

# Greenerside

Official Publication of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of New Jersey

# Reinvesting in Your Golf Course

By Ronald S. Cutlip

Your club's most important asset is the golf course.

lder golf courses across the Northeast are feeling the pressure to keep up with their newer competitors, and that has recently led to an increase of renovations and remodeling.

Most courses over 20 year's old face a variety of issues, such as outdated infrastructure and irrigation, water usage, drainage, overgrown trees, agronomic issues, turf problems, or just plain wear and tear on the tees, fairways, bunkers, and greens.

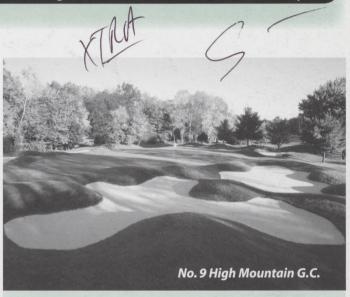
Owners, managers and superintendents alike know course renovations do pay off financially in the long run, both on the course and in the clubhouse. "Since reopening after our renovation project, we have attracted new members and have heard nothing but positive comments from both club members and guests," said Turgay Itez, Club Manager for High Mountain Golf Club in Franklin Lakes, NJ. "Everyone has expressed nothing but delight over the course improvements."

High Mountain Golf Club was built in 1966 by the Mc-Bride brothers, Frank, Joe and Nevin, on 148 acres of the Galenkamp dairy farm. Present-day owners David, Moira, Peter, and Terry McBride, themselves avid golfers with a passion for the game, have upgraded the family golf course to a first-class facility.

Elliott Lewis, CGCS, superintendent at High Mountain, was 100-percent behind the renovation work. As he put it, "Ron Cutlip's renovations corrected a myriad of maintenance problems due to the age of the original course." He added, "For the size and scope of the project, things went very well. It's like unveiling a totally brand new course."

The success of your renovation project all starts with a solid master plan. This plan creates a unified vision, defines the goals and wishes of the club, and schedules the different

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# Questions to ask yourself before you break ground.

Answering "yes" to one or more of the following questions indicates potential problems with your current course design and/or conditions:

- Are your course hazards still in play? Improvements in golf equipment over the past 25 years have created better golfers. Is your course still a challenge to them?
- Are playing conditions unsafe? Improper setbacks and alignments between features can create dangerous areas on your course.
- Is your course uninteresting? Does the original design lack variety in length, par shot value and strategy?
- Do you have drainage problems? Too much or too little water often cause courses to close, or contributes to poor turf growth and other problems.
- In general, are your greens poorly designed and constructed?

Wear and tear causes compaction, poor drainage, worn turf, and other problems.

- Do you have problems growing healthy grass? This may be due to an inferior irrigation system.
- Overall, do your tees, bunkers, greens and fairways look worn?
- Does your course need practice facilities? You can improve overall attraction by adding, updating, or refurbishing the driving range, practice green and bunker, and instruction area.

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## From the editor's desk

## Let it snow

The never thought we were doing anything wrong when my friends and I slipped through the large gaping hole in the fence that allowed us to go sledding on the Preakness Hills Country Club. What harm could we possibly do? Then, one cold January day, a cursing, arm flailing maniac came and chased us away.

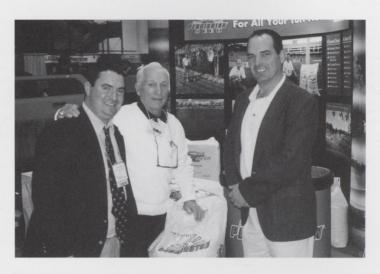
Of course this man wasn't a real maniac he was just the greenkeeper. He wasn't just any greenkeeper either he was the legendary Artie Elmers. Artie was one of the best in the business but he just couldn't run in the snow. He never caught us that day - or any other - but he got his point across. Go somewhere else.

So we did. To the granddaddy of them all - the Montclair Golf Club. What a great tract. Moguls, contours, hollows, grade changes. Donald Ross truly was a genius! Greenkeeper Ed "Chief" Nickelson never chased us either. It was a win-win situation.

