch members, suggesting possible discussion topics. My flyer invited them to "open up" and share information. We then had an informal gathering at my house, complete with favorite local foods.

The two meetings I've held so far were overwhelming successes, probably because everyone was eager to trade information. Once the guests arrived, I handed them a form listing all the discussion topics and let them pick five.

Each discussion group split up into a separate room in my house. Every half hour, guests rotated to a different room to discuss a different topic or the original one.

During the rest of last year, owners and key employees who had attended the meetings continued to thank me for having such a useful gathering. Many competitors got to know each other better and established better ties by trading information.

— The author owns and operates Down to Earth Inc., a landscape firm in Wilmington, DE. He can be reached at 302/654-8113.

Larry Iorii sent this letter to PGMS branch members inviting them to a networking meeting. Copying this format will be helpful to you when you decide to hold your own meeting.

Dear PGMS member:

Due to a positive response from last year's meeting, it's obvious we have many mutual topics to discuss and not enough time. It's also apparent we share many of the same concerns and problems. That meeting was a success because the majority of owners and key employees opened up and shared their practical experiences, concerns, successes and failures.

This meeting's objective: To encourage networking and build relationships between old and new members in an informal setting.

Dinner: Pizza, subs, steak sandwiches, beverages and, of course, desserts.

Cost: No cost (defrayed by sponsors)

Sponsors: I need two at \$___ each per meeting

Meeting 1: Tuesday, Jan. 16 at 6:00 p.m.

Meeting 2: Tuesday, Feb. 13 at 6:00 p.m.