There is no moral in this self-patronizing story, only an hidden agenda. If Brad Klein decides to add sledability to the Top 100 Golf Course rating criteria I'm available for consultation.

Sledingly yours,

12009



Football legends Tim Kerwin and George Toma lectured the editor on winter turf damage from sledding on golf courses.

#### **New GCSANJ Address**

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# **President's** Message

John O'Keefe, CGCS, Preakness Hills CC

s you know, the USGA is the governing body of the game of golf. I think we as Superintendents can be considered the managing bodies of the golf course. We are responsible for maintaining the design integrity, daily conditioning, and virtually every facet of the golf course operation.

During our daily rituals we may encounter many problems, some are easy and some can even require re-growth of the turf which takes time. Some problems we just do not have an answer for. It is these situations that often require outside help and the aid of research. Most times a fellow superintendent, an affiliate member, the USGA or consultants from turf programs can help a great deal. When research is needed it can be time consuming and very expensive. In the Tri-State area, we are fortunate to have many turf programs from universities that conduct great research studies to address the problems we face. Right in our back yard we have Rutgers University, which many consider the finest turf research facility in the country. In 2004, Rutgers will be conducting research on four golf turf related projects. Tri-State Turf Research Foundation, GCSAA, USGA, GCSANJ, and NJTA are funding these projects. The Tri State Research Foundation is the only one of these groups who is funding all four of the Rutgers projects plus another research project being conducted by Dr. Frank Rossi at Cornell University.

The Tri-State Turf Research Foundation was founded 13 years ago to fund turf research related to problems in the Tri-State area. It's governing body is comprised of three representatives from the five area golf course superintendent associations: GCSANJ, Met GCSA, Hudson Valley GCSA, Long Island GCSA, Connecticut AGS as well as three from the MGA. Funding for Tri-State's work comes from annual contributions in the amount of \$2,500 from each association and donations from individual clubs.

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decade, the Tri State Turf Research Foundation has funded over \$300,000 in research projects or made contributions to other charitable turf related associations. This funding has provided solutions to many turf related problems.

Our need for research continues to grow, especially with increased government regulations on water and pesticide use. We need other answers! So when you see that \$175.00 donation request come across your desk, take a few minutes and make a donation. In New Jersey, we normally receive donations from about 50 of the approximately 300 clubs in state. I would love to see 100%. If every club in the Tri State contributed we would be able to sponsor an enormous amount of research. That research will go a long way to provide superintendents with the tools and information they need to be better managers of our golf courses.

If for some reason you do not receive a donation request please contact our GCSANJ Executive Secretary, Ineke Pierpoint or your GCSANJ Representatives on the Tri State Board; Chris Carson, Steve Finamore or Gary Arlio.

John Oxage

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## **Reinvesting in Your Golf Course**

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phases of the construction process.

Some of the issues that are considered during the master planning stage are:

· Outdated and Eroding Infrastructure

If your irrigation system is over 10 years old, it's time to consider an update, or perhaps even a total change. Drainage patterns also change, particularly if housing and other new development has occurred around the course. Catch basins, drainage lines, creek banks, and ditches all need cleaning or replacement over time.

· Wear and Tear of Features

Tee surfaces become uneven after long-term use. Greens get compacted from equipment and foot traffic patterns, and this could lead to drainage and turf problems. New grasses improve playability. Maintenance can be reduced by planting grasses that are more disease, pest, and mutation-resistant. In addition, bunkers erode and change shape over time, so designing new bunkers and restoring and creating a variety of levels makes play easier, as well as improving aesthetics.

• Trees Can Be A Problem

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Too much shade on greens and tees make growing grass difficult. Additionally, the root system of trees robs vital water and nutrients from the soil. Thus, a club may need to sacrifice some trees for the greater good of the course.

Outdated Design

Adding tees and bunkers keeps the course competitive for all levels. Greens may need a redesign to accommodate suitable pin placements for today's faster surface speeds. Bunkers may be added for strategy, direction, and aesthetics.

• Stiffer Competition

Flashy new courses open around you constantly. If you're starting to lose play or members, it may be time to give your course a makeover. "It's simply a matter of keeping up with the times, said Lewis."