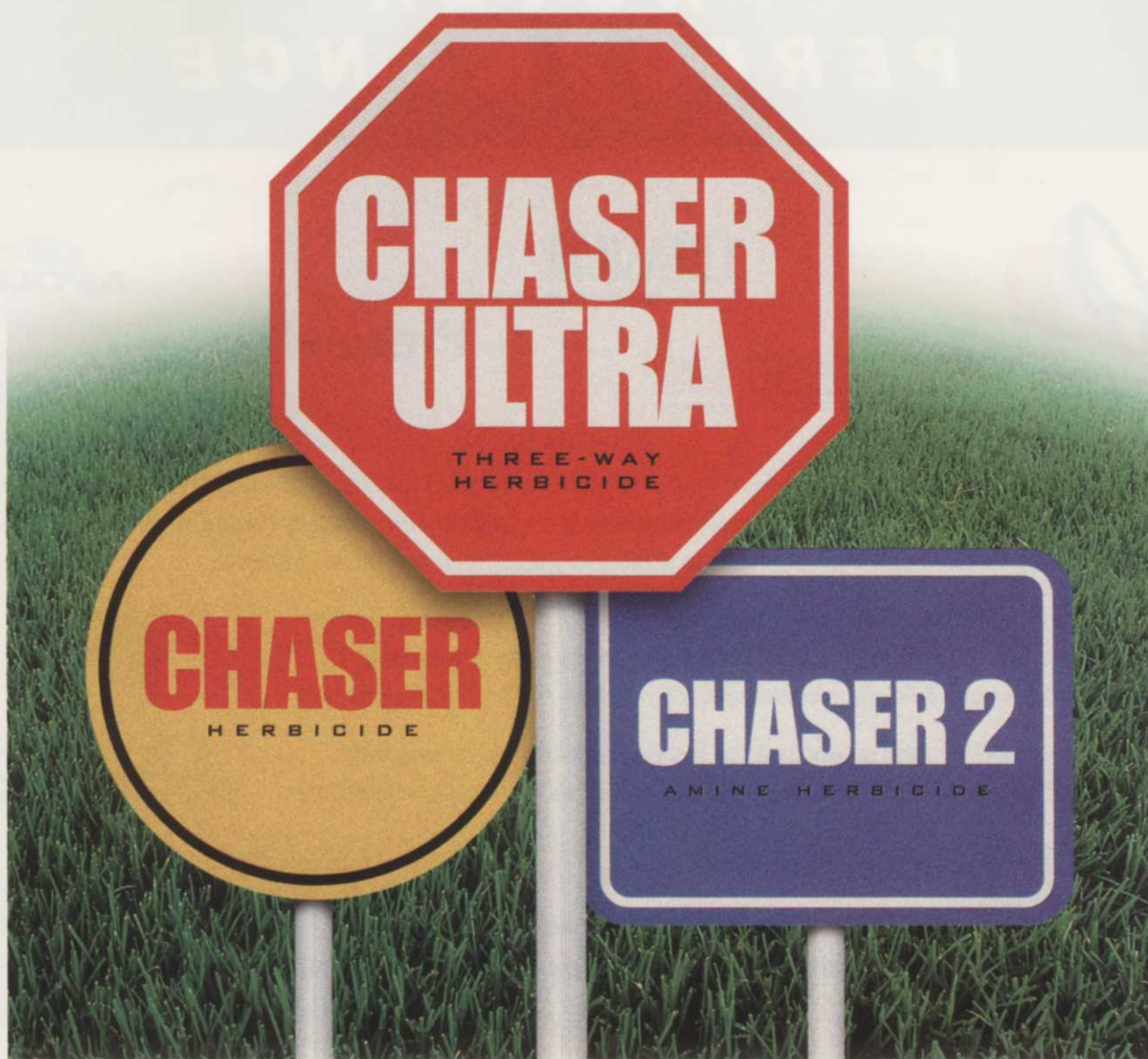
Location: My house, Wilmington, DE

Possible topics (majority vote will select five main topics)

- ▶ Pricing
- ▶ Sources for annuals, perennials, evergreen trees, deciduous trees, etc.
- ▶ Cell phone alternatives and communication/electronic devices
- ▶ Specialty services we can offer each other
- ▶ Insurance (business and health)
- ▶ Employee sources, wages, benefits
- ▶ Snow plowing pricing and concerns
- ▶ Equipment repair, new machines
- ▶ Investments and profit sharing
- ▶ Advertising alternatives
- ▶ Problem-solving plants
- ▶ Your topic

To confirm your attendance, become a sponsor or receive more information, call me at 302/654-8113.

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- Chaser® Ultra is not made with 2,4-D and because it does not contain Dicamba, it's better for use around shallow-rooted ornamental plants and trees
- Chaser and Chaser 2 Amine are economical Triclopyr and 2,4-D formulations with excellent turf safety and superior control of hard-to-kill weeds
- Use Chaser in cooler weather such as the spring and fall and Chaser 2 Amine when days are warmer for year-round control

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industry almanac

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Companies bid for Aventis Biotech

LONDON — Aventis has narrowed the list of potential buyers of its agrochemical division, CropScience, down to German companies BASF and Bayer and U.S.-based Dow Chemical.

Bayer revenues exceed \$10 billion

PITTSBURGH, PA — Pittsburgh-based Bayer reported a 13.6% increase in sales to \$10.1 billion for 2000. This is the first time the company achieved revenues exceeding \$10 billion. Earnings were also higher as after-tax profits rose 32% to \$202 million.

Oyler resigns from U.S. Lawns

CALABASAS, CA — Thomas Oyler resigned as president of U.S. Lawns (USL), the franchise landscape maintenance company he founded in 1986 and sold 10 years later to Environmental Industries (EII). Burton Sperber, CEO of EII, said that Ken Hutcheson, USL vice president of marketing, would assume additional responsibilities as general manager of USL.

McGinnis Farms has new name

MOLINE, IL — Deere & Company announced that McGinnis Farms, Inc., its recently acquired wholly owned subsidiary headquartered in Alpharetta, GA, is changing its name to John Deere Landscapes.

continued on page 16

Recession? What recession?

Busy as ever, Green Industry pros find talk of economic slowdown laughable

BY JASON STAHL

If you want to give Marty Grunder's crew a good laugh, he suggests you tell them the economy is slowing down. Grunder, owner and president of Grunder Landscaping Co., Dayton, OH, says his crews are as busy as they've ever been despite talk of an economic slowdown.

"Our sales are \$100,000 higher than they were last year, and our backlog is the same, too," Grunder says. "We have three large projects we're working on right now, and if they come through, we'll have a record year."

Grunder says he feels his company, which grossed \$2.4 million last year and handles a lot of high-end residential accounts, can stand up to tough economic times better than a company that does primarily commercial work. "Most of our residential clients have a combined gross income of \$200,000, so even if they take a little hit, they're still not going to cut their own grass. Their prize possession is their home."

Jim Campanella, owner of The Lawn Dawg, Hudson, NH, says his company is behind where it wants to be this year, but it has nothing to do with the economy. "We've been trying to sell lawn care over the last two

months with snow on the ground," he says.

Still, he says his company is up 44% over last year and has had record sales over the last couple weeks in April due to rising temperatures. He's doubled Lawn Dawg's business every year since he started five years ago, and he expects the same this year with projected revenues of \$3.3 million.

Rene West, president of Executive Landscaping, Pensacola, FL, says new residential installations are down slightly. In fact, his overall business is down in the first quarter. But he expects a better second quarter for his company, which grossed \$2.7 million last year and has already sold \$1.8 million this year.

Most of the maintenance work Total Landscape, St. Louis, MO, handles is for commercial properties, not expensive homes. Still, times are good. "We haven't

continued on page 16

[CLIPPINGS]

INDUSTRY SNAPSHOT

Here's where some landscape and lawn companies' revenues stand so far this year compared to last:

Custom Lawn Care & Landscaping, Washington

Court House, OH	+30%
Allentuck Landscaping, Gaithersburg, MD	+12%
Raymond Brothers Landscaping, Hillsdale, NJ	+15%
Beebe Landscape Services, East Windsor, CT	+10-15%
Summer Rain, Margate, FL	+15-20%
Joyce Landscaping, Marston's Mills, MA	+20%
Four Square Landscaping, Dallas, TX	+20%
Landscape Images, New Orleans, LA	+15%

industry almanac

continued from page 15

"This name change allows us to create a larger vision of what John Deere Landscapes will become," said John Jenkins, president of the Worldwide Commercial and Consumer Equipment Division. "Instead of serving just regional markets, John Deere Landscapes aspires to become a national supplier of products and services."

DuPont withdraws Benlate

WILMINGTON, DE — DuPont announced that by the end of this year, it will stop selling the fungicide Benlate. On the market for 33 years, Benlate's been criticized as a health risk. DuPont cited high legal costs for its decision.

Lesco reports drop in net sales

STRONGSVILLE, OH — Lesco, Inc. reported that first quarter net sales were down 8.3% compared to last year. The company said the drop in sales was due to a late spring over the northern two-thirds of the country, a severe drought in Florida and an increase in costs. For 2001, the company said it believes it will be able to report higher earnings than last year because of an increased presence in stores and a rebound in sales growth due to normal weather patterns.

PLCAA Day on the Hill deadline nears

MARIETTA, GA — Don't forget to sign up for PLCAA's 12th Annual Legislative Day on the Hill by June 29! Hotel reservations must be made by June 22. Contact PLCAA at 800/458-3466.

[CLIPPINGS]

continued from page 15

had to seek out commercial contracts because they've been just falling in our lap," owner Bob Franey says.

Franey is on target to reach the \$2 million mark this year, which would be an 18% increase over last year. His average installation sale is up 30%. "People are buying more jobs, and bigger jobs," he says. Despite talk of a sour economy, he decided to push water features this year, and so far his decision was a smart one — he's sold ten valued from \$14,000 to \$20,000.

One word of caution comes from Bob Smart, owner of Yard Smart, Olmsted

Falls, OH. "Everyone needs to remember that, when a recession hits, we're usually the last industry to slow down and the last to get going again," he says.