"Keeping the number of rounds up is important," says Pat Lawler, the Club Pro at High Mountain, "but so is providing our members with an exciting golf experience."

#### Improvements made at High Mountain include:

- Tee surfaces were either added or expanded, doubling what previously existed (for example: #3, a par three hole, had less than 2,800 sq. ft.; the new tees have been expanded to over 7,000 sq. ft.); multiple placements were added, lengthening the hole by building new tees further back and serving a wider variety of player abilities.
- Two hundred yards were added to the course length, raising it from 6,700 yards to 6,900 yards. This will help the course meet the challenges of new technology and advancements in players' equipment.
- Fairway grading and drainage were dramatically improved for both playability and maintenance.
- The new addition of fairway bunkers and moundings added excitement and a new strategy to the course.
- A new, double-row irrigation and pump system was created to replace the original 38-year-old single row manual system. This has improved turf quality and soil conditions throughout the course.
- New greenside bunkers and moundings were constructed around the existing greens, which were preserved because of their unique contour and large size.
- A 4,500-square-foot addition was built onto the maintenance facility.
- The pond was expanded and creek bank restoration was implemented.
- The old dairy farm's stone walls were saved and restored.
- Continuous cart paths were added to extend the season and allow play during wet conditions.
- Overall improvements reduced maintenance headaches, eliminated unfair or unsafe playing conditions, increased the

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## **Golf Course**

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speed of play, and greatly enhanced the course's image.

As an architect, I look at an existing golf hole and ask myself, What does this say to the golfer? What impression does he get as he prepares to tee off, as he studies the lay of the golf hole, slopes, doglegs, fairway, bunkers, and green?

In many situations, I can either use the existing land and features, and build upon that framework for the renovation design, or I can completely start from scratch. I present options to the club so that they can make the best decision, choosing between making their course new and dramatic (with moundings, bunkers, and grade changes), or restoring the course's original design along with its historic grandeur.

When a course renovation is completed, it should challenge the golfer, enticing him to play it over and over again.

Golf Course Architect Ronald S. Cutlip, a 4 year member of the GCSANJ, currently resides in New York City with his wife, Cheryl, captain of the Radio City Rockettes.





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# **Building on a Legacy -**

By Paul F. Miller, CGCS

ood things are meant to happen, and it's amazing how pieces fall into place when the time is right. A case in point is our campaign to raise funds to build a new building at the UMass Amherst turf research facility in South Deerfield. While the idea for a new building was first floated by Dr. Troll and others many years ago, it wasn't until this past year that the need, the university's commitment, and our willingness to pitch in all came together.

Everyone in the business knows the history of the turf program in Amherst, and it all started in 1927 when Prof. Lawrence Dickinson started the country's very first college-level course in turfgrass management and science. His "Winter School for Greenkeepers and Golf Course Foreman" started a level of practical instruction that continues today, and one that has been blueprinted in similar schools throughout the United States and abroad. The success of Prof. Dickinson's program was that he focused on having his students understand the practical solutions to the range of turfgrass problems that arise on a golf course.

Over the years, many prominent leaders in the turf industry (including Eliot Roberts, Joseph Troll, Robert Carrow, and Geoffrey Cornish) have made significant contributions to the UMass turf program, establishing it as a leading teaching and research program. These and other nationally known educators have inspired hundreds of graduates to assume leadership positions throughout the industry, as superintendents of prestigious golf courses and as managers of other fine turf areas.

As Geoff Cornish recently wrote in his history of the UMass turf program for the book A Commonwealth of Golfers, published by the Massachusetts Golf Association: "It is not possible to catalog all of the accomplishments of those who have attended UMass's turfgrass programs and have gone on to maintain and enhance the golf courses of this nation and other countries. Their contributions to the excellence



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# the Stockbridge/UMass Turf Program Alumni rally to honor golf management icon, Joseph Troll

of the greenswards of golf are impressive. Without them and those who have graduated from programs at other universities, the playing fields of the game would never have reached their present state of excellence, providing the turf the golfer wants. This includes the nearly 400 courses that take up more real estate in Massachusetts than all fruit and vegetable crops combined."

We as individuals and as an industry now have an opportunity to give something back to the program that got us started and which continues to benefit us today. Geoff Cornish, for example, set an example for us to follow with his own extremely generous commitment to the turf building and for maintaining it into the future. There is strength in numbers, and we should all pitch in to help make this building a reality. It starts with each of us pledging our own financial support, and also committing matching gifts from our clubs. What we invest in today will reap benefits to us at each of our golf facilities tomorrow and it will also show the university that we are behind this program 100%. When we invest, the university will follow, and our actions will speak louder than words.

Our first goal is to raise the funds necessary to build the teaching, research and storage building at the turf plots. The establishment of an alumni advisory board will insure our continued involvement in the years to come, identifying areas for research topics, giving feedback in those areas that are most important to us in the industry. We are on track to have a building in place by the end of 2004, and it will be an opportunity to celebrate Dr. Troll's years of service. We will be hosting a breakfast to honor Joe and others during the turf conference and show on March 3, and as part of that gathering we will be dedicating the turf research plots in Joe's name.

Between now and then, we can come together as a group to show our support for this project. A list of all donors to the turf building will be available at the conference, and there is plenty of time for each of us to get on board before the end of February. For information on how you and your club can be involved, you can call me or one of the other turf captains, or you can make your gift to the Turf Building Fund online at: www.umass.edu/development. The history of the turf program at UMass is one we have all benefited from, but an even stronger future for the program is one we can make together, regaining our place as the premier teaching and research turf program in the country.

The definition of legacy in Webster's dictionary is "something handed down from an ancestor, predecessor or from the past." Joe Troll spent his life preparing us in all facets of golf course management. His rewards have been watching the talents of those students prepare courses for U.S. Opens, Ryder Cups, State Opens, and routine member guest and invitational. Doing something in his honor is long overdue, and now is the time for us to share in this legacy.

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## A dream comes true

By Shaun Barry

In December 2003 I started a journey that I had made many times in my mind. Approximately 23 hours of actual flying time (and 16 time zones) later I was in Australia. I expected to be surprised and amazed but not while I was still on the plane. It turns out that any airline other than Qantas must be sprayed for insects. The flight attendants open all of the overhead compartments and then walk down the aisle while spraying everything and everybody with a pyrethroid. There were no exceptions and no complaints. I wondered what kind of reaction there would have been if this had happened in New York. Lots of lawyers would have been real busy.

The country is really an amazing place. The cities are modern and full of energy and cell phones. Approximately 1/2 of their 20 million citizens live in four cities. In a country that is as big as the USA this means that there is lots of open land. You can see 5-10 miles sometimes without seeing a building. They have lots of farms but very few barns. With their weather it is ok to keep animals and machines outdoors. Expect to see lots of Kangaroos, Emus, Koalas and lots of

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Royal Sydney golf course superintendent John O'Dell poses with his on course transportation.

This horse drawn plough and scoop were the only mechanical aids used in the construction of Alister Mackenzies Royal Melbourne Golf Club.

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#### 2004 Winter "Shop" tour a big success!!