OMISSION

In the May issue of Landscape Management, the first page of the article entitled, "Managing Diseases," was omitted. We regret the error. Go to www.landscapemanagement.net to read the article in its entirety.

WHAT DO YOU BUY?

LM survey respondents who buy:

One or more (net)	38%
Seeding equipment	13%
Large skid-steer loaders	13%
Front-end loaders	12%
Backhoes	7%
Tree planting equipment	6%
Trenchers/vibratory plows	6%
Mini skid-steer loaders	5%
Mechanized graders	2%
Articulated units	1%
Other	6%

(SOURCE: LM 2000 SURVEY)

People & companies

The **J.R. Simplot Company's** Turf and Horticulture Group named **Hironi Yanagisawa** vice



president and general manager of its newly created International division.

The **Evergreen Foundation's** Board of Directors recently expanded with the addition of John Deere's **Bill Klutho** and Aquatrols' **Demie Moore**.

Yazoo/Kees Power Equipment named **Bob Morgan** sales manager.

ProSource One named **Brad Boroughs** turf representative in the Texas market, **David Aughter** vegetation management representative in Minnesota, and **Jennifer Smith** ornamental sales representative in the South Central Turf & Ornamental market.

Becker Underwood

promoted **John Walther** to national accounts manager and **Mike Sherman** to business development manager. The company also hired **Wally Boilek** as national accounts manager.





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The new R-Series RC-30 All Surface Loader is a small machine with big-time performance. Its specially designed rubber tracks and light weight allow you to work on manicured lawns with minimal surface disturbance.

About the same size as an ATV, the RC-30 works wonders in small backyards and also fits in the back of a pick-up*. With a 31.5 hp Cat® diesel engine and hydrostatic drive, you get plenty of smooth, reliable power.



RC-30 Brief Specs:

Width:	46.5
in.	
Ground Clearance:	10 in.
Maximum Lift Height:	80.25
in.	
Track Base:	55 in.

*Always check the load capacity and local laws before hauling in this manner.



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Landscape Management, Golfdom, Turfgrass Trends win 17 TOCA awards

PHOENIX, AZ — The Advanstar Landscape Group collected 17 national Turf & Ornamental Communicators Association (TOCA) awards at the organization's annual meeting held here last month.

Landscape Management won six awards, including firsts for senior editor Ron Hall, managing editor Jason Stahl and associate publisher/executive editor Sue Gibson as

well as merits for the entire staff. Senior graphic designer Jeff Landis also collected a first for *TurfGrass Trends*. *Landscape Management's* sister publication, *Golfdom*, won 10 editorial and design awards, including firsts for Larry Aylward, Frank Andorka and Lisa Lehman as well as merit awards for Pat Jones, Kim Traum, Lisa Bodnar, Frank Andorka and Larry Aylward.

In all, the group won 17 out of the 29 editorial and design awards for commercial publications.

"Although we've been honored to win many TOCA awards in the past, we're serious about constantly improving *Landscape Management*," Gibson said. "We believe one way to measure our progress is in professional awards programs like this one. That we've one several awards this year, against many worthy competitors, is a positive statement about our efforts and the professionalism of our staff."



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Scotts goes West

MARYSVILLE, OH — Scotts Lawn Care expanded westward by acquiring Chicago-based Liqui-Green in May and the lawn, shrub and tree business of Northern Lawns, Omaha, NB. Mark Long, vice president Scotts Lawn Service, said Liqui-Green's six Chicago-area locations will be absorbed into Scotts' three branches. Scotts will also be franchisor for Liqui-Green's franchise locations. Regarding Northern Lawns, 21-year owner Dale Amstutz will stay on through early summer to help with the transition. In recent months, Scotts also acquired Green Valley, Kansas City, KS, and the lawn application business of Munie Outdoor Services, St. Louis, MO.

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(Computer-aided design is used and the latest in manufacturing techniques. But what leads to the most patents is simply meeting a natural need.)



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