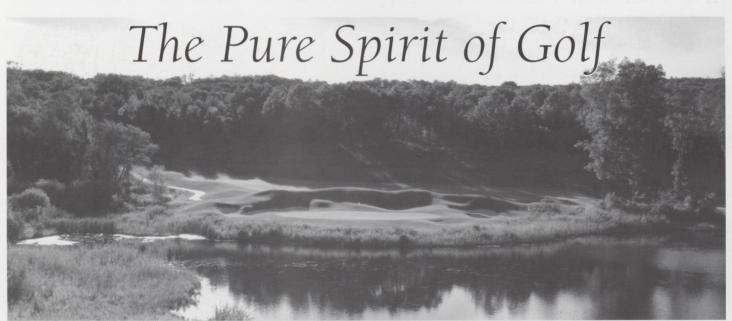
By Bruce Peeples, CGCS

A large THANK YOU goes out to the three hosts of the inaugural GCSANJ maintenance "shop" tour. Mark Denoble of Shackamaxon Golf & Country Club, Chris Carson of Echo Lake Country Club and Mark Kuhns, CGCS of Baltusrol Golf Club did an excellent job in making us feel right at home. They opened their respective facilities to any and all prying eyes and each one passed "the test" with flying colors. Sixty-three people, including superintendents, assistants, green committee chairmen, and staff had great weather and three terrific sites to look around in and ask questions about. The facilities were each in different stages of upgrading and it was interesting to see the various ideas and ways of making a safe, efficient working environment for staff and equipment. Krispy Kremes, four foot subs and homemade cookies also seemed to be a hit at the different locations! Roger Stewart CGCS from TPC at Jasna Polana, had suggested the idea of the shop tour and it looks like we may have a success on our hands!

Mark Denoble was our first stop at nine in the morning. He and Glenn, their equipment technician, immediately started showing us plans and giving tours of their yet to be completed expansion project. It's going to be a great upgrade to his operation. It was interesting to see the use changes recently put into place for various portions of the existing buildings for increased efficiency. Because of the close location of his maintenance facility to the clubhouse, Mark had to keep the esthetics of the addition in the forefront of any planning. I'm sure Mark and his staff will be pleased when warmer weather permits him to complete such an exciting undertaking. Let's hope we get a return invitation to see the final results!

Chris Carson was just returning from teaching duties at Rutgers University when we arrived for the second leg of the tour at Echo Lake. His staff, including Wayne, the equipment and building manager and Ian, the assistant superintendent,

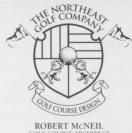
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#### Continued from page 9

had been ready and greeted us warmly. Chris's facility is one that recently completed adding space onto an existing structure. He and his staff obviously are very aware of the advantages in having a clean, efficient work environment. It is something to be proud of and I'm sure Chris and his staff are. One came away from our second stop with many notes on improving our own operations!

Mark Kuhns, CGCS, took time away from his busy schedule to act as a tour guide for the brand new maintenance area. Wow! There is no doubt that they now have a "state of the art" facility that compliments such a great, traditional golf course as Baltusrol. The equipment repair shop, pesticide application building, wash station area, equipment storage areas, office and residential sections are "all the way things ought to be." Mark and his staff have a terrific place from which to direct all the maintenance operations from. It was quite special to be given such a cordial welcome and be allowed the opportunity to visit such an operation.

We appreciated the feeling of professionalism and friendliness throughout the day from our hosts and their staff. A thank you, as well, to Shaun Barry for doing his usual standout job of being the official GCSANJ photographer! Everyone outdid themselves in making a cold winter day into an event we can all learn from in order to improve our own operations throughout the year.

Bruce Peeples, CGCS, of the Spring Lake G.C., is the unofficial GCSANJ Krispy Kreme liaison.

#### **Birth announcements**

Lance and Jaqui Seeton welcomed Kristina Noel into the world on Dec. 27, 2003. She weighed 9 lbs and 6 oz's and was 20 1/2" long. She joins her sister Jenna Grace and makes this family a happy foursome. Father Lance is the President of Secton Turf Warehouse.

Brian and Frances Remo had a baby boy on Jan. 27, 2004. Jack Remo entered this world at 6:23 pm weighing 8 lbs and 8 oz's. He was 21" tall. Mom is recovering quite nicely and Dad is enjoying being the father of two boys. Justin will take some time before he makes a judgment about his new brother. Coupled with Brian's new job it has been a very amazing time in his life.



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## From the archives

Ask Willet Wilt

Think 2003 was wet? This classic Willet Wilt appeared in The Greenerside in 1984 and reminds us that maybe there is some truth to weather patterns cycling through every 20 years - Editor

Question: How wet was it this summer? A.R., Happy Valley Rest Home, Knee Deep, N.J.

Answer: It was so wet that at one course they issued life jackets for any golfer who wanted to attempt the back nine. A neighboring course saw so much rain that the course superintendent had a sign to keep their rowboats in the rough. The bunkers had become water hazards.

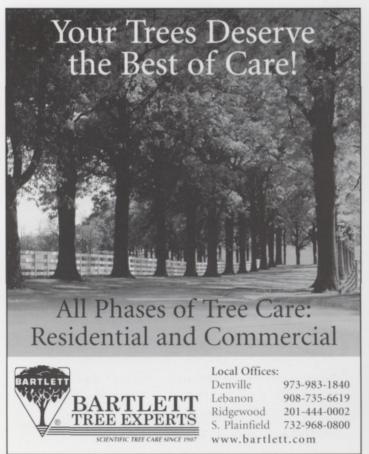
This year, before a golfer got a starting time, he had to find out how the tides were running. When the wind kicked up you could see whitecaps on the fairways. The caddies were doing laps in the traps before they went on their loops.

How wet was it? It was the first year lifeguards had to split their time between the golf course and the club pool. The turf grass roots this year were higher out of the ground than the grass blades. The Olympic Diving Trials were held on the fourth hole of a central Jersey golf course.

You want to know wet! This year you had to apply stickers to the soles of your shoes so you wouldn't float off the greens when you tried to cut them. This was not a year for chemicals that had to be watered in, this was a year for chemicals that had to be flooded in. One of the biggest sellers this year was pontoons to replace tires on golf carts. I asked one course superintendent, "When are you planning to open the course?" His reply was, "as soon as the tides recede."

At golf outings they stopped playing closest to the pin and started playing closest to the puddle. The guy who would win the longest drive was the one who could get his ball to skip across the water the best. When you turned on the pumps this year it wasn't to irrigate the course, it was to drain the bunkers.

A greens chairman told a superintendent, "you have to adapt to this wet weather," so he developed webbed feet and grew gills. The only insects that were a problem were the ones that could swim. If you wanted to find a dry spot on the course, you had to stand on top of a bridge. One golfer had to come off the course after twelve holes because his oars Continues on page 12





## From the archives

Continued from page 11

broke. There is no such thing as casual water when you are up to your neck in it. W.W.

If you want to relive the exciting moments of this season, purchase Willet Wilt's newest book The Summer of Our

Discontent. You can reserve your copy through Ken Kubik, Mt. Freedom, N.J.

Willet Wilt, a well known Greenerside columnist during the Ed Walsh era, now hangs out in Florida with prominent retired New Jersey Superintendents. \( \)

## A dream comes true

Continued from page 8

other strange animals on the side of the road and sometimes in the road.

Australia is also blessed with some wonderful golf courses. My main reason to travel to Australia was to play Royal Sydney and Royal Melbourne. These are a couple of the courses designed by Alister MacKenzie and I am sure that he would be quite happy how they have stood the test of time. I wasn't able to meet with the superintendent at Royal Melbourne but John O'Dell at Royal Sydney could not have been nicer. He alone was worth the trip. John met me at the clubhouse and he arranged for my round. He gave me his

clubs, found a pair of shoes to wear, treated me to lunch and gave me a book on the history of the club. We also spent an hour talking about the course, what problems he faces and how he resolves those problems. I felt right at home.

My journey ended too soon but because of John and some unfinished business with Alister MacKenzie, I will return. There are a lot more wonderful people to meet and golf courses to play.

Shaun Barry, the GCSANJ bon vi vant, is a technical representative for Bayer Environmental Science.

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## **EXPO 2003 photo gallery**



Brian Lescriner and Rolf Strobel checking out the exhibits on the trade show floor during EXPO.



EXPO General Chairman Bob Dickison CGCS and Enrique Lainez enjoying the sights and sounds of the Grand Reception.



Chris Carson presents USGA Green Section director Jim Snow with the New Jersey Turfgrass Hall-of-Fame Award.



Jim Baird of the USGA and Jeff Kent of the Atlantic City C.C. enjoy a break between speakers.



Pete Horran of Lapinski Landscaping and Glenn Miller of the Manasquan River C.C. receive the 2003 NJTA Environmental Steward Award from President Marie Pompei during Expo. Both men were involved with helping the green industry deal with drought emergency issues with state officials.



NJTA President Marie Pompei presented Mickey Stachowski with the 2003 Environmental Stewardship Award for his tireless work on the drought issues facing our industry in Trenton.



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